

# Complete Instructions for Practice Spontaneous Problems

## Animal Rhymes

(This problem is adapted from Competition Stimulates Creativity by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus and Samuel W. Micklus.)

This activity may be done with any number of students. However we suggest you divide the class into groups of 5-7 students and have a contest to see which group comes up with the greatest number of creative responses. You may wish to designate a timekeeper so you can concentrate on the quality of the responses.

### Instructor:

1. Read the problem to the team.
2. Give the team one minute to think, then begin the 2-minute response time. (Increase response time accordingly for groups larger than seven members).
3. Mark each response as either common or creative (do not allow repeats or very similar responses).
4. Call "time" at the end of 2 minutes, allowing any student responding at this time to finish.
5. Total the score, awarding 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each creative response.

### The Problem:

1. You have 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. You may ask questions during your thinking time, but time will continue. You may not talk to each other at any time.
2. You will receive 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each creative or humorous response.
3. You will take turns responding. You may not skip your turn or repeat a response. If one person cannot think of a response, response time will end.
4. Your problem is to make a rhyme using a name or species of an animal. For example, you might say, "I think mice are nice" or "There's a cat in the hat."

### Judging the Responses:

### Examples of common responses:

Simple statements with little humor and anticipated rhymes: There's a deer over here; Black bears have black hair.

Poorly rhymed statements: I saw a lion who was blind; There's a dog on the log.  
Popular rhymes: I saw a butterfly flutter by; I hate meeces to pieces; See you later,  
alligator \_ in a while crocodile.

### **Examples of creative responses:**

Humorous or unique rhymes: There's a caterpillar in a roto-tiller; I can step on an ant,  
but on an uncle I can't; The tiger's stripes were different types; I lost my baseball bat \_  
do you know where it's at?

Multiple rhymes: The bear ate a pear while in its lair; The moose got loose and chased  
the goose; Bird is a word that I've often heard.

Combining animal names with peoples' names: Donald Duck had bad luck; Bugs  
Bunny doesn't eat honey; Larry Bird is seldom heard.

## **Be Patient**

(This problem is adapted from Make Learning Fun, by Dr.C. Samuel Micklus.)

This activity may be done with any number of students. However we suggest you  
divide the class into groups of 5-7 students and have a contest to see which group  
comes up with the greatest number of creative responses. You may wish to designate  
a timekeeper, so you can concentrate on the quality of the responses.

### **Instructor:**

1. Read the problem to the team.
2. Give the team one minute to think, then begin the 2-minute response time.  
(Increase response time accordingly for groups larger than seven members).
3. Mark each response as either common or creative (do not allow repeats or very  
similar responses).
4. Call "time" at the end of 2 minutes, allowing any student responding at this time  
to finish.
5. Total the score, awarding 1 point for each common response and 5 points for  
each creative response.

### **The Problem:**

1. You have 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. You may ask questions  
during your thinking time, but time will continue. You may not talk to each other  
at any time.
2. You will receive 1 point for each common response and 5 points for each  
creative or humorous response.

3. You will take turns responding. You may not skip your turn or repeat a response. If one person cannot think of a response, response time will end.
4. Your problem is to pretend you are a patient in an operating room and you hear noises and conversation. Say what you would like to hear or what you would not like to hear. You must begin each response with "I would like to hear . . ." or "I would not like to hear . . . ."

### **Judging the Responses:**

#### **Examples of common responses:**

I would like to hear . . .

Everything will be O.K.

This operation is routine.

You will be just fine.

The doctor is good.

You'll be able to walk, see, eat, etc. again.

I would not like to hear . . .

You have a 50/50 chance.

His/her blood count is low -- be careful.

Some people come through this O.K.

Try not to worry.

This is going to hurt.

#### **Examples of creative responses:**

I would like to hear . . .

We're lucky we have two kidneys.

Your doctor's other patient is President Clinton.

He/she doesn't even know he/she won the lottery.

The stone passed -- we don't have to operate.

Your insurance will cover everything.

I would not like to hear . . .

Whoops!

The transplant organ is lost in the mail.

