

THE CRITICAL THINKING WORKBOOK

Games and Activities for Developing
CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS



What is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking is clear, rational, logical, and independent thinking. It's about improving thinking by analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing *how* we think. It also means thinking in a self-regulated and self-corrective manner. It's thinking on purpose!

Critical thinking involves mindful communication, problem-solving, and a freedom from bias or egocentric tendency. You can apply critical thinking to any kind of subject, problem, or situation you choose.

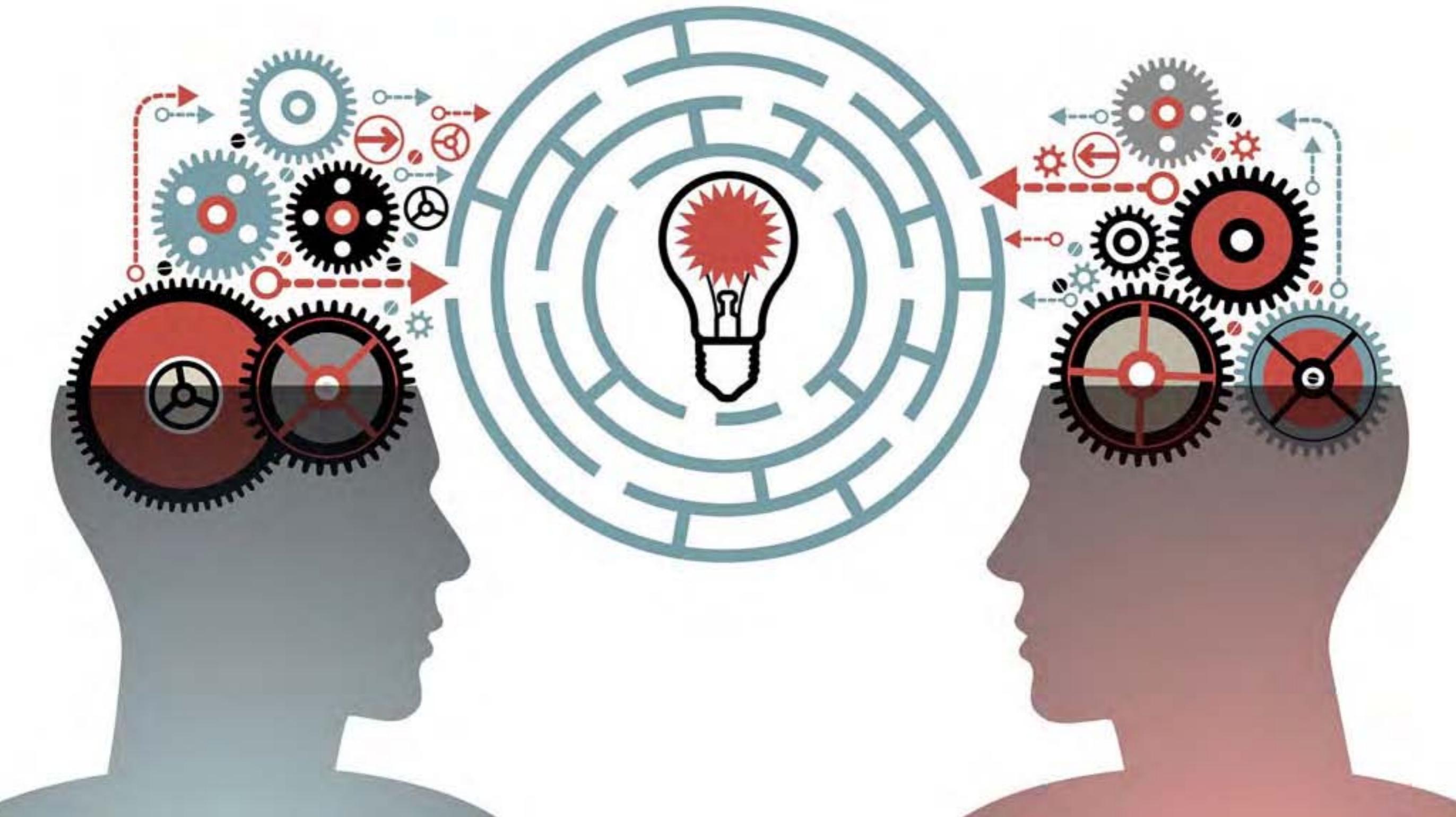
About This Workbook

The activity pages in the Critical Thinking Workbook are meant to be shared and explored. Use it as an electronic document or as worksheets.

