

The Complete Learner's Toolkit

Workbook

Mistakes help me learn

I never stop trying ...

I use learning strategies that work

When it's challenging, my brain is growing

Change is always possible

Helping others helps me ...

Learning is the key

I believe I can ...

I learned how to learn

I work well in a team

Asking questions helps me learn

I see struggle as growth

Name:

Jackie Beere

School Name

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Introduction

What's in it for *you*?

This workbook contains 36 lessons built around the World Economic Forum's projections of essential and in-demand workplace skills for the 2020s.¹ These are the skills you will need in order to grow up with the resilience, confidence and communication skills that will help you be happy *and* successful in your future career and relationships.

Exams are important but these skills are what employers are looking for. Every lesson in this workbook nurtures the habits of reflection and metacognition that will give you the power to manage your thinking so that you have the courage to face the challenges of adult working life.

The ten skills you can develop by using this workbook are:

- Active learning and learning strategies.

Aim: To help you understand more about the way your brain works so that you become a more effective learner.

By finding out more about how to make the most of your amazing brain, you will learn how important it is to persist in finding strategies that will increase your ability and potential.

- Complex problem solving.

Aim: To help you find many ways to tackle any problems you face and realise you are a born problem solver!

As a baby, you solved the problem of how to eat, talk, walk and adapt to life. You did it through playing, watching, listening, copying, practising and learning how to learn, showing that you are a natural problem solver.

- Critical thinking.

Aim: To help you realise and practise how to think and reflect objectively so that you can make good judgements.

Critical thinking is a crucial skill for achieving success at school and at work later in life. It involves observing, analysing, assessing and evaluating evidence in an objective open-minded manner.

- Creativity.

Aim: To make you consider ways you can have more courage to take the risks necessary to find new ways of thinking.

Creativity develops new thinking, leading to different approaches and novel ways of doing things, solving problems and finding new answers. It takes courage to be

¹ A. Gray, The 10 Skills You Need to Thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, World Economic Forum (19 January 2016). Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>.

Introduction: Why this book is essential for our children

creative because as we grow older, we get used to doing things that make us feel comfortable.

- Leadership and social influence.

Aim: To help you develop skills to lead and communicate effectively.

The skills needed to get on with other people are key to success and happiness at school and in the workplace. Everyone can learn more about how to get on well with people and gain respect.

- Emotional intelligence.

Aim: To help you develop self-awareness and manage your emotions to help you succeed at school, at home and in your future workplace.

Becoming emotionally intelligent helps you see 'struggle' as 'growth' because you can enjoy a challenge without self-judgement or comparison with others. It will give you the confidence to be yourself.

- Judgement and decision making.

Aim: To help you identify your values and encourage you to make wise, conscious choices.

We can all make bad decisions, so these lessons help you understand how to be sure about your own values in order to make good choices.

- Service orientation.

Aim: To encourage you to be keen to serve other people in your community and to take pride in delivering high-quality outcomes.

Helping others helps you to develop true inner self-confidence. These lessons will help you develop the motivation to be of service to your employer and your team.

- Negotiation.

Aim: To practise good listening and communication skills that will empower you to develop healthy relationships.

These lessons will nurture the ability to use feedback and develop the gifts of patient listening and empathy.

