Choosing an Investigative Question

Understanding Goal
An Investigative Question is a broad learning goal, stated in student language, which engages and guides student inquiry. When students can answer the Investigative Question, they have accomplished the curriculum objective of the activity.

Background Information

- Good investigations guide students along a journey that points toward a landmark.
- Investigative Questions focus, challenge, and inspire students to answer the question.
- Investigative Questions help students know when they have arrived at the end of an exploration.

Examples:

- How can we realize social change over time?
- What did you learn about slave trades and auctions through studying the provided photographs?
- Who uses algebra on a regular basis and why?
- How do artists use color and line to communicate?
- What skills are needed to be a successful actor?
- Why did President Lincoln carry a $5 confederate bill around with him?
- Can the ideas of a few men provide for the rights and needs of everyone?
- What might Coca-Cola advertisements tell us about American people and culture?

Modified from two sources:
(1) http://www.primarysourcelearning.org/db/imagesdraw/images2.php

William Clark’s compass on chain
Brass, jasper, glass, paint

William Clark’s magnet, ca. 1802.
Iron, paint Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis,