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Creative Thinking

Introductory guide for teachers
and educational managers



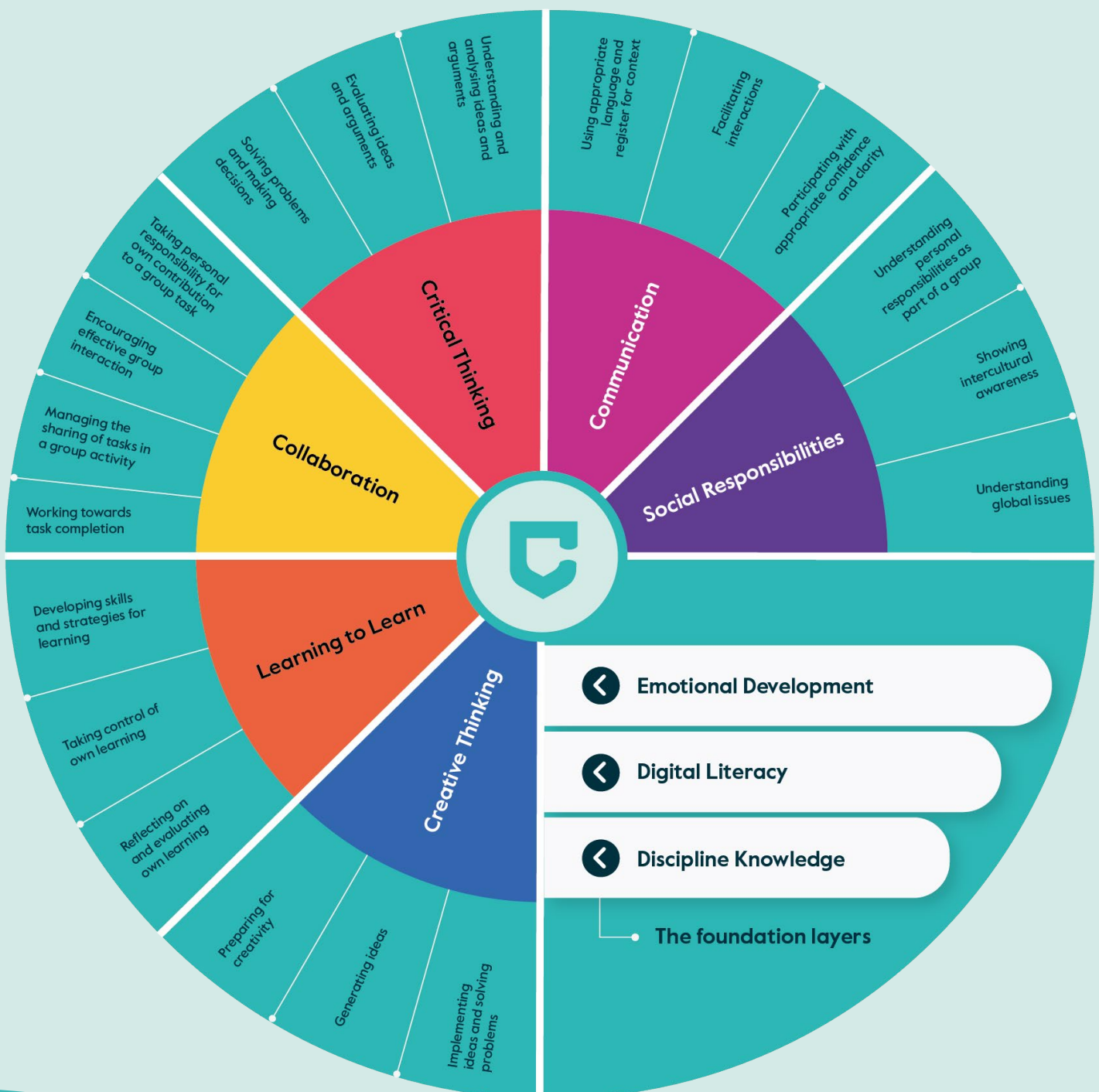
Cambridge
Life Competencies

Why teach Life Competencies?