My cat wouldn't eat this liver.

What happened to the sponge?

You forget to pay your insurance bill.

## **Cantilever Structure**

(This problem is adapted from Make Learning Fun! by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus.)

### **A. JUDGE READS TO TEAMS:**

1. You will have 10 minutes to complete this problem.
2. You are to build a structure of toothpicks and clay that will sit on a table behind a boundary line. The structure will cantilever, or stick out, as far as possible beyond the boundary line without touching the table surface.
3. You may work anywhere you wish. You may also talk.
4. You may break the toothpicks into smaller pieces if you wish.
5. If your structure touches the table surface, you must break it off until it is cantilevered.
6. The structure will be measured after the 10 minute construction period. The distance cantilevered will determine your score.

7. You will be given 50 toothpicks and a piece of clay. The clay will be used to make the joints for your structure.
8. The team must rest the structure on the table behind the boundary line. You may not press down so that the clay adheres to the table to support the cantilever.
9. Scoring will be as follows: You will score one point for each 1/4" the structure extends beyond the boundary line without touching the surface. The end of the cantilever must be above the yardstick when the judge takes the final measurement.

**B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:**

1. Give each team 50 toothpicks and an equal amount of clay. OM recommends Plast-I-Clay by Amoco, or Crayola's Claytime Clay. (The latter is more expensive.) These are available at Toys "R" Us and other stores. If Plast-I-Clay is used, give each team a 1" x 1" x 1" piece or the equivalent.
2. You need a table on which a boundary line is taped across the top and a yardstick.
3. Teams may use their unused clay as a counterweight.
4. Be sure to end at 10 minutes.

## Names

**A. JUDGE READS TO TEAMS:**

(Do not read numbers or phrases in parenthesis.)

1. You will have 1 minute to think and 3 minutes to respond. Questions count against your thinking time.
2. You will receive one point for each response. Highly creative responses will receive five points. This will be a subjective opinion of the judge, and the judge's decision is final.
3. A number has been placed before each of you. That is your assigned number.
4. A stack of cards appears before you. When time begins, the judge will turn over the first card. The team member whose number corresponds to the card number will give the response. For example, if the first card is 3 then team member number 3 will give the response.
5. After the team member gives the response, he or she will turn over the next card. That team member will respond, and so on.
6. You may not skip your turn, or repeat, or pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck.
7. Once the time begins, it will not be stopped. If the judge asks you to repeat an answer, or to clarify it, or to give a more appropriate response, it counts against your time. Speak loudly and clearly.

8. Your problem is: Use a word or words to make a first and last name. You must relate this name to an occupation. For example: Budweiser could be split into Bud as a first name and Weiser as a last name. Bud Weiser could be a beer distributor. Or, saliva could become: first name "Sal" and last name "Iva" and Sal Iva could be a dentist. The first word must be a recognized name or nickname. (Repeat No. 8, "Your problem is:")

## **B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:**

1. Be sure to give exactly one minute to think and three minutes to respond. Timing is critical. A student responding at the buzzer can finish and be scored.
2. Score: One point for each common response and five points for each creative response.
3. In order to ensure that in every five cards turned over each team member will give one answer, stack the cards in the following order for each team: 2,4,3,1,5; 3,1,4,5,2; 3,2,5,4,1; 4,3,5,2,1; 2,1,4,3,5; 2,4,5,1,3; 1,5,3,2,4; 5,4,2,1,3; 4,1,3,5,2; 1,3,5,4,5.
4. If all the cards have been used, turn them over and start again. At the end of the session, the timekeeper should check the order of the cards and rearrange them if any are out of order.
5. Be sure that all cards assigning seat position have been placed into position prior to calling in the team. Place the blank response sheet on the table for the team to see.
6. Examples of Common Responses:

Examples given: Bud Weiser is a beer distributor

Sal Iva is a dentist

Responses similar to one already given, e.g., Bud Weiser is a bartender

Poor quality, but acceptable answers

7. Examples of Creative Responses:

One word broken up to make a first and last name:

