Part 1

Creative Thinking

Creative Thinking and Prewriting: An Introduction

Many studies have focused on emotional blocks to creativity, for example, Edward de Bono (1970), James L. Adams (1979, 2001), and James R. Evans (1991) among others. But a seminal statement on this issue was formulated by Abraham Maslow in 1957. According to him, creativity comes from the unconscious, and in dreams we can be more creative than we are in waking life: “With the lid taken off, with the controls taken off, the repressions and defenses taken off, we find generally more creativeness than appears to the naked eye” (Maslow 1992). Emotional blocks to creativity are the rules we follow and judgment we pass on issues that concern us, but rules and judgment do not apply in the unconscious—that’s why we tend to be more creative in our dreams. For Maslow, out of this unconscious portion of ourselves “of which we generally are afraid and therefore try to keep under control, out of this comes the ability to play—to enjoy, to fantasy, to laugh, to loaf, to be spontaneous—and, what’s most important for us here, creativity, which is a kind of intellectual play, which is a kind of permission to be ourselves, to fantasy, to let loose, and to be crazy, privately.”

It is imperative that creative thinkers overcome emotional blocks. To do that, as de Bono (1970) points out, is to suspend judgment. First, we need to be aware of the difference between being right and being effective: “Being right means being right all the time. Being effective means being right only at the end.” Second, creative thinking is about being effective: we are allowed to be wrong on the way as long as we are right in the end. De Bono says “judgment is suspended during the generative stage of thinking in order to be applied during the selective stage. The nature of the system is such that a wrong idea at some stage can lead to a right one later on.”

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1 For Adams (1979), it is important not to analyze or judge too early; one of the reasons is that “many techniques of conceptualization, such as brainstorming, depend for their effectiveness on maintaining ‘way-out’ ideas long enough to let them mature and spawn other more realistic ideas.”
Similarly, in the writing process, the prewriting stage is what de Bono calls “the generative stage,” while the writing stage itself is “the selective stage” in which we apply what has been produced in prewriting. So when we try to generate ideas for a topic in prewriting, we can afford to be wrong, because writing at this stage is only prewriting—nothing is going public yet (“a kind of permission to be ourselves, to fantasy, to let loose, and to be crazy, privately”). Once prewriting is done or enough information for the topic has been generated, we then come to the selective stage—only by now can we exercise our judgment.

In short, both creative thinking and prewriting are mainly generative, not selective, and the strategies and techniques to be covered in this book serve to open up different pathways of thinking in the generative or prewriting stage of the writing process, which paves the way for the writing stage by providing tools to produce the necessary “raw material” needed for later use.

Unit 1 What Is Creative Thinking?

What creative thinking is: Creativity is the ability to suspend judgment, discover new links between familiar things, look at problems or issues from new perspectives, and form new combinations from concepts already in the mind.

According to Stephen Bowkett (2005), there has been false belief about creativity. Among some of the chief myths he discussed, the following are perhaps most relevant to our writing class:

- creativity is the gift of the few;
- you have to be “bright” to be creative;
- creative people tend to be rather eccentric;
- creative thinking skills cannot be taught.

Actually, Bowkett says “creativity is as much an attitude as it’s a set of mental processes. It incorporates playfulness, curiosity, sensitivity, self-awareness and independence.” One of the most important things in creative thinking is “making links
between ideas as a habit of thought and looking at things in many different ways” (also
called “pathways”). For example, “if a student makes a link that he or she has never made
before, then that is originality on an individual level.” This is, in part, what we are looking
for in this class, although we always aim higher by striving to develop your creative
potential so that you may achieve great breakthroughs in your areas of expertise in the
future. Moreover, for Donald J. Treffinger and Jaclyn R. Huber (1992) creativity can be
defined as follows:

Be able to break away from habit-bound thinking and learn to question the
habitual response; develop many possible alternative ways of responding.

Be able to defer judgment and refrain from evaluating the responses of others;
give responses without imposing evaluations.

Be able to see new relationships and identify similarities among objects or
experiences; identify differences among objects or experiences.