Our world is changing fast and we need to prepare our students with skills and experiences that go beyond simply learning an additional language.

We see the increasing need to work together with people from around the world, to think creatively and solve problems, to analyse sources more critically, to communicate our views effectively, and to maintain a positive mindset in an increasingly complex world.

We understand that the engaging and collaborative nature of the language classroom is the perfect place to develop and embed these key qualities and the Life Competencies framework supports teachers in this challenging area.



What is the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework?

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework has been created in response to educators who have asked for a way to understand how life skills, or 21st century skills, can be integrated into English language programmes. It is made up of six **Competencies** that describe how these essential skills develop and vary across different stages of education, as learners grow and change.

Creative Thinking	Learners actively participate in creative activities, generate new ideas and use them to solve problems.
Learning to Learn	Learners develop practical skills to support and take control of their learning and reflect on their own progress.
Collaboration	Learners work well together in groups through actively taking part in group activities, listening to others, sharing tasks and finding solutions to problems.
Critical Thinking	Learners identify patterns and relationships, evaluate ideas and use these skills to solve problems.
Communication	Learners choose the most appropriate language to use in different situations, manage conversations effectively and express themselves clearly and confidently.
Social Responsibilities	Learners recognise and describe different roles and responsibilities in a variety of groups and understand cultural and global issues.

In addition, there are three **Foundation layers**. Foundation layers are not separate competencies. Instead, they act as underlying dimensions that support and strengthen every other competency. They provide the essential capacities that allow learners to develop and apply all other life competencies effectively.

Emotional Development	Learners identify and understand emotions, manage their own emotions as well as develop empathy and relationship skills.
Digital Literacy	Learners create content, share and interact with others online and maintain their safety and wellbeing while using technology.
Discipline Knowledge	Learners' knowledge of the English language, as well as of other subjects, supports and strengthens their competency development.

The learning journey

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework supports learners at all stages of their learning journey, from very young pre-primary learners right through to adults in education and at work. The framework maps out how learner behaviours typically found within each competency can change and develop as learners encounter new situations and circumstances in their lives both within and beyond the classroom.

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework allows us to support learners throughout their education and into the careers of the future.

- Pre-Primary
- Primary
- Secondary
- Higher Education
- At Work

How the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework aligns with key themes in ELT

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework consists of competencies that are strongly related to key themes in ELT such as:

AI Literacy **Global Citizenship** **Mediation and Translanguaging** **Oracy** **Sustainability** **Wellbeing**

By developing the competencies in the framework, learners are also developing much of the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to develop in the above areas.

This booklet will outline how the Creative Thinking competency aligns with these themes. To find out more about any of the themes, see our series of mini booklets.



Understanding the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework

The Cambridge Life Competencies Framework is made up of six **Competencies** – **Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Learning to Learn, Communication, Collaboration** and **Social Responsibilities**. Each broad competency is broken down into **Core areas** that describe these competencies in more detail. These are then analysed further into **Components** that, along with example **Can Do statements**, describe the observable behaviours that learners are likely to be able to demonstrate by the end of each stage of learning if they have had the opportunity to develop in these areas.



Linked to the competencies are the three foundation layers of the framework – **Emotional Development, Digital Literacy** and **Discipline Knowledge**. Development of skills in these foundation layers underpins all other competencies.

Along with this structured breakdown, we provide **example language** that learners may use to express the actions and behaviours found in each of the Core areas at each stage of learning. These have been informed by both our Functional Language Phrase Bank, a collection of spoken data from expert speakers of English from children to adults, and input from experienced ELT practitioners from around the world. See this example for one Core area within Creative Thinking at the Primary stage:

Competency	Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Creative Thinking	Implementing ideas and solving problems	Experimenting with and refining ideas	Experiments with own ideas for doing creative activities like colouring, drawing and building.	I'm going to use ...
		Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions	Uses resources to initiate their own play or own games	Let's use [a pen].

