


CREATIVITY COUNTS

Cultivating Your Creativity

Practicing creativity builds the mind's reflex and capacity for inspiration. Each of the following experiences roots itself in varying forms of novel and innovative thought. The value of each exercise is not necessarily the product. These simple exercises are an intentional way of seeing your thoughts and expanding your creativity so that you are ready to produce your most creative ideas. For best results with students, a daily practice of creativity enhancement works best. The following exercises can be done once, or repeatedly, or in different contexts.

Pencil In Your Invention

Thinking creatively requires that we think of many new ideas in short periods of time. A pencil is a pencil until it is a pole or a chopstick. What is a pencil to you? Pick up a pencil — preferably a new one. In three minutes, rapidly draw your ideas. In the spaces provided, think of as many new uses for a pencil as you can. Don't worry about how good they look or about penciling in lots of ideas. We've started you off with a grid and filled in the first box for you.

Word Symbols

Transforming a word into a symbol takes a special type of creativity. Sometimes words are just not enough. Symbols and drawings channel clever ways of peering beyond letters and seeing new attributes of common words.

Using the words below, design and draw a representation of each word's meaning to you. Don't worry about how well you draw. Make ten or so quick sketches and then pick a couple to improve or enhance. Put your favorite in the designated box. There is a blank box. That is for you to choose your own word to illustrate!

Cooperation

House

Alternatives

Future

Data

Memory

Creativity

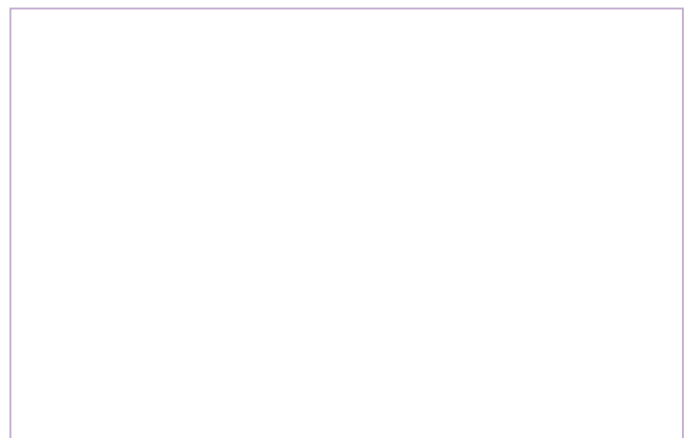
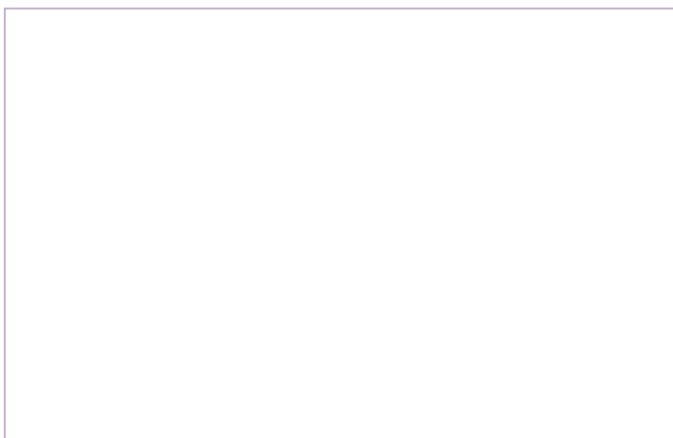
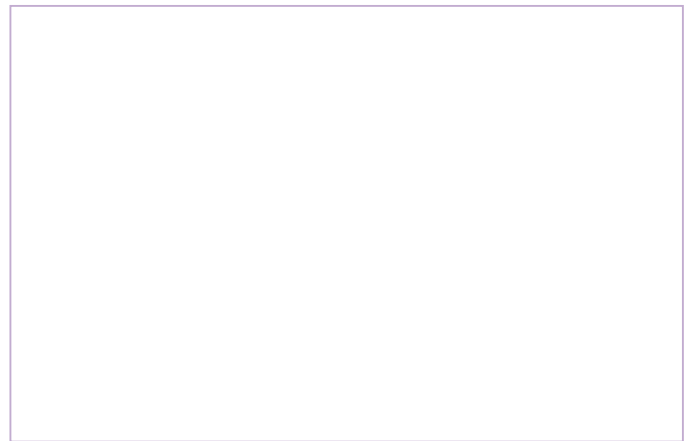
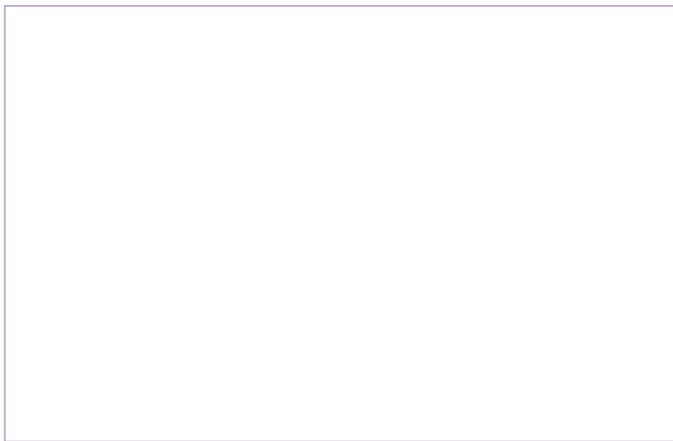
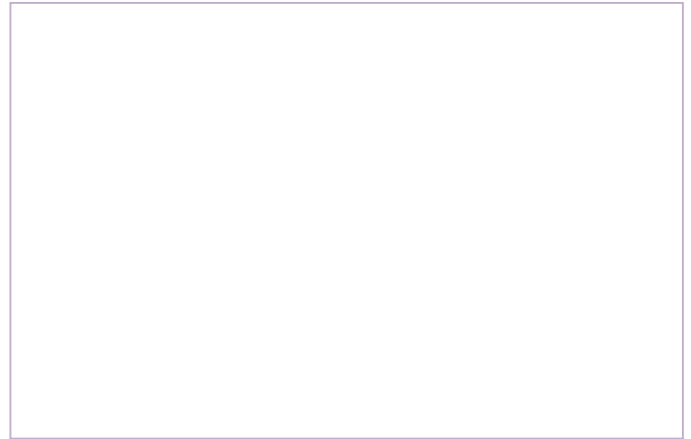
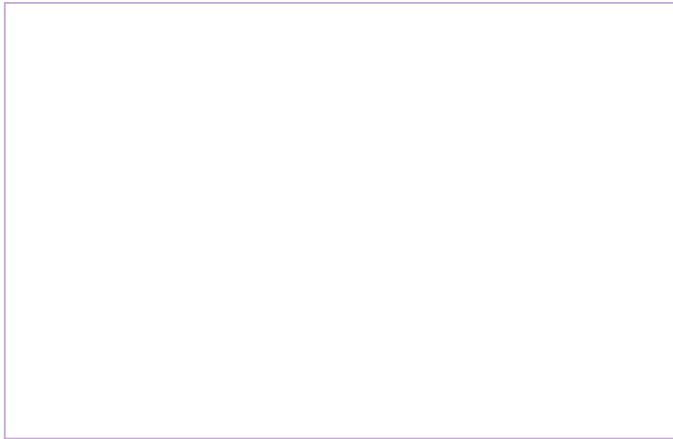
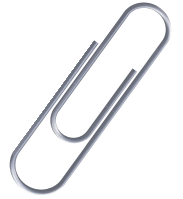
Contentment