Creativity, in sum, is the ability to suspend judgment, discover new links between
familiar things, look at problems or issues from new perspectives, and form new
combinations from concepts already in the mind. It is the ability to think outside the box.
As Diane F. Halpern (1984) succinctly puts it, creativity is “a blend of unusual and good or
useful ideas.”

Unusual and useful, creativity may be best illustrated by the following exercises:

### Exercises

#### Clever Girl

Many years ago, a landlord was threatening to evict a girl, unless she agreed to marry
him. In a false gesture of sincerity, he proposed they let chance decide the matter. He told her
he would write a “Yes” on one slip of paper and a “No” on another, and he would put the slips
in a bag to let her draw lots. If she drew a “Yes” then she would win and could remain in the
house, without marrying him; otherwise, she had to either marry him or move out. To make the
deal more pleasant, they came to the cool back garden of the house and sat down at a table by
a deep well, with two of the servants as their witnesses. The girl happened to see the sneaky
landlord write a “No” on both slips. He folded them up, and put them into the bag.

What was the girl going to do in order to win?

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1 think outside the box: If you think outside the box, your thoughts are not limited or controlled by rules or
tradition and you have ideas that are creative and unusual.
2 succinct: using few words to state or express an idea
3 evict: to force (someone) to leave a place
4 draw lots: to decide who will do something by taking pieces of paper, etc out of a container
5 sneaky: behaving in a secret and usually dishonest manner
Long Lines

A problem of long lines at a service facility might routinely suggest a “technical” approach to change the facilities while ignoring important behavioral solutions. An actual case involved complaints about long waiting times for luggage at an airport terminal.

What would you do to make the complaints disappear?

The following exercise, adapted from Eugene Raudsepp (1977), can be used for understanding what creative thinking is about. Raudsepp says that “thinking of a suitable title for a short story is a good stretching exercise for the imagination, and fun to do in a group. It not only increases your originality and flexibility\(^1\) but also allows you to distill\(^2\) your understanding of the content of the story into a few evocative\(^3\) words.”

Suppose you were the writer of the following tale and wanted to replace the original title. In groups of four, write as many titles as you can to highlight the message of the tale from different angles. There will be no right or wrong answers, but try to come up with at least ten suitable titles. Have fun!

**Exercise**

Write ten suitable titles for the following tale and a statement to explain what each title means. Developing a focus on different aspects of the tale (i.e. the wizard, the king, and the lock) is crucial to this exercise.

**The Royal Wizard\(^4\)**

There once lived a king who depended greatly on his wise man. But, through one

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1. We'll discuss originality and flexibility in Unit 3, “Characteristics of Creative Thinking.”
2. distill: to take the most important parts of something and put them in a different and usually improved form
3. evocative: bringing thoughts, memories, or feelings into the mind
4. wizard: someone who is very good at something
circumstance and another, he grew to doubt the powers and perceptions of his chosen adviser. So, to test him, he had him tossed into a rather comfortable dungeon with a huge door secured by a combination lock. The king promised that if the wise man could free himself, he would be restored to his former exalted post.

The wise man examined the combination lock and calculated that there were 288,000 possible combinations. He further calculated that, at the rate of trying one combination per minute, working an eight-hour day, he would be free in 600 days at the latest.

He made an elaborate chart to keep track of the combinations he tried, hung up his calendar, and buckled down to business as 599 days passed. Before noon of the last day, he twirled half of his quota of combinations and then had a light lunch.

After lunch, he took down his calendar and returned to his job whistling happily. At 4:59 p.m., he had only one more combination to go, so he placed the rolled-up calendar under his arm and smiling confidently, twisted the final combination into place.

Nothing happened! His mouth hung open in shock. He beat on the lock, but it stood firm. In frustration, he threw himself against the heavy door. Slowly, it swung open. It was then that he found that when he had first been imprisoned, the king had ordered that the cell bolt not be thrown.

More Practice

Group Activity: In groups of four, write as many titles as you can (at least ten) for the following story. And write out in one general statement the main idea expressed by each title.