By clearly defining these areas of development in a structured and detailed way, we can ensure that our teaching and learning materials take a systematic approach to delivering and developing these skills in our learners, as they progress. This means that teachers can be assured that our resources bring out the best in their students, without creating extra work.

It should be noted that the framework was developed primarily from research and frameworks that centred neurotypical expressions of Competencies, as neurodiversity and neurodivergence were less understood when the framework was first created. Users of the framework should therefore adapt the framework flexibly, recognising that learners may demonstrate Competencies in diverse ways beyond those described in the framework. Further guidance on this will be published in due course.

What is Creative Thinking?

Creativity is a complex concept which can be defined as the tendency or ability to generate multiple original and innovative ideas, alternatives, or possibilities rapidly and elaborate on them. The ideas, alternatives, or possibilities are viewed as valuable and meaningful by people other than the creator (Mumford, 2003; Restak, 2011; Sigelman & Rider, 2012). Some of the attributes of creative thinking include divergent thinking, imagination, cognitive flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity or unpredictability, intrinsic motivation, and enjoyment of things previously unknown (Restak, 2011; Sigelman & Rider, 2012). We have identified three **Core areas** within Learning to Learn:

Creative Thinking	Preparing for creativity
	Generating ideas
	Implementing ideas and solving problems

- **Preparing for creativity** includes taking part in activities that promote the development of creative skills. These might be drama, music and artistic tasks but also include discussions of hypothetical scenarios, brainstorming and problem-solving activities. In addition, it involves exploring issues that need to be solved or concepts that a learner needs to grasp, ensuring that they see this from multiple different perspectives. This lays the foundation for coming up with original and useful ideas.
- **Generating ideas** requires coming up with lots of new and varied ideas (fluency and flexibility), developing those ideas (elaborating), and coming up with ideas that do not occur to most people (originality). This will often require divergent thinking and imagination.
- **Implementing ideas and solving problems** involves learners testing out the ideas they have generated and refining them. It also involves them being able to confidently present and explain their ideas to others.

Within these Core areas we break things down further, defining the components that make up each Core area:

Creative Thinking	Preparing for creativity	Participating in a range of creative activities
		Exploring issues and concepts
		Considering multiple perspectives
		Finding connections
	Generating ideas	Generating multiple ideas
		Elaborating on and combining ideas
		Imagining alternatives and possibilities
	Implementing ideas and solving	Experimenting with and refining ideas
		Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions

How does Creative Thinking align with key themes in ELT?

Creative Thinking skills support the development of the following key themes in ELT:



AI literacy: AI can be used to support idea generation, solve problems and implement ideas.



Global citizenship: Skills such as generating innovative ideas and problem-solving are crucial for finding solutions to global issues.



Mediation and translanguaging: Drawing on multilingual resources and facilitating group discussion can support creative ideas. Being able to explain new ideas can help present creative.



Oracy: Developing Creative Thinking skills helps learners find innovative ways to express their ideas (e.g. through different metaphors) and experiment with different communication styles. It also helps them develop curiosity and learn to find connections between ideas.



Sustainability: Helps learners generate innovative solutions to sustainability challenges and imagine alternative possible futures.



Wellbeing: Practising creativity can help express and regulate emotions and develop learners' creative strengths.

See our series of mini booklets on these themes to find out more.

Spotlight on Oracy

Oracy encompasses the skills that enable effective spoken communication across contexts and for different audiences (Mercer & Dawes, 2018; Millard & Menzies, 2019, Rios, 2024). By articulating their thoughts clearly, deepening their thinking through dialogue, and engaging confidently in discussion, learners not only develop their communicative competence but also their creative thinking skills.

Oracy nurtures creativity because talk is both a way of expressing ideas and of generating them. In dialogue, learners test out possibilities, combine perspectives, and adapt their language in imaginative ways to fit different contexts.

