

## LESSON 2: Concept Exploration

### MATERIALS:

- Research Binder
- Who am I?—An Exploration (Handout completed for homework)
- Concept Cards (class set cut out prior to lesson)
- Letter to Parents (one per student)

### OBJECTIVES:



BIG IDEA

Research is an organized and systematic way of finding answers to questions.

### Students will be able to:

- Synthesize knowledge for communication
- Compare and contrast various concepts
- Formulate hypotheses



LANGUAGE

### Important Vocabulary:

- Setting

### SEQUENCE:

### TEACHER NOTES:

The length of this lesson may necessitate using two class periods to cover the content in order to meet the learning objectives. Teachers should adjust this lesson carefully, dependent on the needs of their classes and students.

### QUICK REVIEW



CLASS

Talk with students concerning the concept they examined yesterday, *exploration*. Hold a short question-and-answer session asking students questions, such as: *Who is an explorer? What makes an explorer?*



WORD STUDY

**Concept:** A concept refers to an abstract, universal category of objects or ideas with similar attributes. Often, a concept is represented by a single word, such as **conflict**, **exploration**,



**LANGUAGE**

Review the definition of *exploration* that the class created in the previous lesson.

Explain that exploration is a *concept* and today they will be investigating other concepts that will play important roles in this unit of study. Be sure the students can give examples from the work they have done that would be categorized as exploration. The examples do not have to be single words. They might say “experiment” or “scientists doing an experiment.”

**metaphor** or **classification**, or a few words, such as **rite of passage** or **hero’s journey**.

Concepts are important because they help us understand and organize key information within and across topics and disciplines.

It may be helpful to illustrate what a concept is by putting a group of words on the board and asking students if they can come up with one word that describes them all. For example:

- Love
- Anger
- Hope
- Happiness
- Sadness

They may come up with feeling or emotion. Point out that the word they have used is a concept.

### **HOMEWORK DISCUSSION: Possible Explorations**



**BIG IDEA**

Ask students to get out their results from their Who Am I?—An Exploration homework.

Share your responses to illustrate common themes. Have students read through their responses and then share examples from their homework of themes or categories.

Model a Think Aloud and identify questions you might like to investigate based on the common themes in your homework. Examples are given in the unit introduction. Be sure that these are not just topics. The goal is for students to do an investigation that will make them seek information they have to synthesize from many sources.



**PLACE**

The idea of the exploration is to have students find topics that genuinely interest them. At the conclusion of this activity, students should have 3-5 topics of interest.

Encourage students to think locally for their areas of interest. For example, a student who wrote about a musical instrument might be interested in the history of Appalachian music. A student who wrote about a family heirloom may be

Ask students to brainstorm questions that are related to the items they identified in their homework. Example questions:

- Do you think others might be interested in these things, too?
- What do these items tell you about where you live, or your family history?
- What are some “big questions” you might have or issues you might be concerned about?
- Based on your findings, try to answer the question: “What would I like to learn more about?”

Remind students to save this handout and brainstorming exercise. They will need it for future lessons.

### ACTIVITY: Concept Manipulation



**GROUP**

Pair students by readiness and tell them to pick one of their home bases to work from.

Pass out the Concept Cards. (Cut these out prior to the lesson. Cards can also be laminated for later use.) Make sure each pair/group has a full set of cards.



**BIG IDEA**

If you have pairs who seem to be struggling with the idea of explorer or are not clear on a what a concept is, you may decide to use two sets of concept cards, so that students with a less complex level of understanding will have cards with the following, more concrete terms: *writer, reader, explorer, purpose, questions, clues, steps, and knowledge*. This will depend on your specific group of students.

Identify these as Concept Cards and quickly define *concept* again. Explain that this activity will help us think more about concepts and words that are commonly associated with them.

Read each card aloud and have one of the students in each pair hold up his or her concept card. You may want to go over some definitions if necessary or have students identify exemplars of the concept word to be sure they understand the concept (for example, poet, comic book creator, textbook writer are all examples of writers).

Next, instruct students to pair words that might “work well together” in a sentence to make it informative. Before students get to work, model a Think Aloud process of pairing two cards

interested in how their family came to this region of the state.

Students will need assistance to work toward these ideas, but they do not need to be fleshed out at this point.



**READINESS**

Based on your observations during Lesson 1, journal entries and Anticipation

Guides, pair students by readiness for today’s concept investigation and principle construction activity (See Formative Assessment 1).

