# Questing
## Curriculum Overview

**Curriculum Context**
Questing provides students with an opportunity to investigate a place. Place provides opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and critical thinking. By following the inquiry process, they make observations, ask questions, gather information, construct new knowledge, share their work with authentic audiences, and reflect.

*Content standards will vary depending on the nature of the inquiry and curriculum connection.*

**Vermont Standards** | Vermont Standards |
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**Understanding Place 4.6** Students demonstrate understanding of the relationship between their local environment and community heritage and how each shapes their lives.

**Geographical Knowledge 6.7.a** Identify location and patterns of local areas.

**New Hampshire Standards** | New Hampshire Standards |
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**Geography SS:GE:6:1.2** Apply the spatial concepts of location, distance, direction, scale, movement, and region, e.g., the relative and absolute location of the student's community, or the diffusion of the English language to the United States.

**Common Core State Standards** | Common Core Standards |
--- | --- |
**Reading Standards**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.R.1.5.3
Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.R.1.5.5
Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.R.1.5.7
Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

**Writing Standards**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.5.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7
Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

**Listening Standards**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5.1
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

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**Enduring Understanding**

Everything is connected—our economy, our society, our culture and our environment are linked in ways that impact
everyone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts/Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Teachers: Rebecca Brown, ed., <em>Where the Great River Rises</em>; other resources might include field guides such as Tom Wessels, <em>Forest Forensics</em>. For Students: Lynne Cherry, <em>A River Ran Wild</em>; Bruce Hiscock, <em>The Big Tree</em>; Thomas Locker, <em>Where the River Begins</em> or Donald Silver’s <em>One Small Square</em> books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps, Gravestones, Architecture, Natural Resources such as ponds, forests, streams, or fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town history, nature guide, atlas</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What academic vocabulary is essential for this lesson?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primary source, secondary source, research, inquiry, evidence, map, compass rose, map coordinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What vocabulary is needed for a close-read of the texts?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>environment</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment Evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formative Assessments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of evidence gathered from research with quotes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summative Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative/Descriptive Writing: Write a paragraph describing your topic using evidence from research</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Instructional Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gaining Background Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students: This document assumes you will be connecting Questing to an area in your science or social studies curriculum and will have reviewed the background needed to investigate a particular scientific topic or historical era/theme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher: Choosing a place that is within walking distance to school, connects to your curriculum, and offers rich resources requires some pre-visits and meetings with community members who might support your students’ investigations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 1: Introduction to Place-Based Stories</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Picture books introduce students to the idea that places change and the people, flora, and fauna residing there are deeply interconnected.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Short Focused Research</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>You may have your own methods for asking good questions, taking notes, and summarizing information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2: Connecting to Place and Asking Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>What do we see? What do we hear? What questions do we have?</em></td>
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<td>Session 3: Asking Questions</td>
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<td><em>Finding bigger questions and making a research plan</em></td>
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<td>Session 4: Taking Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Conducting research and taking notes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formative Assessment:</strong> After researching your topic, create list of at least three details you will share with the class about your topic. For each detail, provide a quote from your research and record where you found your information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presenting New Knowledge

Session 5: Writing our Quest
How can we share what we’ve learned with others?
Summative Performance Task:
After researching your topic, write a brief paragraph informing your class about it. Support your description with evidence from your research—the details you listed in the previous assignment.

Session 6: Completing our Quest
What do we need to do to complete our Quest?

Grade: 4 - 8
Author: Vital Communities
Contact Information: http://www.vitalcommunities.org/valleyquest
Session 1: Introduction

Focusing Question: What stories do places tell?

Overview: Students read two picture books and make a map

Topical Understandings:
- Places have stories
- The people, flora, and fauna of a place are deeply connected.

Materials:

Thomas Locker, Where the River Begins
Lynne Cherry, A River Ran Wild

Length of time to complete: One or two 30 - 40 minute lessons

Procedures:

A. Mapping a Story

- Read Where the River Begins to the class.

- As a class, go back through the book and make a list of locations within the story.

- Have each student draw one of those locations on a piece of white paper inside a 5” square. Photocopy the drawings so there is a complete set for each student or pair of students.

- Tell students they are going to make a story map. They must use the locations within the story (you decide the number of locations based on your students’ skills). Have them include a title, compass rose, and illustrations for each location.