Oracy skills align particularly well with the **preparing for creativity** and **generating ideas** components of **Creative Thinking**.









We have highlighted some of the **Example Can Do statements** from these areas of the framework that could be used to support Oracy. Look out for the following icon in the following pages:

To find out more about how the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework aligns with Oracy and can support the development of these skills, see our mini booklet.









Creative Thinking across the learning journey

Core areas may be realised in different ways across the different stages of learning. In order to demonstrate this, each **Core area** and **Component** is contextualised by an example **Can Do statement**. This illustrates what kinds of behaviour students who are competent in this area might display by the end of each stage of learning. These example Can Do statements can be used as a starting point in the development of a curriculum, programme or assessment system and will vary in their suitability for learners in different contexts. The example language is provided for teachers to consider what kind of language they could encourage their students to use in these kinds of tasks.









Pre-primary

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Preparing for creativity	Participating in a range of creative activities 	Engages in fantasy or pretend play after listening to a story.	Let's pretend we ...
	Exploring issues and concepts 	Demonstrates curiosity by asking questions.	Where did she go?
	Considering multiple perspectives 	Participates in activities that involve taking the role of familiar people (e.g. being a teacher, parent, doctor or police officer).	I want to be [the teacher].
	Finding connections 	Draws pictures to represent vocabulary and familiar concepts (e.g. an animal, a house, a happy girl, etc.).	This is [a dog].
Generating ideas	Generating multiple ideas 	Produces more than one solution to a problem (including fun and playful solutions).	I have another idea!
	Elaborating on and combining ideas 	Adds some details to their ideas.	And then ...
	Imagining alternatives and possibilities 	Thinks of new, imaginative roles for self through play.	I'm driving [on the moon].
Implementing ideas and solving problems	Experimenting with and refining ideas	Experiments with own ideas for doing creative activities like colouring, drawing and building.	I'm going to use ...
	Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions 	Uses resources to initiate their own play or own games.	Let's use [a pen].









Primary

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Preparing for creativity	Participating in a range of creative activities 	Engages in activities with fantasy or mystery elements.	Let's imagine we're ...
	Exploring issues and concepts 	Actively participates in investigative and exploratory tasks.	I think ... will happen.
	Considering multiple perspectives 	Acts out the roles of various characters in games and drama.	Who are you?
	Finding connections 	Identifies connections between the contents of a poem and their own experiences.	I feel the same when ...
Generating ideas	Generating multiple ideas 	Produces multiple possibilities for substituting words or lines in a song or poem.	Let's change it!
	Elaborating on and combining ideas 	Finds new uses for objects and explains these ideas in detail.	We can throw/drink/sit on it!
	Imagining alternatives and possibilities 	Imagines alternative endings to stories.	In the end ...
Implementing ideas and solving problems	Experimenting with and refining ideas	Experiments with using different media to make and describe their own designs.	I'm going to use ...
	Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions 	Narrates own stories.	Once upon a time ...









Secondary

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Preparing for creativity	Participating in a range of creative activities 	Engages with and responds to creative works from art, music or literature.	I love ...
	Exploring issues and concepts 	Explores different possible interpretations of a story or poem.	I think it means ...
	Considering multiple perspectives 	Considers the points of view of different characters in a story.	He probably feels ...
	Finding connections 	Can relate the content of creative works to own experiences.	I remember when I ...
Generating ideas	Generating multiple ideas 	Comes up with many options to adapt a story.	Maybe we could change the location of the story.
	Elaborating on and combining ideas 	Builds on others' ideas.	I really like that idea. We could even ...
	Imagining alternatives and possibilities 	Asks "what if" and "if only" questions to come up with alternatives and possibilities.	What if we had no money ... ?
Implementing ideas and solving problems	Experimenting with and refining ideas	Redrafts a story or proposal in order to improve it.	This section wasn't working.
	Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions 	Presents a solution confidently to their peers.	The best option seems to be ...

