

Potential



Plus
UK

Discover.
Nurture.
Succeed.

Fun ideas to encourage deeper learning at home



Introduction

Potential Plus UK is a national, independent charity that supports parents/carers and teachers to understand and meet the educational, and social and emotional needs of their children with high learning potential*; some of whom may also have a special education need. We endeavour to do this regardless of age or background.

We offer a free web chat service during term time, as well as bookable consultancy calls for parents and teachers. Our services also include child assessments for high learning potential, parent workshops, family events and training for teachers.

For more information visit www.potentialplusuk.org

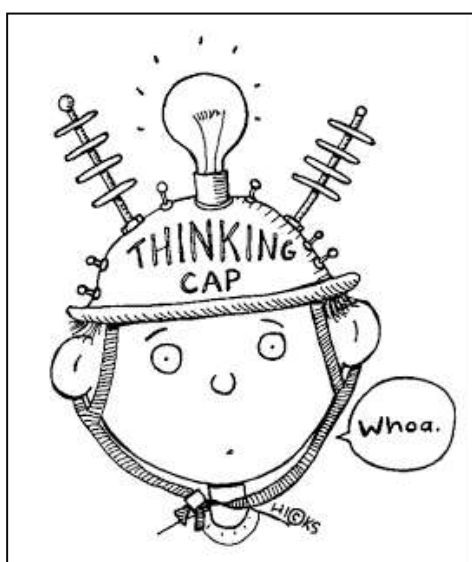
Fun ideas to encourage deeper learning at home

Firstly a little clarification on what we mean by 'deeper learning'.

What is meant by deeper learning?

There can sometimes be an emphasis on questions and tasks that concentrate on 'remembering' information and concepts, and on 'understanding' them. However, all children, and especially those with high learning potential*, need regular opportunities to deepen their learning.

This 'deeper learning' can be provided through opportunities where the children can apply their knowledge and understanding through rich and sophisticated problems. In this booklet we will look at fun ways to try some of these at home.



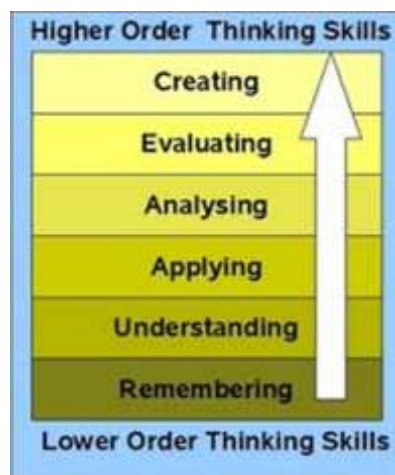
* Potential Plus UK prefers the term 'high learning potential'. In schools this is often referred to as 'gifted and talented' or 'academically more able'.



Higher order thinking skills

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are types of learning that are thought to require more cognitive processing (brain power!) and have more generalised benefits than other, Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). High potential learners often master the lower order tasks very quickly and benefit from being able to think more deeply more often. Activities and questioning that encourage your child to develop their higher order thinking is extremely beneficial, both for their learning and for their enjoyment.

Bloom's (Revised) Taxonomy is a classification of learning objectives, which are perceived to be higher order and lower order. Learning at the higher levels is dependent on having gained knowledge and skills at lower levels. Thinking at the higher levels is also often called critical thinking and creative thinking.



The bottom two levels are 'remembering' and 'understanding'; lower order thinking skills. The complexity of the question or task increases as you go up the levels.

The levels:

- Remembering – Recalling the information (concepts, ideas, facts, skills)
- Understanding – Grasping the meaning
- Applying – Using the information in a new situation
- Analysing – Comparing and contrasting information
- Evaluating – Developing opinions and judgements about the information
- Creating – Using all your knowledge and understanding to come up with something completely new and different

Bloom's Activity to Try Yourself

Most of you will know of the fairytales 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and 'Little Red Riding Hood'. The tasks below are based on the story of Goldilocks. Read through the questions and tasks, then draw a line to the level of question that you think it is.

