



Open Educational Resources Instructional Materials Review

Grade 9 Literacy in ELA: Who Is to Blame for Romeo and Juliet's Death?

Developer/Publisher: NYC Dept of Education

[View Resource](#)

Review Year: 2014

Note that this resource may have been updated since the review. Check the developer website to see if there is a more recent version available.

Format:

- online
- PDF
- editable document

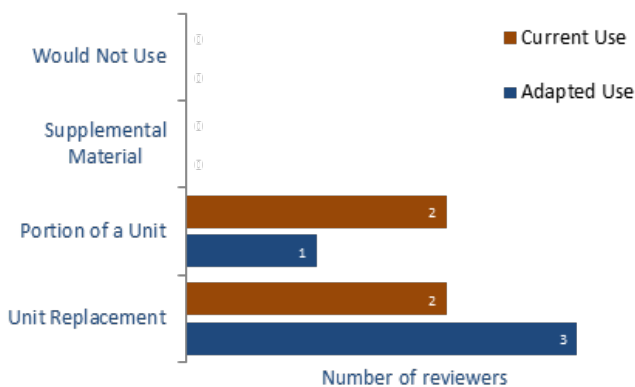
Professional Development:

Instructional supports are embedded in resource

Standards Correlation:

Embedded in Resource

Reviewer Usability Feedback on Current and Adapted Use



Amount of work required to bring into CCSS alignment:

Minor - Moderate

[2014 OER Review Full Report](#)

This resource was reviewed by Washington educators with subject matter expertise and deep familiarity with the state learning standards. Learn more about the review instruments and process by reading the full report.

Subject:

English Language Arts

Grade:

9

Scope:

Unit

Duration:

8 Weeks

Resource License:

Educators may choose to adopt these resources in their entirety or adapt the materials to best address students' diverse needs

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Learning and Teaching Department
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction



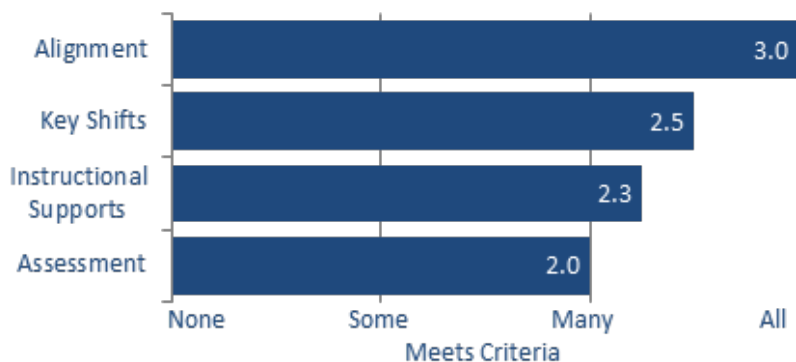
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If any adaptations are made, remove the OSPI logo and link back to the original review. Data is only accurate in the unedited version.

Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQulP) Overall Rating:

Exemplar if Improved (10)

[learn more about EQulP](#)



Background from OER Project Team

The New York City Department of Education has developed Common Core-aligned tasks embedded in units of study to support schools in implementing the standards. Though there is no clear licensing on the materials, there is clear instruction on the website that educators may adopt these resources in their entirety or adapt the materials to best address students' diverse needs.

Reviewer Comments

Review 1

Comments/Ideal Use:

This unit takes a traditional task such as reading *Romeo and Juliet* and aligns it with the Common Core State Standards. Students work on close reading and work toward writing an argumentative essay on who is to blame for *Romeo and Juliet's* death. Each lesson is clear and on what to do with the play and how to connect the ideas of Shakespeare to the big questions of English (i.e. Fate versus Free Will, Is Passion a Friend or a Foe, etc.). There are other entry points too as students use visual images, film, and connections to today to help them understand the play. There is a rubric included for the final assignment.

I would definitely use this unit when teaching *Romeo and Juliet* and can clearly see how teachers could use different pieces of it to help them if they are teaching the play. The unit also makes clear on how to bring together Argumentative writing and a famous Shakespeare play.

The unit is clear on the lesson objectives and scaffolding the students need as they work toward independence in reading both *Romeo and Juliet* and informational texts about the play. As stated in the unit, teachers can use the whole unit, parts of it, or simply use the process in the unit with different texts in crafting an argumentative essay. Teachers of all abilities should be able to use this resource fairly easily. It would be ideal for teachers to have access to the Internet and the ability to project images and film for students to see as they work through the unit.