Higher education

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Preparing for creativity	Participating in a range of creative activities 	Engages in complex creative activities such as putting on an event, show or play.	How about we ... ?
	Exploring issues and concepts 	Asks questions and seeks the answers to these in order to find out more about an issue.	Where did this idea come from?
	Considering multiple perspectives 	Discusses with others how characters in a story, novel or play might develop or act as the plot progresses.	What do you think will happen?
	Finding connections 	Uses tools such as concept maps to show conceptual relationships.	These two ideas are closely linked.
Generating ideas	Generating multiple ideas 	Actively participates in brainstorming activities to generate new ideas.	We haven't mentioned anything about ... yet, have we?
	Elaborating on and combining ideas 	Brings in prior knowledge, perhaps from other subjects or contexts, to solve problems.	This reminds me of ...
	Imagining alternatives and possibilities 	Questions and creates original alternatives to widely-accepted ideas and theories.	When it comes to ...
Implementing ideas and solving problems	Experimenting with and refining ideas	Tests out new theories or models to evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas in which they need to be refined.	I need to refine ...
	Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions 	Convincingly presents the rationale for choosing a particular method in their research project.	[A mixed-methods] approach was most suited to my research questions because ...

At work

Core areas	Components	Example Can Do statements	Example language
Preparing for creativity	Participating in a range of creative activities 	Develops creative ways of presenting products to customers.	This is a tough problem.
	Exploring issues and concepts 	Evaluates established workplace practices to identify potential improvements.	When you look closely at ...
	Considering multiple perspectives 	Asks a range of stakeholders about their perspective on an issue.	According to ...
	Finding connections 	Uses tools such as concept maps to show conceptual relationships.	These two ideas are closely linked.
Generating ideas	Generating multiple ideas 	Actively participates in brainstorming activities to generate new ideas.	We haven't mentioned anything about ... yet, have we
	Elaborating on and combining ideas 	Brings in ideas and solutions from other life domains (e.g. social life, prior jobs or hobbies) to help understand or solve current work challenges.	This reminds me of ...
	Imagining alternatives and possibilities 	Outlines how their industry or sector might look in the future.	In two years' time, ...
Implementing ideas and solving problems	Experimenting with and refining ideas	Tests out possible solutions in order to evaluate their effectiveness and identify areas in which they need to be refined.	Although... worked well, it looks like we still need to work on ...
	Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions 	Presents solutions convincingly to colleagues.	Taking all this into account, I hope you agree is our best option.

Creative Thinking in the classroom

Creativity is a quality highly valued by employers, yet formal education frequently prioritises measurable, pre-determined standards instead. Like other life competencies, creative thinking is difficult to assess, evaluate, or plan into the curriculum because it relies on open-ended, individual responses. For this reason, it should be embraced in the classroom through more flexible, holistic approaches that move beyond rigid assessment.

At the heart of creative thinking lies the notion of novelty and flexibility. But it also requires learners to reflect on the usefulness of their ideas and consider how they can be applied to solve problems, make decisions, or achieve an objective. When learners are encouraged to express themselves creatively, their curiosity and motivation increase. Creative tasks can also strengthen self-esteem and self-awareness, helping learners develop the confidence to question, reflect, and make new connections without feeling anxious or fearing judgement from their peers.

There are many ways to integrate creative thinking into teaching, and the sections that follow illustrate practical approaches for different stages of learning.

Suggestions for classroom practice

The ideas presented here are intended as a general indication of the types of activity that might develop this competency in the classroom, and are not a definitive list.

General suggestions

It is possible to foster creative thinking in the classroom through the use of different types of tasks. By simply tweaking a familiar task – for example, adding a game-like element (e.g. a time or word limit) – teachers are able to introduce an element of spontaneity and unpredictability in class. This can also be done by offering learners more choice, by prompting them to use their imagination, to interact more with their peers or simply to “think outside the box” and encourage original ideas. Overall, whatever the age, the following methods for fostering a creative environment in the class are worth considering:

- Celebrating originality – giving praise to learners demonstrating creativity and reward out-of-the-box thinking.
- Asking learners questions and encouraging them to ask questions too. By using questions as a vehicle to dive deeper into your learners’ thoughts and ideas, you are promoting creative thinking and encouraging learners to consider different perspectives.
- Allowing learners to be playful in their creative thinking – no answers are wrong answers; they should celebrate diversity and even absurdity.
- Ensuring learners feel that the classroom is a safe space in which to engage in creative thinking.