B. Places have Environmental and Human Stories
- Books to read include: Lynne Cherry, *A River Ran Wild* and Bruce Hiscock, *The Big Tree*
Session 2: Connecting to Place and Asking Questions

Focusing Question: What do we see? What do we hear?

Overview: Students visit the place under study, gather evidence, and ask questions.

Materials:
- Clipboards and pencils
- Evidence worksheet (Handout A, Handout B or C)

*There are 3 types of evidence worksheets: a generic worksheet, one for cemeteries, and one for architecture. You could adapt these for a science topic.*

Length of time to complete: One 30 - 40 minute period

Procedures:

A. Establish the boundaries of the place under study

- As a group, walk the boundaries of the place under study. How would you describe/define these boundaries? What landmarks do you see. List them as a class.

B: Gather evidence and ask questions

- Assign students or let them decide on a portion of the place where they will record their own observations and ask questions. This could be a gravestone, house, square yard of soil, boundary around a tree, etc.

- If students are examining a square of soil (rather than a cultural artifact such as a gravestone or a house), provide each student with a meter of survey tape, a magnifying glass, toothpick flags, and Handout A on a clipboard with pencil.
Have students look for a space they want to observe and define their square with a survey ribbon. As they study their squares closely, they can mark five things they find most interesting with toothpick flags and then record what they see.

- Students go in pairs and sit silently for 1 minute with their eyes closed and then record what they hear. Then sit silently for 1 minute and record what they see. After individual work, pairs continue to note all evidence from their spot, filling out the worksheet and asking questions.

C. Share evidence and questions

- Take a class tour of the site with each student pair presenting their observations and questions.
HANDOUT A: CONNECTING TO PLACE

Sit silently for 1 minute with your eyes closed. Then record everything you heard:

I heard......

Sit silently for 1 minute and record everything you see:

I see......

Share your list with a partner and then gather 3 more pieces of evidence.

1) 
2)
3)

With your partner, list as many questions as you can think of about your place:
Handout B: Cemetery Information Organizer

Name of Cemetery: 

Location of Cemetery: 

Complete the following information for each gravestone you investigate.

Full name of the deceased:

Birth Date: _______________________________ Death Date:  __________________________________

Age at death: _____________________________

Husband/Wife of:  __________________________________________________________________________

Son/Daughter of:  __________________________________________________________________________

Other facts:________________________________________________________________________________

On the back of this sheet:
Sketch the gravestone’s shape and any motifs or decorative carvings.
Copy the inscription and epitaph exactly as you see it.
Handout C: House Investigation Organizer

The building that I am investigating: ______________________________

How many stories? _____

The windows are like (circle one).

Are they arranged symmetrically? ___

Sketch their arrangement:

The doors look most like (circle).
Sketch if different:

Look carefully at the walls of the building. What are they made of? (circle)

What shape is your house?

What style do you think your house is?
Cape (1800 – 1860)  Federal (1790-1835)  Greek Revival (1835-1875)

When do you think your house was built? ________________________________
Session 3: Sorting Questions

Focusing Question: *How do we organize our questions?*

Overview: Students organize their questions and make a research plan.

Materials:
- Evidence and questions for field trip
- Inspiration Software, brainstorming software, or sticky notes
- Handout D

Length of time to complete: One 30 – 40 minute period

Procedures:

A. Sort Questions

- Type questions from the field trip into a brainstorming software or write on to sticky notes.

- Sort questions: Look for similarities in the questions. For instance “leader, political, and government” all go together as do “climate, weather, seasons”.

B: Categorizing Questions

- Create categories for each group and ask a general question of the category. This will guide general topics for research.

- Try to come up with one central question to guide the research in general that could turn in to an opening statement. (see Handout D)
Handout A: Sorting Questions with Inspiration Software or Sticky Notes

1. Brainstorm

The first step is to brainstorm questions you have about the topic. Come up with as many questions as you can—a good number to aim for is 20. These questions can be “literal, right there,” “inferential, putting things together” and “essential, big complicated” questions.

This is a sample of questions about a person found on a gravestone.