You can either print off the pages and use them as activity sheets, or you can edit them directly right in the document on your computer.

There are also Answer Keys for the activities that need them provided at the back of the book. Now, go get thinking!

Activities for
COMMUNICATION



FACT or OPINION?

This exercise is about differentiating between fact and opinion. A **fact** can be *proven either true or false*. An **opinion** is an *expression of feeling or point-of-view and cannot be proven true or false*.

The teacher will create some statements that are either fact or opinion. If it's a fact, check on **F** and then briefly explain how it can be proven. If it's an opinion, check on **O** and briefly explain why you feel it can't be proven. Compare answers with your friends and share your views with each other.

Statement:

Reasoning:

1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
5. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
6. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
7. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
8. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
9. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____
10. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> O	_____

COFFEE HOUSE CHAT



Use this one for role-playing and interpersonal communication skills. Fill out the character sheet below to create a persona. Next, the class should be given an historical event or current issue related to the lesson to discuss. Students should also get some time to do some research, and to think about how they want to represent their character's views.

The class will split into groups. What follows will be a 20 min. cafe-style conversation about the chosen topic. Be sure to practice things like being open-minded and disagreeing respectfully.

Character Name: _____ Age: ____ Gender: _____ Marital Status: _____

Occupation: _____ Education Level: _____ Hobbies: _____

Create a brief background for your character:

Research notes for your chat:



Work on some skills using metaphor and choosing words carefully with this fun, challenging exercise. Imagine you live in a world where there are **only 10 words you can ever use**. You can repeat them as much as you want, but you *can't ever use any other words*. Write down the 10 words you'd choose.

Next, make sentences with them in order to communicate something to your group. Use feeling and gesture to help them understand you. You can measure their understanding by writing your actual intended meaning below the sentence. Remember, you've only got 10 words to use, so choose them well!

Your 10 words:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Create sentences with them here:

1. _____
Actual meaning: _____
2. _____
Actual meaning: _____
3. _____
Actual meaning: _____
4. _____
Actual meaning: _____
5. _____
Actual meaning: _____
6. _____
Actual meaning: _____



Time for some great debates! In this exercise, students will learn the importance of being able to take a stance on an issue and defending that stance with logic, reasoning, knowledge, and common sense.

Below is a list of scenarios to present for students to discuss and debate. They are based primarily on ethics and morality. They will encourage students to take a stand and defend their viewpoint. These can be done in pairs, but are much more compelling in larger class debates where views are divided. They can also be used as individual worksheets—students can circle an answer and then explain their choice in writing.

1. Richard finds an expensive looking ring in the school hallway one day. It has no name on it, and it's not near anyone's locker.
Should he: **A)** Give it to lost and found **B)** Ask if it belongs to anyone there **C)** Keep it and not say anything
2. Judy's friend is stressed about an upcoming test. Judy already took the test and got 100%, so she knows all the answers already.
Should she: **A)** Just give the answers to her friend **B)** Use her knowledge to coach her friend **C)** Not get involved at all
3. Coach Nelson has caught two of his star basketball players vandalizing school property. The rule is that they must be suspended. If that happens their team loses the upcoming semi-finals. If the coach keeps quiet they'll surely win, but he could lose his job.
Should the coach: **A)** Suspend the two players and obey the rules **B)** Pretend he never saw them
4. Nick overhears two students bragging about having posted some inappropriate images of a female student online for a joke.
Should he: **A)** Mind his own business **B)** Report the incident to the school principal **C)** Confront the boys and defend the student
5. You witness a bank robbery, and follow the perpetrator down an alleyway. He stops at an orphanage and gives them all the money.
Would you: **A)** Report the man to police since he committed a crime **B)** Leave him alone because you saw him do a good deed
6. A friend tells you that he/she has been receiving anonymous bullying messages online. You suspect that certain people are guilty.
Would you: **A)** Tell your friend just to ignore them **B)** Encourage them to report the abuse **C)** Risk confronting the ones you suspect