Suitable Titles and Main Ideas

There was a merchant in Bagdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions, and in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, “Master, just now when I was in the market, I was jostled by a woman in the crowd and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture; now, lend me your horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me.” The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant mounted it, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the market, and he saw Death standing in the crowd and he came to Death and said, “Why did you

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1 dungeon: dark prison below the surface of the earth, especially under a castle
2 exalted: having a very high rank and highly respected
3 buckle down: start working seriously
4 twirl: turn around and around
5 This is a tale by Somerset Maugham. Can you figure out the title of the story?
6 jostle: to knock or push against (someone) rather roughly
7 Death: the force that ends life and is often shown in art or literature as a skeleton
make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?” “That was not a threatening gesture,” Death said. “It was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Bagdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra.”

Pair Work: First, think of solutions to the following puzzle on your own for five minutes. Then add more to the list of the answers after you compare them with each other. Make sure you both are ready to join the class for discussion.

Bug in the Coffee

At a restaurant a customer was shocked to find a bug in her coffee. She sent the waiter back for a fresh cup. A moment later, the customer pounded on the table and shouted: “This is the same cup of coffee I had before!”

How could she tell?
(How about four solutions?)

The Merchant and the Cheat

A wealthy merchant ordered 100 coins from the top ten goldsmiths of the country, ten coins from each. Each coin was to weigh exactly ten grams of pure gold. One of the goldsmiths decided to cheat. He made each of his ten coins one gram short, but no one could tell the difference from its size, because it was filled with a lighter-than-gold substance. Now the merchant was informed of everything about these counterfeit coins but didn't know who the cheat was. The merchant didn’t want to burn the coins in a fire to detect the fakes (pure gold wouldn’t discolor in a fire). The goldsmiths came to the merchant’s house to deliver the coins on the same day.

How many times did the merchant have to weigh the coins to find out who the crook was?

Ten Dollars per Point

Nick grew up in a very rich family, but he was one of those spoiled kids you could find on campus. He cut classes, threw fancy parties for his friends in his downtown hotel suite or drove his Ferrari along the coast in the evening, and spent the weekend with his girlfriend in his sailboat on the sea. He didn’t have to worry about a thing in college except his grades,

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1 counterfeit: made to look like an exact copy of something in order to trick people
2 crook: an dishonest person
but he believed money could buy just everything.

He was having trouble with his microeconomics class one semester. One day, the professor was giving a test. He handed out all of the tests and went back to his desk to wait. Once the test was over, the students all handed the tests back in. The professor noticed that Nick had attached ten $100 bills to his test with a note saying “Ten dollars per point,” hoping he could get the perfect score, 100 points, for $1,000.

What was the professor going to do with Nick’s test?
(At least three solutions)

Hungry Wolf

A wolf had spent days in the mountains without anything to eat. He came up to a farm where well-fed sheep were enclosed in a large fold\(^1\). The wolf was so thin that he could squeeze in through the bars of the enclosure and eat as many sheep as he wanted. But he realized that after he ate a sheep, he would be unable to escape from the fold.

What could the wolf do to eat a sheep here?
(At least three solutions)

Speeding

One day a cop had set up a speed trap behind a billboard\(^2\) trying to catch speeders. He had been standing there for about an hour when a brand-new BMW came zooming\(^3\) down the road at about 110 mph. The cop noted the speed from his radar gun. Instantly, he switched on the siren, gave chase, and finally flagged down\(^4\) the car.

The cop got out of his cruiser, approached the car, leaned down, and said “Listen, mister. Give me a good excuse and I’ll let you go. But it better be good. You were going well over 100.”

What excuse would the driver give to avoid a ticket for speeding?
(At least three solutions)

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1 fold: an enclosed area for sheep
2 billboard: a large sign for advertisements that is next to a road, on the side of a building, etc
3 zoom: to go somewhere quickly, often making a lot of noise
4 flag down: to make the driver of a vehicle stop by waving at him/her
Unit 2 Creative Strategies (I)

What to Look for in This Unit

**Brainstorming:** It is an activity called “ideas cascading” where many ideas are generated to serve as raw material for later analysis.

