



## Essential Questions

This unpacking tool is intended to accompany the resources posted on the [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#). It may be used by an individual, group, or school-wide to promote and align a common understanding of the essential components of our instructional framework.

### Opening: Build Background Knowledge

Take some time to examine the [Essential Questions page](#) in the toolkit and read the Research and Practice [Brief on Essential Questions](#). As you read, please note:

- What is one new thought or insight I have after reading this?
- What is one thought or practice that emphasized what I already do and know?
- What is one question I have about this?

### Work Time: Apply Your Knowledge and Thinking

Essential questions are a way to frame big ideas, derived from standards, in a way that sets up student-driven inquiry. To apply what you have learned about essential questions, please complete this [Essential Questions Activity](#)

Next, select an upcoming unit or lesson, and complete the [Unpacking Template](#) to practice and demonstrate the process of moving from standards, to skills, concepts, and depth of knowledge, to big ideas, to essential questions.

Finally, please watch [this video](#) from Grant Wiggins and ASCD to see an example of how to use essential questions in the classroom. Once complete, please discuss:

- How will we effectively engage students with essential questions?

### Debriefing and Closing: Plan for Impact

Think about how you can use your new knowledge and insights in your current role and plan for implementing these ideas. Use the following questions as guides:

For administrators and instructional leaders...	For classroom teachers...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➔ How do I currently see essential questions being used in teachers' classrooms?</li><li>➔ What are the most effective strategies for crafting and using essential questions?</li><li>➔ Are there any expectations around the creation and use of essential questions that my school should consider changing or implementing?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➔ How do I currently engage students with essential questions?</li><li>➔ What have I learned about creating and using essential questions that has shifted my understanding of their use?</li><li>➔ How will I engage students with essential questions in the future?</li></ul>