2. Sort

The next stage is to look for similarities in your questions. One easy way to do this is to look at the words in the questions. Do you see similar words? For instance: leader, political, and government all go together.
3. Categorize
Once you have sorted your questions into groups, try creating a category for each group. Once you have created your categories you have the structure of your paper completed. You can see my paper will focus on biography, leadership, and the economy. As a historian, I have also thought about context and significance.

My essential question which would move to the middle would be:
*How do people contribute to their community?*
Session 4: Taking Notes

Focusing Question: How do we research our questions?

Overview: Students conduct research on their topics.

Materials:
- Books, websites, primary sources for related to the place and topic(s) under study
- Note-Taking Worksheet or Software

Length of time to complete: Dependent on extent of project

Procedures:

A. Orientation to Source Materials

- Provide students with a list of websites, files of primary sources, or related books that will support their research. Review what you have gathered.

B: Taking Notes

- Use note-taking software such as NoodleTools, or whatever system you use for students to take notes.

C. Formative Assessment

- After researching your topic, create a list of at least three details you will share with the class about your topic. For each detail, provide a quote from your research and record where you found your information.
Lesson 5: Writing Our Quest

Focusing Question: How can we share what we’ve learned with others?

Overview: Students compose: (a) movement clues (procedures) to guide visitors along the Quest route; (b) teaching clue to share what they’ve learned; and also create (c) illustrations that synthesize their learning.

Topical Understandings:
- Procedural writing
- Synthesis
- Presentation of learning / knowledge

Materials:
- Movement clue worksheet (Handout A)
- Putting it all together worksheet (Handout B)
- Masking tape
- Index cards (or scraps of paper)
- Paper
- Pencil

Length of time to complete: Three to four 30 – 40 minute periods

Procedures:
Before you move through these procedures, review with your class one or two examples of other student work at www.valleyquest.org. You can print examples – or better still look at it on the ‘big screen’ by using an LCD projector. Then....

1. Establish the “Quest domain” (10 – 15 minutes)
   - Have the students sit in a large circle. Let’s map this quest site...right here on the floor!”
   - Using the duct tape, establish the baseline(s); the four directions.
   - Pick a Quest starting point (place to park OR that is easy to find)
   - From there, move mentally through this site, marking KEY site elements using either ‘post its’ or index cards.
2. **Establish route (5 minutes)**
   - Next, sequence these features into an order, or your Quest ROUTE

3. **Assign points**
   - Clarify / assign small groups responsibility for specific segments of the route:
   - Starting point A to point B; point B to C; C to D; etc.
   - *Responsibility will follow based on your earlier site visit & their area of research.*

4. **Clarify assignment (10 – 15 minutes)**
   Clarify that on this field trip, each group - working in its segment - will need to create a movement clue leading to their site (from the last one). The 1st group writes from the Quest starting point.

   Pre-teach movement clues in the classroom (or on campus) using the attached form.
   - First, walk between your two points making observations.
   - Next, chose the landmarks / ideas that you like best.
   - Then, sequence them into procedures.
   - And now, work to turn them into 1 – 3 fragments...
   - And finally into the desired form (sentences, couplets, etc.)

5. **Movement Clues (one period)**
   - Head out on the field trip! Each group drafts their movement clue.
   - Then two groups pair up to test / refine each other’s work.

6. **Back in the Classroom - Teaching clue / drawings (one period)**
   - Pre teach the Synthesis process using the “Pulling it all together” form (Handout B)
     - First, create a list of the things you know about your topic.
     - Next, circle the facts that feel most important to share.
     - Then, sequence these ideas into a best order: A, B, C, etc.
o And now, turn that into a DRAFT paragraph or two of “synthesis writing.”
o Finally, create an illustration that helps convey your idea / story.

- Students put their paragraph and image into the form.

7. Students share their work with a read-through from the beginning.
Session 5: Handout A

**Movement Clues:**
Group: ____________________________

We are responsible from getting:

FROM ____________________________

TO ____________________________

Some landmarks between these two points are:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Now, circle the ones you like the most.

Now sequence them into the ‘best’ order:

1. 
2. 
3. 
Now, write these lines in prose (as sentences)

_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________

Now, turn these into rhyming couplets, your Quest *movement clues*:

_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
_______________________________________________
Session 5: Handout B

Putting it all Together
After researching your settler, write a brief paragraph describing your settler’s life. Support your description with historical evidence.