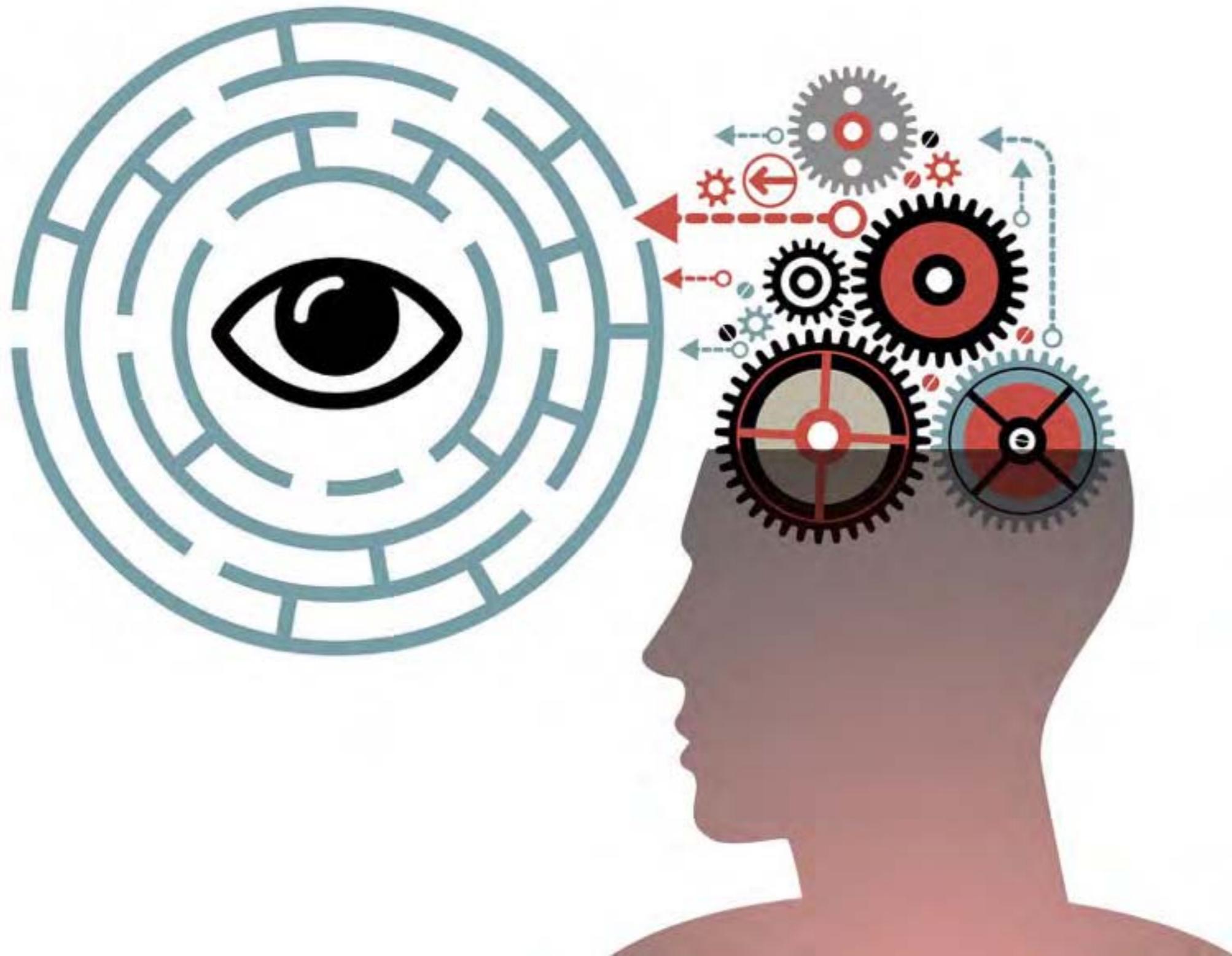
SILENT SHARING

Here is an exercise for visualization and non-verbal communication. It involves conversing with writing and drawing to develop reflection and deliberate thinking.

