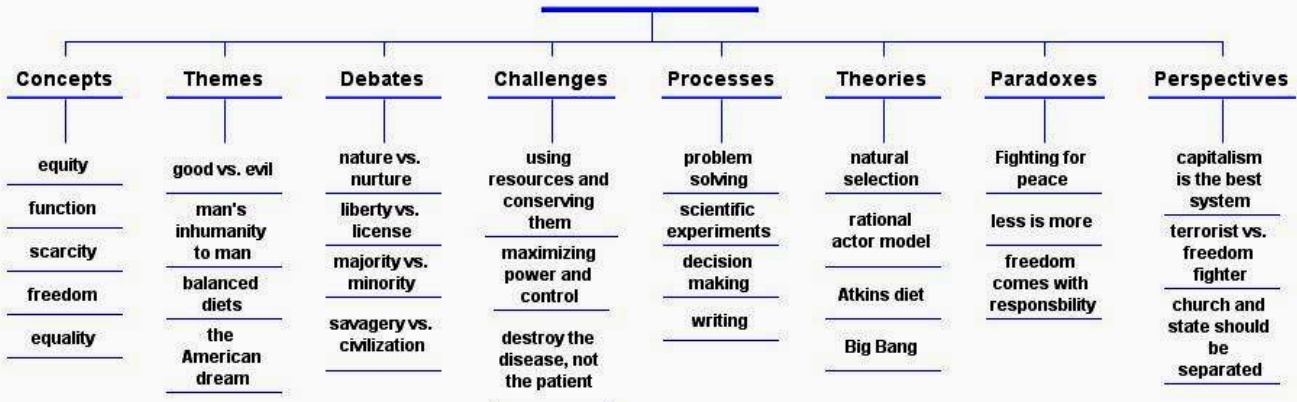


# Big Ideas and Essential Questions in Curriculum

## A big idea:

- refers to core concepts, principles, and theories in a field of study
  - organizes large bodies of factual information into categories
    - transfers to new fields of study and new situations
  - is abstract, requiring investigation to probe its implications

## Big Ideas Take Many Forms



## An essential question:

- has no right or wrong answer; it is meant to be argued
  - is designed to provoke and sustain student inquiry
- addresses the conceptual or philosophical foundations of a field of study
  - raises other important questions
- naturally and appropriately recurs throughout a discipline
- stimulates ongoing rethinking of big ideas, assumptions, and prior lessons

## Examples of Essential Questions

Literature	Math	Science	Social Studies	The Arts
What makes a story great?	Can everything be quantified?	How do you study the unobservable?	Is all history biased?	What is art?
Why read fiction?	What are the limits of mathematical models?	Can everything be known scientifically?	Do things change more than they stay the same?	Is the medium the same as the message?
Does literature reflect or shape culture?	How does what we measure influence how we measure it?	What is the relationship between religion and science?	What makes a good government?	Do we need art?
				What does art tell us about ourselves?