Activity cards

For more ideas on integrating the development of Creative Thinking skills into your classroom, see our Cambridge Life Competencies **activity card** packs. We've created a pack of cards for each stage of learning, and each individual card tackles a component from one of the core Cambridge Life Competencies. The activities are designed for you to use together with your coursebook or teaching materials, to tweak or supplement tasks. Go to [cambridge.org/clcf](https://www.cambridge.org/clcf) to download your free pack.



Primary

At this level, getting learners to engage in a fantasy or a mystery element is easier than with older learners because younger learners are often less inhibited and their attitude more playful. They are innately creative, and from the very early years they use imagination in a wide variety of contexts, particularly during play activities. At this age, it is less about teaching creative thinking skills, and more about fostering and developing skills that are already inherent.

Creating poems and stories

Working with a variety of texts, such as poems and stories, can be an effective way to get learners creating new content from their own ideas or other resources. For example, in this task called “I am ...” (from Goldstein’s 2008 publication *Working with images* – see further reading page at the end of this booklet) learners:

1. read and identify the object described by deciphering a text and then;
2. produce a similar text by personalising an object, allowing them to conjure up new and unexpected images from the object’s material, size, shape, location, etc. without giving the game away too early.

For example, learners read the following text and guess the object. They then create their own “I am ...” verse using the text as a model.

I’m sometimes made of plastic.
I’m usually round.
I have many different shapes.
But i’m often quite small.
I have numbers.
I often sit next to the bed.
You usually use me during the week.
You need me but you don’t like me.
(Answer: alarm clock)

This task allows learners the opportunity to think outside the box and show originality. It also requires them to consider others’ perspectives as their classmates will try to guess their object, and so the clues in their poem need to be at the appropriate level of challenge. Even the process of guessing the object involves some creative thinking and problem solving – teachers can get learners to work together on this part to negotiate and agree on possible answers. To add a game-like element, the teams who work out the answers the quickest could be awarded a prize, or classmates could vote on the best “I am” verse.


This task can also develop divergent thinking, imagination, cognitive flexibility, and tolerance or enjoyment of ambiguity or unpredictability. These skills are necessary to participate in creative activities and are central to this key competency as established in the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework.

Activity card idea

Try out this activity from our Young Learners activity card pack (page 4). Learners listen to a story, watch a short video, or read a simple text, then pretend to be one of the characters. They can think about questions such as: How does the character move? How do they speak? What do they look like? What are they wearing? To extend the task, learners could dress up as the character or draw a picture of them. Download this and other activity cards at [cambridge.org/clcf](https://www.cambridge.org/clcf).

Creative Thinking

Preparing for creativity

 Participating in a range of creative activities

Let's pretend ...

After learners have listened to an audio recording, read a text or watched a video, ask them to pretend they are one of the characters in the story.

- How do they move?
- How do they speak?
- What do they look like?
- What are they wearing?

Learners could also dress up as the character, and/or draw a picture of the character.

Teaching online?

Why not invite learners to take a photo of their drawing or outfit and upload it to a shared portfolio, such as **Padlet** or **Bulb**.

Young

Over to you ...

1. Try this task with your class. When planning the activity, try to make the task as open as possible to encourage divergent thinking and imagination.
2. Reflect on the activity: did it work well? If so, in what ways? Could you improve it? What would you do differently next time?
3. A key element of creative thinking for learners is developed through facing mystery, ambiguity or unpredictability. How could you foster this in class? Consider modifying course book story materials to encourage predictions, guessing, and use of imagination in learners, before showing them the complete stories.

