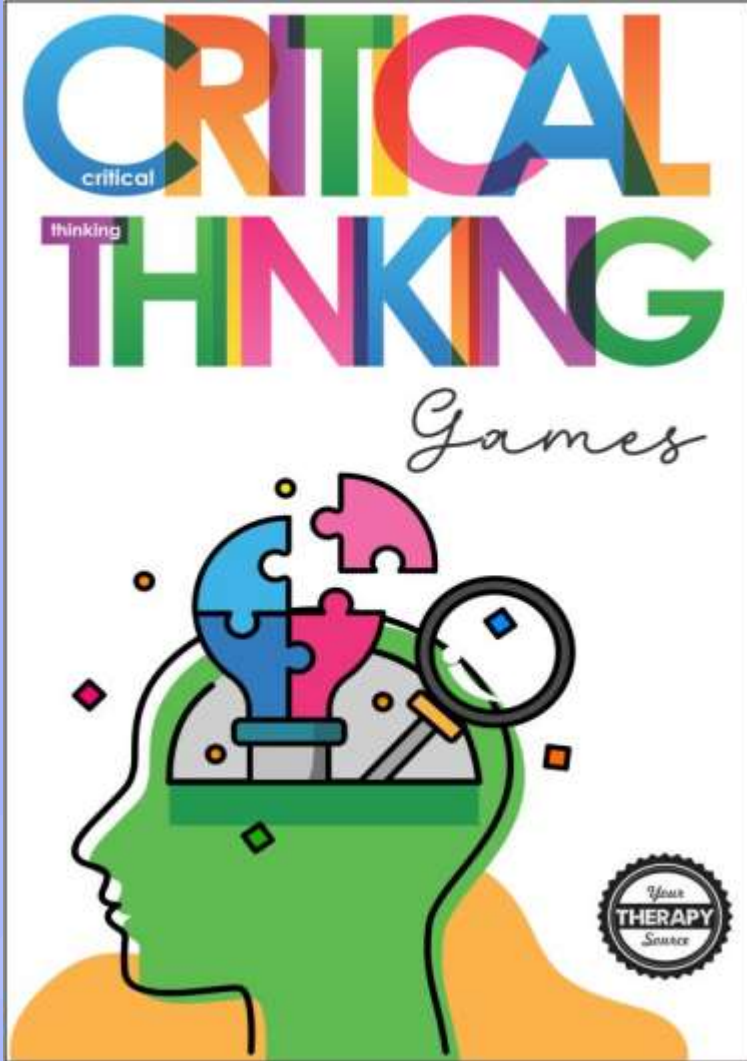




Critical thinking & problem-solving activities





Critical thinking...reflective, higher order, and independent thinking. Applied to the classroom, I think of it as teaching students to think on a deeper level, not just memorizing facts. So I am sharing some great critical thinking activities with you today.





What are the most engaging critical thinking activities for students?

1. Puzzles and games

Puzzles and games are fun and interactive ways to introduce and practice critical thinking skills, such as logic, reasoning, and strategy. You can use puzzles and games that are related to your curriculum, such as *crossword puzzles*, *word searches*, *Sudoku*, or *trivia quizzes*. You can also use puzzles and games that are more general, such as *chess*, *checkers*, *riddles*, or *brain-teasers*. You can challenge your students to work individually, in pairs, or in groups, and to explain their solutions and strategies to each other.






What are the most engaging critical thinking activities for students?

2. Debates and discussions

Debates and discussions are effective ways to develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills, such as argumentation, persuasion, and evaluation. You can use debates and discussions to explore controversial or complex topics in your subject area, such as ethical dilemmas, historical events, or current issues. You can also use debates and discussions to encourage your students to express their opinions, perspectives, and values, and to listen and respond to others. You can structure your *debates and discussions in different formats, such as formal or informal, pro or con, or fishbowl or Socratic.*





What are the most engaging critical thinking activities for students?

3. Projects and presentations

Projects and presentations are creative and collaborative ways to apply and showcase critical thinking skills, such as research, synthesis, and communication. You can use projects and presentations to challenge your students to create something original and meaningful, such as *a poster, a brochure, a video, or a podcast*. You can also use projects and presentations to allow your students to choose their own topics, formats, and audiences, and to share their work with others. You can guide your students through the steps of planning, executing, and evaluating their projects and presentations.





