

# High Five-April

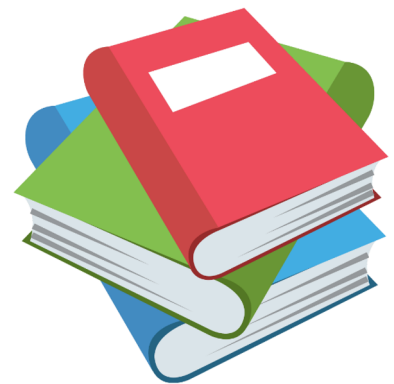
Supporting High Ability Students Through Our Five Goals

## Across Disciplines and Unanswered Questions

This month we will focus on two new thinking prompts: Across Disciplines and Unanswered Questions.

**\*Please check out the end of the newsletter for PD opportunities\***

Our goal for this newsletter is to learn how the thinking prompts can support student thinking and problem solving and for you to feel confident enough to try a question in your lesson.



## Across Disciplines

Across Disciplines connects ideas and concepts within the same field or across other disciplines. This forces students to think about where they have seen the topic before and how they can connect new learning with prior experiences or knowledge.

### Ask Questions:

In what ways is this the same/different as \_\_\_\_\_?

Explain why you saw this differently this time than the last time you studied it.

What other connections can we make?

What are common elements among \_\_\_\_\_?

Which of the common elements among these topics is the strongest bond?

What seems to be the weakest connection between these two things that is still valid?

\_\_\_\_\_ is an example of \_\_\_\_\_ in (math, science, social studies, language arts) because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Combine Across Disciplines with Academic Vocabulary

Across Disciplines pairs well with Academic Vocabulary. Spend time looking at how words have different meanings in different subjects. Analyze their differences and their similarities. A resolution in social studies could be a law. A resolution in reading might be referring to the ending of a story. Resolution on a computer is the clarity or sharpness of an image. How can we combine these elements to allow students to play with words and build vocabulary? Consider more examples such as:

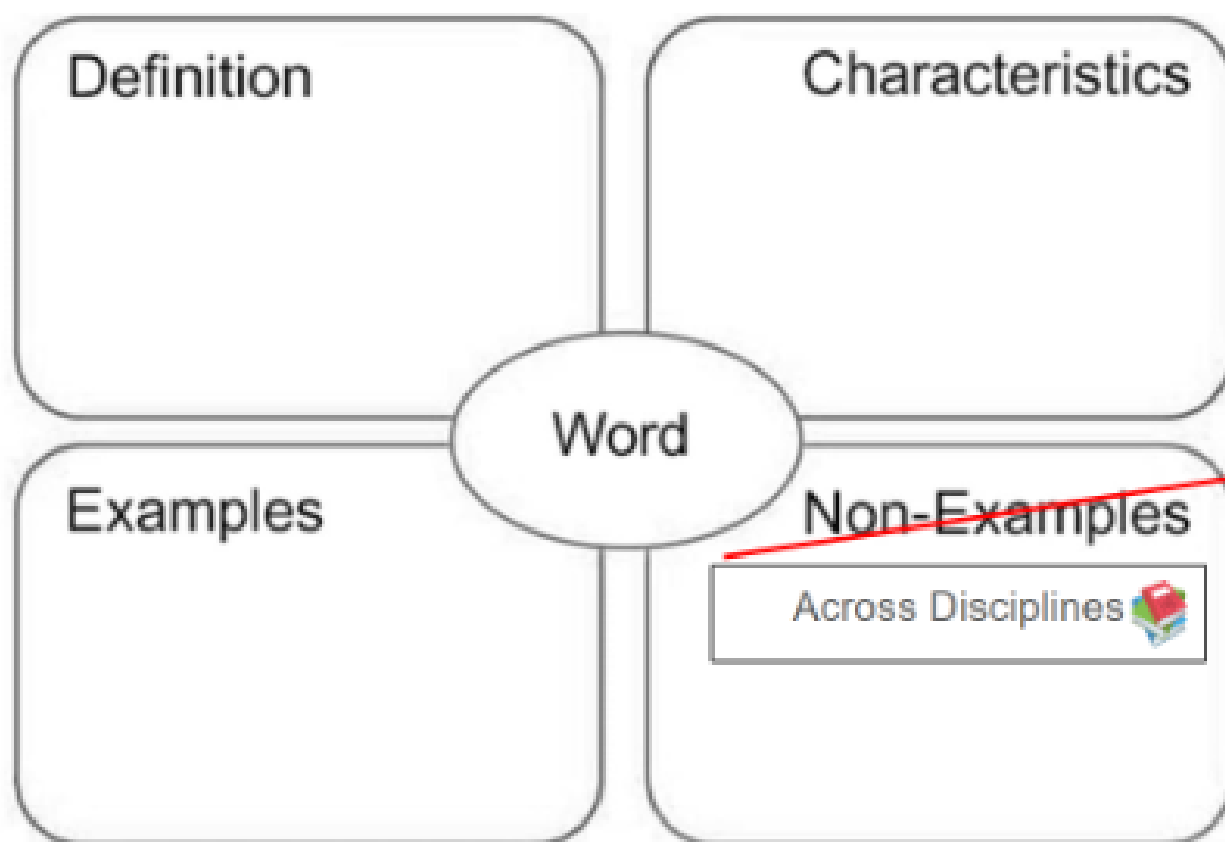
What does revolution mean in social studies versus science?