Secondary

Learners at this age can be more reserved when it comes to creative tasks – they may feel anxious or embarrassed to share their own thoughts and ideas with others. It is therefore important for teachers to create a safe, judgement-free environment in which learners feel comfortable and free to think and act creatively. Much of this will be done through effective feedback and praising of original and creative thought.

Using images to develop creativity through imagination

One way to foster an imaginative response in teenage learners is through the use of images. While the young learners' task (see previous page) focused on visualising/personifying images ("imaging"), in this task learners look at an image as the launch pad for a creative piece of storytelling.

Traditionally, when confronted by an image, learners are asked to merely describe what they can see. However, there are other options which allow for more creativity on the part of the learner. For example, in an activity called "Who am I?", learners create a role for a person in an image, describing their character's feelings, and then guess the role created by others. To help learners frame and structure their story, questions can be presented as such:

Choose a person in the artwork and think about them for a few minutes

- What's my name? Where am I? (I am in ...)
- What is happening?/What has just happened to me? (I am/I have ...)
- What am I feeling now? (I'm feeling ...)
- What will happen next? (They will ...)
- What do I regret or what am I looking forward to? (I regret ...)
- What do I wish most in the world? (If only ...)

It is worth noting here the use of hypothesis in the final questions of the task, which should allow learners to make the sufficient imaginative leap to place themselves in the shoes of the person in the painting and imagine how they would think.

Using Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* as an example painting (the image can be found here: <https://www.edwardhopper.net/nighthawks.jsp>), the following is an example answer from a secondary-school student – this could be presented to learners as a model, depending on the level and age of the learners:

(A) I am at 24-hour café in a big US city. I am waiting for something important to happen. I feel tense and nervous. (B) I am worried that they look for us, that they will hurt us. (C) We're in trouble. (E) We should never do what we did, we shouldn't took (sic) the money but we needed it. (D) Now they're looking for us and I think they'll catch us. (F) I wish the waiter will stop working, making that noise. Oh no!... It's so late, I can't keep my eyes awake. I wish I was somewhere else...

As a follow-up, learners could discuss the reasons for their answers to the questions in order to understand how they each interpreted the images in the painting differently, and discover different possibilities for divergent thinking. This can also help to boost self-esteem and confidence through praising each other's originality.


These tasks provide learners with different options and choices (flexibility), they require the learners to provide details (elaboration) and come up with ideas that do not occur to most (originality) or provide unusual angles (novelty). This is achieved within the framework of creating a story.

Activity card idea

Take a look at this activity from our Teenage Learners activity card pack (page 10). After listening to a dialogue, learners imagine how it could have ended differently or developed in a new direction. This encourages creativity, prediction, and discussion. Download this and other activity cards at cambridge.org/clcf.

Creative Thinking

Generating ideas

 **Imagining alternatives and possibilities**

Change the conversation

After listening to dialogues in class, ask learners to imagine how the conversation might have ended differently or taken a different direction. Give pairs or small groups a copy of the audio script and ask them to make changes. Give learners time to practise reading the new audio script aloud before reading it to the class.

Teaching online?

Learners could make audio recordings of their new conversations and share these in a digital portfolio, such as **Padlet** or **Bulb**.

Teen

Over to you ...

1. Try this task with your class. Consider letting the students choose the image and try to give feedback on the creative efforts. This need not be overly evaluative, but more observational.
2. Reflect on the activity: did it work well? If so, in what ways? Could you improve it? What would you do differently next time?
3. A key element of creative thinking for learners is developed through facing novelty. How could you foster this in class? Consider asking students to change the task in a way they would prefer. This activity could also be gamified by asking students to decide on which story is most elaborate and original.
4. Students at this stage of learning are better able to understand their own learning. Why not consider talking with them about creative thinking skills, their importance, and how to

Adult

Learners at this age may be more sceptical of creative thinking tasks, as they may feel they are a distraction from the more “serious” work (for example, preparing for an exam). It is therefore important for teachers to communicate effectively the benefits of creative thinking, as well as the objectives of specific creative tasks for developing their skills. Emphasis should be placed on the idea that by working together to share creative ideas and thoughts, learners will be able to learn from one another and create better relationships.

