

Creative Thinking Exercises

25 ways to stimulate creative thinking! Use as energisers or create variations to fit in with specific workshops.

1.

New Television Commercial

Create a 15 second commercial for a new product, which jams Sony Walkmans in public places. You can think of a slogan, the music you might use and the images you would show.

2.

Contrasts and Possibilities

Using the phrases below, think of examples that might be possible.

- Something or someone not dead but not alive.
- Something or someone both hot and cold.
- Something or someone both right and wrong.
- Something or someone both old and new.
- Something or someone comfortable but uncomfortable.
- Something or someone both sad and happy.

3.

Stimulus: "Start the Story"

Read the last paragraph of the story below. Briefly describe what happened at the beginning to result in this ending.

So Susan married the vicar and they moved to the priory at Borchester. John moved back to London and became a recluse, concentrating on his writing. He never saw Andrea again. No one did.

4.

Creative Word Association Football

Using each of the starter words below allow yourself to roam freely based on words which come to mind because of the sounds or images in your head.

Starter words:

CAT MONEY BICYCLE CAR SAUSAGE BABY

5.

Black Box

You are presented with a black box (cube) measuring 6" x 6" x 6". You have ten questions you may ask to find out its contents. Which would **you** choose?

6.

Onomatopoeia

These are words, which sound like the things they describe, for example, click, hiss etc. Invent some new words to describe the following concepts:

- The taste in your mouth next morning with a hangover.
- A clapped out old car.
- A miserable rainy day
- An exciting new idea.
- An attractive member of the opposite sex.
- A massive pay rise.

7.

Metaphors

Metaphors are creative ideas that allow us to think in different ways through analogy and comparison. Try out the following.

- How is life like a fun fair?
- Your children like a rose garden?
- Your boss like a pair of shoes?
- What musical instruments best describe you?
- If you were an animal, which would it be?
- How is your organisation like a hospital?
- How is happiness like a puppy?
- How is life like a hot curry?
- How is work like a vacuum cleaner?
- How is the truth like a dictionary?

8.

Looking For Patterns

Take some old newspapers or magazines and cut out about 20 to 30 items that catch your eye. Now sort these into 3 to 5 piles based on the common patterns. Write these down.

Sort them again in a different way.

9.

Dance Craze

Create a new **dance**. You need to come up with:

- A name
- The main steps / movements
- Typical music
- Who does it? (Alone? Couples? Groups?)
- Parts of the body involved? Feet, hands etc.
- **Now demonstrate it!**

10.

Stimulus – “Finish the Story”

Read the opening paragraph of this story below. Briefly describe the rest of what happens.

Jeremy awoke early, glancing at the clock, it was six a.m. It's too early to get up, too late to go back to sleep, he thought. Perhaps I'll do a little preparation before the hearing. He picked up the file from the bedside table and read through it again. And then he saw it. . . how could he have missed it?

11.

Expressing Feelings

- Read a newspaper as if you are deeply in love.
- Greet a long lost friend who you have not seen for ten years.
- Brush your hair as if you are feeling rather scared.
- Walk across the room as though you were really happy.
- Look around as though you feel confused.
- Sit waiting in an office feeling very nervous.

12.

Map Reading

Creativity is about trying on others' maps for size. Imagine yourself as the following and create a short dialogue.

- A three year old talking to a kitten.
- A doctor talking to an elderly, confused patient.
- Two parents complaining about the youth of today.
- A young girl talking about her latest boyfriend to her best friend.
- The boyfriend talking to his mates about the same girlfriend.

13.

Inventions

Invent a product, which will remind you to take your tablet at the proper time. It needs to be cheap and portable.

Invent a means to determine if your cat is in the house before you turn on the burglar alarm. It should be low cost and not harm the cat.

14.

New Uses For Old

What ideas do you have for how we might usefully use the following:

- Broken pottery.
- Old, scrap CD's.
- Old, plastic household gloves.
- Old, plastic plant pots.
- Safety pins.

15.

Juxtaposition

Sometimes creativity is just about incorporating ideas from one domain into another. Try migrating one idea from an item on the left (or right) to one on the other side.

Fast food outlet
Church
Office equipment
Banking hall
Hospital - casualty

Travel agent
Supermarket
Arcade games
Food hall
Disneyland

16.

Storyboard

Create a short story, which contains the following elements.

- A. A dog
The streets of Sheffield
An old lady
A pension book
- B. A king
An enchanted forest
A cruise missile
A magic rock
- C. A rap group
A great deal of money
A policeman
A car chase

17.

Secret Code

You need to find a simple way to transmit the following message to someone so that only they can decode it.

“The time has come for us to take decisive action”

Invent a coding system.

18.

Exaggeration

Choose an object, or a person, or an event and describe it in outrageously exaggerated terms. Use as much distortion as possible.

19.

Fantasy

Think about what you would do if the following were true / happened.

- You won £5 million on the lottery
- You were given 7 days to live
- You were granted 3 wishes
- You were wrongly convicted of a crime and were sentenced to 5 years in jail
- You found out you were adopted

20.

Simply Describe

Describe the following items to someone in simple, non-technical language. You cannot use the words below in your explanation.

- A calculator
- A queue
- A pestle and mortar
- A hangover

21.

Words and Meanings

Below you will find some new words. Describe what they mean to you and the images they convey..

If someone was suffering from Terbal Grinitris what would you recommend?

If you had just seen a Gruxipetl, what would it look like? Is it dangerous?

If my colleague has just Vongelled me, how should I react?

I am going on holiday to a new resort called Torventinia. Describe what it will be like in terms of the scenery, food and entertainment.

22.

Forced Associations

You can encourage creative “leaps” by forcing links between ideas. Complete the following linkages below by explaining the links.

<u>Paint</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>Reservation</u>
<u>Apple</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>Library</u>
<u>Television</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>Bicycle</u>
<u>Sex</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>Police station</u>
<u>Investment</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>xxxxxx</u>	<u>Menu</u>

Sample answer

Paint → War paint → Indians → Reservation

23.

Sketching

Draw, in as few lines as possible, something which captures the following words.

Spring Landslide Computer Hernia Stream Diet Suicide Holidays
Energy

The test is that when you show your sketch to friends / colleagues they will be able to tell you the word you are describing.

24.

Mime Time

Using only movements (NO words, NO sounds) mime the following:

- A counsellor with a patient
- A man taking money out of a cash point machine
- A traffic warden booking an illegally parked car
- A locksmith fitting a new lock
- A drag artist putting on his make-up and clothes

Your aim is to make your friend / colleague understand what you are doing.

25.

New Signs

An international body has asked you, to suggest signs for a new airport.

Signs needed:

Doctor

Amusement arcade

Lost property

Immigration

Baby changing room