Break into groups of 2 or 3. Each person gets their own sheet (or create one big one for the team). The teacher will provide an essential driving question to ponder. Write it at the top of the sheet. Next, reflect on the question and then begin "talking" about it using only writing and sketching in your space.

The Essential Question: _____

Activities for
THINKING VISUALLY



REBUS ROUNDUP

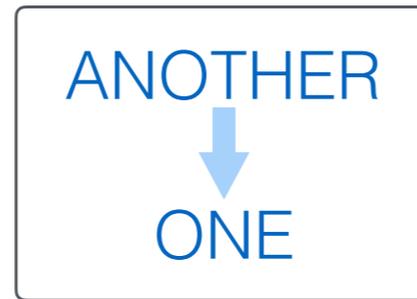
Rebus puzzles use visuals that put a different spin on words or parts of words that are well known. Figure out the word or phrase for each of these rebus puzzles and write it underneath.



1 _____



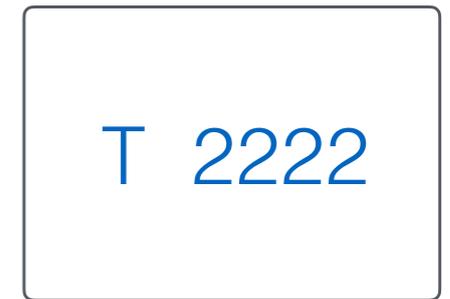
2 _____



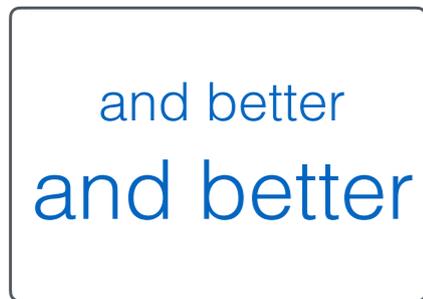
3 _____



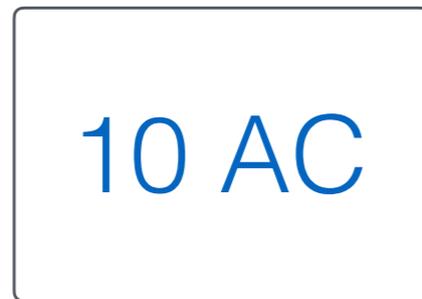
4 _____



5 _____



6 _____



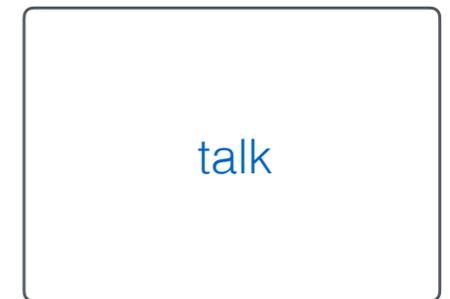
7 _____



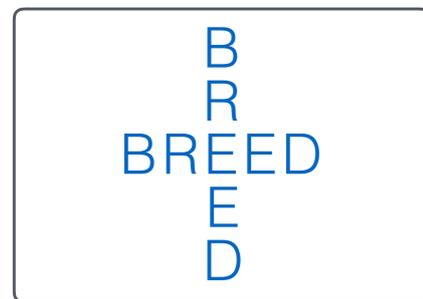
8 _____



9 _____



10 _____



11 _____



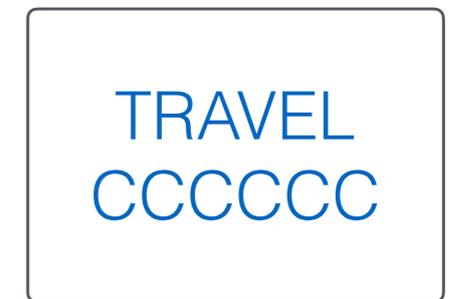
12 _____



13 _____



14 _____



15 _____



16 _____



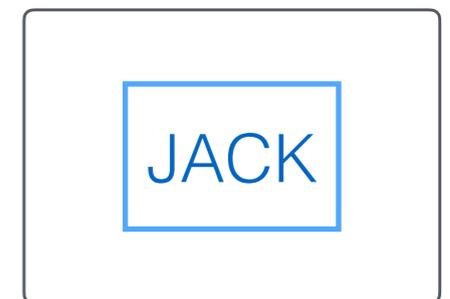
17 _____



18 _____



19 _____



20 _____

TOTAL RECALL

Look at the objects and words on the page for 1 minute. Next, try to write down everything you remember seeing and reading on the page. If you're doing this one as a colour print-off, try recalling the specific colour of each word and shape too, if you can.