Minnie Ster is a clergyman

Lou Pole is a tax advisor

Dan Druff is a hairdresser

Paul Bearer is an undertaker

Bill Fold is a pickpocket

Bee Keeper is a honey farmer

Clara Net is a musician

Jack Hammer is a construction worker

Ali Gator is a marine biologist

Bill Board is an advertiser

Two words put together to make a name:

Chuck Roast is a butcher

Rose Bush is a landscaper  
Jim Floor is a basketball coach  
Cliff Hanger is a mountain climber  
Sandy Rhoades works for the highway department  
Mark Spotter is a surveyor  
Carrie-West is a pioneer  
Armond Hammer is a carpenter  
Don Garments is a model  
Johnny Mop is a janitor  
Ted E. Bear is a zookeeper  
Al Kaseltzer is a pharmacist  
Matt Weaver is a tailor  
Will Writer is a lawyer  
Pete Spreader is a gardener

NOTE: Once an answer is given, if a very similar answer is given, count it as common only and then declare any other answers that are basically the same as repeats.

## Omer In The Basket



- A. **JUDGE READS TO TEAMS:** (Do not read material in parentheses.)
1. You will have 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. You may ask questions during your thinking time; however, time continues. No other talking is allowed.
  2. You will receive 1 point for each common response. Highly creative or humorous responses will receive 3 points. This will be a subjective opinion of the judges, and the judges' decision is final.
  3. Your team is to take turns in sequence. You may not skip your turn, or repeat, or pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck. However, each of you has been given one stump card. You may skip

your turn by placing your stump card in the box. You may each skip one turn. Your team will receive 4 points for each card not used.

4. Once the time begins, it will not be stopped. If the judge asks you to repeat a response, or to clarify it, or to give a more appropriate response, it counts against your time. Speak loudly and clearly.
5. Your problem is to say something about the basket. (Show the team a photocopy of the picture) For example, you could say, "OMER looks like he's sleeping." (Repeat number 5, "Your problem is.... ")

**B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:**

1. Be sure to give exactly 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. Timing is critical. Students responding at the buzzer can finish and be scored.
2. Score: 1 point for each common response, 3 points for each creative response.
3. Give each team member one stump card. If a team member uses his or her card, make him or her place it in a box when it is used. Be sure to award 4 points for each unused card.
4. Examples of Common Responses:

General comments on appearance: That's a pretty basket; OMER looks tired; The flowers are pretty; OMER has his tongue out; The basket is white.

Miscellaneous: Raccoons eat eggs; There's a basket in a basket; Is that OMER Junior? Who cuts that grass?

5. Examples of Creative Responses:

Humorous responses: You could make an "OM"-lette with those eggs; OMER must have eaten a lot because he looks stuffed; OMER is so cute... he's such a doll; hard-boiled eggs; Did a wooden chicken lay those eggs?

Unique responses: I'll bet artificial bees love those flowers; OMER is saying, "Na... na... na"; OMER doesn't have his pants on; If the wooden eggs hatched, would we get a wooden chicken (a tree, 2' x 4", etc.)? What kind of picnic could you have with the stuff in that basket? Why doesn't the little raccoon have tiny eggs in his basket?

Miscellaneous: The Easter Raccoon must have been here; OMER has hands but no feet; Do raccoons lay eggs? Do raccoon dolls eat wooden eggs?

# Something In Common

## A. JUDGE READS TO TEAMS: (Do not read material in parentheses.)

1. You will have 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. Questions count against your thinking time. You may ask the judge questions but may not talk to each other at any time.
2. You will receive 1 point for each common response. Highly creative or humorous responses will receive 3 points. This will be a subjective opinion of the judges and the judges' decision is final.
3. A number has been placed before each of you. That is your assigned number.
4. A stack of cards appears before you. When time begins, the judge will turn over the first card. The team member whose number corresponds to the card number will give a response.
5. After the team member gives a response, he or she will turn over the next card. That team member will respond, and so on.
6. You may not skip your turn, or repeat, or pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck.
7. Once the time begins, it will not be stopped. If the judge asks you to repeat a response, or to clarify it, or to give a more appropriate response, it counts against your time. Speak loudly and clearly.
8. Your problem is to name two things that have something in common and what it is they have in common. For example, you might say, "Snow and rain both fall from the sky." (Repeat number 8, "Your problem is....")