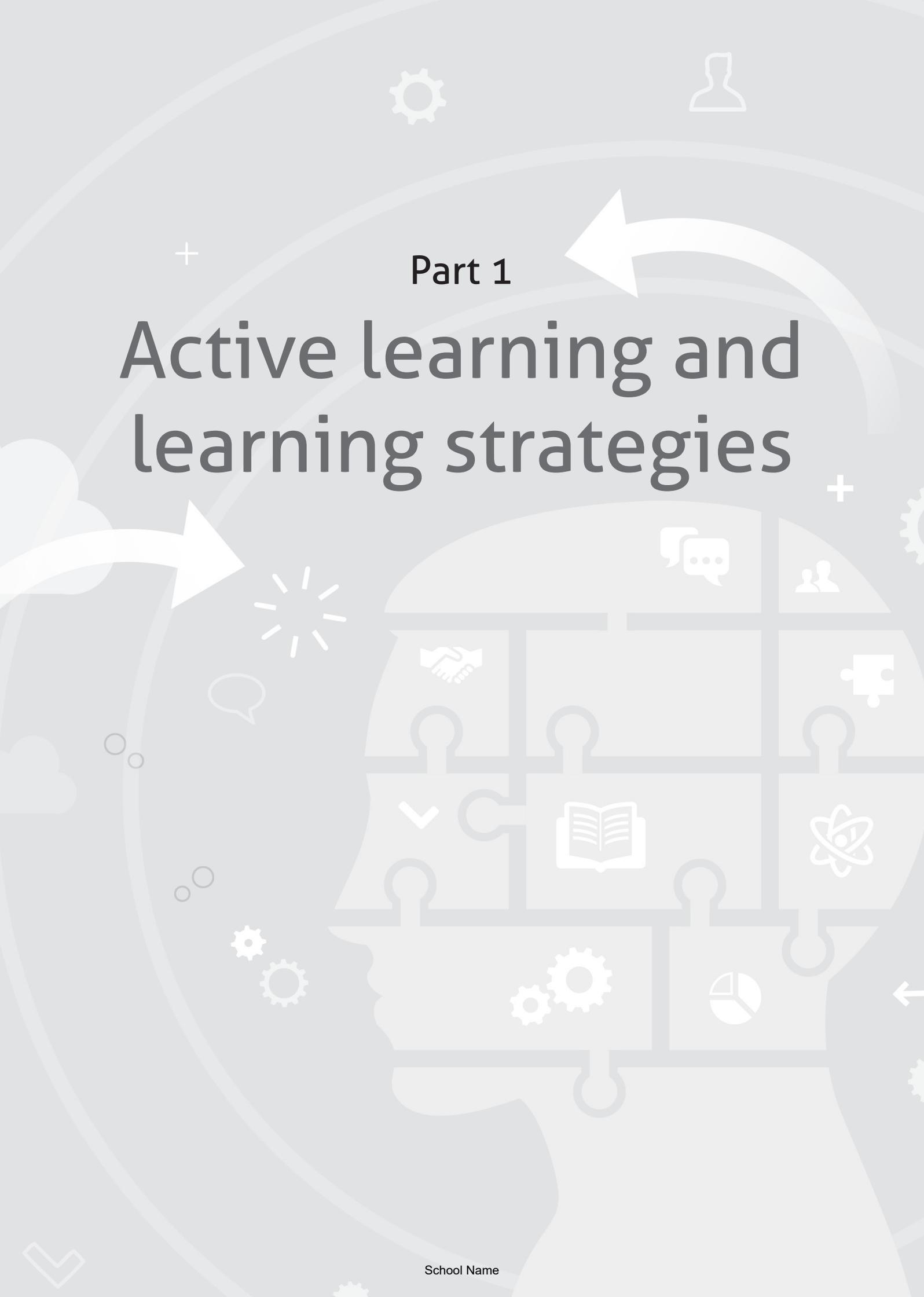
- Cognitive flexibility.

Aim: To help you have the ability to stand back from your emotional reactions and reframe your thinking.

Cognitive flexibility is the ability to change your mind and adapt to different circumstances more easily. This will make you resilient, confident and keen to cope with change and challenge. These lessons will help you avoid getting stuck in unhappy thoughts.

I hope you enjoy these lessons and that they help you fulfil your potential.

Try out the activities and do share them with your friends and family. And please do get in touch to let me know if these lessons help you! jackie.beere@virgin.net



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Part 1

Active learning and learning strategies

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Lesson 4

Your thinking brain



Aim: To understand how brains work naturally to solve problems and to challenge yourself to develop cognitive flexibility.

The thinking brain (the neocortex) is your 'thinking cap' where all the hard work takes place.

There are different types of thinking, which we need to use in combination to make best use of our brains. Standing back and thinking about how we are thinking is called metacognition, and this is a useful strategy to draw on.

For example, when we are doing a jigsaw puzzle, we sort out the pieces using colour and shape, but we also use our brains to think about the 'big picture' and how it all fits together to get it right.

When you have a game to play or a piece of furniture to build you can follow the instructions or just have a go at figuring it out. Which strategy do you use? Why?



TASK

To help understand the way your brain works, respond to these statements with Yes (Y) or No (N).