What is a cell in science versus a cell in computer technology?

What is a plane in math versus a plane in a current events article for reading?

What is the difference between a market in economics versus a market that a character might visit?

Many teachers frontload lessons with a Frayer model activity. Consider changing one of the Frayer model boxes to include ways this word might have different meanings in a different subject. Consider as you teach over the next school year to ask your students to keep an eye out for words across disciplines. Keep a giant list in your classroom!

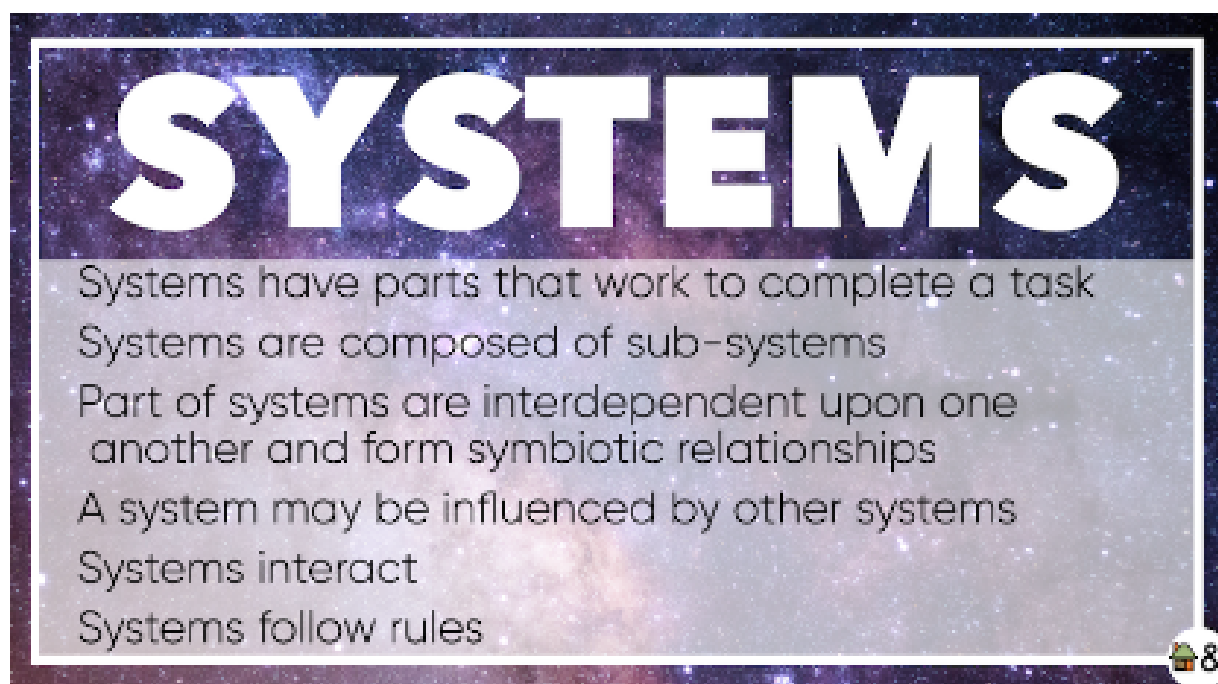


## Across Disciplines can be more than than The Chocolate Unit with Universal Themes

In the 90s, it was common for teachers to teach across the content areas by teaching the same topic but apply different skills. For example, the grade level might be in the chocolate unit. The language arts teacher would teach a story related to chocolate, the math teacher might measure the chocolate, the science teacher might talk about the melting point of chocolate, and the PE

teacher might teach about the health concerns and benefits of chocolate. That is one reason to tie disciplines together but it has also been met with controversy. These units are clever and sure to gain students' attention. However another perspective would ask are these skills really meeting the rigor of the standard? Is it worth teachers working together to all teach about the same subject? The answers to those questions might be yes.

