



**STRETCH**

**and**  
**Challenge**  
**for**  
**ALL**

**Practical Resources for Getting  
the Best Out of Every Student**

**Torsten Payne**



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# Introduction

Too much to do and too little time.

That should be in the standard job description for teachers. My aim for this book is to reduce the workload without compromising on the quality of students' learning. As a full-time teacher myself, I've made this the book that I would want to use – crammed full of ideas, strategies and resources, all explained as quickly and simply as possible. Better yet, each is accompanied with an example or a ready-made worksheet that can go straight onto the photocopier.

Having taught for over 20 years, I've been given some days off over the last few years to work with schools across Europe, and I have been constantly amazed at how hard teachers work, their sense of humour and their creativity. This book is a greatest hits collection of the best ideas – ones that I've seen and used and know that they work in the classroom.

The activities here have been chosen as the ones best suited to stretch and challenge *all* students, to develop their thinking and show their progress. As most teachers have mixed ability classes most of the time (and even in set groups there is still a range of ability), the activities in this book have been chosen using three criteria:

1. Are they accessible? In other words, could *all* students, regardless of their ability, understand the tasks and be able to have a go at completing them without long teacher explanations beforehand?
2. Do they make the students think for themselves and make their own mental connections? Not only will this make the teacher's life easier but it also encourages independence, which means that students use higher level thinking skills, remember more and learn resilience – all key skills directly linked to progress.
3. Do they give students a chance to shine? Every activity here has been chosen precisely because they do not set a ceiling on what can be achieved. Instead, it is up to the student to take it as far as their ability allows and to demonstrate just what they are capable of.

I hope that you and your students enjoy trying out these ideas and that they save you some time so you can enjoy the rest of your life as well.

# Challenging Questions

The answers are all out there, we just need to ask the right questions.

**Anon.**

Teachers spend more lesson time on questioning than anything else apart from explanations. It is a great way to differentiate and meet the individual needs of all students, including the most able. Best of all though, a good question makes the student review what they already know and critically evaluate the conclusions that can be drawn.

Features of the most effective questions include:

- Multiple possible answers – this allows everyone to approach it at their own level. In addition, our first answer often isn't the best one, so it's important to encourage the students to think of a few options and then choose their best.
- Thinking time – typically people need three seconds for lower level thinking skills such as remembering and ten seconds for higher ones like analysis or evaluation.
- Variety – different types of questions make students think in different ways. In particular, a variety of higher and lower level questions encourages deeper thinking and understanding (see the examples in 'The Good Questions' on page 36). The ideal split for the greatest progress is 80% lower and 20% higher for primary students and then gradually equalising to 50%/50% by the end of Key Stage 4 (and staying at this level for Key Stage 5).

This chapter contains a number of strategies (and ready-made worksheets) to get the students thinking for themselves and making their own connections using a mix of higher and lower level thinking skills.

# Cause and Effect

## How does it work?

Either put a written description or a picture of an event in the centre of a worksheet and ask the students to complete the 'causes' and 'effects' boxes.

This works just as well in examining the impact of a character's action or decisions in a story as it does for factual events such as a volcano or the Second World War.