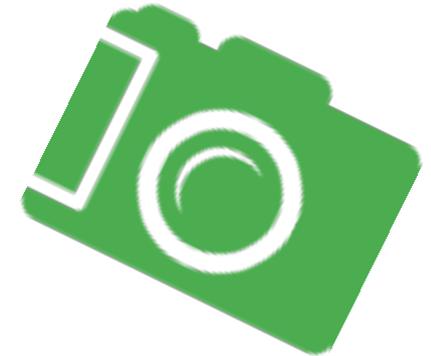
LUNCH



EAST



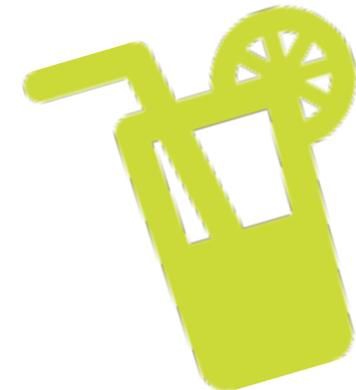
SUMMER



RIGHT



VACATION



RAINBOW



WINTER



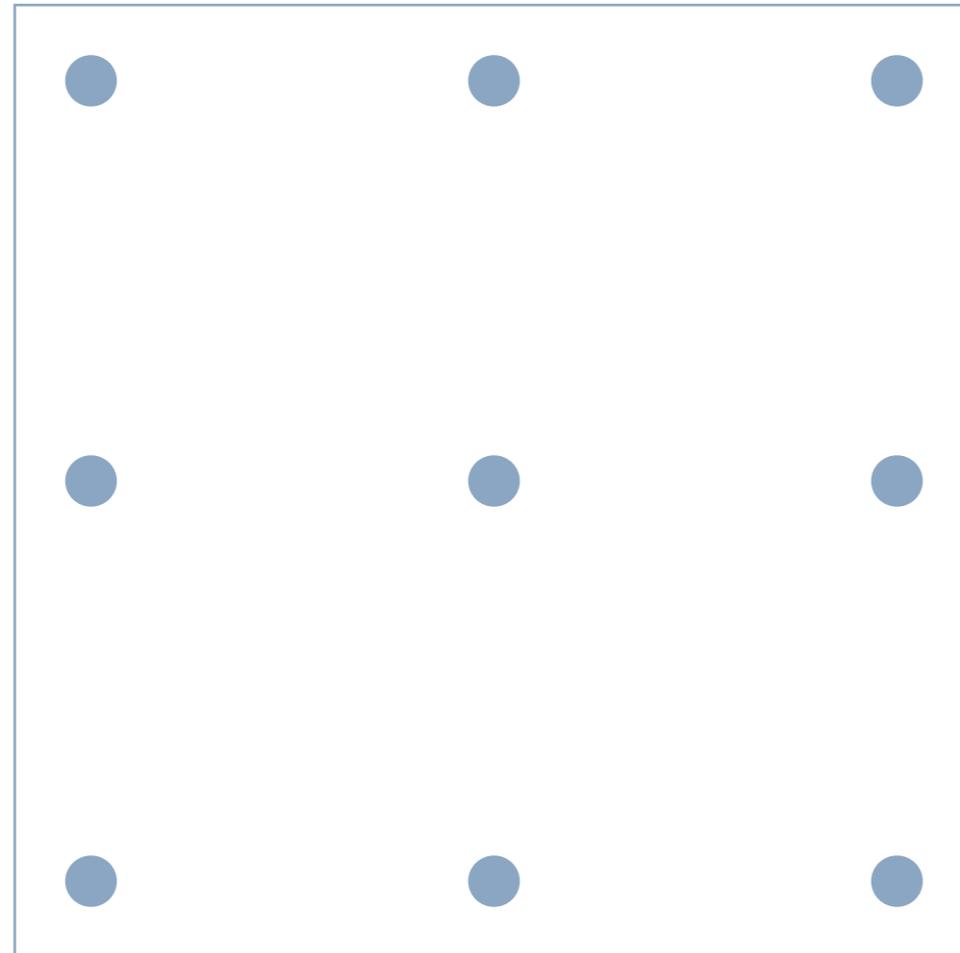
SUNGLASSES

WEST



4/9 CONNECT

Connect these 9 dots using *only four lines*, and *without lifting your pencil from the paper*.
(**Hint:** Think beyond real and imaginary boundaries with this puzzle.)



CRAZY CAPTIONS

Put in your own creative wording for each of these images. You can write some dialog between the characters, write a single-line caption, or turn the image into a clever meme. Keep it short and witty!













MEANINGS IN MIND

Write *one sentence* to explain what each common image or symbol means to you. The idea here is to move away from conventional meanings and relate to the images personally.















AWESOME ANAGRAMS

Anagrams are words and sentences that can be written different ways to obtain more words or groups of words. Create new words by rearranging the letters in the ones below—some can be tricky!

SPEAR

REWARD

LEAST

REINS

PASTE

MISTER

TRACES

PLATES

SPREAD

POST

PLAYER

NAME

SKATE

SNAP

LEAP

PARTIES

RATES

RESTRAIN

PASS

TEAM

EAST

Activities for
INDIVIDUAL SKILLS



YOU NAME IT

Answer each question for each list below. To make it more challenging, try answering as quickly as you can against another person.

Name 3 people that:

1. Talk more than you

2. Talk less than you

3. Work hard

4. You think are smart

5. Wear costumes

6. Are teachers

7. Travel a lot

8. Are always nice to you

9. Have a job you'd love to do

10. Are very creative

Name 3 places that:

1. Have good food

2. You would like to visit

3. Have lots of mountains

4. Are always warm