There also might be another way to tie disciplines together while also meeting the rigor needs of all students. Another way to look at across disciplines that is gaining traction for all kids is implementing universal themes across the curriculum. Universal themes "are each highly abstract, one-word concepts that connect to any topic. There is Power in fractions, Star Wars, and The Gold Rush. You can spot power in science, poetry, basketball, and history. These themes are abstract enough to be truly universal" as Ian Byrd from [byrdseed.com](http://byrdseed.com) explains. The key is to choose ONE word for the entire school year. Create generalizations about that word and watch as students continually come back to the universal theme when they read a story, do a science experiment, complete a math problem, play a musical piece with the orchestra, learn a new sport in PE, or even while learning social and emotional skills. [Learn more about universal themes](#) and consider picking one word to practice with your grade level team next school year. Eventually each grade level can choose a universal theme and by the time a student leaves the school district, they will have practiced many different themes and be much more well rounded!

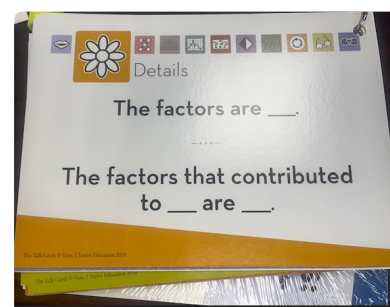


Systems is an example of a universal theme that can be discussed in a wide variety of ways. Brian Housand has many different universal themes in his blog posts about Curious Quotes and Universal Themes @ <https://www.brianhousand.com/blog/systems-curious-quotes>.

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## Giveaway!

Would you like these sentence stems Talk Cards for Depth and Complexity? These are great to get students started with this type of thinking or as a great way to engage our students who are high ability and English learners! Take a minute to tell us what you have tried or would like to try from Depth and Complexity for a chance to win. [\\*Click here for the Google Form \\*](#)



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## Unanswered Questions

Unanswered questions brings the mystery back into learning. It is not about asking students what they still want to know, but it may be that the question does not have an answer. It is being comfortable with the unknown and having answers that you can seek to find.

### Ask Questions:

The information that is unclear, incomplete, or lacking about \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.

What do you not know the answer to, because the answer is unavailable?

Imagine a resource that would answer this question.

Who else had this question? How did they answer it? How could this help us?

How important is it that this question is answered?

What are some possible unintended consequences of \_\_\_\_\_?

## Unanswered Questions is a perfect place for metacognition

In a middle school classroom, students took the monthly Evaluate test. After they finished, they checked their answers. They wrote to the teacher explaining what they missed. Then the teacher asked them to list their unanswered questions. One of the questions asked about evidence from the story to prove an inference. The evidence that was supposed to be chosen was about the character traveling alone. The student missed it. One of their unanswered questions was "if it's you and your animal does that mean you are alone?" This unanswered question told me what the student was thinking. They didn't miss this question because they lack inference and supporting evidence skills. They missed it because they don't consider someone alone if they are with their animals. Making it a classroom routine to write unanswered questions in the corner of their work, lends a lot of insight to a student's brain and helps teachers plan accordingly. Try using unanswered questions at the end of any assignment, test, or project and see how it can ramp up student thinking!



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mean your alone?

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### Use the Unanswered Questions prompt in debate to keep kids open minded

When people consider teaching debate, the typical argument skills and choosing one side over another comes to mind. However, should we consider teaching kids how to stay open minded? Try using the unanswered questions prompt to teach argument skills and teach kids how to stay open minded. In my classroom, students recently read a publication from The Flip Side about the latest Tik Tok bill that passed the House of Representatives. [They read from sources considered on the left and the right. They were asked to summarize the debate and consider how both the left and right presented their arguments.](#) The last question of the writing prompt did not ask them their opinion. Instead, it asked students to consider their unanswered questions. It asked them to think of what they do not know and the significance of that on their ability to make an educated opinion in this debate.

