



Activity Pack 1: Imagine



Activity for Grades 3-5

Thomas Edison once said, "To have a great idea is to have a lot of them."

Brainstorming is a key part of this stage in the creative process. In fact, brainstorming remains one of the most effective creative thinking techniques in use today. The primary cornerstone to brainstorming is the absence of judgment or criticism. All ideas, no matter how non-traditional, have the right to exist at this stage. This is particularly valuable for those students who lack the confidence to publicly share their ideas.

A comfortable, collaborative environment can help to inspire students during the "imagine" phase. Invite students to sit on beanbag chairs instead of at desks, in groups instead of by themselves, outdoors rather than inside the school, or listening to music instead of working in silence.

This year's *Doodle 4 Google* competition theme is: If I could invent one thing to make the world a better place. We can think of no greater purpose for students to show their creativity than to make the world better for others. It all starts with a little imagination!

Pass Me Your Ideas!

In this activity, students create new uses for common objects and use their imaginations and the brain writing strategy to help them generate creative ideas for how to make the world a better place.

Strategy: With brain writing, each group member is given one sheet of paper with a question or a prompt on it. Students are then given one minute to write or draw ideas that relate to the question or prompt. After one minute, each group member passes his or her paper to the group member on the left. He or she reads the ideas previously written and has another minute to write down more ideas. Students can use the ideas already written as triggers for new ones, or they can ignore them altogether. This process is repeated until everyone has his or her original sheet back. Ideas are then read aloud and discussed. Groups are encouraged to continue generating and writing ideas throughout the discussion. It's important that students are encouraged to come up with as many ideas as possible, no matter how silly or unlikely they seem. You will want to make sure students support all answers with no judgments. Brain writing ensures that all students have a chance to participate and often eliminates the nervousness students have when asked to share ideas verbally. Note: Depending on the makeup of your class, brain writing can be done as a whole class or students can be divided into smaller groups.

You Will Need:

- Three to four common objects such as a paper clip, plastic water bottle, rubber band, fork, fly swatter, tennis ball, playing card, Lego block, pair of chopsticks, sponge, straw
- A pack of Post-It Notes®
- Paper
- Pencils or markers

- Stopwatch or other timing device
 - Computers or tablets (optional)
 - Access to the Internet (optional)
1. Divide students into groups, and distribute a common object (see materials list) to each group. Explain that their challenge is to come up with as many uses as possible for the object (other than what it is traditionally used for) in two minutes. One student should list answers. After two minutes, each object will move to the next group and the exercise will be repeated using the new object.
 2. After all objects have rotated to all groups, invite students to identify and present what they believe to be their most original or interesting use for each object. Groups that can't reach consensus can present more than one. Present answers and allow students to evaluate which group generated the most creative answers. To help students understand the concept, you may also want to evaluate the most creative answers or come up with a list of your own.
 3. Ask students what they used to come up with these new and different uses for common objects. They used their imaginations! Our imagination is what allows us to create things that may not already exist or new uses for existing objects. Tell students that many of the things they use every day, such as skateboards and dolls, came from someone's imagination. If no one had imagined them, they would not exist.
 4. Hold up a pack of Post-It® notes (or other common object used to help people). Explain that the Post-It® note was created by a man named Arthur Fry in 1974. He was a singer in his church choir and had trouble keeping his page open to the right place. Each time he would use a piece of paper to hold his place in the hymnal, it would fall out. He had heard about an adhesive that a co-worker at 3M developed that would allow paper to stick but easily be pulled off. He imagined a way to use the weak adhesive and his bookmark to hold his place in his hymnal. He tried it and it worked! He took his idea to 3M and his creative ideas turned into an invention. His original idea for a product to help himself has helped people all over the world.
 5. Explain that imagination can also help us take existing ideas and make them better. Since the first Post-It® note was first created, for example, people have improved it with new sizes, new colors, and new types of paper. Ask students if they can think of other ways this idea could be improved upon.
 6. Write the question for this year's *Doodle 4 Google* competition on a chalkboard, electronic whiteboard or flip chart: If I could invent one thing to make the world a better place, what would it be? You may want to explain the competition to students at this time. Information and previous entries can be viewed at www.google.com/doodle4google.
 7. Explain that creative thinking can often come from collaborating with others through

brainstorming. If students do not know what brainstorming is, explain that it is an exercise where participants try to come up with as many answers as they can to a question or prompt in a specific period of time. The goal is to come up with lots of answers. Brainstorming is like stretching our brains! There are no bad answers! All answers are accepted during brainstorming, even ones that don't seem likely or possible.

8. Arrange students so that they are in a circle with group members at a table, in desks, or on the floor with a writing surface. Distribute a sheet of white paper to each student. Ask them to write the following prompt in the center of their papers: The world would be better if _____.
9. Explain that they will have 30 seconds to write as many answers to the prompt on their sheet of paper as they want. You may want to add time during later rounds so that students have time to read the answers on their papers. They can either write words or draw pictures. Remind them that all answers are acceptable, no matter how unlikely or silly they seem.
10. When students are ready, set your timer for 30 seconds and say, "go." After 30 seconds, instruct all students to pass their papers to the left. Continue this process until each student has or her original paper back.
11. Give students an opportunity to review all of the answers on their papers.
12. To ensure that all ideas are shared, you may want to display all papers in the room. Or you can simply invite each student to share the three favorite ideas written on his or her paper with the class. Ask students how brain writing helped them to come up with creative ideas they may not have thought of on their own.
13. Refer students back to the competition question. Ask them to consider all of the answers they have written and read. Ask them to choose the one they would most like to use to help them make the world better.
14. Finally, ask each student to complete the competition prompt: If I could invent one thing to make the world a better place, I would _____.

Take It Digital!

Students can brainstorm electronically with these creative apps!

- **Bubl:** Bubbl.us is a simple and free web application that lets students brainstorm online by creating mind maps. To view examples, learn how to use bubbl.us or simply start brainstorming, go to <https://bubbl.us/>.
- **Popplet:** Used as a mind-map, Popplet helps students think and learn visually. Students can capture facts, thoughts, and images and learn to create relationships between them. For a tutorial on Popplet, go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8N6lbC_VCk.
- **SyncSpace:** SyncSpace is a collaborative whiteboard app available for tablets. Students can use SyncSpace to create drawings and documents on tablets. They can create using free-hand drawing tools, using typing tools, or a combination of the two tool sets. Drawings and documents can be sent to and synced with other users so that they can comment and edit.

Extension:

We often hear it said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. In addition to brainstorming, our ideas are often inspired by the creations of others. Encourage students to bring in several objects or images that spark their imagination. Have students present their objects or images and explain what inspires them. Students can then use these as springboards for the Create activity, Shades of Greatness, as well as other writing or drawing projects.