**Means-ends analysis:** To do means-ends analysis is to take detours by listing appropriate means to your ends (subgoals for the subproblems) and then move on to the final goal.

**Left-brain and right-brain:** This creative strategy refers to the use of both left-brain logical skills and right-brain spatial skills.

**Utilizing different senses:** Utilizing different senses is related to the right-brain strategy of imagery—using as many different senses as you can: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

I Brainstorming

Brainstorming was originally proposed by Alex Osborn in 1963 as a method for group problem solving, but it's also useful for individuals working alone. Brainstorming is also called “ideas cascading” where many ideas are generated to serve as raw material for later analysis. Bowkett’s suggestion for this activity is that “once you have identified the concept(s) to be brainstormed or the problem(s) to be solved, the golden rule is that all responses are valued and go into the melting pot.” Effective brainstorming requires participants to make links and to look at things in as many different ways as possible and to volunteer to contribute freely without passing judgment on anything. Remember, refinement of ideas or critical thinking is for later use. At this stage you just write down the first thing that comes to mind; anything goes—no idea is to be evaluated or judged, much less discarded.

For example, when we were brainstorming for the “Bug in the Coffee” exercise in Unit 1, one of the students said something like this: “Maybe, the lady had dropped her earring into the cup, so when she saw it in the coffee brought back by the waiter, she knew he didn't bring her a fresh cup.” This idea may not make much sense if we think the lady would risk losing the earring by doing something like that to test the waiter (and it would be implausible to think she anticipated the waiter would simply bring back the same

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1 cascade: to flow or hang down in large quantities
2 implausible: not believable or realistic
cup), but the student’s idea wasn’t choked off (the idea had been triggered by an earlier idea another student came up with in the first place—that the lady saw a leg of the bug still in the coffee). Instead, the seemingly incorrect idea was soon developed into a good one: Maybe, the lady didn’t value the earrings any more because they were a gift from her husband, and she was thinking about divorcing him right at that moment in the restaurant (because she had found out that her husband had been cheating on her for a long time).

Bowkett (2005) has offered the following tips for brainstorming:

- Use volunteer scribes to record all ideas.
- If ideas seem to be drying up, use word-webs and concept-maps to kick-start further associations.
- Deliberately throw a ridiculous response into the melting pot. This helps to keep the activity light-hearted and OKs further silly suggestions from the students.
- Jump into another point of view. Say, for example, “What ideas would Batman come up with?”

Exercises

Let’s brainstorm about the puzzles below in groups of four. List as many different possibilities as you can. Go for quantity.

Woman on a Railway Track

A woman was on a railway track when she saw an express train speeding towards her. She jumped off the track, but before she jumped she ran ten feet towards the train. Why did she do that?

The Island Fire

A man is on a small island (in the center) that is one mile long and eighty yards wide. The vegetation is very dry from a long drought. Suddenly it catches on fire at one end of the island, and a strong wind is blowing it towards him, burning the whole width of the island. There is no beach, only sheer cliffs, and the sea is infested with sharks. How can the man avoid being consumed in the flames?

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1 drought: a long period of time during which there is very little or no rain
2 infest: to cause trouble by being present in large numbers
How to Bug People

How do you annoy people (parents, friends, classmates, teachers, etc)? Brainstorm different possibilities.
Example:
(1) Blow your nose loudly in class.
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II Means-Ends Analysis

Sometimes, you may not succeed in problem solving on your first try; you need to break the problem down into smaller problems, called subproblems, and then solve them one by one till you achieve your final goal. “Most often progress toward the goal is not made along a single well-paved road,” Halpern tells us, and “when the goal is not immediately attainable,” you often need to do a little means-ends analysis or take detours by listing appropriate means to your ends (subgoals for the subproblems) and then move on to the final goal. Examine the following problem and think of it in terms of subproblems. How do you solve the problem by taking a detour for the subgoals?