## What's the advantage?

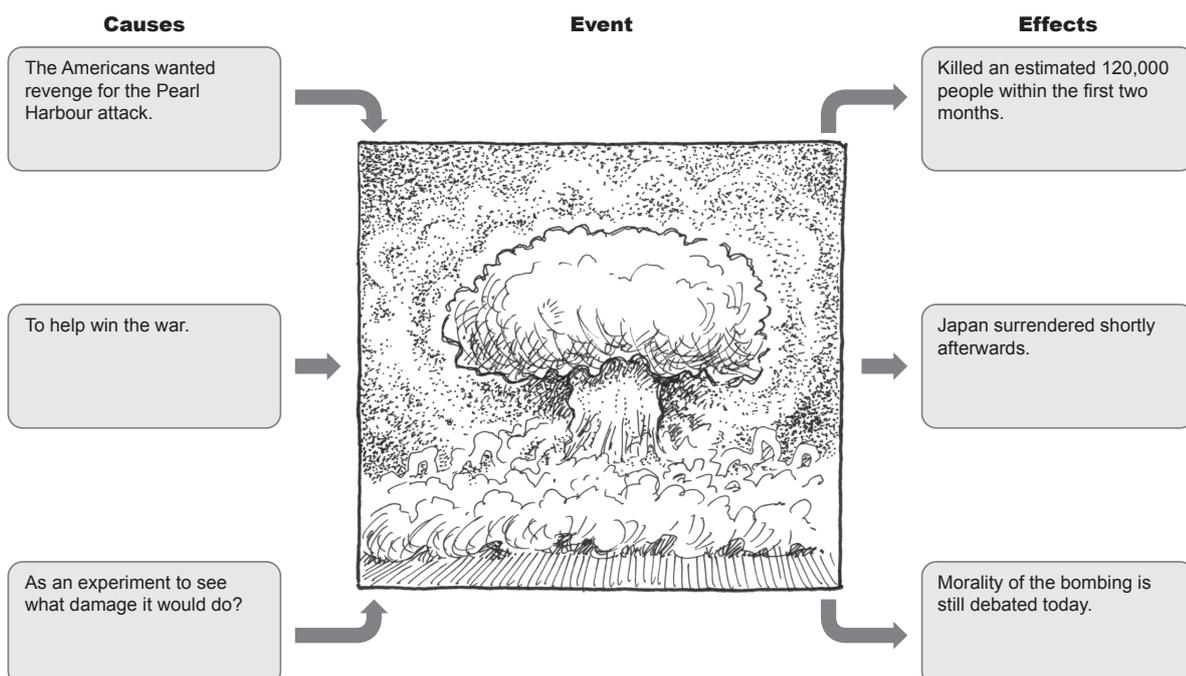
We tend to view events as snapshots, isolated from the chains of cause and effect that surround everything. This worksheet forces the students to think beyond simply accepting a fact or action and instead encourages them to consider the factors that brought it about and the ramifications that follow.

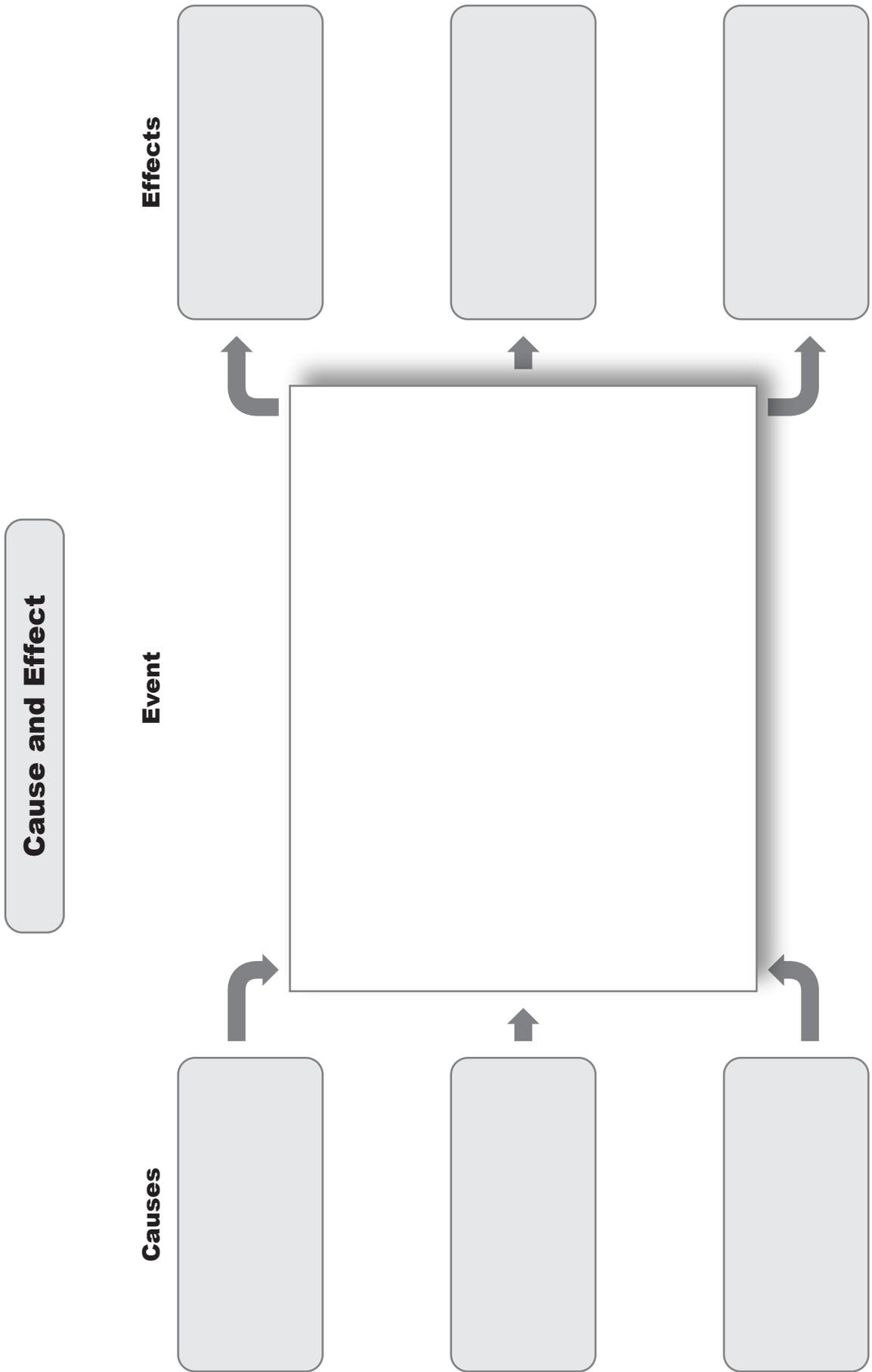
Thinking about an event in greater depth, making their own connections and understanding the context also means that it is far more likely to be remembered.

