

# *Habits of Mind*



# **Thinking Flexibly**

**Students' Handouts**



**Habits of Mind**  
**Thinking Flexibly**

*"If you never change your mind, why have one?"*

Edward deBono

*"Just when I think I have learned the way to live, life changes."*

Hugh Prather

Thinking Flexibly means looking at it another way.

Attributes of Flexible Thinkers:

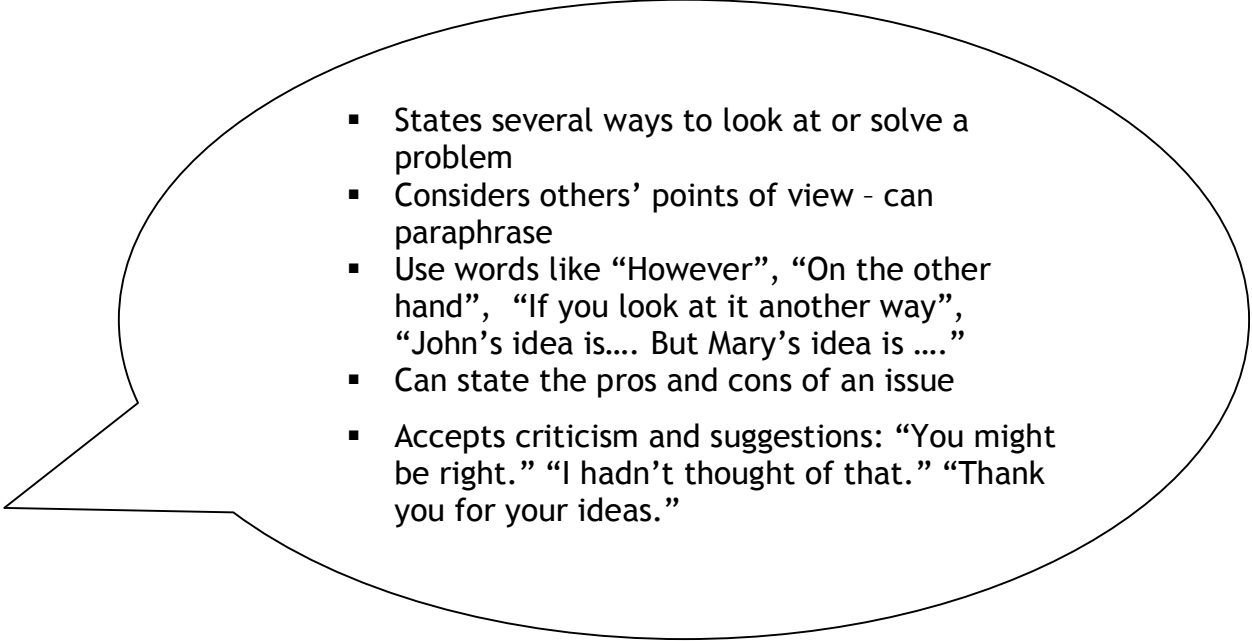
- Have a well-developed sense of humor.
- Can approach a problem from a new angle using a new approach.
- Have the capacity to change their minds as they receive new or additional data.
- Consider alternative points of view.
- Deal with several sources of information simultaneously.
- Have and can develop options and alternatives to consider.
- Are able to shift their perspectives.

Some students have difficulty in considering alternative points of view. THEIR way to solve a problem seems to be the ONLY way. They see situations from a very 'self-centered' point of view: "My way is the way!" Their mind is made up; "Don't confuse me, that's it."

Without alternative points of view, a person becomes rigid in his thinking. Rigid thinking prevents one from being open-minded in various social situations. Students need to practice flexible thinking as it fosters a tolerance of others, especially important in a multi racial society.



**What it sounds like...**

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- States several ways to look at or solve a problem
  - Considers others' points of view - can paraphrase
  - Use words like "However", "On the other hand", "If you look at it another way", "John's idea is... But Mary's idea is ..."
  - Can state the pros and cons of an issue
  - Accepts criticism and suggestions: "You might be right." "I hadn't thought of that." "Thank you for your ideas."

