



# Research

Getting started:  
Essential Questions

# How to make a topic into an essential research question

- What is your subject?

For example: Great Depression, art and artists in the 1930s, developmental delays, mercy killing

## **Mercy Killing**

# 5 interesting aspects of the topic

- Euthenasia
- Physician assisted suicide
- Religious aspects
- Punishment
- Who decides?

Of the five things you listed, which one is most interesting to you?

# Punishment

List up to five things about your topic that you find interesting. You can write this list in question form to make this step easier.

- Why people perform mercy killing
- Examples of mercy killing
- Animals vs. humans mercy killing
- Is mercy killing moral or immoral?
- What happens to people who perform mercy killing?

Which one of the above list would you choose if you could only study one thing for the rest the year?

What happens to people who perform mercy killing?

# Essential Questions

**What are the traits of an essential question?**(From: The Question Mark, March 2005. <<http://www.questioning.org/mar05/essential.html>>

- The question probes a matter of considerable importance.
- The question requires movement beyond understanding and studying - some kind of action or resolve - pointing toward the settlement of a challenge, the making of a choice or the forming of a decision.
- The question cannot be answered by a quick and simple “yes” or “no” answer.
- An answer cannot be found; it must be created by the researcher
- The question probably endures, shifts and evolves with time and changing conditions - offering a moving target in some respects.
- The question may be unanswerable in the ultimate sense.
- The question may frustrate the researcher, may prove arid rather than fertile and may evade the quest for clarity and understanding.

# Examples

Not Essential	Essential
Can cow's milk be used as a food or beverage for human consumption?	Should cow's milk be used as a food or beverage for human consumption?
Who invented the bicycle?	How has the invention of the bicycle impacted society?

# Essential or Not?

## Essential or Not?

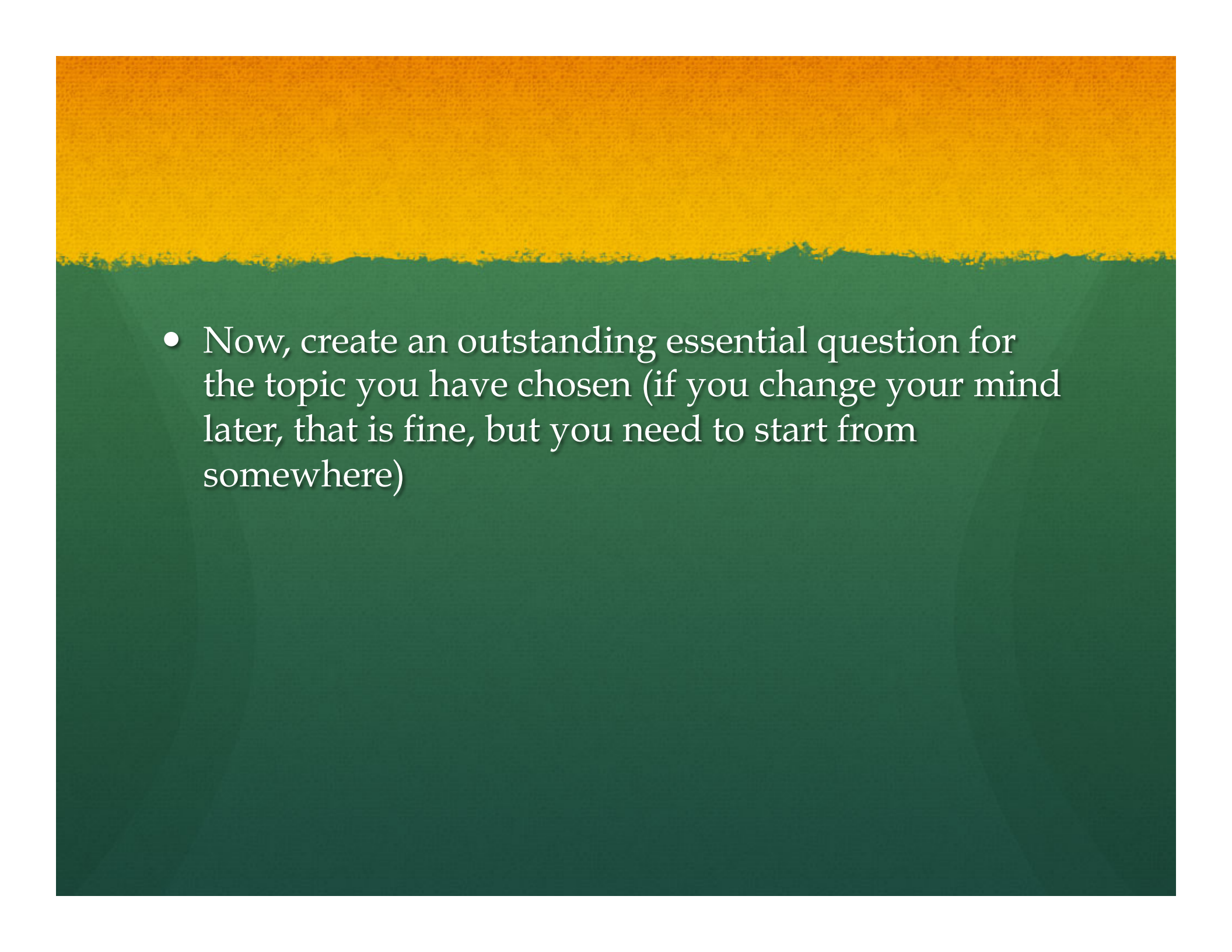
1. Which president since 1950 has had the greatest impact on international affairs?
2. What makes a firefly light up?
3. What was life like for pioneers on the Oregon Trail?
4. Is *To Kill a Mockingbird* a book that everyone should read?
5. How does photosynthesis work?

# How to:

- **Which one?** (Collect information to make an informed choice)
- **How?** (Understand problems and perspectives, weigh options, propose solutions)
- **What if?** (Use the knowledge you have to pose a hypothesis and consider options)
- **Should?** (make a moral or practical decision based on evidence)
- **Why?** (understand and explain relationships to get to the essence of a complicated issue)

# Some examples

- Which one: Of several examples of acts that have been called mercy killing, which one really is?
- How: How is “mercy killing” defined/determined?
- What if: What if mercy killing were made legal?
- Should: Should mercy killing be treated like murder?
- Why: Why is mercy killing treated like murder?

- 
- Now, create an outstanding essential question for the topic you have chosen (if you change your mind later, that is fine, but you need to start from somewhere)