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Essential questions can be used at the opening of a lesson to introduce the benchmark and challenge students to, “put on their thinking caps.” Essential questions can be posted on the board and incorporated into lessons in a variety of ways, including think-pair-share, small group discussions, cross curricular connections, teacher modeling, guided practice, summarization at the end of lessons, posed to students as a “ticket out the door”, used at both the beginning and end of lessons for a comparison in change of

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# Essential Questions



Essential Questions should:

- support the acquisition of the benchmarks
- be open-ended (no single right answer)
- be thought-provoking
- require students to draw upon content knowledge and personal experience
- be revisited throughout the week in other content areas to make connections and support the skills
- lead to other essential questions
- require students to EVALUATE (make a thoughtful choice between options, with the choice based upon clearly stated criteria), to SYNTHESIZE (invent a new or different version) or to ANALYZE (develop a thorough and complex understanding through skillful questioning)
- spark our curiosity and sense of wonder
- be included during small group instruction
- be differentiated to meet the needs of students
- be adapted to meet the needs of students (ie. if needed, specific words can be adapted for increased student friendly language, questions can be modified to include specific detail or name of story, etc.)

Essential Questions for Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Benchmarks

## **Reference and Research**

Why is it important to pay attention to text features (illustrations, graphs, title, headings, captions, bold print, etc.) before you read a selection?

How do text features (illustrations, graphs, title, headings, captions, bold print, etc.) help you understand the selection?

What information can you find in both the text and the text feature to help you understand what you read?

**Chronological Order**

How does chronological order help you understand what you are reading?

When you read, why is it important to understand the order of events?

**Compare and Contrast**

Why is it important to make comparisons when you read?

How do you make comparisons as you read?

How does understanding compare and contrast relationships in reading help you understand compare and contrast in real life?

**Vocabulary**

How do prefixes and/or suffixes help you understand the meaning of words?

Why is it important to know the meaning of prefixes (suffixes, antonyms, synonyms, homophones, homographs, etc.)?

Why are context clues important?

How do different context clues help you understand the meaning of words?

When you read, what clues help you determine the meaning of unknown words?

How do you remember what words mean?

When you encounter an unfamiliar word in reading, how do you determine the meaning of the word?

**Cause and Effect**

Why is it important to understand the relationship between cause and effect?

What helps you determine cause and effect relationships when you read?

How does understanding cause and effect relationships in reading help you understand cause and effect in real life?

**Main Idea and Details**

How do details help you understand the meaning of a passage?

Why is determining the main idea of a passage important?

How does determining the main idea help you understand what you read?

**Plot Development**

How does identifying the setting/place/time of a story help you understand what you are reading?

How does knowing the actions and feelings of the character help you understand the story?

How does identifying the problem and solution in a story help you to understand what you read?

How does understanding problem and solution relationships in reading help you understand real life problems?

**Author's Purpose**

Why is determining the author's purpose key to understanding what you read?

When you read, why is it important to ask yourself, "Why did the author write this piece?"