Make

Paperclip Cartoon

Limiting your imagination is the quickest way to quash creativity. The fastest way to a great idea is by allowing humor to produce lots of silly ideas.

In this activity you are going to create a cartoon. Each frame of your cartoon is going to contain a paperclip. Not an ordinary paperclip, but a paperclip that has been transformed by your creativity into other objects and ideas. Don't limit your creativity, let your paperclip become a bird, a fence, a person... but never a paperclip! Use a real paperclip to trace if needed.



Creative Combos

Creativity involves making remote associations. An important kind of creativity is when our mind combines unlike ideas in new and different ways. This exercise encourages you to imagine these combinations of very unlike ideas and objects.

Draw a picture and write about one of your creative combos. Think about how elements of one object can be used to enhance aspects of the second object or idea.

- A skateboard that is a lizard.
- A smart phone that is also a laser.
- A box that is also a pet.
- A dress that is also food.
- A magnet that is also a hat.
- A coffee mug that is also a book.
- A spoon that is also in love.

Inventive Noodling

History is full of inventions. Many inventions are revisions of prior inventions punctuated with innovation. The wheel of a cart becomes the tire for an airplane or the inner tube for a float on a river. We are going to use a simple and familiar substance to do some creative noodling.

Ramen noodles are those square cakes of hardened noodles that, when placed in water, expand and soften into a slurping, favorable mess of noodles. Now use the following questions to guide your inventive noodling.