Question or Task
List the main characters in the story
Compare and contrast the characters of Goldilocks and Little Red Riding Hood
Judge whether or not Goldilocks should have acted as she did and give your reasons
Illustrate what might change if Goldilocks forced open the door of the house
Rewrite the last scene of the story
Draw a timeline for the events in the story

Bloom's Level
Remembering
Understanding
Applying
Analysing
Evaluating
Creating

An answer is given at the end of this booklet for you to check.

What is it about the question or task that helped you to decide the level of thinking required for it?

You have probably said 'the verb' – that is List, Compare and contrast, Judge, Illustrate and change, Rewrite, and Draw.....in many cases these really help to differentiate the level of thinking that is required for the task. So if we change the verb used in a question we can often make the question or task more complex.

The next page shows lots of different verbs and tasks that add complexity and deeper learning to any topic.



The table below shows some of the verbs used to ask questions at each of the different levels of the taxonomy, along with example tasks and example questions:

Thinking Skill	Verbs Used	Example Tasks	Example Questions
Remembering	Name Find Write Tell List State Recite Also who, what, where, how etc	List Timeline Facts Recitation Quiz Flashcards Bullet points	How many...? Name the ...? What is...? Who was it that...? List the Find the
Understanding	Describe Summarise Discuss Outline Predict Interpret Explain	Summary Explanation Mind map Presentation Timeline Scrapbook Examples	Describe in your own words...? Outline for me....? Summarise the events... Explain why... happened?
Applying	Demonstrate Solve Use Apply Illustrate Construct Examine	Illustration Project Role play Map Diorama Leaflet Newspaper Article	Demonstrate another instance when... Construct a set of instructions to... What questions would you ask of...? Examine how....
Analysing	Categorise Analyse Classify Compare Contrast Separate Relate	Diary Collection Illustration Questionnaire Flow-chart Model Diagram	How is this similar to...? Compare and contrast... What are other possible outcomes? Distinguish between? Classify the requirements....
Evaluating	Judge Critique Justify Debate Recommend Prioritise Experiment	Survey Graph Report List criteria Debate Essay Written case	Judge the value of...? Do you think...is a good or bad thing? How would you feel if? How effective are...? Prioritise.....
Creating	Design Create Plan Construct Invent Devise Make	Story Poem Play Song Animation Invention Website	Design a... Invent a solution to.... Construct a completely new.... Rewrite the ending



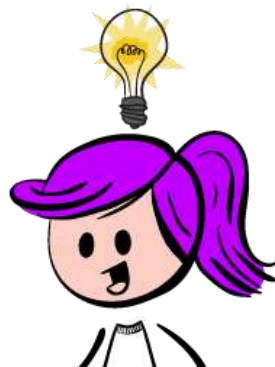
To try at home

- Whenever you are about to ask your child a question, just take a few seconds to think about the level of thinking required to answer it. Rather than asking a 'remembering' or 'understanding' question, try to turn it into one that develops your child's higher level thinking skills.
 - Rather than "Tell me what happens in the book", try
 - "Compare and contrast the two main characters in the story."
 - "Recommend the book to me."
 - "Invent a new ending for the story."



- Choose any topic, a book, a game, or TV programme that you are interested in or where you share an interest with your child and devise some appropriate questions and tasks that go up through the Bloom's thinking levels.

- As appropriate ask your child to do something similar. Over time this will also help them to better understand the complexity of thinking that is required for a task or a question.



Creative thinking

Creative thinking is a way of looking at problems or situations in a new way that creates unusual or different solutions.

Creative thinking helps to:

- Develop the imagination
- Generate lots of ideas
- Experiment with alternatives
- Develop flexibility and originality
- Become more open and tolerant
- Build courage and intellectual risk-taking (that is, the courage to take an intellectual challenge)



Creative thinking is linked to higher order thinking.

To try at home

OTHER USES



You have 2 minutes to come up with as many different uses for an egg cup as possible. There are no right or wrong answers!

