**Creating Essential Questions**

**Let’s start by looking at what an essential question is not:**

1. It is not a question that can be answered with a Yes or No.
2. It is not a question that can be answered with a Simple Google Search.
3. Is is not a vague questions that lacks clear focus.
4. Is is not a question that can be answered in one sentence.

Okay, so now that we have some idea of what it is not. Let’s look at what it is and what role it will play in your GENIUS HOUR PROJECT.

**The Essential Question**

An essential question guides your research. Think of it as a road map. It provides you with reference points if you start to veer off course. However, like any great road trip you may not always decide to stick exactly to the route that you originally created. Your essential question for your genius hour project does not have to be static. It can change, take on new directions as your genius hour project develops. However, please make sure to discuss any new changes to your essential question with your teacher.

**An essential question IS:**

1. It IS a question that guides your research.

2. It IS a question that will give your research a frame and a focus.

3. It IS clear and concise—or short and sweet.

4. It IS a question that tells your audience what your project will address.

5. It IS a question that has no single “right” answer.

**Examples of Essential Questions:**

1. **In the face of adversity, what causes some individuals to fail while others prevail?**
2. **In what ways does art reflect culture as well as shape it?**
3. **How and why do we provide checks and balances on government power?**
4. **Who “wins” and who “loses” when technology changes?**
5. **Can I provide water to people that don’t have it?**
6. **Does art reflect culture or create it?**
7. **Who am I as a member of the world’s community?**
8. **How could I design an app that people would want to purchase?**
9. **How do landforms, climate, and the location of natural resources affect the way people live and work?**