## Practical tips

- This activity can make a good starter to engage the students in a topic.
- This can work well photocopied onto A3 and given to pairs or small groups to promote the sharing of ideas.

## Example: Hiroshima





Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Good Questions

## How does it work?

This activity explores the verbs typical of the six different categories of questions based on Bloom's taxonomy of thinking skills. There are two ways this can be used:

1. The teacher keeps a copy of this chart (page 37) visible as a reminder for themselves when engaging the students in a question-and-answer session and to aid in varying the types of questions asked.
2. A copy of the chart is given to the students to support them in asking good questions. For instance, 'Who can ask me an evaluation question about the story of "Little Red Riding Hood"?' and, 'Thanks for that example. Now who thinks they can answer it?'

## What's the advantage?

The main point of this is to avoid overusing knowledge-based, remembering-style questions that demand the least amount of thought. Good questions demand far more thinking, which in turn leads to better engagement and a greater chance of the topics studied being understood and remembered.

## Practical tips

- Depending on the students, you might need to check that they understand all of the verbs before asking for questions.

## The Good Questions

Lower level			Higher level		
Knowledge	Understanding	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Creation
tell	explain	solve	analyse	judge	create
list	interpret	show	distinguish	select	invent
describe	outline	use	examine	choose	compose
relate	discuss	illustrate	compare	decide	predict
locate	distinguish	construct	contrast	justify	plan
write	predict	complete	investigate	debate	construct
find	restate	examine	categorise	verify	design
state	translate	classify	identify	argue	imagine
name	compare		explain	recommend	propose
	describe		separate	assess	devise
			advertise	discuss	formulate
				rate	
				prioritise	
				determine	

# The Question Spectrum

## How does it work?

This activity is an alternative version of 'The Good Questions', which was devised by an excellent teacher I worked with called Richard Pepperell, who kindly gave permission to use it here.

The easiest questions (i.e. those requiring the lowest levels of thinking) are at the top left of the chart and the hardest are at the bottom right.