## B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:

1. Be sure to give exactly 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. Timing is critical. Students responding at the buzzer can finish and be scored.
2. Score: 1 point for each common response, 3 points for each creative response.
3. In order to ensure that in every 5 cards turned over each team member will give one answer, stack the cards in the following order for each team: 2,5,1,3,4; 1,5,3,2,4; 1,5,2,4,3; 5,3,4,2,1; 2,1,5,4,3; 1,3,2,5,4; 3,5,2,4,1; 4,5,2,1,3; 4,3,1,5,2; 3,5,1,2,4.
4. If all the cards have been used, turn them over and start again. At the end of the session, the timekeeper should check the order of the cards.
5. Be sure that all seat positions have been marked prior to calling in the teams. If there are fewer than 5 team members, have them turn cards until there is a team member in the numbered position.
6. Examples of Common Responses:

Obvious similarities: Pens and pencils write; Baseball and football are sports;

Cars and buses move people;

Dimes and nickels are coins;

Steak and cake are foods;

A and B are letters;  
1 and 2 are numbers;  
Moms and dads are parents;  
Red and white are colors;  
Oranges and apples are both fruits;  
Helicopters and airplanes fly;  
Socks and hats keep me warm.

Weak associations: Horses and cats can't fly; June and July aren't winter months;  
Trees and ants can't speak;  
Car and house don't have the letter "d" in them.

#### 7. Examples of Creative Responses:

Unusual or humorous similarities: Brown and black both begin with "b";  
Fish and people breathe;  
May and June are both girls' names;  
My ears and nose are both on my head;  
The principal's office and the dentist's office are two places I don't like.  
Things that have something in common, but are generally not related to each other: Clocks and people have hands;  
Nuns and soldiers both wear uniforms;  
Highways and paper clips go around;  
Some pizzas and golf courses have mushrooms.

NOTE: Once an answer is given, if a very similar answer is given, count it as common only and then declare any other answers that are basically the same as a duplicate and ask for another response.

## Tower of Pasta

(This problem is adapted from Omermania by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus.)

For this activity, divide the class into groups of 5-7 students. You may need an assistant to help keep track of timing, measuring, scoring and how well the team members are working together.

#### **Instructor:**

1. Give each team 40 pieces of spaghetti, 15 pieces of elbow macaroni, 25 miniature marshmallows, 10 toothpicks, 4 straws, and 5 adhesive mailing labels.
2. Have a table or desk available for the teams to build their structures.

3. Give each team 5 pounds of 16-penny nails to use as weights, and a pint-sized plastic container.
4. Read "The Problem" and "Scoring the Solutions" to the students.
5. Give the students 7 minutes to develop their solutions. They must stop working on their structures at the end of the 7 minutes.
6. The team will place the container on its structure before having it measured.
7. Once the structure is measured, the team may start the 2-minute testing period.

### **The Problem:**

1. You have 7 minutes to make a structure and 2 minutes to test it. The structure will be scored on height and strength.
2. You may talk to your team members at any time.
3. You may use only the materials given to you.
4. The structure must rest on the surface of the table. It may not lean against a wall or be supported by anything else.
5. Once your structure is finished, you will place the container on top of it. It will then be measured from the surface of the table to the top of the container. It must measure at least 8 inches high to receive score.
6. Once your structure is measured, you will begin placing weights in the container one at a time. A weight must be held for 3 seconds to count for score.
7. You will be finished when your structure breaks, you have used all the weights, or time ends.

### **Scoring the Solutions:**

1. You will receive 10 points if the structure supports the container.
2. You will receive 3 points for each inch of the height of the structure, including the container.
3. Each weight supported by the structure for 3 seconds is worth 1 point.
4. You will receive 1 to 10 points for how well your team works together.

