

GENERATION

10 IDEAS IN 10 MINS 	DRAW ON INSPIRATION 
Force your internal critic to shut up by generating as many ideas as possible. Quantity over quality will help your mind to expand rather than contract. Set a stopwatch for 10 minutes to write down 10 ideas. Importantly, they don't have to be good ideas.	Instead of writing ideas, simply start sketching relevant concepts. By activating your visual cortex you'll open up new ways to think about things. Don't try to solve the problem right away, just start moving the pencil.
SHOWER THOUGHTS 	101 IDEAS 
The reason we have great ideas in the shower is that we're not doing anything else. Use your time in the shower to think, during your run, or meditating in a sensory deprivation chamber to consider the brain.	Give yourself or your team a deadline to compile 101 ideas in a list. By having so many ideas, you'll give yourself permission to have more bad ideas, which in turn opens you up to more good ideas.

PERSPECTIVE SHIFTS

INVERSION 	ANOTHER'S SHOES 	RECONTEXT 
By flipping the perspective you can open up new insights. What the opposite of the problem or solution? What would be the worst idea? Who isn't the target audience?	Imagine you're a historical figure, the customer, an inventor, etc. What might Gordon Ramsay, Barack Obama, Hitler, Jesus, Lady Gaga, The Devil, God, Napoleon, Hitler, the Atticus Finch, Steve Jobs, The Fall Guy, or the narrator do?	How would you solve the problem in the future or least? What about a different cultural context? How would aliens see things? Try 5 ideas in 5 minutes on different ways to frame the problem.
NO LIMITS 	EXTREMIFY 	CHALLENGE 
Removing limitations means removing assumptions, which can result in novel perspectives and solutions. Imagine you have unlimited power, budget, time, or technological capability to solve the problem. What would a god do?	Looking at extremes can bring insights into sharp relief. What would happen if you amplified the problem or solution? What if it was minuscule or all-consuming? What would a global response look like?	Creative breakthroughs often arise from challenging conventions. What assumptions have already been made? Could they be wrong, or shifted? What if the brief is too narrow? Too wide? Pretend to be your competitor.



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CREATIVE THINKING TOOLS

PROVOCATION

FUTURE NEWS 	FIVE WHYS 
Pretend you've already achieved success. What's the newspaper headline or article says? Writing this out will spur you to think of big, newsworthy ideas. Explaining how and why it worked so well forces you to consider the steps to success.	This technique is often used to get to the root of a problem, but it can also discover insights into creative thinking. Start with a problem or solution, then keep asking 'why?' to see where it leads you.
WHAT IF? 	SWOT NOW 
Simply starting the thinking process with 'What if...' can elicit a creative response. Try saying it out loud or writing it down several times in a list to hack your brain to think differently.	Create four quadrants and list Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths and Weaknesses relate to internal factors while Opportunities and Threats relate to external aspects. These analyses are usually used for strategic planning, but they can also be used to provoke new ideas.

LIMITATION

WRITE A CLEAR BRIEF

Failing to provide a clear and compelling brief does not, contrary to popular opinion, 'open' or 'encourage' creativity. Use the brief template to create a **brief** or at least provide a clear brief on the basis of a single sentence. Ask: Why are we doing this? Focus on the strategic objective rather than the execution e.g. 'Help people think creatively' rather than 'Make a brainstorming poster'.

MENTAL MODELS



PARETO PRINCIPLE

About 80% of the output tends to come from 20% of the input. How might we optimize by focusing on the most relevant factors? How can we design for the primary audience?



FIRST PRINCIPLES

Define the base principles to reason more clearly. Question what's actually fundamental to bring the problem (and solution) into sharp relief. What unnecessary assumptions are being made?



SOCIAL PROOF

As tribal creatures, we want validation before we act. How can we create and communicate social buy-in? Could the crowd itself contribute in some way?



CRITICAL MASS

A critical mass is a self-sustaining chain reaction. What could we do to create a viral effect whereby the idea spreads itself? How might we make it remarkable or useful enough to become its own amplifier?



SCARCITY

We value things that are in short supply. Is there a way to create demand or the perception of it? How might limitations be beneficial?



THE THIRD STORY

Consider the impartial perspective. Were we often blind to our own assumptions, and our perceptions are colored by our limited understanding. What might someone with no knowledge or bias think?



IN GROUPS



CONCEPT WALL

To start your collaborative brainstorming session, everyone writes or draws a key concept relating to the subject matter on sticky notes. Then put them up on the wall as stimulus for further brainstorming.



ROLE UP

Give each person in the group a role to play such as the customer, the rebel, the narrator, the joker, the sage, the CEO, the shareholder, the skeptic, etc. Then give a scenario involving the product, problem, or situation to role play.



ANONYPOST

Each person writes or draws a single idea per sticky note and puts it on the wall in a separate room. Take turns reading your favorite idea that wasn't your own (and hasn't yet been nominated) and explain why.



YOUR BIAS IS

Group brainstorming is often affected by social factors, and confident voices thwart more considered thinking. Familiarize yourself with common cognitive biases that can affect decision making, evaluation and group dynamics at [yourbias.is](#)



BRAIN WRITING

Everyone writes an idea on a piece of paper. Pass your piece of paper clockwise, the next person adds on the idea. Repeat until everyone has contributed to each other's ideas with their own suggestions, extensions, iterations or perspectives.



HEADS IN THE CLOUD

Rather than verbal collaboration, use a cloud-based service like Google docs with open sharing permissions so everyone can simultaneously collaborate, comment, and build on each other's ideas. Create a copy of the doc at [schools-of-thought.org/cloud](#)

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