- How can you change ramen noodles to make them different and better?
- For what other parts of the grocery store can you create new types of ramen noodles?
- From what else can ramen noodles be made?

Once you have some ideas, create a package that markets your new ramen noodles product.

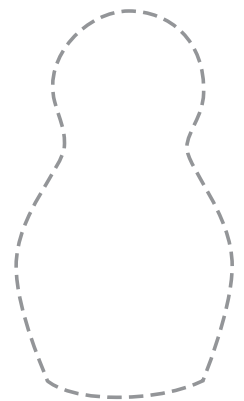
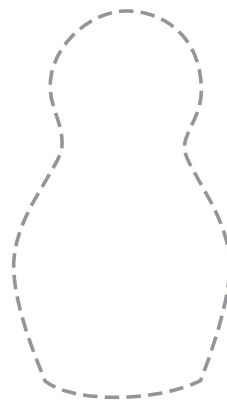
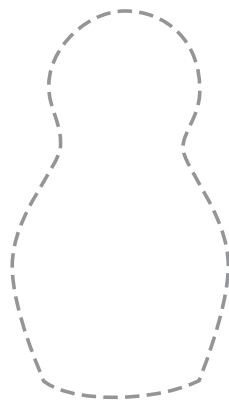
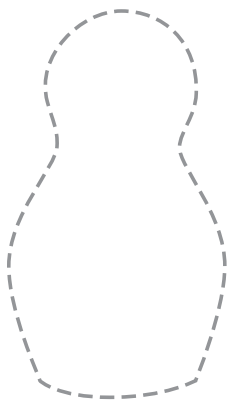
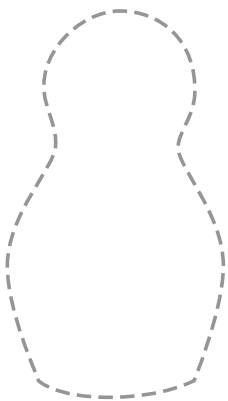
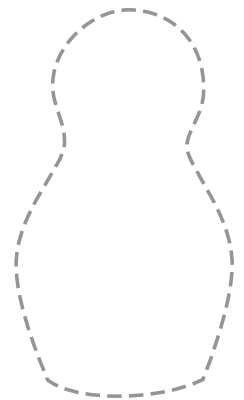
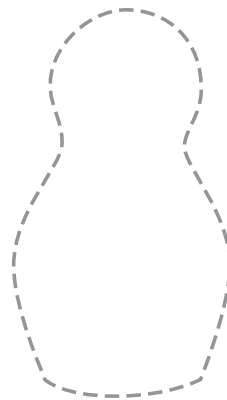
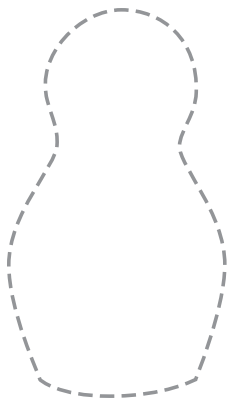
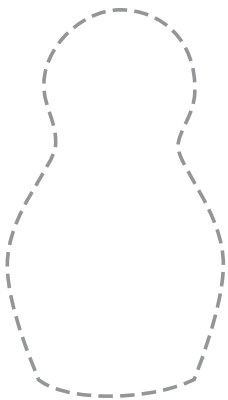
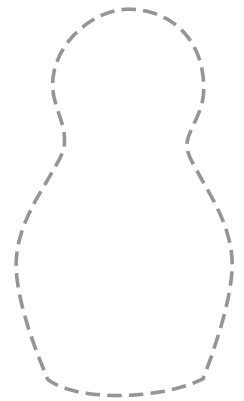
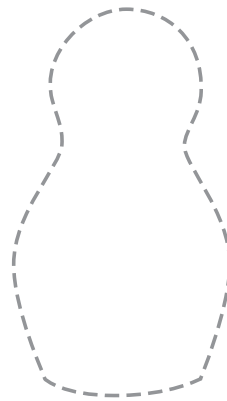
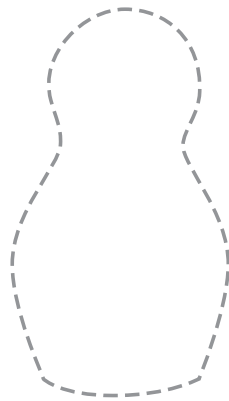
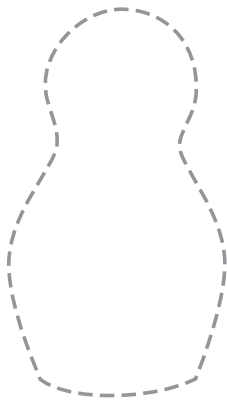
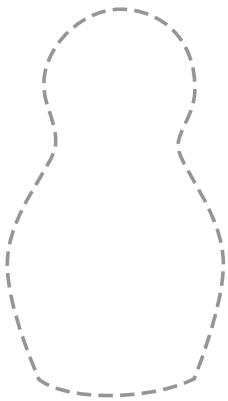
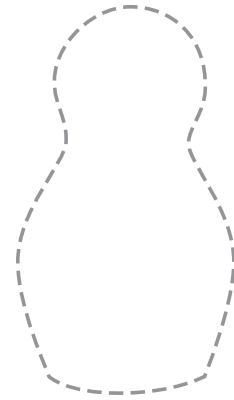
Final Package