One student wrote, *"The whole situation brings up multiple questions that figuring out answers to would help us understand the ban better. The first question that came to my mind while reading was why China would want this information, and what they could do with it. I also wonder whether China really controls all of American content. Are other countries also being spied on? I also questioned how it was okay for countries like Russia to use propaganda on U.S.- owned apps, but not for China on their Chinese-owned apps. The last question I came to while reading was whether these pieces of evidence were facts or just speculations. Without knowing the answers to these questions, I cannot fully comprehend the whole TikTok ban situation which leaves me unable to come to an educated conclusion on the March 2024 TikTok argument."*






Another wrapped up her piece with these thoughts about her unanswered questions. *"The major questions that must be answered before concluding your opinion are quite abundant. Firstly, you need to ask yourself why people feel motivated to investigate TikTok in the first place. Why is China so threatening to the U.S.? People should wonder why China would want random social data. Additionally, I commonly asked myself how this affects other countries. People support the U.S. and might follow whatever they choose to do. Do other countries feel the same way? This issue has a lot to do with political parties & the upcoming election as well. People need to rethink their opinions & make sure their views aren't being skewed by false information. Finally, some users may want to be involved in this argument, instead of leaving it to government officials who don't even use the app as government devices can't have it. Should they be involved? Ultimately, this is a difficult decision for the government to make. It is important to stay educated & fight for what you believe in regarding this 2024 National TikTok argument."*

Both of these 8th graders used unanswered questions to consider the argument. I never asked for their opinions in writing. However, these students show how much thinking we can elicit without asking them to take a stance. Try asking about unanswered questions instead of asking students to form an opinion. The deep thinking will still be there and will probably exceed what they would have produced if they focused on their opinion instead. If more people were able to focus on unanswered questions, we would see a much more open minded society, too.

Teacher tip: Keep the symbols for each prompt handy. Here are the symbols for unanswered questions and across disciplines. Just copy and paste from the slides directly into any document you are working with! The background of the symbol is clear and will work well with anything you can copy and paste a picture into. This is incredibly helpful to show students what kind of thinking different questions are asking of them. Look how the symbols can be embedded directly into the questions.

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Write an organized, formal 400 words or more that accomplishes the following:

1. Summarize  the March 2024 Tik Tok argument with **no bias**.
2. Evaluate the argument from **the left's** point of view  and evaluate **HOW** they make their argument. Did they use any **extreme or absolute language**? What **rhetorical devices** were used? Is this point of view believable for you?
3. Evaluate the argument from **the right's** point of view  and evaluate **HOW** they make their argument. Did they use any **extreme or absolute language**? What **rhetorical devices** were used? Is this point of view believable for you?
4. Describe the major questions that must be answered **???** before someone can come to an educated conclusion on the March 2024 Tik Tok argument.

Ian Byrd from Byrdseed TV has an email list that you can sign up for in which he shares questions that he asked early in his teacher days and offers suggestions on how to change the questions to encourage thinking and problem solving through depth and complexity. His first question was about *The Challenge*, a story from the reading curriculum. His question was: Is *The Challenge* an example of non-fiction, historical fiction, or realistic fiction? Support your answer with three explicit details.

The students named the genre and they moved on to another unrelated question. Now, let's do some thinking...what question would you ask to follow up and push student thinking?

Once you have thought of a question, [click here](#) to see what Ian Byrd would ask now.

## A Science Example-A Mere Model of a Cell

Another great example of how to update the rigor of a HS Biology question is in Ian Byrd's example of [A Mere Model of a Cell](#). Check out this two part video of a question that a reader submitted and how he would change it up for students to analyze instead of following directions. He models his thinking and talks us through his process. The video is short and if you want more information or examples, I have the PD account that he mentioned and I will share those resources with you!

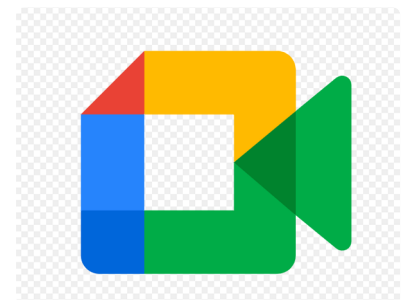
## Spring High Ability Professional Development Opportunities

Kristie Speirs Neumeister, Ph.D. and Ginny Burney, Ph.D. from Ball State University are offering two workshops in May to focus on high ability education. Please see below and click the link for the details. Let Kim Jovic know if you would like to attend and if you would like virtual or in-person.

