

Research

Getting started:
Essential Questions

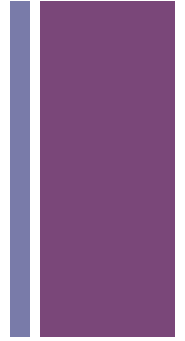
+ How to make a topic into an essential research question

- What is your subject?

For example: Great Depression, entertainment in the 1930s, the Dust Bowl, famous people in the 1930s, Chicago World's Fair

Famous People

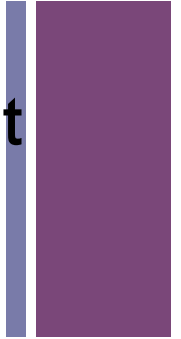
+ 5 interesting aspects of the topic



- Shirley Temple
- Charlie Chaplin
- Judy Garland
- Salvador Dali
- Howard Hughes

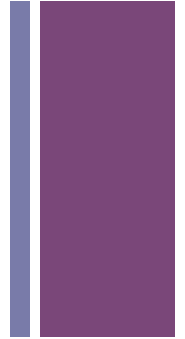


Of the five things you listed, which one is most interesting to you?



Howard Hughes

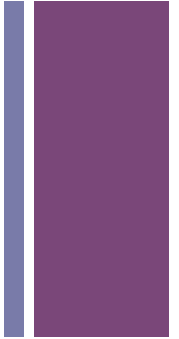
+ List five things about your topic that you find interesting. You can write this list in question form to make this step easier.



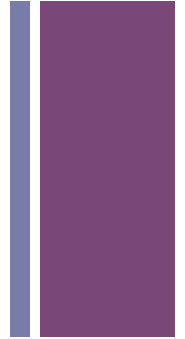
- How did he become involved in the film industry?
- Where did all his money come from?
- How/why did he become involved in aviation?
- What made him turn strange and reclusive as he aged?
- What was his early life like?

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

How did he become involved in the film industry?



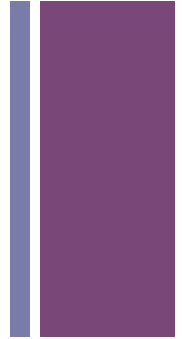
+ Essential Questions



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

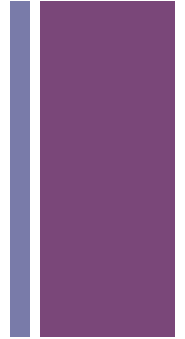
- The question probes a matter of considerable importance.
- The question requires movement beyond understanding and studying - some kind of action or resolve - pointing toward the settlement of a challenge, the making of a choice or the forming of a decision.
- The question cannot be answered by a quick 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?

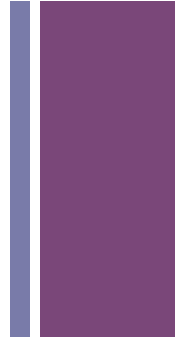
1. Which president since 1950 has had the greatest impact on international affairs?
2. What makes a firefly light up?
3. What was life like for pioneers on the Oregon Trail?
4. Is *To Kill a Mockingbird* a book that everyone should read?
5. How does photosynthesis work?

How to:

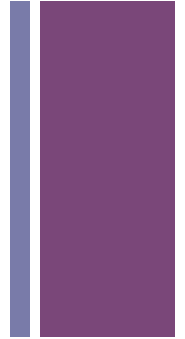


- **Which one?** (Collect information to make an informed choice)
- **How?** (Understand problems and perspectives, weigh options, propose solutions)
- **What if?** (Use the knowledge you have to pose a hypothesis and consider options)
- **Should?** (make a moral or practical decision based on evidence)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

+ Some examples



- Which one: of film makers in the 1930s, including Howard Hughes, which one was the most influential?
- How: How did Howard Hughes' actions as a film maker affect the film industry?
- What if: How would the film industry be different had Howard Hughes not become a film maker?
- Should: Should Howard Hughes have been valued as highly as he was at the time?
- Why: Why was Howard Hughes such a famous and important figure in the 1930s?



- 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)