

Problems Ideas for Every Lesson

Ask for a Prediction: What would happen if...? What should this person do next and why? Which method will...?

Show a Pattern: Show a series of similar images, numbers, words, or events. Then ask them to identify the rule. Why are these similar? Why are these different? What connects all of these things?

Present an Alternative: Present two nearly identical items, situations, solutions, or stories. Why are they different, and why does it matter?

Present an Error: Present a solution to a problem that has a critical error in it. Will this work? Why or why not?

Flip the Problem: State the solution first. How did that happen? Why did that happen? What led up to this moment? How did I get that answer?

Give them a Limitation: Give students a goal, but limit how they can reach it. Constrain forces creativity. Write only using words that start with.... Build something only using.... This culture only had _____. How did they...?

Ranking Systems: Present several possibilities and ask students to order them based on some reasoning that requires opinion: usefulness, reasonability, impact, value, data, or importance.

Odd one Out: Present several possibilities, items, or facts. Include one that seems plausible but does not match the others. Which one doesn't belong and why?

Incomplete Information: Give students a task or a goal and purposely leave out an important element, tool, or fact. Students identify gaps in their knowledge or a system and either look for alternatives or address the issue.