

Resources

Activity Sheet: enlarged copy of **My Magical Thinking Potion** 🎧

Teacher instructions: **The Good Thinker Game** 🎧

Activity cards: one set of **The Good Thinker Game Cards** 🎧

20 Dispositions of an active Thinker and Learner 🎧

Good Thinker Certificates 🎧

You will need to find: A soft toy, to be named 'Brains'

Tune in!



Activity: What's in my head?

- Tell your pupils they are going to learn about some of the types of thinking that our amazing brains can do. Explain that thinking is often private – it happens secretly in our heads and no one else can know exactly what we're thinking about – but it's important to talk about it so we make sure we're using our brains really well.
- Invite your class to guess what you're thinking. After a few guesses, reveal the answer by completing the sentence, 'Inside my head, I am thinking about ...'
- With your pupils in a circle, ask them to take turns to step forward and say, 'Inside ____'s head, he/she was thinking about ... *(repeating what the previous person said)* Inside my head, I am thinking of ...' Try to keep the pace fast.

Heads together

'Heads together' Introductory session

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Investigate



Thinking and Learning Tool: Learning about thinking

- Introduce Brains, your soft toy, who is coming to these lessons because he's a really good thinker.
- Explain that not everyone knows what a good thinker is or has the confidence to believe they can be good at thinking, so you're going to create a magical potion, full of good thinking ingredients, to remind everyone of what's needed to become good thinkers like Brains.
- Display an enlarged copy of the sheet 'My Magical Thinking Potion'. Pretend to ask Brains to help get you started by suggesting 3 ingredients:
 - Ideas – good thinkers need to be prepared to come up with lots of ideas
 - Courage – good thinkers are brave and share their ideas and thoughts
 - Mistakes – good thinkers know that mistakes are important as this is often the way you do your best learning
- Discuss each of these and add them to the picture. Ask your pupils for their own ideas.
- Follow the instructions provided to play the 'Good Thinker' game.



The type of ingredients you're hoping to include are simpler versions of the ideas listed on the sheet '20 Dispositions of an Active Thinker and Learner', e.g.:

- Questions – good thinkers are curious and ask questions about the world
- Effort – good thinkers keep trying and don't give up when things feel hard

Find a way of linking all your pupils' ideas to the discussion at hand. Emphasise the fact that everyone can learn to be a better thinker, no matter how old they are or how clever they feel.

Now reflect!

Questions to consider could include:

- What have we learnt about good thinkers?
- In what ways are you a good thinker? (Your pupils could take it in turns to say something positive about themselves, completing the sentence: 'I am a good thinker because I ...')
- How could you be a better thinker? What are you going to try to do?

Keep thinking

Make a copy of the class's good thinking potion and send this home so that families can see and discuss the type of attitudes and habits that you hope to encourage. Further ideas can be brought in and added to the display.

Follow-up ideas

Unlike the following six lessons, there is no curriculum follow-up for the 'Habits' lesson. However, you may still like to try some of the following:

- Talk about the importance of exercise for our bodies and use this as a way of introducing a discussion about how to exercise our brains. Ask your pupils for their ideas. Ian Gilbert  explains, 'To grow your brain, give it the equivalent of a full regular workout – feed it with information through all the senses. See new sights, taste new tastes, smell new smells, feel new ... feels.' You might like to keep a wall chart to record 'New things we've noticed today'.
- Involve Brains in lessons wherever possible. He could be asked to offer advice when pupils are stuck and to give suggestions and ideas. Challenge your class to read his mind when they're faced with a particular situation, encouraging them to put themselves in the position of a 'good thinker' and come up with the ideas themselves.
- To reinforce the dispositions, play the 'Good Thinker Game' again, giving different cards to different pupils.
- Use the 'Good Thinker Certificates' to reward pupils for displaying the sort of traits discussed.

Suggestions for display



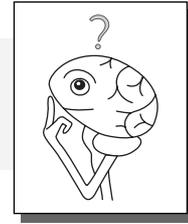
Make a large picture of a cauldron, with the pupils' ideas on individually named 'think clouds' above it. Refer to these during other lessons and discussions.

Further resources

There are many excellent resources to support the development of positive thinking and learning habits. See Chapter Six in Part One for a list of recommended books and websites.



For a highly original approach to thinking about thinking by try: *Little Owl's Book of Thinking* by Ian Gilbert (2004), Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing.