**Lesson 1**

# *Journal*

What have you learnt about 'Thinking Flexibly' from the activity you just did?

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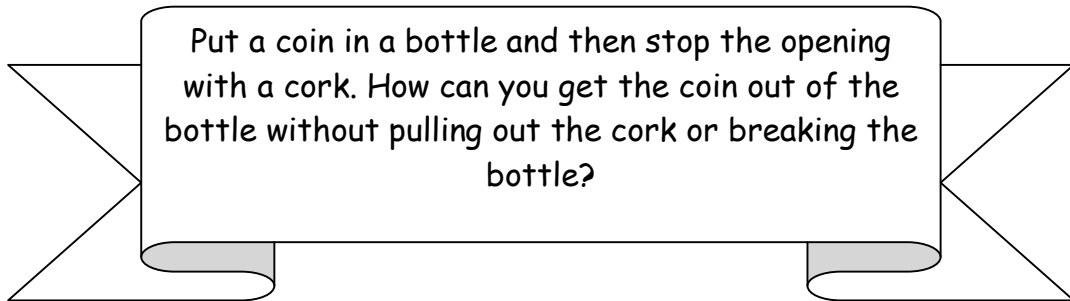
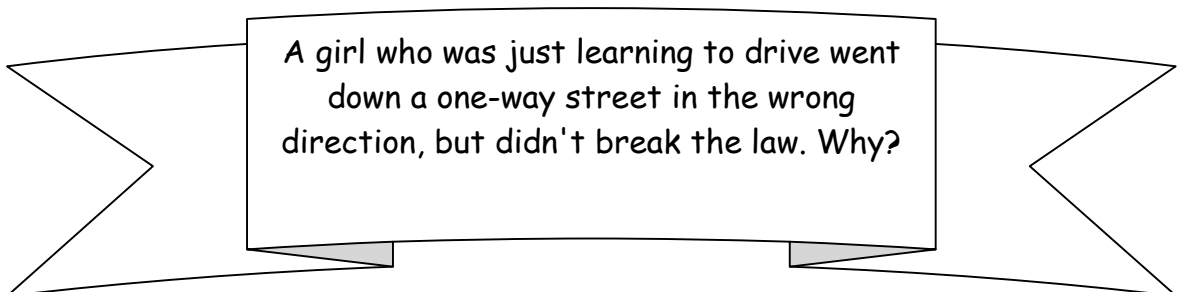
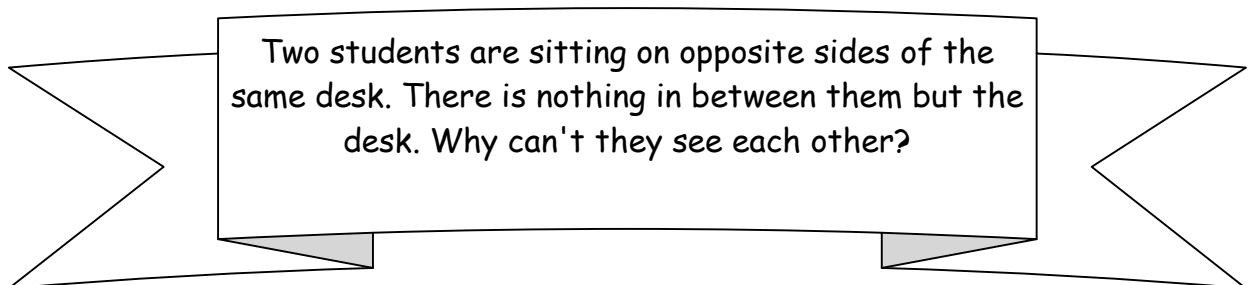
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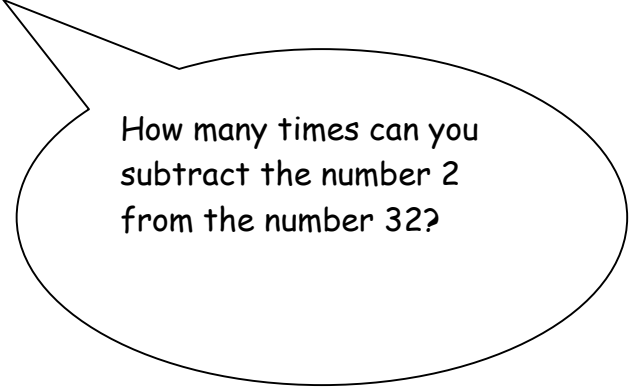
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**Lesson 2**