Doing a timed task helps children get used to doing things within a set period of time in a fun way.

It is important to highlight the number of ideas generated.

Ask which idea they like the best and why?

Try OTHER USES with different items.

Increase complexity by asking your child to think about the uses of the egg cup if it were smaller, larger, made from a different material, or from a different perspective, such as if they were an alien, or an elephant!

You could also relate the item to school subjects or course work; but still make it fun!



WHAT IF...?



You have 2 minutes to generate ideas about what might happen if the tilt of the earth increased. At this stage there are no right or wrong answers!

Highlight the benefit of generating lots of ideas.

Ask which they like best and why?

Create your own 'WHAT IF...?' scenarios to try with your child. They could create some too for you to try!

If you want to relate it to school subjects, ask your child's teacher/s about current school topics that they are studying.

WORD FUN



Make a sentence starting with the following letters:

M... F... I... A... G... C...

For example:

My father is a great cook.

Devise your own game: Cut individual letters and put them into a container. Pull out 6 at a time and create a sentence that makes sense. Increase the number of letters; add punctuation, topics etc in additional containers for deeper complexity.

Try it with numbers rather than letters!

BOARD GAMES FOR CREATIVE THINKING

There are lots of board games that encourage creative thinking, such as:

- Junior PSI
- What is this?
- Balderdash



Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally.

Critical thinking helps to:

- Make and understand links between ideas
- Identify, create and evaluate arguments
- Notice inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning
- Identify the relevance and importance of ideas
- Reflect on the justification of our own beliefs and values
- Solve problems systematically



To try at home

FACT OR OPINION



Write down 2 facts about yourself – something that can be proven to be true or false – and 1 opinion.

For example:

I live in London.

I am good at problem solving.

The colour of my front door is red.

Ask your child which are facts and which are opinions. How can they check the facts?

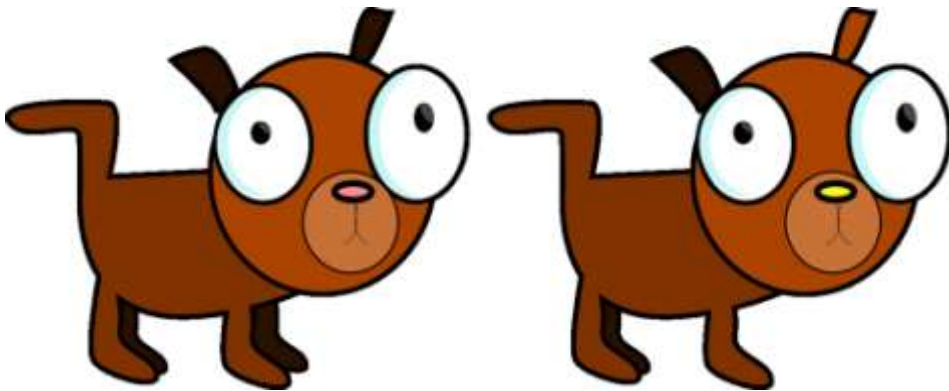
Ask your child to do something similar about them self.

Together look at a variety of different sources, such as newspaper articles and TV advertising, and see if you can work out which are the facts and which are opinions.

Explore different situations when there are advantages and disadvantages of using fact and opinion.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Any activity that encourages your child to closely examine a variety of texts, sounds or pictures helps them to identify inconsistencies; it encourages them to compare and contrast.

Take two articles from two different sources about the same topic, for example an article from two different newspapers, and together consider the similarities and the differences. You could also compare them with the TV news report or the online news. Explore why there are similarities and differences!

PLUS MINUS INTERESTING

Many high potential learners have lots of ideas and thoughts in their heads and for some it is difficult to find their way through this mass of information. Exploring and listing the 'plus' points and 'minus' points about a challenge, problem, situation, or decision, can help them to gain clarity.