What are the most engaging critical thinking activities for students?

4. Scenarios and simulations

Scenarios and simulations are realistic and immersive ways to stimulate and enhance critical thinking skills, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and reflection. You can use scenarios and simulations to expose your students to real-world situations and challenges in your subject area, such as *case studies, experiments, or role-plays*. You can also use scenarios and simulations to engage your students in authentic tasks and actions, such as making predictions, testing hypotheses, or performing procedures. You can facilitate your students' learning by providing feedback, questions, and prompts.



What are the most engaging critical thinking activities for students?

5. Questions and prompts

Questions and prompts are simple and versatile ways to foster and assess critical thinking skills, such as inquiry, analysis, and metacognition. You can use questions and prompts to elicit your students' prior knowledge, curiosity, and opinions, such as open-ended, closed-ended, or essential questions. You can also use questions and prompts to guide your students' thinking processes, strategies, and outcomes, such as Bloom's taxonomy, graphic organizers, or rubrics. You can incorporate questions and prompts in any of the above activities, or in any other instructional methods.





What are the most engaging critical thinking activities for students?

6. Tips and resources

To make your critical thinking activities more engaging and effective for your students, consider aligning them with learning objectives, differentiating them according to readiness and interests, scaffolding them according to proficiency, monitoring and adjusting them with feedback, and using online tools such as Kahoot, Padlet, or EdPuzzle. Doing this will help you provide your students with relevant activities, choices and options, support and challenge, recognition and improvement.





Get outside the classroom

Take learning outside the classroom. Applying learning to the world around them will support students in making crucial connections that build critical thinking. Check this video for ways to bring the outdoors to your classroom!





Incorporate Turn and Talks

Turn and talks allow students to briefly share, review, and make connections to things they are learning. It is one of the top critical thinking resources when executed effectively in the classroom. Turn and talks allow for the exploration of an array of topics.





Make Opportunities for Students to Teach

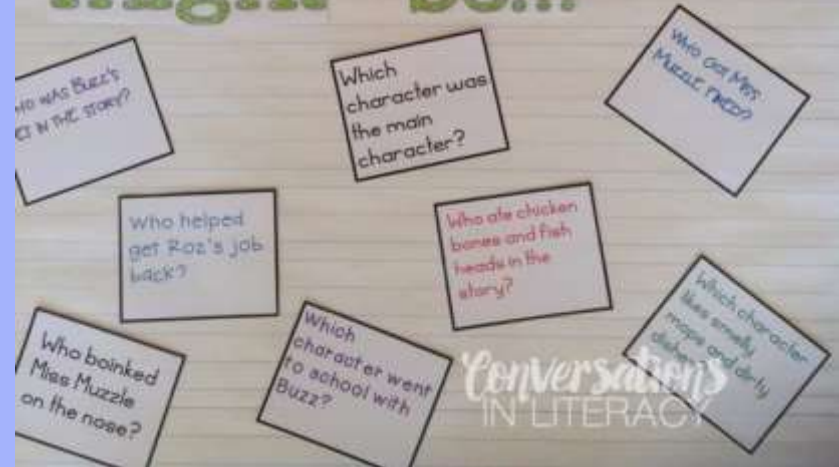
The deepest learning occurs when we teach others. Your kids will really be able to tap into their critical thinking skills in this exercise, where you'll invite them to play teacher! It's a fantastic way to deepen their understanding of concepts, as you'll encourage them to reteach learning material to their peers.



Critical Thinking
The
The Answer
answer is...is...

Fly Guy

The question might be...



The Answer Is...



I love this backwards thinking strategy! Give an answer and the students must come up with a question for it. The more you model and encourage creative thinking for this strategy, the more the students will enjoy coming up with creative questions! They enjoy thinking of questions that maybe no one else would think of to ask.



Always Make Time for Reflection

Reflection is indispensable to the critical thinking process. Reflection empowers students as learners and prompts deeper thinking. Reflection allows students to tackle higher levels of thinking resulting in better consciousness of self and learning. You can provide opportunities for silent reflection, exit tickets, journals, etc.



Thanks!