Resources

Poster: enlarged copy of **Star Questions**

Activity sheet: individual copies of **Star Questions about ...**

Poster: enlarged copy of **Questioning for Understanding**

Activity sheet: one copy between two of the **Questioning for Understanding Picture sheet**

Teacher instructions: **Questioning for Understanding sample dialogues**

You will need to find: your class's soft toy, Brains

Tune in



Activity: Star Questions

- Ask your class to recall ways in which Brains is a good thinker. Remind them that asking questions is an important thinking ingredient, as good thinkers are curious about the world around them and want to understand it.
- With your pupils standing in a circle, show them the poster 'Star Questions' and read the 6 question words. Invite someone to volunteer to stand in the middle.
- Taking it in turns, the first 6 pupils jump forward, clap and call out a question about the volunteer. Each should begin with a different starter word from the star. The person in the middle should try to answer the questions.
- After 6 questions, the seventh person takes over in the middle. Try to keep the pace fast.

Heads together

This lesson:	Philosophy for Children, 'Generating the Question Session'	Page xx
Curriculum lesson:	Philosophy for Children, 'Discussion Session'	Page xx
Discussion skill:	Being brave with ideas. Encourage your class to speak up, to have confidence and to share their thoughts without fearing others' response	

Investigate



Thinking and Learning Tool: Questioning for Understanding



- Explain that Brains has discovered that some questions are particularly useful in helping him understand and find out about things. This activity teaches one of his favourite questioning routines.
- Display the sheet 'Questioning for Understanding' and read out the 3 question steps.
- Give out copies of the first photograph and ask your pupils to look closely at it as there are all sorts of things that they might notice. Begin by giving an example, e.g. 'I notice that ... it's someone's birthday'. Can anyone explain how you knew this was true?
- What else do your pupils notice? Where appropriate, follow up their comments with one or both of the other questions. The sample dialogues show how to probe for further evidence and reasoning. If a child is unsure about how to answer, open the question up to everyone.
- Repeat with the second picture.
- Praise everyone for their good thinking and point out how much more they discovered about the pictures by using this routine than if they had simply looked at it normally.



For this activity, you may prefer to ask each child in turn or simply allow pupils to put forward ideas as and when they have them.

Now reflect!

Questions to consider could include:

- Why is asking questions something that good thinkers like to do?
- Can you think of any times when it's particularly important to ask questions?
- What other things in the classroom could we use for our 'Questioning for Understanding' routine?

Keep thinking

Invite your pupils to choose any topic, e.g. dinosaurs or outer space, and think of 6 interesting 'Star Questions' about it. Record these using the 'Star Questions about ...' sheet. Photocopy onto thin card, so they can be rotated when displayed with a drawing pin through the centre.

Follow-up ideas

Curriculum-based lesson

'Star Questions' helps pupils begin to explore almost any new subject and encourages them to direct the course of their own learning. Introduce your topic by inviting the class to think of 6 'Star Questions' they'd like to ask. At the end of the topic, your pupils can check whether they've answered all their original questions.

The 'Questioning for Understanding' routine is excellent for encouraging observation skills and a deeper level of thinking. For example, it could be used in:

- English – to talk about a short story, nursery rhyme or poem.
- History/Religious Studies – to investigate an artefact.
- Art – to learn to explore a painting.
- Geography – to discuss a photograph of a scene from another country.

Suggestions for display

- ✂ Display the class's 'Star Questions' about a new topic and add answers, in the form of pictures or simple statements, whenever these are found.

Notes for use by other year groups

While 'Star Questions' is designed to introduce younger pupils to questioning and is replaced by 'Asking Thinking Questions' in Year 3, the 'Questioning for Understanding' routine can be used at any level and across the whole curriculum. For instance, use it to:

- explore a passage from a class novel
- analyse a scientific experiment
- generate ideas about a picture of a geographical phenomenon such as a volcano

By experiencing this sort of routine frequently at school, your pupils will learn to support their observations automatically with explanations and hypotheses. Extend this with older pupils by developing other questioning routines and getting more able pupils to invent versions of their own.

Further resources

This routine was adapted from ideas developed by Project Zero, a research and development group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Further examples can be found on their 'Visible Thinking' website at: www.pz.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/01_VisibleThinkingInAction/01a_VTInAction.html.