	Statement	Y/N
1	I organise facts and material well.	
2	I work step by step.	
3	I am rarely impatient.	
4	I read instructions before starting.	
5	I like to work things out on paper.	
6	I like working on my own.	
7	I like to make lists.	
8	I can concentrate for a long time.	
9	I like reading.	
10	I enjoy working with numbers.	
		Total Yes
		Total No

More Yes than No? You may be more of a logical thinker.

Now look at these statements. Do they apply to you? Respond Yes (Y) or No (N).

	Statement	Y/N
11	I prefer variety and excitement.	
12	I like to doodle a lot.	
13	I love trying new ideas.	
14	I think of creative solutions.	

	Statement	Y/N
15	I like new experiences.	
16	I just try out ideas as I go along.	
17	I prefer to flick through a magazine starting at the back.	
18	I make decisions based on gut feelings.	
19	I find it hard to concentrate for long periods of time.	
20	I prefer art to reading and maths.	
		Total Yes
		Total No

More Yes than No? You may be more of a creative thinker.

If you have a fairly equal number of Yes and No answers to all 20 questions, you are in the middle – which is an excellent place to be because you are using logical and creative thinking. This will make you a great learner.

Two kinds of thinking

Logical	
writing	sequencing
logic	language
numbers	detail
analysing	spelling
reading	

Creative	
ideas	the big picture
intuition	rhythm
daydreams	colour
sport	imagination
playing music	



TASK

We can get into habits that can help or hinder our ability to learn. It's important to challenge your thinking habits so that you are a flexible thinker. Think about how you can get into the habit of using both sides of your brain while learning.

- How could you use more creative thinking in maths?

.....

.....

- How could you use more logical thinking in drama or art?

.....

.....

Look at the following list of tips to help get you into good habits for learning.



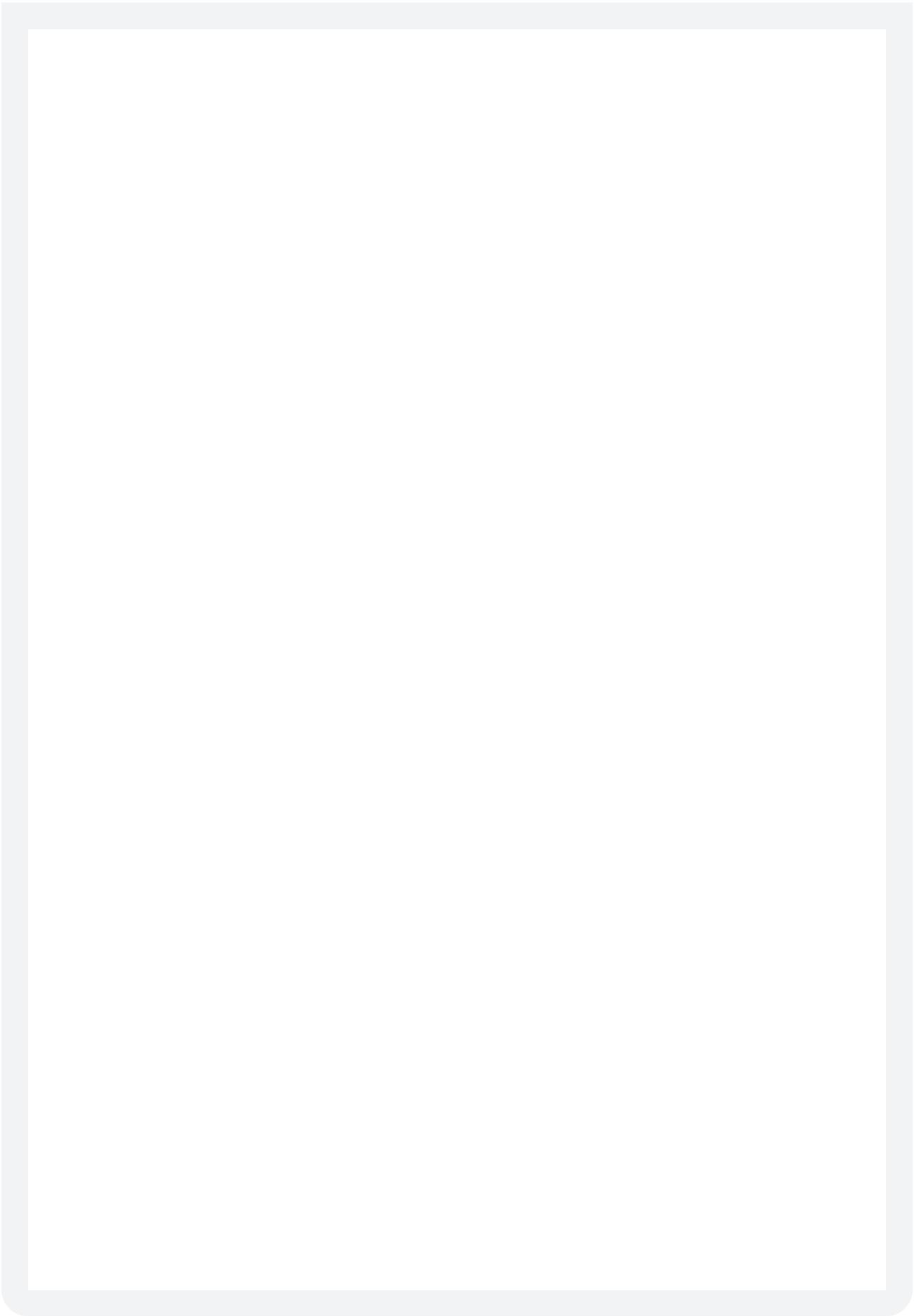
Top tips for logical thinkers:

