

# THE THINKER'S KEYS – A 'ONE PAGER'

The Thinker's Keys place emphasis upon the development of creative thinking. They are designed to engage and motivate students in creative thinking activities and provide a framework for teachers when developing units of work. The Thinkers Keys provide a range of question or task starters, presented as KEYS to unlocking the analytical, critical and creative thinking abilities of learners.

## QUICK TIPS:

- The Thinker's Keys require direct instruction and direct reference to the terms FLUENCY, FLEXIBILITY, ORIGINALITY, and ELABORATION.
- It is very important that the teaching around the Thinkers Keys occurs in the context of authentic learning for students to gain the most out of them.
- Exposure to the keys in a series also helps with transfer, and encourages learners to have a frame of reference and variety of options from which to choose when selecting the best possible strategy for each situation.
- Feedback using the terms fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration encourages reflection and goal setting

## BASIC TENETS:

1. Creative thinking can be taught, and can be both exciting and enjoyable. This kind of active, engaged participation can promote a positive attitude towards the learning process.
2. The stimulation of creativity in learning heightens the emotional link with that learning. This emotional involvement boosts the effectiveness of our memory systems.
3. Developing our creative potential will strengthen our ability to cope with change. If there is one thing that we can guarantee into the 21st century, it will be the exponential rate of change that will affect the world. When our thinking is open ended and accepting of new ideas, we become much more capable of adapting to these changing circumstances”(Ryan)

## THE THINKER'S KEYS:

The Thinkers Keys are twenty powerful strategies for generating intellectual thoroughness in everyday learning in all settings and have been organised into two general groups:

- 1)Critical / Organisational (the purple cards). When you need to get yourself organised, these are the cards for you. They encourage you to do your research, to evaluate your information, and to place any necessary tasks into action.
- 2)Creative (the Orange Cards). When you want to generate all-new ideas, or to develop some different perspectives on an issue, then these Cards will help you to do so. They challenge you to think very differently.

## A QUICK SUMMARY OF THE THINKER'S KEYS:

1. **The Reverse-** Challenges Children to think of the never, cannot
2. **The What If-** A what if question, come up with solutions
3. **The Disadvantages-** List disadvantages and Improvements
4. **The Combination-** List attributes of both, then combine
5. **The Alphabet-** Come up with something for each letter of the Alphabet
6. **The B A R-** Bigger, Add, Replace acronym. Come up with a solution for each
7. **The Variations-** How many ways can you...
8. **The Picture-** Draw a picture/diagram
9. **The Prediction-** Make a prediction
10. **The Different Uses-** Find 10 different uses for...
11. **The Ridiculous-** Try to justify a ridiculous statement
12. **The Commonality-** Find common points between...
13. **The Question-** Come up with 5 questions for...
14. **The Brainstorming-** Brainstorm solutions for...
15. **The Inventions-** Design a ...
16. **The Brick Wall-** Consider alternatives to...
17. **The Construction-** Construct a... Materials...
18. **The Forced Relationships-** Come up with a solution to a problem involving two dissimilar objects
19. **The Alternative-** Work out 3 ways to...
20. **The Interpretations-** Give 3 possible explanations for...



A great resource that includes templates and a range of examples of the Keys in use can be found online at [http://www.tonyryan.com.au/blog/wp-content/uploads/Thinkers\\_Keys\\_Version1.pdf](http://www.tonyryan.com.au/blog/wp-content/uploads/Thinkers_Keys_Version1.pdf)