



# Curriculum-Framing Questions

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# Asking Questions is Contagious

- It promotes authentic learning, which encourages students to ask more questions
- Students are more likely to become self-directed learners because they are interested in the answers
- Students see the connections between the subject being taught and their world—it can change their whole outlook on what education is about

# Curriculum-Framing Questions include Essential, Unit, and Content Questions

## Why Use Curriculum Framing Questions?

- To target higher-order thinking skills
  - To require comparison, synthesis, interpretation, evaluation, etc.
- To ensure student projects are compelling and engaging
  - To require more than a simple restatement of facts
- To focus on important topics
  - To connect learning to other disciplines and other topics of study
  - To ask questions that have been asked throughout human history
  - To address compelling questions that students ask

# Essential Questions

- **Are broad, open-ended questions:**
  - Address big ideas and enduring concepts
  - Are engaging and meaningful
  - Spark curiosity
  - Pose a reasonable challenge
  - Require higher-order thinking skills
  - Have answers that cannot be looked up in a book
  - Often cross disciplines and help students see how subjects are related
- **Example:**
  - **EQ:**
    - **Why do we need others?**

# How Do Essential Questions Help Teachers?

- They help teachers focus on important topics in their year-long curriculum
- They raise important questions across content areas (Math, Science, Literature, History, etc.).
- They center around major issues, problems, concerns, interests, or themes that also occur in other units.
- They help teachers promote authentic inquiry

# How Do Essential Questions Help Students? (cont.)

- Essential Questions bring meaning and focus to the study of events and topics throughout a project or course, which otherwise may seem arbitrary or unrelated.
- They engage students' imagination and connect the subject with their own experiences and ideas.
- There is no one, obvious “right” answer, so students are challenged to explore many possibilities.
- They encourage in-depth discussion and research, and set the stage for further questioning.
- They help students compare, contrast, and make analogies.

# Unit Questions

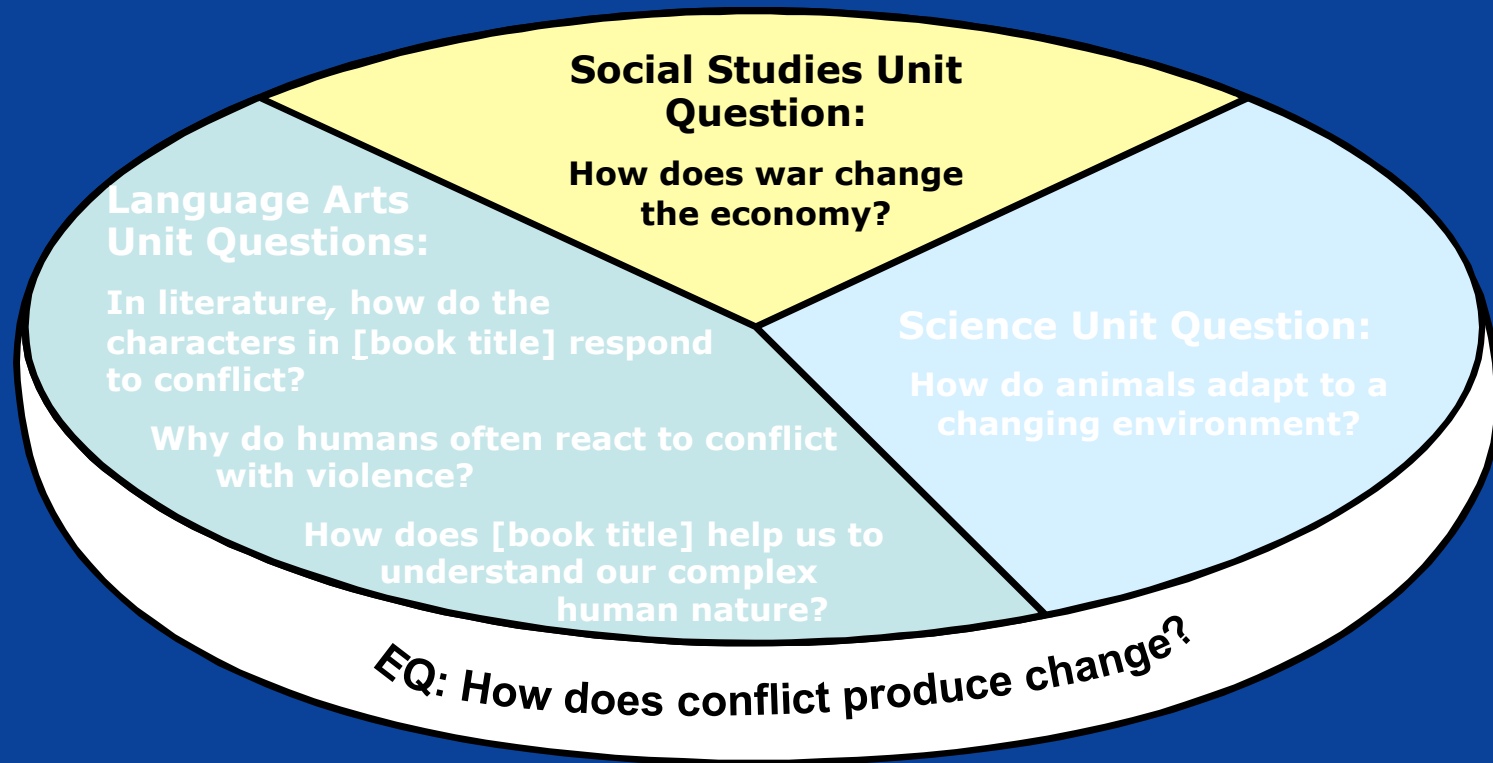
- Are open-ended questions that tie directly to a project or unit
- Pose a reasonable challenge
- Require higher-order thinking skills
- Help students construct their own answers and their own meaning from the information they have gathered
- Help answer the Essential Question
- Examples:
  - EQ:
    - *Why do we need others?*
  - UQ:
    - **Which of our community helpers is the most important?**
    - **Which community helper would you most like to be?**

