

Essential Questions

1. What is social justice?
2. What is power?
3. What is oppression and what are the root causes?
4. What causes prejudice?
5. What are the responsibilities of the individual in regard to social justice?
6. When should an individual take a stand against what he/she believes to be an injustice? What are the most effective ways to do this?
7. What does power have to do with fairness and justice?
8. Is it ever necessary to question the status quo?
9. What are the benefits and consequences of questioning/ challenging social order?
10. Does labeling and stereotyping influence how we look at and understand the world?
11. What does it mean to be invisible? (context: minorities)
12. What are the causes and consequences of prejudice and injustice, and how does an individual's response to them reveal her/his true character?
13. What are the causes and consequences of prejudice and how does an individual's response to it reveal his/her morals, ethics, and values?
14. What are the elements that build a strong friendship?
15. What impact does family have over different stages of our lives?
16. What can we learn from different generations?
17. Who has more wisdom; children or elders?
18. Is conflict an inevitable part of relationships?
19. What makes a healthy relationship?
20. Are some relationships destructive?
21. How are people transformed through their relationships with others?
22. What is the responsibility of the community to an individual? What is the individual's responsibility to the community?
23. What is happiness and how can it be achieved?
24. How important is happiness ?
25. Is happiness more important than truth?
26. Why does happiness seem to be so elusive for so many people?
27. What is the greatest good; happiness, truth or love?
28. What should the limits be on an individual's pursuit of happiness?
29. To what extent does a culture or society shape an individual's understanding or concept of happiness?
30. Does the past matter more than the present or the future?
31. What matters more; how we view ourselves, or how others see us?
32. What does it mean to grow up?
33. Do you believe your actions are fated, or do you believe actions can change the course of your life?
34. Have the forces of good and evil changed over time?
35. What are the responsibilities of the individual and/or society in regard to the health of the environment?
36. How do different world views lead to different views toward nature?
37. Why has nature inspired so many artists over time?
38. What is love?
39. Does love require sacrifice?
40. What is the relationship between love and trust or between love and loyalty?
41. What are the factors that move individuals, communities, or nations to great sacrifice and what are the consequences?
42. How is language used to manipulate us?
43. In what ways are language and power inseparable?
44. Is it possible to think without language?
45. How does an author use the resources of language to impact an audience?
46. Is literature more like a window or a mirror?
47. What is literature supposed to do?
48. What influences a writer to create?
49. How does literature reveal the values of a given culture or time period?

50. In what ways are all narratives influenced by bias and perspective?
51. Where does the meaning of a text reside? Within the text, within the reader, or in the transaction that occurs between them?
52. Can a reader infer an author's intentions based on the text?
53. What is the difference between a good read and great literature?
54. Who decides the criteria for judging whether or not a book is any good?
55. What is the difference between reality and illusion?
56. What are the potential conflicts when one person's reality is another person's illusion?
57. Who am I? What is real? How do we define who we are?
58. What is the meaning of life?
59. Is death to be feared? Welcomed? Accepted?
60. Are we guided/governed by fate, free will, a greater power, or do we fall somewhere on the spectrum between?
61. What does it mean to be a hero?
62. Do the attributes of a hero remain the same over time?
63. When does a positive personality trait become a tragic flaw?
64. What is the role of a hero in a culture?
65. Are human beings inherently good or evil?
66. How do different cultures shape the definitions of good and evil?
67. What is freedom?
68. Is freedom ever free?
69. What is more valuable physical freedom or psychological freedom?
70. What are the essential liberties?
71. What sacrifices should people make for freedom?
72. What is the American Dream and to what extent is it achievable for all Americans?
73. In what ways does the American Dream mean different things for different Americans?
74. How has the American Dream changed over time?
75. Can anyone truly be independent?
76. How would we define a utopian society?
77. Why do people continue to pursue the concept of a utopian society?
78. Is utopia attainable? At what cost should it be worth attaining?
79. What is the relationship between decisions and consequences?
80. How do we go about making good decisions?
81. How can a person's decisions and actions change his/her life?
82. What is more revealing: words or deeds?
83. Why are people often not what they seem to be?
84. Who are more dangerous: men or women?
85. Who are more powerful: men or women?
86. Who are more spiritual: men or women?
87. Is killing ever justified?
88. What is worth dying for?
89. Can the thirst for vengeance ever be satisfied?
90. What happens after death?
91. Where were you before birth?
92. What is most important: to know, to love, or to believe?
93. Why are there walls between people?
94. Why is it so difficult to find true love?
95. Is it better to be lonely or annoyed?
96. Is it better to be single or married?
97. Is it better to be in a relationship or alone?
98. Does money lead to happiness?
99. If God is all-good and all-powerful, why do the innocent suffer?
100. What do we need to feel at home in this world?
101. Should prison be for rehabilitation or punishment?
102. In times of peril, should it be every man for himself?
103. Is confession good for the soul?

104. Are fathers often jealous of their daughter's boyfriends?
105. Is love blind?
106. Is it always wrong to lie?
107. Is revenge sweet?
108. Does one good turn deserve another?
109. Does poverty lead to crime?
110. Is stealing wrong?
111. In some cases, is suicide the only solution?
112. Does suffering make you a better person?
113. Will most parents sacrifice for their children?
114. If you cannot provide a good home for a child, should you turn his/her care over to someone else voluntarily?
115. Should you do your job according to the rules instead of making moral judgements on your own?
116. Can someone have it all without something happening which spoils their happiness?
117. Is a person usually aware of his or her enemies?
118. Does a bit of good emerge out of every bad situation?
119. If a person has been seriously wronged by another person, does the victim need to seek revenge in order to establish peace in his or her life?
120. Is death or murder the ultimate form of revenge?
121. Does revenge make the avenger feel better?
122. Should children be punished for the sins or crimes of their parents?
123. Does one have to experience the ultimate feeling of loss and devastation in order to fully appreciate the feeling of ultimate bliss?
124. Is Hammurabi's Code, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," the best method of dealing with others?
125. In times of utter despair, is it true that the only thing a person can hold on to is the idea of hope?
126. Is money the key to happiness?
127. Is it possible to fall in love more than once?
128. Are there limits to revenge?
129. Can one be several "persons" in one? In other words, can a person have very different personalities depending on the situation in which a person finds himself or herself?
130. Is it true that experiences in your past will haunt you for the rest of your life?