**Virtual and In-Person Workshops:** Attached please find two flyers-one for our workshop on how [to infuse higher order thinking skills and problem solving](#) into core content areas and one for our workshop on understanding and meeting [the social and emotional needs of high ability learners](#). These workshops are available for either in-person or asynchronous, virtual participation.

## HA Office Hour-April

Do you have questions about a particular student, resources for differentiation, or the identification process? I will hold office hours on the last Monday of each month. I will be available on a Google Meet. Pop on at any time during the hour to ask any questions that you may have. I can also answer general testing questions as well! The April office hour will be on 4/29/24 from 4-5 p.m.



To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/msi-sghh-qof>  
Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 515-518-1055 and enter this PIN: 523 685 448#  
To view more phone numbers, click this link: <https://tel.meet/msi-sghh-qof?hs=5>

## Screening Update-Kindergarten SIGS & CogAT platform Transition

During the month of April, some teachers at the kindergarten academies will receive an email from our SIGS system. SIGS stands for Scales for Identifying Gifted Students. Teachers will fill out this scale for students in Language Arts only, Math only, or both. The scales are due 4/15, just in time

for our identification meeting referenced below. This information helps us to determine if the students will qualify for high ability services or not.

I received an email last week informing us that the Elevate testing platform for CogAT will not longer be supported next year. We will go back to using DataManager and having session IDs for each subtest. This is not news that I hoped for, but I will make sure that the testing process is just as smooth as it was this year!

District and State Assessment Windows 2023-2024: Perry Township		
Name of Assessment	Assessment Window Begins	Assessment Window Ends
Evaluate LA (3-8) and Math (2-8)*	8/7/23	8/11/23
• mCLASS EOY Read 3D (DIBELS & TRC & Dyslexia Screener K-2)	8/2/23	8/11/23
Evaluate LA (3-8) and Math (2-8)	9/11/23	9/15/23
CogAT Grades 2 & 5	9/11/23	9/22/23
Evaluate LA (3-8) and Math (2-8)	10/2/23	10/6/23
• MindPlay (2nd step for mCLASS students flagged "At Risk" but did NOT receive GCE)	8/3/23	9/29/23
PSAT	10/25/23	10/25/23
Evaluate LA (3-8) and Math (2-8)	11/6/23	11/10/23
NWEA for Grades 2 & 5	10/30/23	11/10/23
Systems Readiness Test (3-8, and Biology)	11/16/23	11/16/23
Kindergarten CogAT	11/27/23	12/15/23
Evaluate LA (3-8) and Math (2-8)	12/4/23	12/16/23
• mCLASS EOY Read 3D (DIBELS & TRC - Dyslexia Screen New Students)	12/8/23	1/26/24
Evaluate LA and Math (2-8)	1/8/24	1/22/24
• MindPlay for New students flagged in mCLASS, without a GCE	12/9/23	2/22/24
WIDA Access K-12	1/16/24	3/5/24
NAP Testing (MS, PAWS, SWS)	1/29/24	3/8/24
LEARN Biology ECA Winter	2/5/24	2/23/24
Evaluate LA and Math (2-8)	2/5/24	2/9/24
SAT (optional date)	3/4/24	3/18/24
Evaluate LA and Math (2-8)	3/4/24	3/23/24
NWEA for Kindergarten	3/5/24	3/15/24
READ-3 Spring	3/4/24	3/15/24
SAT (alternate date)	4/8/24	4/28/24
Evaluate LA and Math (2-8)	4/1/24	4/9/24
TEAM gr. 3-8, 10 alternate measure	4/1/24	5/10/24
LEARN gr. 3-8	4/15/24	5/10/24
LEARN Biology ECA	4/15/24	5/1/24
mCLASS EOY Read 3D (DIBELS & TRC)	4/22/24	5/17/24
Evaluate LA and Math (2-8)	5/6/24	5/10/24
READ-3 Summer	5/15/24	6/28/24

\*Formative Assessment Window: Evaluate. District Test window is the first week of the month.  
mCLASS for grades K-2. IDOE assessments required. All assessments are online.

• Bulleted items required by IDOE's Dyslexia Guidance

Last Update: 8.15.23

Event Information

High Ability Identification Committee

This meeting will last from 3:30-5pm, but you do not have to attend for the full time. I started earlier this year, so you can come at a time that works for you and your building schedule. When?

Wednesday, Apr 24, 2024, 03:30 AM

Where?

PTEC 210



Nina Bowman

Nina is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters