



# Creative and Critical Thinking

To develop creative and critical thinking skills, challenge students to apply these strategies to your content.

## Five Word Challenge

Challenge students to take what they are learning and convey it in a condensed form. For example, ask them to describe a particular concept in 5 words or less. Simplifying a message is one of the most sought-after skills in the workplace and requires both creative and critical thinking.

## Infograph It!

Ask students to evaluate and organize their data in a visual way. They must think critically as they evaluate the validity of their data and decide how to organize it. They must think creatively as they communicate their data in the form of a graph, drawing, or infographic. The more students exercise critical and creative thinking, the better problem-solvers they will be!

## Inanimate Letters

Have students write letters from one inanimate object to another. For example, primary grade students may write a letter from the number 1 to the number 3. Older students may write a letter from the element Radon to the element Argon. Inanimate letters require students to re-contextualize what they know about the subject(s) and apply their thinking in a novel way.

## Put the Work into Worksheet

Worksheets get a bad rap, but in the hands of the right teacher, they can inspire creative and critical thinking. Instead of handing out a worksheet, challenge your students to write their own worksheet. Have them think about what they need to learn and come up with questions, problems, or prompts that require the target learning in order to answer. Creating a worksheet is usually more than enough work to lock in the content, but if you want to have more fun, have students "answer" one another's worksheets!

## Narrative Text, Expository Captions

Use the book *White Owl, Barn Owl*, by Nicola Davies (or another of her books in a similar format) as a model and then have students write expository captions to go with a narrative story on a similar topic.

## SCAMPER

Use the SCAMPER activity to differentiate instruction, promote creative thinking, and/or discover alternate design solutions. Once students have studied a concept or designed a solution, ask them to SCAMPER it. They can choose one letter of the acronym to revisit their learning. S=substitute, C=combine, A=adapt, M=modify, P=put to other use, E=eliminate, R=rearrange.

# Food for Thought

To see a Creative and Critical Thinking strategy in action, check out this Blue Apple project:

We need food to live, but are we making the best choices when it comes to nutrition? A healthy, well-balanced diet can help people achieve optimal health and reduce the risk of illness. In this project, students will learn to make healthier choices by diving deep into the world of nutrition. Students will use their creativity to design and test healthy recipes. They will think like dieticians, using data to improve on their delicious designs. Finally, they'll present their nutritious dishes to a live audience and create a cookbook to sell for a charitable cause.



To explore this project and others, visit [BlueAppleTeacher.org](http://BlueAppleTeacher.org)