# How Do Unit Questions Support Essential Questions?

Essential Question	Unit Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can math help me understand the world around me?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– What are fractals good for?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why have stories always been important throughout history?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Why do we still read Shakespeare? How is Shakespeare's work relevant to my life?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does art reflect or change society?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– How does impressionist art reflect life in the late 1800's?</li><li>– How does your own art reflect your life and culture?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does it take to change the world?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– How did the policies or actions of Abraham Lincoln affect America in the 1860's?</li><li>– How do the policies and actions of Abraham Lincoln affect your life today?</li></ul>



# Teams of teachers from different disciplines can use their own Unit Questions to support one Essential Question



# Content Questions

- Have a narrow set of correct, fact-based answers
- Often relate to definitions, identifications, and general recall of information (example: questions found on a test)
- Help answer the unit questions
- **Examples:**
  - EQ:
    - *Why do we need others?*
  - UQ:
    - *Which of our community helpers is the most important?*
    - *Which community helper would you most like to be?*
  - **CQ:**
    - **Who are some community helpers?**
    - **What do these community helpers do?**

# What is the Difference Between an Essential Question and a Content Question?

Essential Questions	Fact-based, “One” Answer Content Questions
• How does art reflect culture or change it?	What is renaissance art?
• How does an organism succeed in its environment?	What is the life cycle of a frog?
• How does conflict produce change?	What is the conflict in the story?
• Why do laws change?	How are laws made?
• Is history a history of progress?	Who is an important inventor and what did he/she invent?

# How Do Content, Unit, and Essential Questions Support Learning?

<b>Sample Standard</b>	<b>Concept 3: Organisms and Environments</b> Understand the relationships among various organisms and their environment.
<b>Sample objective</b>	Students will be able to identify an ecosystem and explain how the organisms within an ecosystem are connected and interdependent.
<b>Content Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How do I collect information and display it in a graph?</li> <li>– What urban animals are there and what do they need to survive?</li> </ul>
<b>Unit Question</b>	How can urban wildlife and humans live together successfully?
<b>Essential Question</b>	<b>How can we all get along?</b>
<b>Project</b>	Using actual wildlife injury data from a local wildlife rescue center, students learn what animal species have been injured, the causes of injury, and the effects of reduced urban wildlife. Students provide recommendations to reduce human caused injury to wildlife and present a summary of their findings and recommendations to the local Audubon Society, the Humane Society, neighborhood associations, and other interested groups. At the end of each public presentation, students gather public reaction to the data, and publish the findings and ideas in an informational brochure for the public.