For example, put the two students who showed the deepest understanding about exploration together and the students who showed the shallowest understanding about exploration together. Determine pairs prior to the lesson based on the level of understanding they showed on the Formative Assessment and discussion of *concept*.

If you have a smaller group of students, or you would prefer, you can do this as a whole group activity, instead of doing this in pairs.

together. This grouping should reveal the kind of exposure the students have had to these words/concepts. You will probably need to provide a lot of support and suggestions during this grouping stage.

Emphasize that there is no single correct answer to this exercise, but that different pairs of words work together in different ways. Encourage more advanced students to reuse cards so that they come up with more than three pairs.

Instruct the students to create sentences for pairs of cards—meaning they should try to come up with a sentence that contains both words in the pair and shows how the words might go together. Model this sentence creation for them. Consider choosing two more difficult words to pair when you model.

Explain to students (verbally) why you paired the words you did. On the board, write a sentence using both words. Try to make your sentence a relationship sentence. See examples in Teacher Notes.

Give students time to create these sentences. Each student should be writing the sentences in his or her journal section of the Research Binder—even though partners will write identical sentences. Monitor students' progress informally and provide support as required.

Ask each student pair to determine their best sentence and rewrite it on a piece of chart paper or poster paper.

Ask each student pair to share their sentence with the class and post it somewhere in the room. (You may want to make this a bulletin board area.)

After students share their sentences, ask them to predict what they might be studying throughout the unit.



TIP

**Think Aloud:** A Think Aloud is a metacognitive dialogue with yourself about your thought

process concerning pairing the concepts. You will use this strategy quite often throughout the unit.



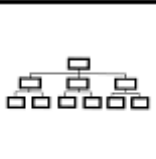

Sentence Examples (be sure to use at least the first example to reinforce the idea of explorer):

- **Explorers** discover things they didn't know before. To do this, they must leave places they already know well and go on a **journey**.
- People have different **perspectives** about what **contributions** are important to our society.
- **Writers** have different **purposes** when they write for different audiences.

If you have grouped students, be sure to use examples from the subset of cards given to each group.

Ensure that each word makes it up on a poster at least once. This may require you to move around the room and encourage some students to post different sentences than they initially chose.

Most students will probably feel comfortable with the words **reader** and **writer**. Encourage those who wrote great sentences for the more difficult

	<p>words like <b>perspective</b> and <b>contribution</b> to share their creations.</p> <p>Sentence Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People have different <b>perspectives</b> about what <b>contributions</b> are important to our society.</li> <li>• <b>Writers</b> have different <b>purposes</b> when they write for different audiences.</li> <li>• Being an <b>explorer</b> means going on a <b>journey</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INTRODUCTION: Knowledge Expedition</b></p> <div data-bbox="207 779 381 978">  <p><b>CLASS</b></p> </div> <p>Tell the students they are going to be participating in a knowledge expedition, and ask if anyone has any ideas about what that may mean.</p> <p>Write <i>knowledge expedition</i> on the board. Spend some time dissecting the word <i>expedition</i>.</p> <div data-bbox="207 1108 381 1308">  <p><b>TOOLS</b></p> </div> <p>Explain that today all students will have the opportunity to brainstorm what they would like to explore. Then, after they have finally decided on a question, explain that throughout the unit they will learn how to search for and uncover important information. Share that you are going to be exploring as well!</p> <p>Now you are going to model (through a Think Aloud) how you will determine your research question. The <b>Sample Think Aloud Script</b> serves as a <i>guideline</i> for you. You are encouraged to use your own interests and ideas for this Think Aloud.</p> <div data-bbox="199 1535 370 1734">  <p><b>RULES</b></p> </div> <p>Researchable questions are: (1) highly interesting to the researcher, (2) can be researched given available resources and time, and (3) not too big and not too small.</p>	<div data-bbox="1161 726 1334 926">  <p><b>WORD STUDY</b></p> </div> <p><b>Expedition:</b> (a) A journey undertaken with extensive planning and a definite objective: <i>an expedition against the enemy stronghold; a scientific expedition to the South Pole.</i> (b) The group undertaking such a journey. (<i>American Heritage Dictionary</i>)</p> <p><b>Sample Think Aloud Script:</b>  <i>SAY: I have lots of things that I am interested in. I really love [keeping my family safe]. Write [keeping family safe] on the board. Just brainstorming a list of all the things I am interested will be the first step in getting my ideas out.</i></p> <p><i>I know that scientists and historians investigate and</i></p>

Go ahead and brainstorm on the board while you think aloud. It is almost as if you are employing a stream of consciousness from your mind to the board. Don't overwhelm the students with a massive list, but do model how one idea spurs the thought of another idea. Consider listing ideas related to Appalachia (e.g., *What makes a person or place Appalachian?* or *What famous singers are from the Appalachian region?*) Once you have about 10 topics on the board, stop generating ideas, stand back and quickly review your list.

