

High-Level Summary of 2026 Enhancements

5th Grade ELA | Unit 2

Overall, we tried to redesign this unit to create a more balanced, culturally responsive approach to the unit texts and topics. The revisions focus intentionally on centering agency, joy, and lived experience rather than primarily framing the content through oppression or violence. There is also a clear effort to avoid a “single story” about Muslims and Afghanistan by broadening perspectives and revising vocabulary to be less negatively weighted. At the same time, the changes aim to better support teachers in navigating sensitive or violent content and to strengthen the role of memoir as a powerful form of historical witness that helps students connect personal experience to broader historical events.

of Instructional Days

# of instructional days in prior version of unit	# of instructional days in revised unit
39	36 (removed days to shorten this already long unit)

Texts

Texts (Chapters) Removed	Rationale
<i>Kids of Kabul</i> : Zuhail	We removed this section because we shifted the unit away from a focus on women’s rights in Afghanistan and toward how people respond to oppressive rules.
<i>I am Malala</i> : Chapters 7 (new stop at page 48), 10, 21, and 22	We removed these chapters to better emphasize Malala and her community’s resilience and response to the Taliban, rather than focusing primarily on violence and fear.

Texts (Chapters) Added	Rationale
<i>Kids of Kabul</i> : Amullah	We replaced Zuhail with Amullah because both texts focus on sport and allow students to examine how the Taliban impacted both boys and girls in similar ways.
<i>I am Malala</i> : Chapters 1 and 2.	We added these chapters to highlight Malala’s family support and establish a foundation for understanding the events and challenges that follow.

Reordering of Unit

The unit maintains the same overall progression.

Writing Tasks

Tasks Removed	Rationale
Day 7 - Narrative Writing	There were many one-day narrative writing tasks that asked students to write from a different character's point of view. The unit was too long, so we removed one to focus more on the others.

Tasks Added or Revised	Rationale
Lesson 28 - Paragraph Writing (New)	Since theme is such a big part of this unit, we wanted students to have another opportunity to practice discussing and writing about the themes in the unit.
(Old Lesson 32) Lesson 29 - Opinion Writing (Revised)	We revised this prompt to be more clearly an opinion prompt and to add student engagement.

Core Standards

No core standards have been removed or added to the unit.

Essential Questions

Original Essential Question	Updated Essential Question	Rationale
How can family relationships and dynamics influence a person's actions?	n/a	Staying in unit.
How did the Taliban regime impact life for residents of Kabul?	How can people, especially young people, respond when oppressive rules shape their lives?	This shifts from a harm-centered focus on documenting the impacts of the Taliban regime to an inquiry about human agency and response. Instead of primarily asking what oppression did to people, it now emphasizes how individuals—especially young people—can respond when faced with unjust or restrictive systems. This change moves the learning from a descriptive understanding of suffering toward an action-oriented lens that highlights resilience, resistance, and civic engagement.
What can be done to improve women's rights and equality both in Afghanistan and Pakistan?	Removed	We removed this Essential Question both because four EQs were too many for one unit and because the revised Essential Question already

		captures the core ideas of rights, inequality, and response to injustice. The new question broadens the focus beyond a single issue or region and still allows students to explore how people respond to oppressive systems, including questions of gender equality. This helps streamline the unit while keeping the essential concepts intact and more conceptually connected.
How can one person impact a community?	n/a	Staying in unit.