



Vertical Progression of Knowledge-Building
Unit Topics and Essential Questions

Unit	Knowledge Strand	GRADES						
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Life Science	Plants and Animals Have Needs Why do living things have different needs?	Plants and Animals Grow and Change Why do living things change?	Plants and Animals in Their Habitats How do living things get what they need to survive?	Animal Adaptations How do living things survive in their environment?	Observing Nature How do we respond to nature?	Cultivating Natural Resources Why do we cultivate living things?	Relationships in Nature What roles can we play in the balance of nature?
2	Character Matters	Every Story Has Characters How are characters different?	Many Kinds of Characters How do we learn about characters?	Characters Facing Challenges What can we learn when we face problems?	Ways Characters Shape Stories How do our actions influence our lives?	Characters' Actions and Reactions How do we reveal ourselves to others?	Developing Characters' Relationships Why do we value certain qualities in people?	Characters at Crossroads How can people inspire and change us?
3	Government and Citizenship	Rules at Home and School Why do we have rules?	Being a Good Community Member Why do people get involved in their communities?	Government at Work Why do we need a government?	Government for the People Why do people participate in government?	Government in Action How can government influence the way we live?	The U.S. Constitution: Then and Now Why do laws continue to evolve?	Beyond Democracy Why might societies form different types of government?
4	Perspectives in Literature	Writers Tell Many Stories Why do people tell stories?	Stories Have a Narrator How do people create stories?	Many Characters, Many Points of View How can a story change depending on who tells it?	Comparing Points of View What makes people view the same experience differently?	Understanding Different Points of View What do we learn when we look at the world through the eyes of others?	Recognizing Author's Point of View How can other perspectives help us evaluate the world?	The Reader's Perspective How does the journey through life influence a person's point of view?
5	Technology and Society	Technology at Home and School Why do we use technology?	Technology at Work How can technology make a difference in our lives?	Solving Problems Through Technology Where do ideas for inventions come from?	Advancements in Technology What is the value of innovation?	Technology for Tomorrow How do we make decisions about developing new technology?	Technology's Impact on Society What value does technology bring to people's lives?	Technology in the 21st Century How do we take responsibility in making advances in technology?
6	Themes Across Cultures	Stories Have a Message How do we know what is right?	Stories Teach Many Lessons What can we learn from a mistake?	Tales to Live By What can different cultures teach us?	Making Decisions What helps us solve problems?	Confronting Challenges How do we overcome obstacles?	Up Against the Wild What compels us to survive?	Legendary Journeys What inspires a quest?
7	History, Culture, and Geography	Holidays and Celebrations Why do we celebrate people and events?	Past, Present, and Future Why is the past important?	Investigating the Past How does understanding the past shape the future?	Communities Then and Now What is a community?	The Transcontinental Railroad How do communities evolve?	Conflicts That Shaped a Nation How does conflict shape a society?	Achievements of Ancient Cultures Why do we consider certain civilizations “great”?
8	Earth Science	Weather and Seasons How do our lives change with the seasons?	Observing the Sky Why do the sun and moon capture our imagination?	Wind and Water Change Earth How do we react to changes in nature?	Weather and Climate How do we understand change?	Earth Changes How do Earth's natural processes impact our lives?	Water: Fact and Fiction What does water mean to people and the societies they live in?	Exploring Earth's Structures How does Earth itself inspire human endeavors?
9	Economics	Meeting Our Needs and Wants Why do we make choices?	We Use Goods and Services Why do people trade with each other?	Buyers and Sellers How do the goods we make, buy, and sell connect us?	Spending Time and Money What do our economic choices tell us about ourselves?	Resources and Their Impact How does access to resources influence people's lives?	The Economic Development of Cities How do economic changes impact society?	Economic Expansion What does it mean to be a citizen in a global society?
10	Physical Science	Forces and Motion What makes things move?	Exploring Sound, Light, and Heat How would our lives be different without sound, light, and heat?	States of Matter How can matter change?	Forces and Interactions How does understanding science help us achieve our goals?	The Power of Electricity Where do scientific discoveries lead us?	Transforming Matter Why do we measure and describe the world?	Forces: Going to Extremes How does our knowledge of forces help us make sense of Earth—and beyond?