## **Tug o' War**

(This problem is adapted from Problems to Challenge Creativity by Dr. C. Samuel Micklus.)

This activity may be done with any number of students. Students will work individually or in groups of 2-5 to make links that will be joined together to form a chain to be used in a tug-of-war. You should select 2 or 4 non-participating students to participate in the tug-of-war and to keep track of the score.

**Instructor:**

1. Give each team an envelope containing one tissue, 4 toothpicks, one adhesive mailing label, one straw, one rubber band, one Styrofoam cup, and one piece of 8 1/2" x 11" paper.
2. Make up tags containing each team's name (two per team).
3. Have a scissors and a coffee can available for the students to use.
4. Read "The Problem" and "Scoring the Solutions" to the students.
5. Give the students 6 minutes to develop their solutions. Do not allow teams to view each other's solutions.
6. Test the completed links to make sure the coffee can is able to pass through. If a link does not accept the can, it is disqualified.
7. Mark each completed link with the team's tag.
8. Form two chains -- Chain A and Chain B -- by attaching the links together with a 15-inch piece of clothesline using a square knot. Once all the links are attached, add a 3-foot rope to each end to serve as a pulling device.
9. Test the chains by having individuals tug at both ends.
10. Score as each link breaks. Once all links are broken, total the score.

**The Problem:**

1. You have 6 minutes to develop your solution. You may talk to your teammates at any time.
2. Using the envelope of materials, you are to make two links for tug-of-war chains. You will choose one link to be attached to Chain A and one to be attached to Chain B.
3. Each link must have an opening large enough for a one-pound coffee can to fit through.
4. You may not alter the coffee can and you may not use the scissors as part of your links.
5. Once your links are completed, they will be attached to either Chain A or Chain B. The chains will then be used in a tug-of-war.

**Scoring the Solutions:**

1. Testing Chain A: When the first link breaks, each remaining link receives 1 point. When the second link breaks, each remaining link receives 2 points, and so on.
2. Testing Chain B: When the first link breaks, each remaining link receives 5 points. When the second link breaks, each remaining link receives 6 points, and so on.
3. Each team's points for its links in Chain A and Chain B will be added for its final score.
4. The team with the highest score wins the Tug O' War!

# Names and Occupations

## A. JUDGE READS TO TEAMS:

(Do not read numbers or phrases in parenthesis.)

1. You will have 1 minute to think and 3 minutes to respond. Questions count against your thinking time.
2. You will receive one point for each response. Highly creative responses will receive five points. This will be a subjective opinion of the judge, and the judge's decision is final.
3. A number has been placed before each of you. That is your assigned number.
4. A stack of cards appears before you. When time begins, the judge will turn over the first card. The team member whose number corresponds to the card number will give the response. For example, if the first card is 3 then team member number 3 will give the response.
5. After the team member gives the response, he or she will turn over the next card. That team member will respond, and so on.
6. You may not skip your turn, or repeat, or pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck.
7. Once the time begins, it will not be stopped. If the judge asks you to repeat an answer, or to clarify it, or to give a more appropriate response, it counts against your time. Speak loudly and clearly.
8. Your problem is: Use a word or words to make a first and last name. You must relate this name to an occupation. For example: Budweiser could be split into Bud as a first name and Weiser as a last name. Bud Weiser could be a beer distributor. Or, saliva could become: first name "Sal" and last name "Iva" and Sal Iva could be a dentist. The first word must be a recognized name or nickname. (Repeat No. 8, "Your problem is:")

## B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:

1. Be sure to give exactly one minute to think and three minutes to respond. Timing is critical. A student responding at the buzzer can finish and be scored.
2. Score: One point for each common response and five points for each creative response.
3. In order to ensure that in every five cards turned over each team member will give one answer, stack the cards in the following order for each team: 2,4,3,1,5; 3,1,4,5,2; 3,2,5,4,1; 4,3,5,2,1; 2,1,4,3,5; 2,4,5,1,3; 1,5,3,2,4; 5,4,2,1,3; 4,1,3,5,2; 1,3,5,4,2.
4. If all the cards have been used, turn them over and start again. At the end of the session, the timekeeper should check the order of the cards and rearrange them if any are out of order.
5. Be sure that all cards assigning seat position have been placed into position prior to calling in the team. Place the blank response sheet on the table for the team to see.

6. Examples of Common Responses:

Examples given: Bud Weiser is a beer distributor

Sal Iva is a dentist

Responses similar to one already given, e.g., Bud Weiser is a bartender

Poor quality, but acceptable answers

7. Examples of Creative Responses:

One word broken up to make a first and last name:

Minnie Ster is a clergyman

Lou Pole is a tax advisor

Dan Druff is a hairdresser

Paul Bearer is an undertaker

Bill Fold is a pickpocket

Bee Keeper is a honey farmer

Clara Net is a musician

Jack Hammer is a construction worker

Ali Gator is a marine biologist

Bill Board is an advertiser

Two words put together to make a name:

Chuck Roast is a butcher

Rose Bush is a landscaper

Jim Floor is a basketball coach

Cliff Hanger is a mountain climber

Sandy Rhoades works for the highway department

Mark Spotter is a surveyor

Carrie-West is a pioneer

Armond Hammer is a carpenter

Don Garments is a model

Johnny Mop is a janitor

Ted E. Bear is a zookeeper

Al Kaseltzer is a pharmacist

Matt Weaver is a tailor

Will Writer is a lawyer

Pete Spreader is a gardener

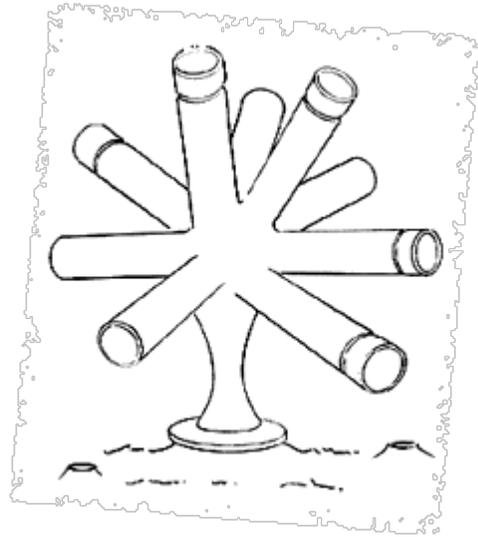
NOTE: Once an answer is given, if a very similar answer is given, count it as common only and then declare any other answers that are basically the same as repeats.

# Twinkle Thing

When the team members enter the room, tell them this is a verbal problem.

**A. JUDGE READS TO TEAMS:** (Do not read material in parentheses.)

1. You will have 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. Questions count against your thinking time. You may ask the judge questions but may not talk to each other at any time.
2. You will receive 1 point for each common response. Highly creative or humorous responses will receive 5 points. This will be a subjective opinion of the judges, and the judges' decision is final.
3. Your team is to take turns in sequence. You may not skip your turn, or repeat, or pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the team is stuck.
4. Once the time begins, it will not be stopped. If the judge asks you to repeat a response, or to clarify it, or to give a more appropriate response, it counts against your time. Speak loudly and clearly.
5. You will be shown a picture of something found on the planet Twinkle. Your problem is to say something about it or say what it may be used for. (Repeat number 5, "Your problem is, ").



**B. FOR JUDGES ONLY:**

1. Be sure to give exactly 1 minute to think and 2 minutes to respond. Timing is critical. Students responding at the buzzer can finish and be scored.
2. Score: 1 point for each common response, 5 points for each creative response.
3. Place a photocopy of the picture in full view of the team.
4. Examples of Common Responses:

Uses: It could be used in a game, to play Jax, as a sign, to talk to, as a pointer, keep it as a pet.

Remarks: It's funny looking; It has nine arms and one leg; It's scary.

Examples of Creative Responses:

Use it as an anchor, a paperweight, an instrument to predict the weather, a weapon, a cookie mold, a telescope to see all around, something to hold twinkle samples, a twinkle ruler, a hat rack.