

## Chicago History Museum Connections Explore-Examine-Explain

Whitehead’s Rhythm of Learning maps the sequence from exploration—“romance”—to Precision—developing relevant knowledge and abilities—through Synthesis. A unit starts start with engagement—an orientation--and then builds competence, leading to synthesis.

**EXPLORE:** The Rhythm of Learning starts with wonder. So explore the exhibit—enjoy thinking about things you choose to see.

Then identify a BIG Question that could frame learning by your students.

### Examples of Essential Questions

*Students could work on a unit with one of these exemplary Essential Questions—and visit the Chicago History Museum to complement their reading of texts.*

*Choose a question that fits a primary, intermediate, or upper grade.*

### Essential questions from Exemplary Sources

*How do cultural experiences influence who we are? (CPS Literacy Content Framework DRAFT)*

*What causes change? What remains the same? (NCSS)*

*How am I connected to those in the past? (NCSS)*

*How has the meaning of citizenship evolved? (NCSS)*

*What is the balance between rights and responsibilities? (NCSS)*

*How do our personal stories reflect varying points of view and inform contemporary ideas and actions? (NCSS)*

*How has the world changed and how might it change in the future? (NCSS)*

*Is new technology always better than that which it will replace? (NCSS)*

*How do we know what really happened in the past? (NCSS)*

*How does society influence our identity and the choices we make? (FH))*

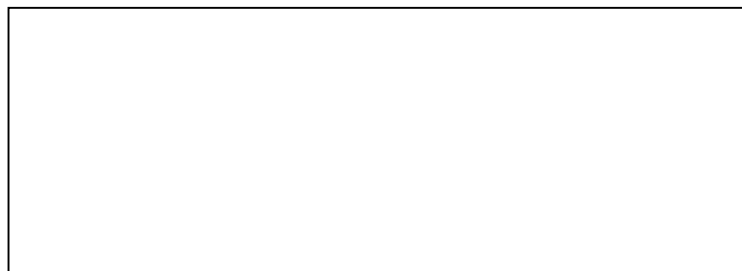
*Is history a history of progress? (UbD)*

*What makes a family a community? (UbD)*

*UbD = Understanding by Design; FH = Facing History and Ourselves; NCSS = National Council for Social Studies*

**EXAMINE:** CCSS Anchor Reading Standard 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Identify one object in the museum that students could analyze to start to answer the BIG question. Draw or name it here.



Students could start with literal questions and then analyze and infer with guided “reading”--  
What does it show about how people lived? What value does it represent?

**Expanding Competence:** Students take many steps to answer the Essential Question. That question keeps them focused on BIG thinking.

### Synthesis

Students complete their learning in a performance-based assessment.

Can a poem be a performance assessment? Read the following poem and decide—could it be a “mentor text” to represent a way to answer to the question,

“How do we know what really happened in the past?”

## **The Chicago Fire**

By John P. Curtin

On a hot, dry night in 1871,  
At the end of the day, when the work had been done,  
Chicago families were going to sleep,  
But a spark had been set, and flames would soon creep.

The story about Mrs. O'Leary you have heard,  
Though the man who said that spoke dishonest words.  
He told of a lantern and the kick of a cow;  
But the simple fact is, we just don't know how.

The city we know is of steel, brick, and glass,  
But the time of that fire is well in our past.  
The buildings we know will resist heat & flame;  
The buildings back then weren't exactly the same.

Builders in those days chose to build with wood;  
There was so much around, and they thought it was good.  
But wood doesn't stay strong like stone when it's hot,  
So what seemed safe and smart really was not.

The fire, once lit, spread so quickly,  
From house to house, and tree to tree.  
It moved through the streets, driven by winds,  
So fast that no one was sure where it would end.

The fire finally died out after two days  
Thanks to light rains and a shifting breeze.  
But not before it had taken its toll --  
Three square miles, and so many homes.

This story, to us, is exciting, it seems,  
Though to them, at the time, it brought down many big dreams.  
History is safe, with the distance of time,  
But in the midst of the events, there's a lot on the line.

Created by John P. Curtin, 1967-2012

DePaul Center for Urban Education ©2002

For more content-connected poetry by John Curtin: [Teacher.depaul.edu](http://Teacher.depaul.edu)