

Understanding by Design Glossary

UbD Elements	Characteristics of Elements	Illustrative Examples
Unit <i>A unit focuses on a major topic, process, theme, or performance based on established goals and standards, and typically lasts 10 - 25 class periods.</i>	Units are framed in terms of intended student outcomes and achievements, not in terms of content covered. The unit focuses on the use of content, and the selection of activities and their sequencing reflects a focus on outcomes not inputs.	
Established Goals <i>Standards: National and state standards that are the focal point of the unit.</i> <i>Other Goals: Can include District or School goals other than academic Standards (e.g., community contributor, 21st century skills)</i>	If listed, targeted goals should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Taught and assessed within the unit ○ Feasible with existing time frame and resources 	
Transfer Goals <i>Long-term performances that we want learners to eventually be able to accomplish on their own. Transfer goals establish purpose and relevance.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long-term in nature ○ Emphasis is on independent and contextualized performance ○ Help to establish purpose and relevance by answering common student questions such as: "Why should I learn this? "What can I do with this?" 	
Understandings <i>Specify transferrable ideas and processes that students should come to understand.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are inferences students should realize or derive as a result of the work of the unit ○ Are framed as full sentences (specific generalizations) in response to the prompt, "The students will understand THAT..." ○ Help learners make sense of otherwise discrete facts and skills; they "connect the dots" ○ Cannot be simply transmitted; they must be "earned" by the learner 	
Essential Questions <i>Open-ended questions that focus instruction on the big ideas, align instruction with assessment. By exploring essential questions students develop and deepen their understanding.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage active meaning-making by the learner about important ideas and issues ○ Are open ended; have no simple right answer ○ Are meant to be investigated, argued, looked at from different points of view ○ Raise other important questions ○ Naturally arise in every day life and/or "doing" the subject ○ Are meant to recur; can be fruitfully asked over time 	

Knowledge and Skills <i>Specify what students should know and be able to do as a result of the unit.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Content knowledge and skill should be “means,” not an end in themselves ○ Only list enabling knowledge and skills that will be explicitly taught and assessed in this unit 	
Performance Tasks <i>Ask students to apply knowledge and skills to a new situation (transfer) to show evidence of understanding.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demand thoughtful application of knowledge and skills, not just recall ○ Establish authentic contexts for performance ○ Are open-ended; they do not have a “best” answer or a “right way” to complete the task ○ Yield tangible products and performances as evidence of understanding and transfer (Stage 1 goals) 	
Other Evidence <i>Additional summative assessments that are aligned with and measure Stage 1 goals.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifies needed assessments of all Stage 1 goals ○ Includes conventional tests, assignments and observations to supplement the evidence from the performance tasks 	
Criteria <i>The basis for evaluating student performance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Valid criteria and indicators based on Stage 1 goals ○ Aligned with CCSS qualifiers or other performance standards ○ Key evaluative criteria can be used to develop more detailed rubrics 	
Learning Plan <i>Intended to equip students to achieve the goals of Stage 1 and perform well on the Stage 2 assessments.</i>	<p>A sequence of learning events that are designed to help students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acquire targeted knowledge and skills ○ Make meaning of important ideas ○ Equip students to transfer their learning ○ Textbooks and other materials should be used as resources not necessarily the controlling focus of the learning plan 	