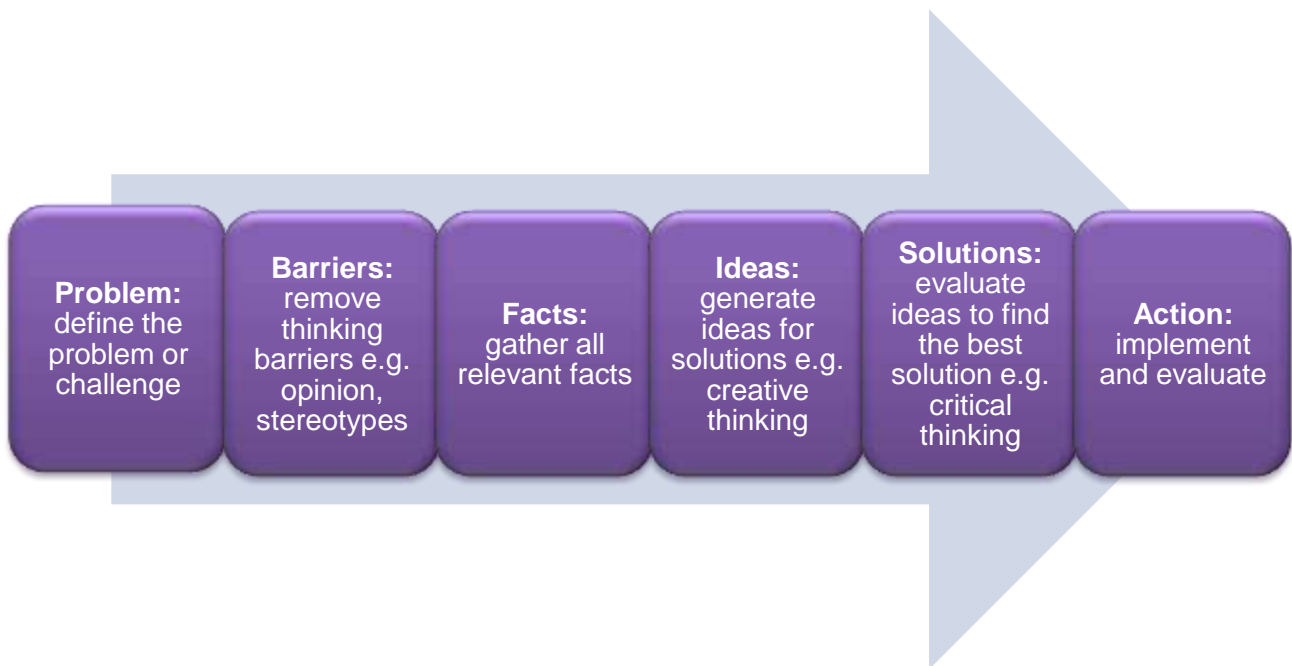
Encourage them to think about anything 'interesting' that their exploration uncovered, for example, something they would like to know more about, or a train of thought that would take them 'off topic' in a different direction.



Problem solving process

The ability to problem solve and be innovative are important life skills. All of the above ideas on higher order thinking, creative thinking and critical thinking can be applied to aid the problem solving process!

Below are 2 examples of structures that can aid the process, but you and your child might create your own that works for you!



To try at home

Think of a challenge that you and your child can work through together. Here are some examples of challenges:

- Filling the long summer holiday
- Helping a local charity
- Eating fun, healthy and cost-effective food



Board games

Board games are a great, fun way of developing skills, learning to fail in a safe environment and learning together as a family.

Here are just a few ideas:

Strategy skills	Chess, Go, Settlers of Catan, Mancala
Verbal skills	Apples to Apples, Taboo, Last Word, Articulate, Don't Say It
Visio-spatial skills	Swish Junior, Shape by Shape, Brain Box, Qwirkle
Problem-solving skills	Spin-out Brain Teaser Challenge, River Crossing, Rush Hour Junior

More help and support

We hope that you enjoy some of these ideas to encourage deeper learning at home.

As a national charity our aim is to help these young people to thrive both educationally and in their overall well-being. If you would like more help and support please do not hesitate to contact us.

For more information visit www.potentialplusuk.org

