

# EQuIP Review Feedback



**Lesson/Unit Name:** The Art of Persuasion and the Craft of Argument

**Content Area:** English language arts

**Grade Level:** 11

**Overall Rating:**

**E/I**

Exemplar if Improved

## Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

*The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:*

- ✓ Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.
- ✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.
- ✓ Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose (e.g., presents vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose, and other qualitative characteristics similar to CCSS grade-level exemplars in Appendices A & B).

*A unit or longer lesson should:*

- ✓ Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.
- ☐ (Grades 3-5) Build students' content knowledge and their understanding of reading and writing in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through the coherent selection of texts.

Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards

The unit front-matter lists a targeted a set of 11th grade CCSS ELA-Literacy standards: RI.11-12.5, RI.11-12.6, W.11-12.1, SL.11-12.3, L.11-12.3. The strongest of these standards throughout the unit are SL 3 and L3, as the SMART chart and text annotation activities support students to evaluate a speaker's point of view, use of evidence and rhetoric, and language choices. While it is a focus in Lesson 3, the structure of authors' arguments and their points of view are not a point of focus for many of the lessons. To further align this unit, the authors might consider creating questions or tasks aimed at analyzing author use of structure, author purpose(s), and argument(s) in lessons 1, 2, and 4. Finally, this unit struggles to fully target the depth of the identified writing standard and might improve if suggestions at the end of this dimension and in Dimension II are followed.

Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction

A clear and explicit purpose for instruction is included in this unit. For example, the front-matter of the unit includes the following desired results: established goals, transfer goals, meaning goals, acquisition goals, and assessment evidence. Furthermore, each lesson includes clearly stated and well-aligned goals for students, essential questions, and standards. Some of the unit targets are less aligned throughout the materials. For example both, "Conveying complex ideas, concepts, and information." and "Evaluating the effectiveness of an argument." are listed as acquisition goals, but it is unclear that students will be able to convey complex ideas or analyze an argument as they have few opportunities to do so. The authors might consider revisions to include activities focused on identifying a text's argument(s) and conveying this analysis in written and spoken form throughout the unit.

Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose.

The texts selected for this unit include Coretta Scott King's "The Death Penalty is a Step Back.", Brutus's and Marc Antony's speeches from Julius Caesar, Frederick Douglass's "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?", and the speech by Severn Suzuki at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. These complex texts are of sufficient quality and scope for students to understand and analyze rhetorical structures. However, there are no text complexity measures provided for this text set, nor is there a rationale provided for their selection. To improve CCSS-alignment and usability by a national audience, the authors might consider providing qualitative measurements, quantitative measurements, and reader considerations as well as a short explanation why the texts were chosen.

Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.

Literacy is somewhat integrated throughout this unit. Reading and speaking and listening are well supported through whole class and paired work

reading and discussions. Listening is well supported through student review of speeches. However, writing is not well supported throughout this unit. While students are regularly asked to complete graphic organizers or annotate texts, the majority of writing is assigned as summative assessment (in lessons 2, 3, 4 and 5). The lesson might improve if authors added more opportunities for students to write to learn, with supportive activities embedded in lessons.

Rating: 2 – Meets many of the criteria in the dimension

## Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

*The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:*

- ✓ **Reading Text Closely:** Makes reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction.
- ✓ **Text-Based Evidence:** Facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about common texts through a sequence of specific, thought-provoking, and text-dependent questions (including, when applicable, questions about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media).
- ✓ **Writing from Sources:** Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays).
- ✓ **Academic Vocabulary:** Focuses on building students' academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction.

*A unit or longer lesson should:*

- ✓ **Increasing Text Complexity:** Focus students on reading a progression of complex texts drawn from the grade-level band. Provide text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded and supported to advance students toward independent reading of complex texts at the CCR level.
- ✓ **Building Disciplinary Knowledge:** Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts.
- ✓ **Balance of Texts:** Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5).
- ☐ **Balance of Writing:** Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.

Reading Text Closely

Throughout this unit students are routinely expected to read texts carefully and examine their evidence. There are occasions when students work to discern deep meaning. For example, students are asked to carefully read in lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4 with the use of graphic organizers for rhetorical devise, text annotations, or text dependent questions. However, as students are not required to engage in a productive struggle to discern a deep meaning of these texts' purpose, structure, and argument it is unclear that students will be able to deeply analyze their rhetoric. The authors might consider providing the opportunity for students to discuss author purpose and argument for the text so that students have support when analyzing a deeper meaning of the text.

Text-Based Evidence:

There are opportunities for students to discuss common texts through paired student work time in lessons 1, 2 and 3 and a sequence of specific, thought-provoking, text-dependent questions in lesson 4. However, no text-dependent questions are provided for the remaining texts in this unit. To improve CCSS-alignment and better prepare student for the high complexity of the Douglass text and task, the authors might consider providing a short set of text-dependent questions for each text. Additionally, many of the questions provided for the Douglas text are expansive and to better support a rich and rigorous discussion benefit from a significant narrowing. For example, question two "How does Douglass make the transition to the true subject of his speech (lines 24-41)? Why does he begin this section with a series of questions? How does his relationship with his audience change in these three paragraphs? What sentence best sums up the claim he is making?" could be edited to read "What device does Douglass employ in lines 24-41 and why does he do this?"