Concerns:

- The formative assessments are informative writing and the summative assessment is an argumentative piece
- Could have more ideas for students as they work on their argumentative assignment. After reading each lesson and the details within the lesson the writing lesson is fairly short

Suggestions:

- The formative assessments could work on argumentative writing instead of informative
- The unit could give more ideas for working with students on the argumentative writing assignment

Review 2

Comments/Ideal Use:

I handed this unit to a colleague a few days ago and we both agree that we will be taking many formative activities from it--she was just upset that I hadn't given it to her sooner as she was half-way through the third act.

Ideally, this unit would work well for many veteran teachers who already have text-dependent questions and assessments for Acts I-V of Romeo and Juliet. There are so many lively exercises that stimulate deep-thinking and cross-curricular connections--such as love-hate in a war-torn country or what controls our destiny, fate or free will?--that the student and the teacher both should get an energy boost from this unit. Reading scaffolding with chunking, summarizing and thinking aloud would help the unit, but a seasoned reading ELA teacher would add these components. Also, the writing process is alluded to but the actual formative pieces such as a cause/effect chart for various elements and an annotated copy of student analysis of multiple areas of Romeo and Juliet would aid the formulation of the claim and its warrants along with aiding the peer edits, the revisions, the editing and the final essay.

Concerns:

- Not enough process writing elements and exemplars. It refers to using the writing process on page 39 but no student samples or exemplars or scaffolding is given.
- Not enough text-dependent questions and student answers. The use of discussion, Whoosh and tableaux are not enough to check for individual student understanding of each scene and act. The questions/answers allow for that type of piece by piece analysis.
- Not enough vocabulary scaffolding with the archaic words for ELL and struggling readers. There are many vocabulary words and phrases and terms that stymie student comprehension and they must be addressed by the teacher or someone who is knowledgeable.
- Too much time spent on camera angles and film elements. This seemed counterproductive because the entire unit was eight weeks long and camera angles seemed not related to W or RL or RI.

Suggestions:

- Use the entire writing process from annotating the reading, making charts and graphs, brainstorming the claim and warrants, crafting, revising, editing, etc.
- Use the current text-dependent questions/answers that our department created ten years ago to engage students and check for understanding, line by line.
- Use the current vocabulary sheets and text-dependent questions that we have that look at the word context and often gives the background of the word.



- Drop Lesson 7 and the comparison of the Luhrmann version which is not poetic or even relevant for my students.

Review 3

Comments/Ideal Use:

The primary use of this unit is to develop writing skills, others skills are supportive. The unit uses Romeo and Juliet as a play to study. The key Common Core Standards that the unit focuses on are "Key Ideas and Details" in writing, and "Draw Evidence from Literary and Informative Text" in reading. Other standards are called upon as needed to complete the tasks of the primary Standards.

The unit develops through Anticipation Guides and Exit Slips. To some teachers this may be equivalent to Advance Organizers and Outcomes. The Anticipation Guides set the stage for various activities based on the particular topic that is being studied. They can ask the students to indicate on a line their degree of affirmation from agree to not agree, to prepare the students to do a scene, discuss camera angles, write a poem, and so forth. Some activities compare the treatment of a topic in various media, such as paintings, film, theater productions.

The Introduction to the unit is an overview stating the Big Idea, Essential Questions that will be asked at the conclusion of the unit, Content, and Skills which are to be developed. This sets the goals and the expected results. There is a Writing Argument Rubric and other assessments are included under Exit Slips. There are no grades associated with these. The final project was to write an answer to the question posed at the beginning of the unit.

This unit requires an experienced teacher, since so much of the early part of the unit is teacher led and modeled. A teacher who was comfortable with the terms of evaluation and the vocabulary used in process of understanding a Shakespeare play would benefit the students.

Concerns:

- There is a lack of documented feedback, rubrics, from the work done in the Lessons. It is not clear whether "Exit Slips" serve this purpose.
- No provision for students below or above grade level.

Suggestions:

- A transparent and progressive grading system would be appreciated by student and teacher.
- Peer to peer grouping may help to engage all students. This unit does a good job with grouping activities.

Review 4

Comments/Ideal Use:

This unit is strong enough that teacher's with minimal experience could use it well.

Strengths:

- More standards are covered than cited in the document itself
- Great integration of listening and speaking
- Variety of writing tasks to engage students at all levels



Concerns:

- No rubrics for exit slips
- All lessons are not included with unit. Emphasis on performance task
- Differentiation is addressed in some areas. Not much reference to ELL students, though the material discusses the ways teachers can level the materials and/or the exit slip expectations.
- There is a rubric for scoring the performance task, but no rubrics for the exit slips or more formative assessments. The instruction and questioning however are very explicit, so, it would not be too difficult to create these as generic rubrics to use with multiple tasks.

Suggestions:

- Add some rubric examples for exit slip expectations
- Add the daily lessons to this to create a more complete piece of work for the teacher