Tell the students that they will look at the topics that interested them and create questions they might like to explore to get answers. Use the Think Aloud strategy to eliminate topics that just won't work—that you can't turn into researchable questions. You will want to end up with a question like: *Who really discovered America?*



Use this question if you choose to use the materials provided in this unit. However, you could create your own model related to a natural disaster or natural history important to your community, such as: *Why is Virginia moving away from the coal mining industry?* or *What jobs are available to Virginians who used to work in the coal industry?* If you choose your own topic, be sure to find appropriate resources as models throughout the unit.

Tell students it is their turn to brainstorm all the areas they are interested in and then turn the topics they are most interested in into questions.

Remind students that researchable questions (1) are highly interesting to the researcher, (2) can be researched given available resources and time, and (3) not too big and not too small.

Instruct students to turn to the next blank page in their journals. Encourage students to jot down people, places, and events that are interesting to them. Prompt them to think about things that they have learned or books that they have read on topics that they'd like to know more about.

Give students some time to really think, talk, and record. Also, provide some time for students to turn to their neighbors and share their questions so far. They are also encouraged to look

*explore questions. That is how they conduct their research. There is an unanswered question that they attempt to answer. Scientists often conduct laboratory experiments to test if certain medicines will help people get better. For example, a question a scientist might ask is: Does this new medicine help patients avoid getting a cold? And historians often ask questions about why something happened. For example, a historian might ask: How did the people explorers like Columbus encountered help or hinder their explorations? Hmm, I want to look at my list here and determine what questions I have about these topics.*



You might run into a time issue at this point. You can save your personal topic Think Aloud until next class if that works better.

**NOTE:** Please don't view the timelines for each lesson as rigid and definite—you can always finish lessons the following class.



The question "*Who really discovered America?*" is only an example for you to use as a model. It is

<p>back to their <u>Who am I?—An Exploration</u> homework for ideas.</p>	<p>suggested that you use the provided questions, links, and resources for this question throughout the unit. That way you will have more time to adequately differentiate rather than look for appropriate materials. However, you could just as easily replace this question with another. Please make sure that your students understand that this is only an example and that they should choose questions based on their own interests. Examine the entire unit to get a better idea of what you will be doing.</p> <p>You may want to limit the subject area students will work in during this research project. You can focus students on science/social studies questions, or you may want to consider just studying people. You can decide what will be best for you and your students. Remember that the more students are interested in their questions, the more they will stay motivated and get the most out of this unit.</p>
<p><b>HOMEWORK</b></p> <div data-bbox="215 1459 414 1669" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Instruct students to go home and talk with someone about their Knowledge Expedition. They will spend the next few weeks investigating a question of interest to them (as long as it is teacher approved). They will want to make sure they have considered many potential questions.</p>	
<p><b>PREPARATION</b></p>	

Send home a brief letter to parents informing them of what will take place during this unit of study and how they might offer assistance. Use the sample Letter to Parents provided for ideas about what to include in this letter.

Make sure you have the Explorer's Cart ready for the next lesson.



You will need to prepare three sample texts (short articles or book excerpts) for Lesson 3 about your chosen theme (Discovering America or another Appalachian research topic you've chosen). These texts should be suitable for three different readiness levels:

- Sample Text #1 needs to be of average readability for your group of students. For gifted students this will usually be at least one grade level advanced, but even more importantly it needs to contain various organizational structures like: bold and/or italicized words, section headings, captions, pictures or graphs, etc.
- Sample Text #2a needs to be at an independent reading level for most students. Whiteout the section headings. Rewrite (or type and tape) the list of section headings at the bottom of the article, but do not put them in order.
- Sample Text #2b needs to be the exact same text as 2a; however, do NOT add the section headings to the bottom of 2b.