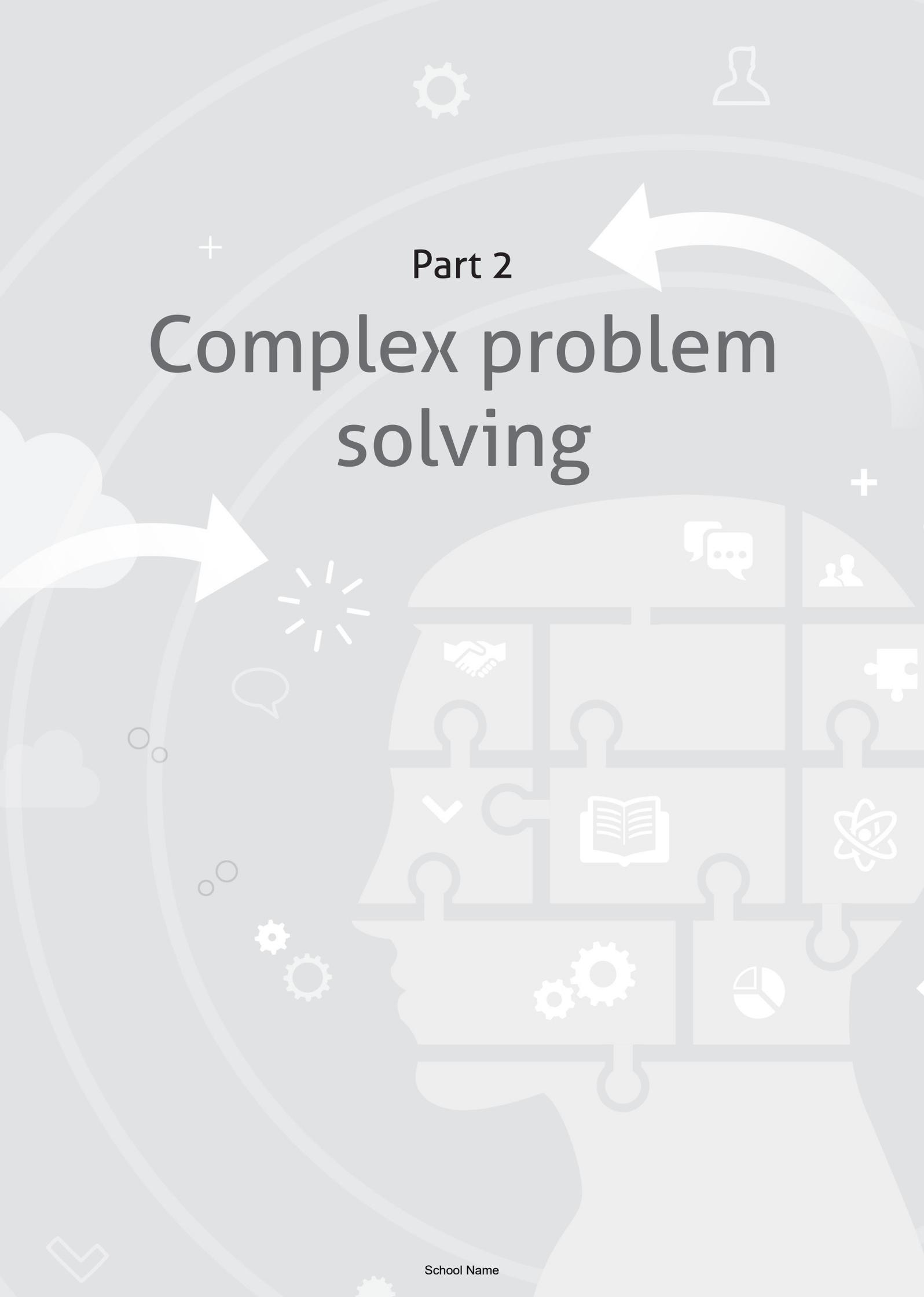
- You may need to be more open to trying new activities and ideas.
- Don't get bogged down in detail.
- Practise working well with others.
- Vary your learning habits to keep your creative brain working.
- Know that making mistakes is an important part of learning.