5. You don't want to visit ever

6. Are not on Earth

7. Have a lot of technology

8. People haven't fought in wars

9. Have a lot of pollution

10. Are famous all over the world

Name 3 things that:

1. Are square

2. Are orange

3. Smell good

4. Live in the water

5. Taste terrible

6. You enjoy doing

7. You don't enjoy doing

8. People read

9. You see at school every day

10. Scare you

1001 WAYS

This is a brainstorming exercise. The class writes everyday objects on slips of paper and places all the slips in a box. You each draw a slip from the box, and the activity begins on a 15 min. timer. You must now come up with as many *new uses for your object as you can*. Write them down or sketch them out in the box—be as creative as you can! (You can also do this exercise in pairs or groups)

My Object: _____

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?

This exercise is designed to help you think laterally and discover new ways of looking at the world. Answer these questions using creative and constructive thinking. You can use as much detail as you like. For fun, try to think of your own "What Would Happen?" questions!

What would happen if ...

... there were suddenly no computers, tablets, or phones of any kind anywhere on Earth?

... we had to live in a world without electricity?

... you woke up one morning to discover you had changed into a cartoon character?

... all the animals in the world could suddenly communicate with us in our own language?

... you discovered your best friend was a superhero?

EXPLAIN YOURSELF

How would you describe the following things and their sensations to someone who had never seen or experienced them before? Use all your senses in your descriptions!

