

# Defining Essential Questions

6TH GRADE

CAPSTONE PROJECT

2012



## What is an Essential Question?

**An Essential Question is an open-ended question that gets to the heart of the big idea. Students have to think critically to answer an Essential Question. Instead of simply looking up answers, students must conduct research and create an original answer.**

### **An Essential Question:**

- Provokes deep thought
- Solicits information-gathering and evaluation of data
- Results in an original answer
- Helps students conduct problem-solving research
- Makes students produce original ideas rather than predetermined answers
- Encourages critical thinking not just memorization of facts

# Creating Essential Questions

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## TYPES OF ESSENTIAL QUESTION?

**WHAT IF?**

**WHY?**

**HOW?**

**WHICH ONE?**

**SHOULD?**

### QUESTIONS STEMS

### POTENTIAL PRODUCTS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Can you design a... to...?                                     | Invent a machine to do a specific task.                             |
| Why not compose a song about...?                               | Design a building to house your study                               |
| Can you see a possible solution...?                            | Create a new product. Give it a name and plan a marketing campaign. |
| If you had access to all resources how would you deal with...? | Write about your feelings in relation to...                         |
| Why don't you devise your own way to deal with...?             | Write a TV or web show, play, puppet show, role play, song about... |
| What would happen if...?                                       | Design a CD, book, or magazine cover for...                         |
| Can you develop a proposal which would...?                     | Compose a rhythm or put new words to a known melody.                |
| Can you create new and unusual uses for...?                    | Sell an idea.   |
| Can you write a new recipe for a tasty dish?                   | Devise a way to...  |
| Is there a better solution to...?                              | Prepare a list of criteria to judge a... show.                      |
| How can you judge the value of...?                             | Conduct a debate about an issue of special interest.                |
| Can you defend your position about...?                         | Make a booklet about 5 rules you see as important. Convince others. |
| Do you think... is a good thing or a bad thing?                | Form a panel to discuss views, eg "Learning at School!"             |
| How would you have handled...?                                 | Write a letter to... advising on changes needed at...               |
| What changes to... would you recommend?                        | Write a half yearly report  |
| Do you believe...?   | Prepare a case to present your view about...                        |
| What do you think about...?                                    | ...   |
| How would you feel if...?                                      | ...   |
| How effective are...?  | ...   |