Writing from Sources

Writing standard 1 is listed in the targeted standards and addressed in points throughout the unit via summative assessments. Learning in the unit might be improved if authors incorporated more summaries and short responses that help to build toward the summative assignments, an earlier use of the writing rubric, and/or other process writing strategies.

Academic Vocabulary

The academic vocabulary is built in lessons 2 and 3 as students review rhetorical devices in the SMART bank of rhetorical terms. A glossary is given for lesson 4, but no instruction is provided for these terms. The unit might better support building students' academic vocabulary if instructional activities for specific academic language in various texts were provided.

Increasing Text Complexity

This unit includes a series of texts that clearly build in complexity through

the lesson progression. The learning in each of these lessons is focused on the text and scaffolded with the use of graphic organizers to identify rhetoric, text annotation, and paired student discussions. The lesson could improve in CCSS-alignment and usability if the aforementioned text complexity measures were included for these text so a using teacher would better understand the progression of and instructional supports for for these texts.

**Building Disciplinary Knowledge**

The unit is focused on building students understanding of types of rhetorical devices to persuade by using texts focused on social justice. If more attention were paid in supporting teachers to identify and analyze author argument, then students would likely build knowledge in social studies as well. However, it is understood in this review that such a social studies focus is not the intention of the unit's authors.

**Balance of Texts**

A balance of literary and informational texts is included in this unit with in use of a variety primary source speeches and an excerpt from Shakespeare.

**Balance of Writing**

A balance of writing is not included in this unit. Notes and summative on-demand writing are the only lesson assignments. The unit could improve if more process writing was included at strategic points throughout the unit.

**Rating: 2 – Meets many of the criteria in the dimension**

**Dimension III – Instructional Supports**

*The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:*

- ✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts.
- ✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use.
- ✓ Provides *all* students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text.
- ✓ Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence.
- Integrates appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening and speaking for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band.
- Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band.

*A unit or longer lesson should:*

- ✓ Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time (*may be more applicable across the year or several units*).
- ✓ Gradually remove supports, requiring students to

Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing, and speaking about texts.

Students are likely to be engaged by this unit. The initial activity provides relevance to students when it states, "Think of a time when you were trying to persuade your parents to let you do something new or risky—a request to which they were inclined to say ‘no’ initially. How did you go about persuading them to see things your way?". As high school students are often fond of arguing, the focus of the lesson on better understanding the importance of rhetoric in making arguments is likely to engage student interest.

Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use.

The instructional expectations are clearly laid out and the unit materials are easy to use. The front-matter of this unit includes targeted CCSS standards, desired results, evidence of learning, and and a learning plan. Each lesson has great ease of use, with lesson-targeted standards, essential questions, expectations for learning, and a detailed lesson sequence. Some of the unit materials may be unfamiliar to using teacher (such as the SMART chart), so the authors might consider providing a key for the various graphic organizers to make their instructional purpose and implementation more clear.

Provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding All students are expected to engage with the texts throughout the unit and scaffolding is provided to support this engagement. The strategic increase in text and task complexity from Lesson 1 to 4 is an excellent support for all readers. Further suggestions to improve scaffolding include those mentioned in Dimension II: opportunity for students to discuss author purpose and argument and the use of a short set of text-dependent questions for each of

demonstrate their independent capacities (*may be more applicable across the year or several units*).

- Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection.
- Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5.
- Indicate how students are accountable for independent reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and motivation (*may be more applicable across the year or several units*).
- ✓ Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.

the lessons.

Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence.

Some of the lesson activities focus on challenging sections of text, but the unit as a whole struggles to engage students in a productive struggle with each of the unit's texts. The materials in lessons 4 engage students in a discussion about sections of Douglass's text with a series of text dependent questions. However, Lessons 2 and 3 require students to analyze texts for rhetoric, but do not provide the support students to focus on challenging sections of text. Authors might consider including more text dependent activities, as suggested in the criteria above and in Dimension II.

Integrates appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening and speaking for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band.

Supports for struggling learners are included in this unit. These include: graphic organizers, rereading, listening to speeches, partner work, whole class discussion, guided reading, and text dependent questions (in Lesson 4). If text-dependent questions were provided in Lessons 2 and 3, these supports would better integrated throughout the unit.

Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band.

Extensions and more advanced text for students has not been included in this lesson and would be an easy supplement in Lessons 2-4 or as a replacement for the text in Lesson 5.

Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time

The progression of learning supports students to develop the ability to identify and analyze the use of rhetorical devices in a persuasive text The strategic pairing of texts and tasks throughout this unit provide that students deepen this skill over time.

Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities

Supports are gradually removed through the progression of the lesson activities, as students are expected to complete reading and discussion learning activities in small group and whole class formats at the start of unit and end by individually completing a summative assessment. Students might be better supported to complete the writing portion of this culminating task if process writing assignments were used in lessons 2-4.

Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and/or reflection

There are not opportunities for authentic learning or application in this unit. Though such choice may not be applicable in a unit of 12 days, the authors might consider providing instructional activities to support student reflection on learning after such complex texts and tasks have been used.

Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules.

There is not an opportunity provided in this unit for instruction in grammar, conventions, writing strategies, or discussion rules. There might be an opportunity to teach grammar if questions were created that focus on the the complex grammar used in the unit's texts. Likewise, opportunities for

teaching writing strategies and discussion rules exist when such activities are introduced in Lessons 2 and 3.

Indicate how students are accountable for independent reading based on student choice and interest

The unit does not indicate how students are accountable for independent reading based on choice, though such criteria may not be necessary in a 12 day unit.

Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.

Technology and media are used to deepen learning in the use of videos for students to listen to speeches.

Rating: 2 – Meets many of the criteria in the dimension

#### Dimension IV – Assessment

*The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:*

- ✓ Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).
- ✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.
- ✓ Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.

*A unit or longer lesson should:*

- Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.

Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).

This unit consistently provides the opportunity to formatively assess the extent to which students can meet the expectations of RI 5, RI6, W1, and L3. Such opportunities include the completed graphic organizers in Lessons 1-3, students' text annotations in Lessons 3 and 4, and answers to discussion questions in Lesson 4. Summative assessments include: a one-paragraph reflection on the persuasiveness of Coretta Scott King speech in Lesson 2, a two-paragraph evaluation/comparison of Brutus's and Marc Antony's funeral orations in Lesson 3, and the unit's culminating assessment in Lesson 5. However, as opportunities to observe evidence of the extent to which students can identify and analyze the overall structure and author purpose for an argument is lacking, standards RI5 and RI6 are only partially assessed. If the authors created criteria within the lesson activities pertaining to an author's use of structure and purpose of argument, assessment for these two standards might be better aligned.

Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased and accessible to all students.

The summative assessment methods used throughout this unit are unbiased for all students. The formative writing assessments are mostly unbiased, and could improve in alignment to this criteria if the aforementioned suggestions regarding use of process writing were added (see Dimension II).

Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance

A rubric for the summative writing assessment is included on pages 49 and 50 of the unit plan and is well-aligned to the expectations of CCSS W1 and the final assessment, with specificity for each rubric element. The authors might consider using the rubric earlier in the unit, perhaps with the writing assignments in Lessons 2 and 3, so that students are familiar with expectation for writing and are provided an opportunity to reflect on their own progress within such expectations.

Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative and self-assessment measures.

Varied modes of assessment are included in this lesson. There is a per-assessment in Lesson 1 as students reflect on a time they tried to persuade their parents, as well as the formative and summative assessments addressed in the first criteria of this dimension. The authors might consider

the aforementioned use of the writing rubric earlier in the unit to provide students with a self-assessment measure.

Rating: **3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension**

### Summary Comments

Overall Rating: 9, Exemplar if Improved

The strengths of this unit include:

- The final writing assessment and clear planning to that assessment
- Concise & clear so the unit's purpose and use is easily identified. The unit also leaves great room for teacher independence.
- Excellent selection and sequence of texts with a good balance of task and text complexity throughout the unit

Opportunities for improvement include:

- RI5 and RI6 need better support throughout this unit (suggestions are made in Dimension I and II)
- Addition of text complexity measurements and selection rationale (see Dimension I)
- Better support of process writing throughout the unit (see Dimensions II, III, and IV)
- Increased use of text dependent questions (see Dimension II)

### Rating Scales

#### Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

**3:** Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

**2:** Meets many of the criteria in the dimension

**1:** Meets some of the criteria in the dimension

**0:** Does not meet the criteria in the dimension

#### Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:

**E:** Exemplar – Aligned and meets most to all of the criteria in dimensions II, III, IV (**total 11 – 12**)

**E/I:** Exemplar *if* Improved – Aligned and needs some improvement in one or more dimensions (**total 8 – 10**)

**R:** Revision Needed – Aligned partially and needs significant revision in one or more dimensions (**total 3 – 7**)

**N:** Not Ready to Review – Not aligned and does not meet criteria (**total 0 – 2**)

### Rating Descriptors

#### Descriptors for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:

**3:** **Exemplifies CCSS Quality** - meets the standard described by criteria in the dimension, as explained in criterion-based observations.

**2:** **Approaching CCSS Quality** - meets many criteria but will benefit from revision in others, as suggested in criterion-based observations.

**1:** **Developing toward CCSS Quality** - needs significant revision, as suggested in criterion-based observations.

**0:** **Not representing CCSS Quality** - does not address the criteria in the dimension.

#### Descriptor for Overall Ratings:

**E:** **Exemplifies CCSS Quality** – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard and exemplifies most of the criteria across Dimensions II, III, IV of the rubric.

**E/I:** **Approaching CCSS Quality** – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard in some dimensions but will benefit from some revision in others.

**R:** **Developing toward CCSS Quality** – Aligned partially and approaches the quality standard in some dimensions and needs significant revision in others.

**N:** **Not representing CCSS Quality** – Not aligned and does not address criteria.