A bunch of flowers

An automobile

A rainstorm

A laptop computer

A piece of chocolate

A rock concert

A hug from someone

A favourite place of yours

YOU KNOW THE RULES

The rules and laws we have in life are meant to guide us and protect us, and to keep order in our society. Imagine that you get to make 3 rules that *everyone in the world must follow*. What rules would you make and why?

Rule No. 1 _____

I chose this rule because:

Rule No. 2 _____

I chose this rule because:

Rule No. 3 _____

I chose this rule because:

SKETCH THEM OUT

Everything around you—cars, buildings, even our personal electronic devices—all started with an idea. This is an exercise in *creative visualization*. In the space below, sketch out an idea for an invention or a concept you think would be cool. Some ideas are provided, but feel free to come up with your own.

Suggestions

- *A portable source for charging a smartphone*
- *A traffic system that doesn't rely on colours*
- *A machine that turns trash into energy*
- *A "green" vehicle*
- *An all-new method of personal transportation*
- *A new immersive gaming system*
- *An idea for a tablet or smartphone app*
- *A challenging and fun new idea for a sport*
- *A clever design for an interior space*
- *An idea for a social networking domain*

My Inventive Idea: _____



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



STRANGE INTERVIEW



Pair up with a partner and test each other with these fun and challenging “job interview” questions. This one is all about lateral thinking and common-sense viewpoints. It’s also about active listening!

1. A man buys a new car and goes home to tell his wife. He goes the wrong way up a one-way street, nearly runs into 7 people, goes onto the sidewalk, and takes a shortcut through a park. A policeman sees all this and still doesn’t arrest him. Why not?
2. If you had a machine that could generate one million dollars a day, what would you be willing to pay for it?
3. Why is it against the law for a person living in New York to be buried in California?
4. One house is made of red bricks, one of blue bricks, one of yellow bricks, and one of purple bricks. What is the green house made of?
5. A little girl kicks a soccer ball. It goes 10 feet and comes back to her. How is this possible?
6. In South Africa you can’t take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not?
7. You drive past a bus stop and see 3 people waiting for the bus: an old lady who is about to die, an old friend who saved your life, and your perfect partner. Knowing you can only have one passenger in your car, what would you do?
8. How much dirt is there in a hole 3 feet deep, 6 feet long, and 4 feet wide?
9. If it took 8 men 10 hours to build a wall, how long would it take 4 men to build the same wall?
10. How far can you walk into the woods?
11. How many books can you put in an empty backpack?
12. Your friend says he can predict the exact score of every football game before it begins. He's right every time. How is that possible?



WORST CASE SCENARIO

In a crisis situation, teamwork is crucial to handling challenges effectively. Fabricate a scenario in which students need to work together and solve problems to succeed (ex: stranded on a deserted island, being lost at sea, etc.). The rule is that every team member must contribute an idea for a possible solution.

For example, they could come up with a list of items that would help them survive, or think of a plan to find shelter or build it. Students can then vote and agree to a final solution.



TRAIN of TALL TALES

Form into a circle and give everyone a unique picture of a person, place, object, or animal. One person begins a story that uses whatever happens to be on their photo as the focus. The next person continues the story by adding something related to their photo. This exercise gets funny and challenging!



PAPER TOWER

This fun collaborative team-building exercise develops aspects of Solution, Creativity, and Collaboration Fluency. Each group constructs a free-standing tower out of newspaper and tape. There isn't a time limit for this exercise, unless you want to establish one.

It encourages critical thinking and problem-solving. Which team can build the tallest, structurally sound free-standing tower? Throughout the process, students will start to realize there are questions they have that they didn't ask. This is a perfect time to get them to explore how to answer these questions for themselves.



CLASS MINEFIELD

This is an exercise based on building communication and trust between people. Arrange a challenging obstacle course and place students into teams. They get to take turns navigating the minefield you've built while blindfolded, with only their teammates verbally guiding them. You can also require students to use only specific words or clues to make it harder, and switch the minefield around for each team.