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Characterizing Creativity

Nothing is more intimidating than a blank sheet of paper. That's why we've put 16 blank shapes on the paper. Shapes are starting points and help some people dive into a project quicker and generate more creative ideas.

Use your creativity to design some characters of different varieties and personalities. Give each character a name. Share your characters with someone else.



Sharing Invention

It took a highly skilled group of 180 individuals to create the movie, *Finding Nemo*. At one of its space centers, NASA employs more than 13,000 people to design, launch, monitor, and maintain its missions.

While many great ideas have individual origins, most ideas are refined by collaborating groups of creative thinkers. This activity should be done with someone else. Drawing and visualizing objects as connected shapes is an important skill.

Below are some shapes. With your friend, pick three of the shapes. Make those shapes into one of the following:

- A tool for a builder.
- A musical Instrument.
- A piece of furniture.
- A mode of transportation.
- A toy for a baby.
- A water park ride.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for drawing or sketching.

Deconstructing the News

Every day, we experience moments of deconstruction. Scrambled eggs are deconstructed eggs. Often, starting with an object creates a mental constraint or limitation. Deconstructing an idea creates new pathways of thought.

In this activity you are using your insight to develop a new representation of today's newspaper. Take the front page of today's newspaper. Quickly cut apart words, photographs, numbers, or drawings. Tape the parts back together in a novel new way. You are the editor now! You can use colored pencils or markers to create sections of your new news.



Time to Create

Once something is invented, seeing that object in a new way is a challenge. Take the wristwatch. For some, cell phones have replaced wrist watches. For others, wearable clocks are useful and necessary.

How can the idea of a wearable clock be reimagined?

Design a new and creative way to wear and tell time. What are the clock's features?

How is it worn? Does your clock interact with other devices? How is time revealed on your wearable clock?

Keys to Creativity

Nothing we design is ever in isolation. Keys were invented in Egypt about 6,000 years ago, yet we may think that the shapes and sizes of keys are only of the type we carry. We are missing thousands of years of examples and visual references. Visual research is as important as the research is for writing a history paper.

- First, research keys. (Google images highlights hundreds of them.)
- Pick some of the old and new key shapes you like. Since nothing we know or do is in isolation, use that research to drive your creativity to draw a novel key in the shape of an animal.

Research Samples



Animal Key (Iterations)

Animal Key (Final)

Over and Over

When constrained only to produce a single shape, our minds find other ways to be creative.

Use only the shape to the right to create a design or a picture or a pattern. Be creative. Change the size, the intensity, and the position of the shape.