Top tips for creative thinkers:

- Remember the details – take one step at a time.
- Create lists to ensure you get things done.
- Make yourself do some planning and prioritising in advance.
- Avoid procrastination (putting things off!).
- Avoid distraction and distracting others.
- Don't rush in without thinking.
- Read the instructions and check your work when finished.

Choose the tips that you find useful and, in the space that follows, design a poster for your bedroom – one that includes your selected tips, alongside a picture or diagram to help you remember them.





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Part 2

Complex problem solving

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Lesson 7

100 solutions



Aim: To take a problem and work as a group to consider lots of possible solutions.

Analytical thinkers need to be cool, calm and objective, with great attention to detail. Asking the right questions is an important skill.

Creative thinkers take risks *and* challenge their minds to think outside of the box.



TASK

Start with a real-world problem that is affecting your school or local area. For example: 'A shortage of teachers' or 'Litter is ruining our parks'.

First, be a creative thinker:

Simply brainstorm 100 ideas in a group and write them down on a big piece of paper. Don't worry about whether your ideas are realistic or practical; they can be as wild and wacky as you like.

Complex problem solving

Choose your five favourite solutions to the problem, remembering to involve everyone in the discussion and decision.

Then be an analytical thinker:

Imagine that you are a detective or scientist working on the problem. Look at the five solutions you just came up with. Switch off your emotional brain. Be focused, practical and unbiased as you examine each solution and test each one out using a SWOT test. For each solution look at its:

