



Hillcross Primary School

Parent Information on
Tony Ryan's Thinkers Keys

What are Thinking Keys?

- Thinking Keys are 20 powerful strategies for generating thinking in many learning situations

“When children can think critically and creatively, it enriches their learning and their life.”

The 20 Thinkings Keys

1. The Reverse Key
2. The What If Key
3. The Disadvantages Key
4. The Combination Key
5. The Alphabet Key
6. The B A R Key
7. The Variations Key
8. The Picture Key
9. The Prediction Key
10. The Different Uses Key
11. The Ridiculous Key
12. The Commonality Key
13. The Question Key
14. The Brainstorming Key
15. The Inventions Key
16. The Brick Wall Key
17. The Construction Key
18. The Forced Relationships Key
19. The Alternative Key
20. The Interpretations Key



For more information please visit : <http://www.thinkerskeys.com>

The 'What If?' Key



You can ask virtually any 'What If' question.
You can use the ideas wheel to record the
children's responses.

E.g.. What If.....

...all cars turned into skateboards?

...chocolate was good for you?

...mice were as big as elephants?

...money did grow on trees?

The COMMONALITY Key



Decide upon 2 objects which would generally have nothing in common, and try to outline some points of commonality between them.

Example:

The commonalities between a

- Mouse and a car.
- A ruler and ice-cream.
- A friend and a present.

The COMBINATION Key



List the attributes of 2 dissimilar objects
(one within your area of study, one outside),
then combine the attributes into a single object.

THE EXAMPLE: A leaf and a mousetrap.

The Leaf

- They change colours through the year.
- Insects often eat them..
- There are millions of them



The Mousetrap

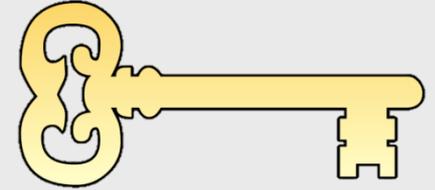
- They are made of wood and wire
- They can kill mice
- They can be left in lots of places.



THE COMBINATIONS:

1. A miniature mousetrap for placing on leaves, that can kill insects when they try to eat the leaf.
2. Mousetraps that can change colour and blend in with the surface on which they are

Reverse Listing Key

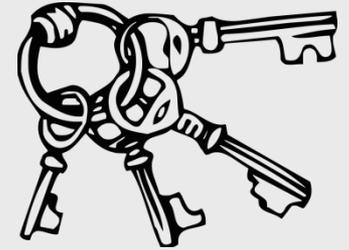


Place words such as **cannot**, **would not**, **never** or **not** in a sentence.

E.g..

- ❖ Name 10 things that you could not clean:
- ❖ List 10 things that can not grow
- ❖ Name 10 things you couldn't put on a sandwich
- ❖ Name 10 items you wouldn't find in a house
- ❖ List 10 things you would not see at the circus

The Question Key



Start with an answer and list questions that give that answer.

E.g.. Think of questions to give the answer:

- Midnight
- Seaweed
- Christmas
- Koalas
- Clowns
- Butterflies



Picture Key



Draw a simple diagram or squiggle and students work out ways to link it (by finishing the picture) to a specific:

Topic

Theme

Book

Celebration, etc.



(N.B. Variation on Ryan's original Picture Key)

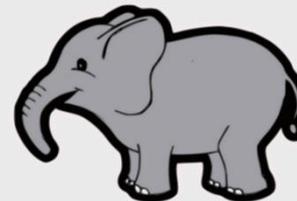
The VARIATIONS



This key employs a special group of words.
Start each question with ...

How many ways can you...

- Paint a house?
- Wash an elephant?
- Use a paper cup?
- Turn on the T.V?



The CONSTRUCTION



Set up a wide variety of construction problem-solving tasks and use lots of readily available materials.

THE EXAMPLE:

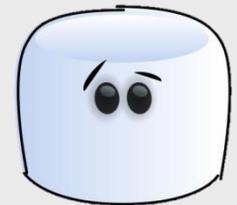
1. Build a self-supporting structure to hold 1 person

Materials: 10 balloons and sticky tape.

2. Build a platform which will suspend a house brick as high as possible in the air.

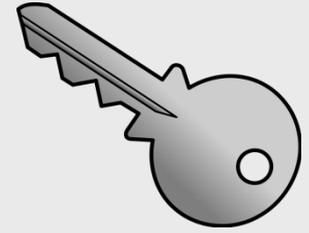
Materials: One house brick, 10 straws and some sticky tape.

3. Build the highest possible structure
Materials: dry spaghetti and marshmallows



4. Build a trap for the Big Bad Wolf

The Alphabet Key



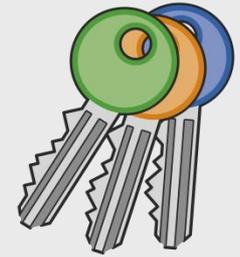
Choose an object or general category of objects which feature in the area of study and compile a list of words from A to Z which have some relevance to the object/s. Then try to expand on some ideas which link with each of the words.

The A-Z of...

- Minibeasts
- Countries around the world?
 - Childrens names?



The DIFFERENT Uses



Put your imagination to work and list some widely different uses for a chosen object from your area of study. (emphasis on reusing and recycling).

THE EXAMPLE:

Find 10 uses for red plastic noses



1. Place them in your strawberry patch to give a false impression of the number of strawberries.
2. Use them as face masks for mice when they undertake a cheese factory robbery