

# Big Thinkers and Ideas: Thinking Through Time

## Summary

This unit introduces students to the core thinkers and ideas in the history of knowledge and science. Students will self-select thinkers and ideas of interest and will pursue one topic for a research paper and presentation, thereby becoming experts in one particular time. By researching diverging views or criticisms alongside their ideas or thinkers, students will continue to develop critical thinking skills and demonstrate an important depth of thought. They will also develop a conceptual understanding of what it means to be a big thinker or idea as opposed to an influential thinker or idea. The methodology of this unit is very student-led and peer-taught and is grounded in validating and celebrating student interest and passion. Throughout, students develop and hone research, reading, writing, and speaking skills.

## Objectives

In this unit, students will demonstrate

- ▶ a sense of the history of thought and knowledge
- ▶ specialized knowledge in one area of interest
- ▶ the ability to research across multiple sources and synthesize information
- ▶ the ability to determine meaningful information from less important information
- ▶ an understanding of what constitutes a 'big thinker' or 'big idea'
- ▶ the ability to communicate research findings in written work
- ▶ the ability to communicate research findings visually
- ▶ the ability to communicate research findings verbally
- ▶ self-monitoring and self-guiding skills

## Outcomes

This unit has been developed for an independent school and thus does not use provincial curriculum outcomes. It has, however, been designed to fit within the arc of this year's social studies course, to build on the foundation of previous years, and to lay crucial groundwork for the year that follows -- either inside the same school for some students, or in the public education system for others.

## Time Frame

5 weeks (2-3 classes per week)

## Outline

Getting Started:	1.5-2 classes
Independent Research:	4-5 classes
Progress Report:	2-3 classes
Culminating Research:	2 classes
Presentations & Conclusion:	4 classes
TOTAL:	14-16 classes (4-5 weeks)

## **Assessment**

### *Formative*

1. Topic Proposal
2. Progress Report
3. Peer Feedback (Two Props & A Push)

### *Summative*

1. Verbal/Visual Presentation
2. Written Report
3. Bibliography

## **Texts**

Flamehorse (handle). "Top 10 Greatest Philosophers in History." *Listverse*. 19 February 2011. Web.

jeremiahjw. "The History of Nikola Tesla -- A Short Story." YouTube. 10 July 2010. Web.

Mackay, Mairi. "10 Ideas That Changed the World." *CNN*. 12 December 2008. Web.

MINI USA. "10 Not Normal Ideas That Forever Changed the World." *BuzzFeed*. 8 October 2012. Web.

Mongoose (handle). "Top 10 Most Influential Scientists." *Listverse*. 24 February 2009. Web.

OU Learn. "Achilles and the Tortoise -- 60 Second Adventures in Thought." YouTube. 3 October 2011. Web.

"Zeroes to Heroes: Ten Unlikely Ideas That Changed the World." *The New Scientist*. Web.

Other texts that mesh with student research areas will be sought out and included as students decide on topics.