

# DOINGWHATWORKS



SAMPLE MATERIAL

## Sample Essential Questions by Grade Level

Normal Park Museum Magnet Elementary School, Tennessee

**Topic:** How to Organize Your Teaching

**Practice:** Higher-Order Questions

At the beginning of each curriculum module, grade-level teams spend a day planning instruction, starting with essential questions and the enduring understandings they want their students to have at the end of the unit. Teachers post the questions in their classroom and deliberately organize instruction and assessments around these questions. The essential questions are shared across grade levels to create curriculum coherence across the common social studies and science themes.

Note: These questions represent one school's interpretation, derived in part from the Tennessee standards. Different questions might be appropriate in other settings.

Grade Level	Unit Title	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
Kindergarten	Animals, Animals Everywhere!	Animals are made up of parts that help them work. All living things have a habitat. Living things use their senses and adaptations to survive in their habitats.	How do animals' body parts help them function? Why can't wild animals live outside their habitat? How do animals adapt to their habitat?
First Grade	Egypt	Diversity of cultures depends on locations. All members of a community contribute to the economics of their society. Different cultures can exist within the same community. All cultures have things in common.	How does geography affect one's culture? In what ways do people work together for economic growth? How do different cultures exist within the same community? Why is culture important to individuals?
Second Grade	Dinosaurs	Paleontologists use fossils to gain insight about once living things. Over time the regions where dinosaurs lived changed. The causes of dinosaur extinction are debatable.	How do paleontologists use fossils to gain insight about once living things? How have the regions where various dinosaurs once lived changed? Why did the dinosaurs become extinct?
Third Grade	Force and Motion	Predictable patterns occur in the universe. Relationships exist between force and motion.	How do patterns control the universe? What is the relationship between force and motion?
Fourth Grade	Westward Expansion	Numerous reasons caused people to move west. Organized rules and structures exist in groups. Many factors affect cultural interactions between groups.	Why did people emigrate? How does a group govern themselves? Why is it difficult for people of different cultures to interact?
Fifth Grade	Cells	All living things are composed of smaller units. An interdependent relationship exists within a given system.	Why are cells important? How are systems interdependent?