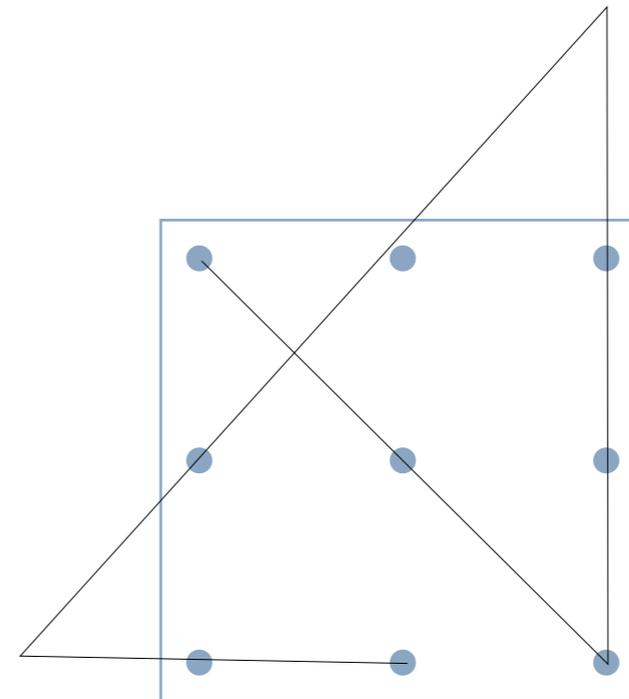
Answer Key

REBUS ROUNDUP

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Split decision | 11. Cross breed |
| 2. Middle age | 12. Half-hearted |
| 3. One after another | 13. Mixed metaphor |
| 4. Editor in chief | 14. Sideshow |
| 5. Tea for two | 15. Travel overseas |
| 6. Bigger and better | 16. Top secret |
| 7. Tennessee | 17. Painless operation |
| 8. Moral support | 18. Get up and go |
| 9. Forget it | 19. Small talk |
| 10. Small talk | 20. Jack in the box |

4/9 CONNECT

Start experimenting with lines that extend outside the square, and the answer comes quickly. Here is a solution: if the dots are numbered 1 through 9 from left to right, draw a line from dot 1 through 5 to 9, then up through 6 and 3 and outside of the box, then back down through 2 and 4, then right through 7 and 8. This will allow you to create other solutions based on these rules



AWESOME ANAGRAMS

Spear

pare
parse
pears
reaps
spare

Reward

drawer
redraw
warder
warred

Least

slate
stale
steal
tales
teals

Reins

resin
rinse
risen
siren

Paste

tapes
peats
septa
spate

Mister

merits
miters
mitres
remit
timers

Traces

carets
caters
caster
crates
reacts
recast

Plates

pare
parse
pears
reaps
spare

Spread

drawer
redraw
warder
warred

Post

opts
pots
stop
tops

Player

parley
pearly
replay

Name

amen
mane
mean

Skate

stake
steak
takes
teaks

Snap

naps
pans
span

Leap

pale
peal
plea

Parties

pastier
pirates
traipse

Rates

aster
stare
taser
tears

Restrain

retrains
strainer
terrains
trainers

Pass

asps
saps
spas

Team

mate
meat
tame

East

eats
sate
seat
teas

STRANGE INTERVIEW

1. The man was walking.
2. Why pay for the machine if you already have it?
3. Burying people who are still alive is a crime.
4. Glass panels.
5. She kicked it straight up into the air.
6. You can't take a picture with a wooden leg; you have to use a camera.
7. Give the car keys to your friend, and let him take the old woman to the hospital. Then stay behind and wait for the bus with your perfect partner.
8. None—otherwise it wouldn't be a hole.
9. The wall is already built; no need for anyone to build it again.
10. Halfway—after that, you're walking out of the woods.
11. You only need one; then the backpack isn't empty.
12. The score before any football game begins is 0:0.

Great students deserve great lessons.

Students are the new critical thinkers. Now that you've explored activities for critical thinking skills, it's time to take the next step in really engaging your students.

The **Solution Fluency Activity Planner** is the place to be for developing top-notch lesson plans for eager young minds. The Activity Planner lets you:

- Access thousands of inquiry and PBL units
- Create your own custom lesson plans
- Align with your curricular standards
- Collaborate with global educators



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