

Example of Planning for Concepts & Conceptual Understandings

Step 1: Standards

Find 2-3 standards for your unit. You can start with any content area or use standards from multiple content areas.

Geography
Students draw on concepts and processes from geography to understand issues involving people, places, and environments in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.
<p>Gr 4. Geography 1: Students understand the geography of the community, Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world by communicating their findings by creating visual representations of the world, showing a basic understanding of the <i>geographic grid</i>, including the equator and prime meridian.</p> <p>Gr 4. Geography 2: Students understand geographic aspects of unity and diversity in the community, Maine, and various regions of the United States and the world including Maine Native American communities by describing impacts of geographic features on the daily life of various cultures including Maine Native Americans and other cultures in the United States and the world.</p>
History
Students draw on concepts and processes using primary and secondary sources from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.
<p>Gr 4. History: Students understand various major eras in the history of the community, Maine, and the United States by identifying major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, persons, and timeframes, in the history of the community, the state, and the United States. Students make real or simulated decisions related to the state of Maine or civic organizations by applying appropriate and relevant social studies knowledge and skills, including research skills, and other relevant information. * Students distinguish between facts and opinions/interpretations in sources. *</p> <p>Gr 4. History: Students understand historical aspects of unity and diversity in the community, the state, Maine Native American communities, and the United States by describing various cultural traditions and contributions of Maine Native Americans and various historical and recent immigrant groups in the community and the state.</p>

Example of Planning for Concepts & Conceptual Understandings

Step 2: Concepts

Find the big ideas in the standards. This process can be easier when you work in groups. In the standards above, some teachers found the following standards.

Geographical &
Historical issues

People

Environment

Perspective

Continuity &
change

Place

Step 3: Conceptual Understandings

Conceptual understandings show the relationship between concepts. To build them, pick at least two concepts. Join the concepts with a [relationship verb](#) (the link has a list of verbs). Play around with the combinations of concepts and verbs until you have a few conceptual understandings (up to 8-9) that fit your unit. Since there are multiple combinations, it helps to consider what you want your students to remember long after the lesson or unit is done.

- People/communities interact with place and environment
- Place and environment impact people/communities
- Understanding historical perspectives to inform our current/future actions
- Understanding that there are different historical perspectives

Step 4: Conceptual Questions

Some teachers prefer to turn the conceptual understandings into questions for students to explore. Questions are part of inquiry-based instruction. You can use these questions to have students develop their own conceptual understandings.

- How do I/my friends/community impact where I live?
- How does where I live impact me/friends?
- What does history tell me about where I live?
- What are different perspectives about where I live (based on history)?

Step 5: Skills & Lesson Ideas

Vocabulary

- Perspective
- first -hand/second-hand account
- rebuttal/argue
- Inform
- Persuade

Example of Planning for Concepts & Conceptual Understandings

- opinion/fact
- Activism

Possible Lessons

- Apples to Apples
- Opinion writing
- Mapping in Maine
- Understanding how different people use the land

Resources

- Look at Wabanaki unit and match to conceptual understandings/questions
- TPS Teachers Network (free website) - ask a question in the commons
- Maine Memory Net

Project

- Write a (opinion) letter to someone about an issue they care about
 - Choice
 - Authentic audience