Strengths

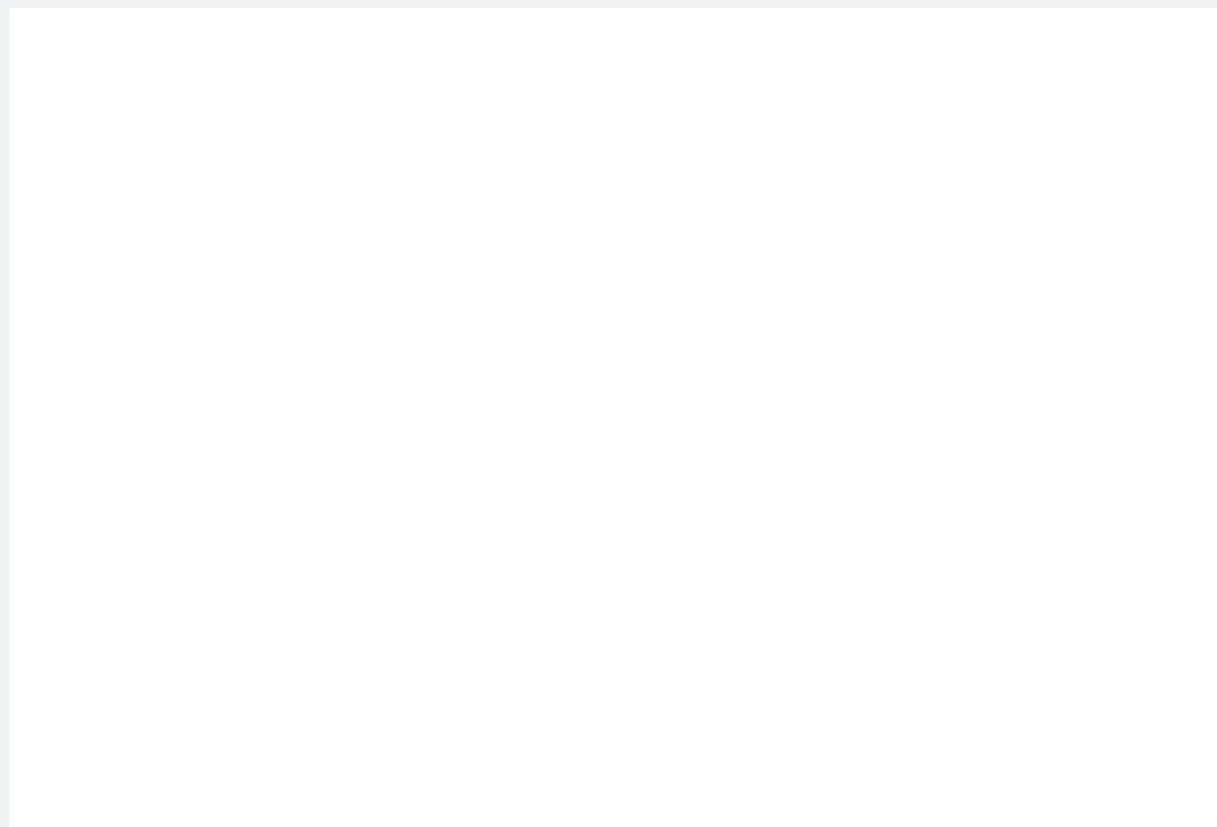
Weaknesses

Opportunities

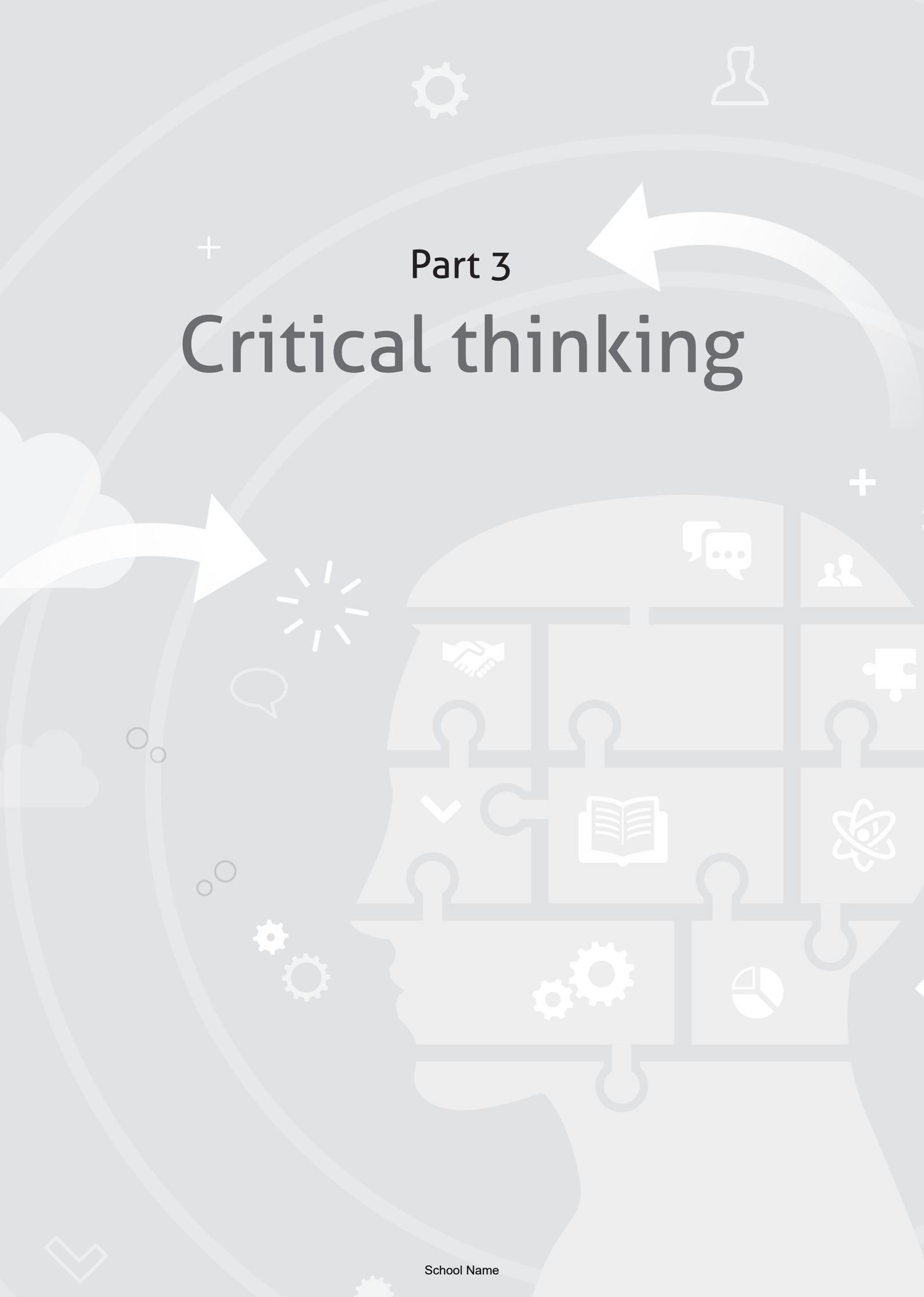
Threats

Based on this analysis, throw out all but two of the solutions, then do some market research for each one. Take the remaining two solutions to other people in the class and ask them for their opinions. Use this to choose what they think is the best one.

Now create a proposal or advertisement to sell your solution to people. Make sure this explains clearly why it is the best option.



Present this solution to the class. Use any visual aids that may help.



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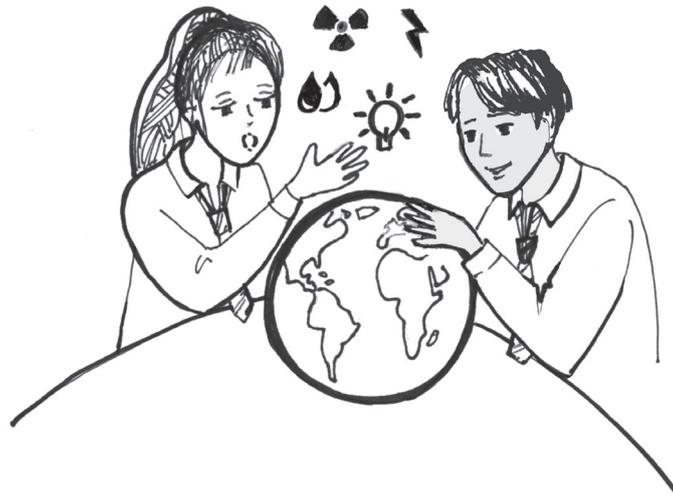
Part 3

Critical thinking

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Lesson 9

Asking the right questions



Aim: To understand how important questioning is and how to form good questions.

Build your brainpower

You learn more from asking questions than from answering them. To ask questions you need to be creative in your thinking. You need to work from back to front.

A good question pushes back the boundaries of knowledge and shows you are engaging your brain with learning.



TASK

If this is the answer ...?

If these are the answers, think of three possible questions for each statement.

For example: Yes, we have no bananas. 'Are there any fruits you find hard to get in your shop at the moment?'

- There must be another way.

1.
2.
3.

- I haven't stopped dancing yet.

1.
2.
3.

- My computer does it for me.

1.
2.
3.

Now, in pairs, think of three more answers and get your partner to think of the questions.

Share the best examples with the class.

Work with your partner to create two or three questions on each of the following topics using the 8Way Thinking Tool (see page 40).

- Global warming.
- Social media.
- Skateboarding.
- The moon.

Can you answer any of your questions? Can anyone else? How can you tell whether they are useful questions?

Write down the definition of a useful question for learning.

