



BIG IDEAS & ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

	BIG IDEAS	ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
Definition	Big ideas are the core concepts, principles, theories, and processes that should serve as the focal point of curricula, instruction, and assessment.	Enduring understandings are central to a discipline and are transferable to new situations.
Feature	Important, enduring, and transferable.	Specific inferences, based on big ideas, having lasting value beyond the classroom.
Role	Big ideas go beyond discrete facts or skills to focus on larger concepts, principles, or processes, which makes learning them meaningful for teachers and students.	Enduring understandings ensure the sustainability of the work invested in the learning episodes because the enduring understandings are carried forward through the students who experience and act upon them in consistent ways, both in and out of the classroom.
Example	Students study the Lewis and Clark expedition as a specific historical event because of its significance to a larger idea, such as Manifest Destiny, which rationalized the United States' control over the aboriginal inhabitants. This big idea transcends its roots in nineteenth-century America and is a cornerstone of westward expansion. Without grasping the distinction between the indigenous presence and U.S. westward colonization, students cannot understand the full spectrum of American history—even if they are highly knowledgeable and articulate about certain facts of history.	Students come to understand that the territory Lewis and Clark traveled through was already occupied and had been since time immemorial. This inference from facts, based on “tribal sovereignty” and “colonization,” provides a conceptual unifying lens through which to recognize the significance of Manifest Destiny as well as to learn about tribes before, during, and after the Lewis and Clark episode, as well as today and into the future. This means that Honoring Tribal Legacies encompasses the entire time spectrum (i.e., past, present, and future).

This table draws from pages 35, 36, 58, 60, and 140 of volume 2 of the Honoring Tribal Legacies handbook.

<https://blogs.uoregon.edu/honoringtriballeagacies/handbook/>