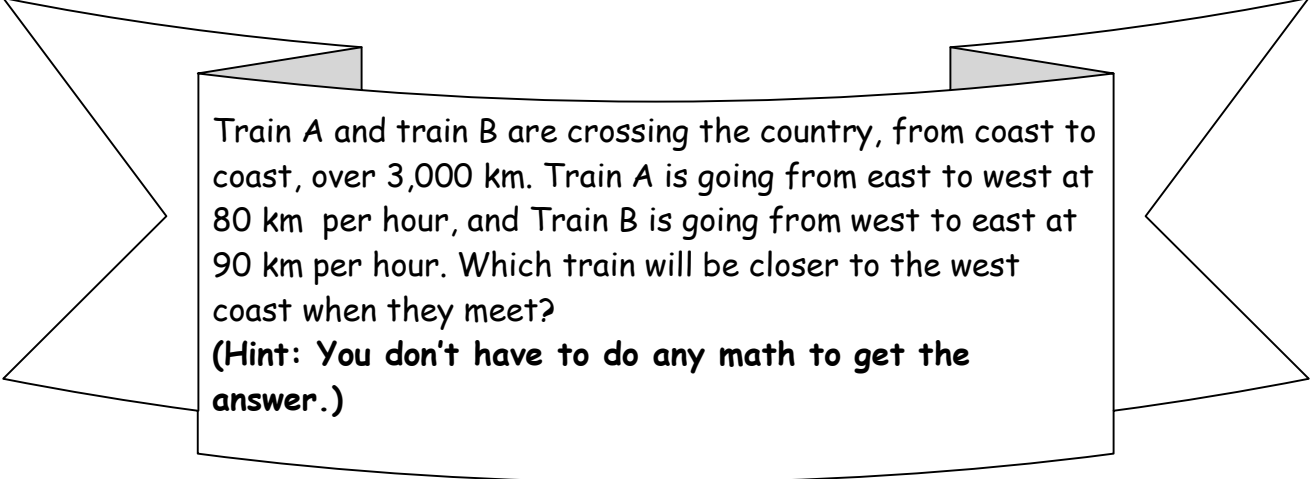
# Riddles

To answer these questions, you have to let your brain think in different ways than you may be used to!