Exercise

Crossing the Gorge

Engineers were trying to build a suspension bridge over a deep and wide gorge. The whitewater at the bottom of the gorge was too violent for any boat to cross.

How would you get the heavy cables from one side of the gorge to the other?
Hint: You need to think about subgoals before you can reach your final goal in solving the problem.

Subgoal 1: ___________________________
Subgoal 2: ___________________________
Subgoal 3: ___________________________
Final Goal: ___________________________

1 gorge: a deep narrow valley with steep sides
2 whitewater: a part of a river that looks white because the water is running very quickly over rocks
III Left-Brain and Right-Brain

Before we discuss the left-brain and right-brain strategy, let’s try a simple little game from Bragdon and Gamon (2001) to see if you are more left-brain or right-brain oriented or both.

Exercise

Possible Pairs

Make seven pairs out of these fourteen different items based on whatever similarities make most sense to you. Use each picture once and don’t leave any pictures out. There are no correct answers.

1. hat
2. sun
3. noisy kids
4. bugs
5. tornado
6. snail
7. beach umbrella
8. schoolboy cap
9. igloo
10. happy man
11. rain cloud
12. crying lady
13. top
14. house

1 tornado: an extremely violent storm consisting of air that spins very quickly and causes a lot of damage
2 snail: a small soft creature that moves very slowly and has a hard shell on its back
3 igloo: a house made from blocks of hard snow or ice
4 top: a child’s toy that spins around on its point when the child twists it
The left-brain and right-brain strategy refers to the use of both left-brain logical skills and right-brain spatial skills. Sidney J. Parnes ("Creative" 1992) says, "We might classify processes, methods, tools and techniques as verbal, so called ‘left-brain,’ or non-verbal, so called ‘right-brain.’" The left and right hemispheres of the brain are also called the “logic brain" and the “artist brain” respectively. The logical left-brain is so powerful that Bragdon and Gamon advise us to stimulate it when it comes to doing math: “Next time you have to perform a chore that involves math computation, try placing a plant, picture or cherished item to the right side of your viewing field and glance at it every so often. Researchers say looking to the right stimulates left-brain math skills and should make the process of mathematics flow easier. Go figure—and gaze to the right.”

However, the right hemisphere is only one part of the brain, and our thinking may often be limited to one area of brain activity. For instance, Parnes says, "If I were to say to you that one-half of eight is zero, you might scoff¹, shrug, be puzzled, or react in a number of ways.” This is only because you were thinking in left-brain logic. If you switched to right-brain thinking, then it’d be another story. What Parnes means is that “you may have structured ‘one-half of eight’ in your mind to become ‘one-half of 8’… and you may have then suddenly seen ‘one-half of eight’ to be ‘0’—the top or bottom half—or ‘zero’. Thus you may have redefined the problem from a mathematical one to a visual one.” Many researchers believe that right-hemisphere imagery is the source of creativity coming from the unconscious. John Curtis Gowan (1992), for example, maintains that “The history of man’s creativity is filled with stories of artists and scientists who after working hard and long on some difficult problem, consciously decide to ‘forget’ it, to, in effect, turn it over to their unconscious, i.e., to their RH (right hemisphere). After some time, often with great suddenness and totally unexpectedly, the solution to their problem announces itself to them in almost complete form.” For instance, Dr. Charles H. Townes, one of the inventors of laser beams, miraculously had a brainwave about how to get laser beams when he was taking a walk in a park². In short, we need to learn to stimulate our creativity by educating both halves of the brain.

This creative strategy is relevant to writing as well. Sometimes, for example, writers may experience what we call “writer’s block”—we don’t know where to begin or how to continue writing once started. It’s probably due, in part, to the overuse of only one hemisphere of the brain, the verbal left-brain or the logic brain. Sometimes it may be helpful simply to switch to the non-verbal, visual right-brain for a change.

The following is an exercise of visual thinking from Raudsepp (1980). It can improve your powers of visualization and ability to think in mental images.