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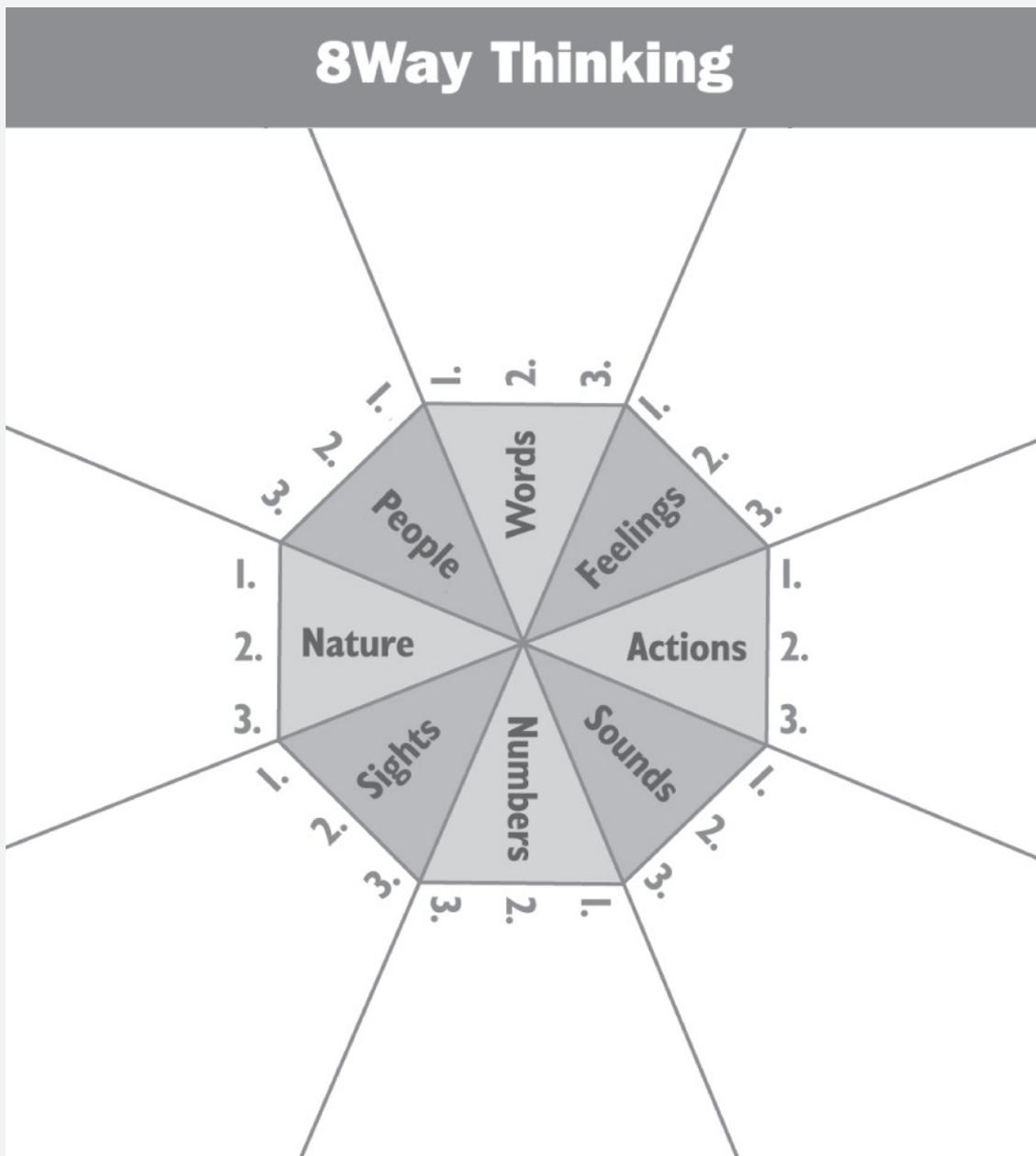
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Using the 8Way Thinking Tool

Write an idea under each heading that relates to your topic. Use internet research to help you. Here is one example for each 'thinking way' related to the topic of global warming to get you started:

- Feelings: Sadness
- Actions: Recycling
- Sounds: Crackle of forest fires
- Numbers: 2-degree rise in temperature
- Sights: Tsunamis
- Nature: Glaciers melting
- People: David Attenborough
- Words: Extinction



Under interrogation

Being good at asking questions is important in many professions. Imagine that you are a suspect in a case of burglary in your home area. Your partner is to interrogate you. Create ten crucial questions to ask about the event that will move the case forward.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Try them out then swap roles.