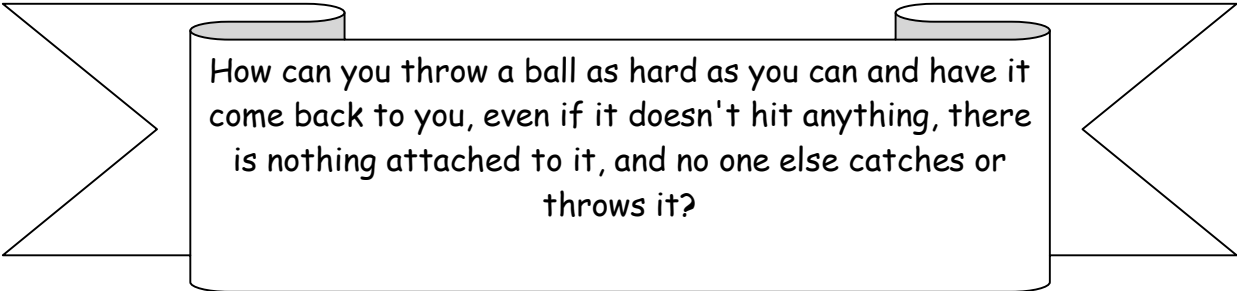
Question 1Question 2Question 3

Question 4

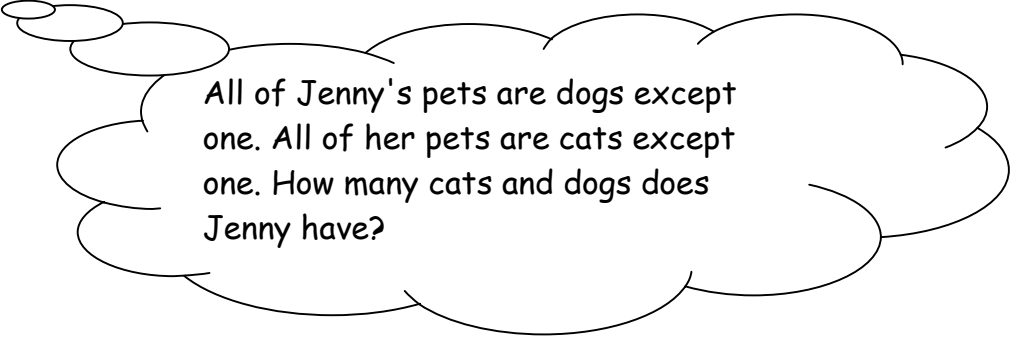
How many times can you subtract the number 2 from the number 32?

Question 5

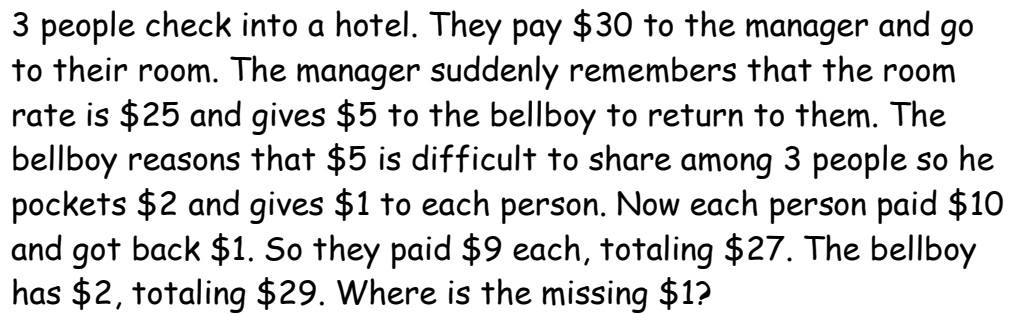
Train A and train B are crossing the country, from coast to coast, over 3,000 km. Train A is going from east to west at 80 km per hour, and Train B is going from west to east at 90 km per hour. Which train will be closer to the west coast when they meet?  
**(Hint: You don't have to do any math to get the answer.)**

Question 6

How can you throw a ball as hard as you can and have it come back to you, even if it doesn't hit anything, there is nothing attached to it, and no one else catches or throws it?

Question 7

All of Jenny's pets are dogs except one. All of her pets are cats except one. How many cats and dogs does Jenny have?

Question 8

3 people check into a hotel. They pay \$30 to the manager and go to their room. The manager suddenly remembers that the room rate is \$25 and gives \$5 to the bellboy to return to them. The bellboy reasons that \$5 is difficult to share among 3 people so he pockets \$2 and gives \$1 to each person. Now each person paid \$10 and got back \$1. So they paid \$9 each, totaling \$27. The bellboy has \$2, totaling \$29. Where is the missing \$1?



### Self-Assessment Rubrics for Thinking Flexibly

Criteria	Level 1	L1 – L2	Level 2	L2 – L3	Level 3
Has wide variety of perspectives	Has only one way of looking at a situation. Rarely generates alternative ways of approaching tasks.		Generates and finds a variety of ways of looking at a situation.		Consistently explores as many alternative ways of looking at a situation.
Evaluates usefulness of alternative ways thought of.	Does not consider usefulness of way thought of.		Some consideration of usefulness of ways of looking at situation		Evaluates these many ways to see how useful they might be. Analyzes the effects of these alternatives.
Appreciation for alternate points of view.	Not receptive to other views other than their own		Listens to other peoples' view points but does not consider them for use.		Expresses appreciation for others' points of view.
Adaptable and changes mind after evaluation.	Unwilling to accept other viewpoints even though it is clear that doing so would be helpful		Describes some ways others' points of view are different and new but does not consider changing mind.		Changes mind and incorporate others' points of view in own thinking.