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¹ scoff: to laugh at a person or idea, and talk about them in a way that shows you think they are stupid
² Reported in a science program on CCTV-10, 9 August 2009.
Exercise

More Than Meets the Eye

Concentrate on the following illustration and imagine as many images as you can in it. Look at the picture from as many angles as you wish. List at least ten different images you can think of.

![Image](image_url)

IV Utilizing Different Senses

The technique to utilize different senses is related to the right-brain strategy of imagery. According to Adams (2001), “sight tends to be the predominant sense from a physiological standpoint. However, just as verbal thinking should not be allowed to elbow visual thinking out of the way, neither should the visual mode be allowed to overpower other sensory modes.” One reason to use all other senses like smell, sound, taste, and touch is that they "augment visual imagery and each other to vastly increase the clarity of one’s total imagery.” Michael F. Andrews (1992) has proposed a “pine cone module” for utilizing all sensory inputs in creative problem solving. Parnes (Source Book 1992), in his headnote on Andrews’ essay, says “divergence’ is called for as much in fact-finding as in idea-finding,” and “feelings are recognized and emphasized as important elements of the facts.” Utilizing all the five senses in exploring sensations and feelings in an encounter with a pine cone, for Parnes, sets a shining example of the kind of divergent thinking we all need in examining problem-situations. The following are some of the pointers extracted from Andrews’ description of a fully sensory experience with the pine cone:

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1 “Divergence” refers to divergent thinking “characterized by the generation of multiple possible solutions to a problem, often associated with creativity.” The concept was introduced in 1946 by the US psychologist Joy Paul Guilford (Colman 2007).
What Does It Look Like? Look directly at the cone and attempt to see its overall shape and the shape of its specific parts, variation of color, of texture, and design qualities. Turn it around and upside down, and take a good look at it from different angles.

Sound Awareness. Try rubbing the cone in the palm of your hand and listen to the sounds. With your nails vigorously stroke the scales in one direction and then another… Make sounds by slapping the cone, tapping it with a pencil, dropping it on a table. Squeeze the cone and listen. Do it again and again. Break one of the scales, then several at the same time. How do these sounds affect you? Experiment and listen. Attempt to detect any echoing or vibrating qualities.

Not Touching but Feeling. How do the various surfaces of the cone feel to you? Are they appealing, irritating, perturbing, aggravating, disturbing? As you handle the cone what other sensations do you experience: warmth, coolness, dampness, dryness, weightlessness, prickly feeling?

Smell Sensitivity. Explore the pine cone with our sense of smell. Contemplate the effect that the smell of the cone has on you. Is the smell foul, spicy, fragrant, pleasing, repulsive? Fix your mind on your own imaginal responses. Wet the cone and experience the difference in odor. Burn part of the cone and discover a completely different sensation.

Tasting and Savoring. Explore the wide range of taste by rolling one of the scales of the cone in your mouth slowly and deliberately so that it makes contact with various taste sensors. Contemplate and relish your tastes. Try tasting the scales after you have raised their temperature, soaked them in water, or chewed them for a while. The sensations that

1 perturbing: causing (someone) to be worried or upset
2 aggravating: making a bad situation, an illness, or an injury worse
3 repulsive: disgusting, in a way that almost makes you feel sick
you experience from the taste of the cone are conditioned by the feeling of its texture as well as its particular smell.

The puzzle below was one of the topics for the English writing test in the National College Entrance Examination (the Beijing Test Paper) in spring, 2004. Solve the problem by using as many different senses as you can.

**Exercises**

**The Fallen Sign**

On a sunny morning, Xiao Hong from Orange Town was on her way to her friend’s house in Green Hill, a small town she had never been to before. At a crossroads, she found the signpost showing the directions had fallen over. She got lost.

How could she find out which way to go? Consider two or three different ways of working out the problem.

Write a short paper (around 200 words) on your solutions.
Three Light Switches

One of my friends put this puzzle to me years ago. It is easy to solve, but it takes some sensory awareness to do it.

There are three lights in Room 101, which are controlled respectively by three switches installed in the next room separated by a brick wall (no see-through glass, nor an opening in the wall).

