

Sample Essential Questions for Content Areas

Arithmetic (numeration)

- ✎ What is a number? Why do we have numbers? What if we didn't have numbers?
- ✎ Can everything be quantified?

Arts (visual and performing)

- ✎ Where do artists get their ideas?
- ✎ How does art reflect, as well as shape, culture?

Culinary Arts

- ✎ When is it ok to deviate from the recipe?
- ✎ What makes a safe kitchen?

Dance

- ✎ How and what can we communicate through the language of dance?
- ✎ In what ways can motion evoke emotion?

Economics

- ✎ What determines value?
- ✎ Can macroeconomics inform microeconomics (and vice versa)?

Foreign Language

- ✎ What distinguishes a fluent foreigner from a native speaker?
- ✎ What can we learn about our own language and culture from studying another?

Geography

- ✎ What makes places unique and different?
- ✎ How does where we live influence how we live?

Government

- ✎ Who should decide?
- ✎ How should we balance the rights of individuals with the common good?

Health

- ✎ What is healthful living?
- ✎ How can a diet be healthy for one person and not another?

History

- ✎ Whose story is it?
- ✎ Is history the story told by the winners?

History cont.

- ✎ What can we learn from the past?

Literature

- ✎ What makes a great book?
- ✎ Can fiction reveal truth? Should a story teach you something?

Mathematics

- ✎ When is the "correct" answer not the best solution?
- ✎ What are the limits of mathematical representation and modeling?

Music

- ✎ How are sounds and silence organized in various musical forms?
- ✎ What roles does music play in the world?

Physical Education and Athletics

- ✎ Who is a winner?
- ✎ Is pain necessary for progress in athletics? ("No pain, no gain")

Reading and Language Arts

- ✎ What makes a great story?
- ✎ How do you read between the lines?
- ✎ Why do we punctuate? What if we didn't have punctuation marks?

Science

- ✎ To what extent are science and common sense related?
- ✎ How are "form" and "function" related in biology?

Technology

- ✎ In what ways can technology enhance expression and communications? IN what ways might technology hinder it?
- ✎ What are the pros and cons of technological progress?

Writing

- ✎ Why write?
- ✎ How do effective writers hook and hold their readers?
- ✎ What is a complete thought?

Source: [Understanding by Design, Wiggins & McTighe](#)