

# What's the Big Idea?

If you've explored theme-based teaching, you've likely encountered Big Ideas—also called themes, key ideas, or essential questions. These umbrella concepts invite students to explore what it means to be human and understand the world around them. Rooted in shared human experiences, Big Ideas build on Dr. Ernest Boyer's concept of commonalities like identity, storytelling, community, and our relationship with the world—forming a foundation for meaningful, connected learning. Use this graphic as a quick reference for these concepts.

While the human commonalities provide a rich topic for inquiry, learning and creating, other suggestions for Big Ideas include:

- Identity
- Survival
- Conflict
- Ritual
- Heroes
- Fantasy
- Power
- Change
- Spirituality
- Rites of Passage
- Celebration
- Ancestry