How can you identify each switch and its controlled light if you have only one chance to go into Room 101 to check?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

More Practice

Reducing Automobile Accidents

What could be done to reduce automobile accidents? Give yourself ten minutes to produce as many suggestions as you can.

Guessing Game

Adams encourages us to be “ambidextrous,” if unable to use either hand with equal skill, but at least to be able to stimulate both halves of the brain, to shift from one type of thinking to the other and ideally to do both at once. Try experimenting with this technique in the following game, by focusing on nonverbal skills (images and spatial strategies) as well as verbal ones (language).

Pair Work: Student A starts out by announcing whether the thing he/she is thinking of is “animal,” “plant,” or “object,” and Student B may ask up to six yes-no questions to figure out the identity of the thing Student A has in mind.

(“Animal” here refers to any of living creatures like humans, birds, wild and domestic animals, and sea animals; “plant” to any of vegetables or fruits; “object” to any of inanimate objects.)

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1 ambidextrous: able to use either hand with equal skill for writing, playing sports, etc
Part 1 Creative Thinking
The Courier

A courier had to deliver a package to a house surrounded by a five-foot fence. The house could be approached by the main path only. Unfortunately, a huge dog was tied by a rope to a tree nearby, so that the path was within the dog’s reach. If the courier walked up the path, he was sure to be attacked by the dog.

How could he outmaneuver the dog and deliver the package?

If you have difficulty solving this problem, use the picture as a visual aid and see if it can spark a solution. Also, you need to achieve a subgoal before you can actually solve the problem.

Subgoal: ________________________________

Final goal (solution): ________________________________

1 courier: someone who is employed to take a package, documents, etc somewhere
2 outmaneuver: to use cleverness or skill to gain an advantage over (someone)
Four Switches and One Light

This puzzle is a little more complicated than “Three Light Switches”:

Four switches can be turned on or off. Only one of them controls the light in the next room, but you don’t know which. From the room with the switches in it, you can’t see whether the light in the next room is turned on or off. You may flip the switches as many times as you like, but once you enter the next room to check on the light, you must be able to determine which switch turns on the light.

Assignment

Creative Thinking Exercise

Brainstorm different solutions (preferably ten) to one of the following problems.

Tardy Student

Suppose you were the teacher of a class and had a student who was habitually late in the morning.

What would you do to correct his tardiness?

A Spendthrift

A woman suddenly changes her frugal habits and becomes a spendthrift.

What must have happened to make her change her behavior?

The Boss

One day a boss said to his employees, “I can fight and beat any man who works here.”

A seven-foot new employee, once a heavyweight boxer, stood up to take on the boss.

What would the boss do?

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1 flip: to quickly start or stop electrical equipment by pressing or moving a button
2 spendthrift: a person who spends money in a careless or wasteful way
3 frugal: careful to buy only what is necessary
Homework

Nosy Roommate
Linda was a college student and had a nosy roommate who was never interested in study but in other people’s affairs. When Linda was in class, her roommate would look through her desk and read her personal mail.

How could Linda overcome this problem?
(Four solutions)

Careful Driver
Driving down a 50-miles-per-hour street, John passed three cars without going over the speed limit. But a traffic cop pulled him over and gave him a ticket.

Why?
(Six solutions)

Picture Story
Each of the following two pictures has a story to tell us. Pick either one of them and figure out what is happening in the story.

Use your imagination and list as many possibilities as you can.

Brain Power
Use both verbal and non-verbal thinking skills to figure out the meaning of each of the following riddles:

Examples:

(1) man

(2) stand

Answer: man overboard
Answer: I understand
Now, your turn.

(1) /r/e/a/d/i/n/g/ → (7) ii → O → O

(2) r roads → (8) he’s/himself
   a
d  s

(3) cycle cycle → (9) gnikool

(4) t o w n → (10) death/life

(5) 0 J.D. M.D. Ph.D. → (11) THINK

(6) knee light → (12) aaaaaabbbbbbb...