Creating safe speaking environments

As an example, development of creative thinking can be undertaken in group speaking tasks in which learners collaborate. Indeed, creative thinking tasks work best in safe speaking environments in which classmates respect and value each other’s contribution, and do not fear being judged. For example, one such group speaking task could be the following:

Think of a gift for a person visiting your country. The gift should:

- Communicate something about or be typical in some way of your culture;
- Be easy to transport back home;
- Cost under 50 EUR, and;
- Be original, different or funny in some way.

It is worth noting here that the four constraints or conditions imposed by the task are in fact what makes this appropriate for creative thinking. Without these conditions, the learners would have too much freedom and it would be harder for them to provide the imaginative response that is demanded of them. In order for learners to succeed in a task like this, they need to gather information, select and rank ideas and then reach a final decision to present to the class as a whole. Unlike the previous activities, this task has a real-life outcome – learners might have experience of making similar decisions about gifts outside class. This makes the task more motivating to learners as they can see the real relevance and applicability to their own everyday context.

As an extension to the activity, groups could be invited to add a “what if” scenario. After one group has presented their ideas to another group, the other group then suggests a possible issue with the gift, e.g. “But what if the person visiting your country isn’t allowed to transport [x] on the plane?” This can lead to further creative thinking through the need to problem solve and consider alternative scenarios.

In this task, learners collaborate to solve a particular real-world problem and make decisions to achieve a specific goal or challenge. The challenge is provided by the constraints imposed by the task itself. The task is immersive and engages learners’ personal identities.

Activity card idea

Why not try out this activity from our Adult Learners activity card pack (page 11)? Learners prepare a short 30-second 'elevator pitch' to summarise an idea, project, or product. To add variety, ask them to adapt their pitch for different audiences (for example, a potential customer, a manager, or a peer). Learners practise their pitch, then present it to the class. Download this and other activity cards at [cambridge.org/clcf](https://www.cambridge.org/clcf).

Creative Thinking

Implementing, presenting and explaining ideas and solutions

Implementing ideas and solving problems

Elevator pitch

When the coursebook instructs learners to share ideas or opinions, ask them to write a short, 30 second 'elevator pitch' to summarise their idea/s. Explain that an elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive speech used to spark interest in a project, idea, or product. Have them practise their elevator pitch, and invite learners to read their pitch to the class.

Teaching online?

You could use an online timer set to 30 seconds when learners read their elevator pitch to the class.

Adult

Over to you ...

1. Try this task with your class. If you want to increase the challenge, add more 'what if' scenarios to challenge the students' reflexivity and flexibility.
2. Consider explicitly relating this task to work-related skills: finding creative solutions, responding to challenging and unpredictable questions etc. This task could be modified to a workplace context too if that helps motivate students.
3. Reflect on the activity: did it work well? If so, in what ways? Could you improve it? What would you do differently next time?.

Further reading

For more information on this topic, please see:

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York: Longman.

Dörnyei, Z., & Murphey, T. (2003). *Group dynamics in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OECD. (2024). *PISA 2022 results (Volume III): Creative minds, creative schools*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-iii_765ee8c2-en.html

OECD. (2024). *New PISA results on creative thinking: Can students think outside the box? PISA in Focus, 2024/125*. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/06/new-pisa-results-on-creative-thinking_7dccb55b/b3a46696-en.pdf

OECD. (2023). *How are education systems integrating creative thinking in schools? PISA in Focus, No. 122*. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/how-are-education-systems-integrating-creative-thinking-in-schools_f01158fb-en.html

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- ✓ Creative Thinking
- ✓ Critical Thinking
- ✓ Learning to Learn
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Social Responsibilities
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