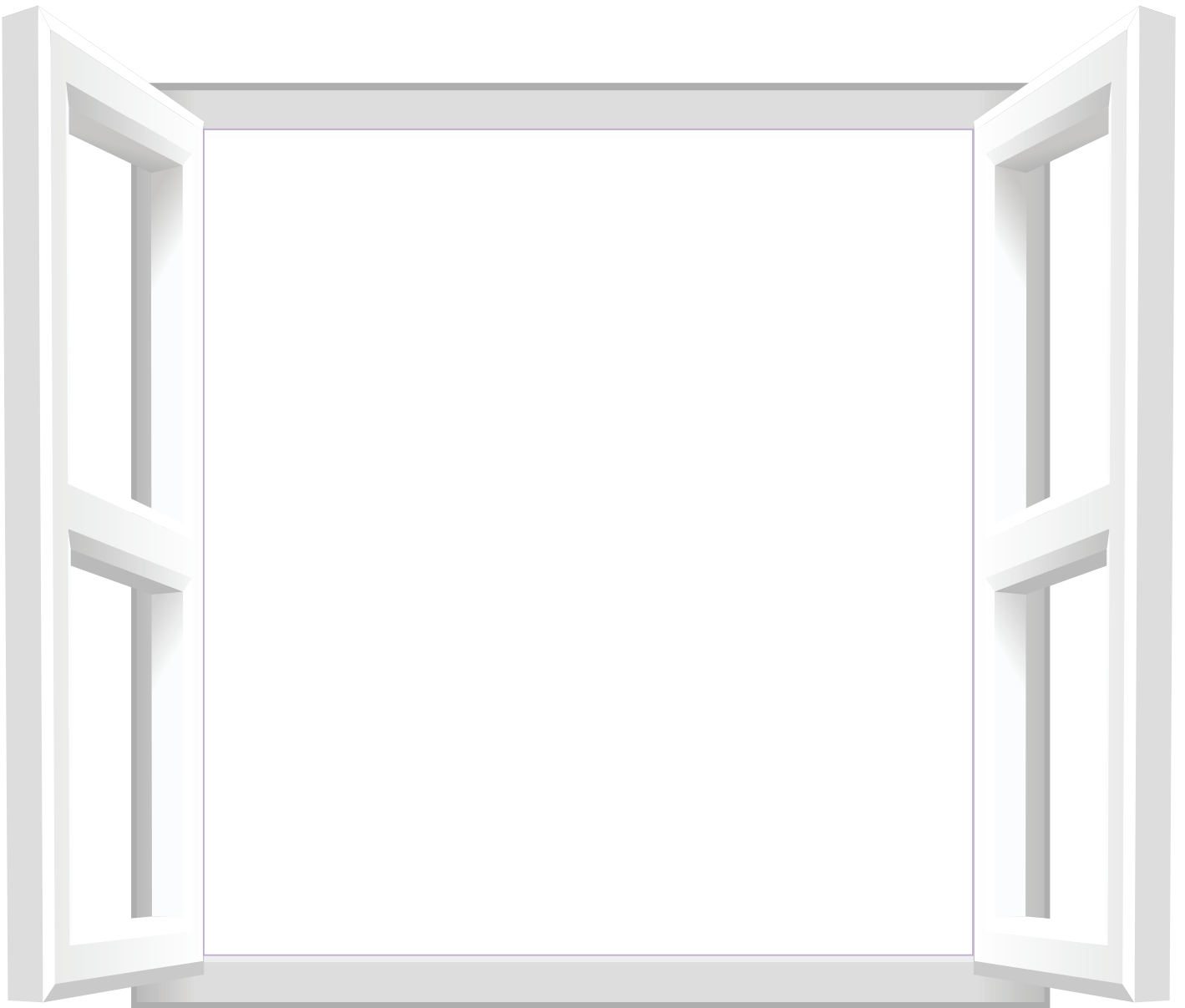


Window on Creativity

If you could awake to an imaginative world outside your window, what would it look like?

- Would your window be on an imaginary planet?
- Would you be near water?
- Would there be lush plants, crowded buildings, or a barren landscape?
- Would strange and wonderful birds perch near your window?

Use your imagination to draw the view from your window.



The Rhythm of Creativity

Turn the tunes on, put in your ear buds, or close your door, and draw what you hear.



What does the music you hear look like?

How does your illustration of the music change the more you listen?

Game of Constraint

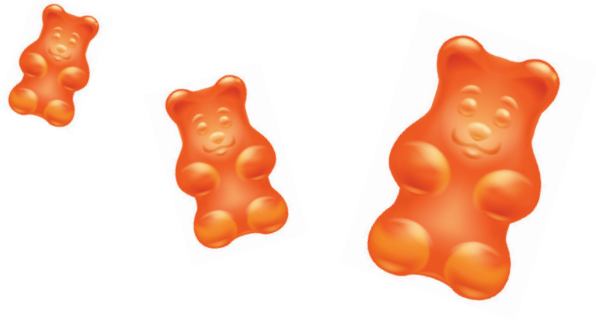
Constraints make us more mentally nimble and creative. Using a very limited number of objects is a constraint. Time is also a constraint. So time yourself for this activity. Use the following objects to create a game. You must use all of the materials. Write the rules of your game for someone else to play.



Sweet Ideas

Creativity often means taking something literal and concrete, and abstracting the idea. Here is a way to take the literal to a sweet conclusion.

Get a bag of gummy bears. Arrange the gummy bears (and any found materials that seem appropriate) to illustrate the following words.



<div>Conflict</div> <div></div>	<div>Winner</div> <div></div>	<div>Protest</div> <div></div>
<div>Fun</div> <div></div>	<div>Friendship</div> <div></div>	<div>Collaboration</div> <div></div>