Draw an illustration that reveals something you’ve learned about their life and times.
Session 6: Completing Our Quest

Focusing Question: What do we need to do to finish our Quest?

Overview: Students participate in a production session, where all of the Quest elements are completed: map; compass rose; movement clues; teaching clues; directions to the site; Quest box (with stamp, pad, sign-in book); thank you notes; marketing plan distribution plan; etc.

Topical Understandings:
- Editing
- Design
- Promotion
- Distribution

Materials: Paper, pencils, glue sticks, computers, a pair of compasses (artist) and various art materials for the box maker, book maker and stamp maker.

Time: One or two 30 - 40 minute periods. (Note: Could be completed as homework)

Procedures:
1. Revisit a sample Quest (online or in one of the Valley Quest books) with your students and encourage discussion about overall design, layout, graphics, etc. Tell the students that this is the time for them to pull together and work to bring their Quest to a final product. Set a deadline for the completion of tasks.

2. Assign students or small groups to the different tasks that will complete your Quest:

   Job title: Artist(s)
   - Challenge: Come up with a design for a Compass Rose that indicates North and utilizes elements/details/themes of your Quest site.
   - Procedures:
     - Sketch out the Compass Rose.
• Ink it with dark pen so that it will photocopy.
• Reduce image to the appropriate size for your publication
• **Materials:** paper, pencil, pen, examples of Compass Rose

The best compass roses will encrypt some elements of the story of your site.

**Job title: Poet(s)**

• **Challenge:** Review the “portions” of the Quest and work to improve flow, meter, and rhyme so that the quest fits together as a whole.
• **Procedure:**
  • Review clues
  • Edit to improve flow, meter, etc.
  • Spell check the entire document
  • Print out the final product
• **Materials:** Pen, paper, computer, dictionary, thesaurus

**Job title: Cartographer(s)**

• **Challenge:** Create the Quest Treasure Map, using student drawings, landmark drawings and other resources.
• **Procedures:**
  • Collect student drawings
  • Photocopy, darken and re-size as necessary
  • Lay out to “frame” the Quests map
  • Create site map utilizing community map, google map, world wide web or memory
  • And overlay student “landmark” drawings re-sized as appropriate
  • Insert compass rose
  • And add key, title, scale, etc. as appropriate
• **Materials:** Paper, pen, map resources, student art work

**Job title: Graphic Designer(s)**
• **Challenge:** Come up with a publication format/design that works best to present your Quest.
• **Procedures:**
  • Should there be a cover? What should it look like?
  • Compose the “To get there” instructions that steer visitors to the Quest site.
  • Consider the overall design: Where should the map and clues be placed? 
  • Create a statement from the group. “This Quest was created by…”, “because…”, and especially a “we’d like to thank…” section at the end.
• **Materials:** Paper, pens, colored pencils, crayons, copies of Quest map and clues.

**Job title: Archivist(s)**
• **Challenge:** Come up with a system to organize and store digital photographs and other materials used so you have a clear records and resource for others.
• **Procedures:**
  • Download pictures from camera
  • Scan primary or secondary sources
  • Create digital archive folder or files for the teacher
  • Burn on a CD and deliver to school librarian
  • Burn on a CD and deliver to your Historical Society

**Job title: Stamp Maker(s)**
• **Challenge:** Come up design and carve a rubber stamp for the Quest treasure box.
• **Procedures:**
  • Follow the instructions at [http://www.vitalcommunities.org/valleyquest/MakeAStamp.htm](http://www.vitalcommunities.org/valleyquest/MakeAStamp.htm)

**Job title: Book Artist(s)**
• **Challenge:** Make a guest book for your Quest treasure box.
• **Procedures:**
- Follow the instructions at: http://www.vitalcommunities.org/valleyquest/bookmaking.htm

**Job title: Publicist(s)**
- **Challenge:** Come up with a plan to share your Quest with the broader community: other classes, library patrons, day care centers, scout groups, etc.

**Job title: Appreciator(s)!**
- **Challenge:** Create thank you notes to acknowledge all the people (and organizations) who have helped you with your project.

3. Students share their work

4. Finally, finish the project with a CELEBRATION and CLOSING CIRCLE:
   - What did you learn?
   - What will you remember?
   - What was most important for you?
   - What excited you the most?
   - How did this project make you feel?