

Thinker's Keys - A Summary

A range of question starters are presented as keys to unlocking the analytical, critical and creative thinking abilities of students.

The Reverse	Places words such as “cannot”, “never” and “would not” in sentences which are commonly displayed in a list. (eg Things you would never see in a boat)
The What If	You can ask virtually any what if question, serious or frivolous. Record thinking on a graphic organiser.
The Alphabet	Students compile a list of words from A to Z which have some relevance to a given category which features in the area of study.
The BAR	Use this to improve on the design of everyday objects. B = Bigger, A = Add, R = Remove or Replace.
The Construction	A problem solving task that requires the creative use of limited quantities of everyday materials.
The Disadvantages	Here, students choose an object or a practice, and list of a number of its disadvantages. Then they list some ways of connecting or eliminating these disadvantages.
Different Uses	Students put their imaginations to work as they list some widely different uses for a chosen object from an area of study.
The Prediction	Students think critically as they predict possible outcomes to a set of given circumstances or a particular situation.
The Picture	A simple diagram which has no relevance to the area of study is presented and the students then try to work out ways in which it could be linked with that area of study.
The Ridiculous	Make a ridiculous statement that would be virtually impossible to implement and then have students attempt to substantiate it.
The Commonality	Select two objects with little to do with each other and ask students to find points of commonality.
The Inventions	Students are encouraged to develop inventions which are constructed in an unusual manner or using unusual materials.
The Alternatives	Students list ways in which to complete a task without using the normal tools or implements.
The Question	Start with the answer, and try to list 5 questions which could be linked with that answer.
The Brainstorming	State a problem which needs to be solved and have students brainstorm a list of solutions.
Forced Relationship	Students develop a solution to a problem by considering the attributes of a number of dissimilar objects.
The Combination	Students list the attributes of two unmatched objects, and then combine the attributes to create a new or better product.
Interpretation	Describe an unusual situation and then ask students to think of some different explanations for the existence of that situation.
The Brick Wall	Make a statement which could not generally be questioned or disputed, and then try to break down the wall by finding other ways of dealing with the situation.
The Variations	Students find many ways to overcome an obstacle or solve a problem.