There are two ways to use this:

1. The teacher uses the chart (page 39) to inform their questions to the class and to ensure that they are asking a range of questions and demanding both higher and lower level thinking skills.
2. The students are invited to write a question for a topic and then asked where it would go on the Question Spectrum. As a follow-up they can be asked to write another question that would go in the band below.

## What's the advantage?

If the students understand the differing complexities of a range of questions, then they will be better able to answer those questions. In other words, by thinking more about the questions they will understand what level of knowledge and understanding is needed to give a good answer.

## Practical tips

- Version 2 works well as a revision exercise: you can choose five questions from different bands and set them for the class.
- If you have a projector you can display the Question Spectrum on the board for version 2. Get the students to write their questions on sticky notes and attach them to the board where the whole class can see.

**The Question Spectrum**

	<b>Is/Does?</b>	<b>Has/Did/ Was?</b>	<b>Can?</b>	<b>Should?</b>	<b>Would/ Could?</b>	<b>Will?</b>	<b>Might?</b>
<b>What?</b>							
<b>Where?</b>							
<b>When?</b>							
<b>Which?</b>							
<b>Who?</b>							
<b>Why?</b>							
<b>How?</b>							

# No Pen Day

## How does it work?

Some schools have a 'no pen day' once a term or year, as advocated by the Communication Trust charity, but even if yours doesn't this is still a good strategy to use in your department or classroom occasionally. Simply put, this is a lesson or day when the students will not be asked to write down or draw anything. Instead, the focus is on questioning, group work and discussion.

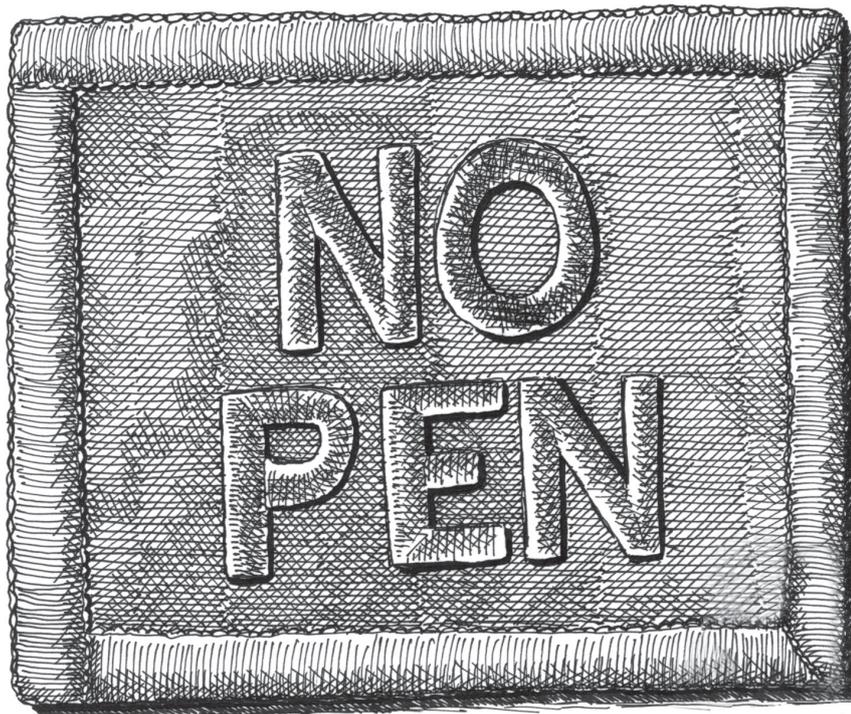
Rather than give you a generic approach here, if you are interested I would recommend searching the Internet for 'no pen day' ideas with your age group and subject as there are a huge number of ideas and resources freely available online.

## What's the advantage?

For students this seems like a treat as they equate no pen with no work! However, research shows that the best progress in understanding ideas comes not from writing but from discussion. This strategy therefore ensures that the students focus on the most effective ways of learning.

## Practical tips

- The physical process of writing helps some students to remain focused. If that is the case for your students, ensure that some physical activity (such as one of the card sort ideas in Chapter 4) is included in the lesson.
- A good homework task can be a written response to the lesson, either answering a question given by the teacher, or the students writing down (and evaluating) the key points of the lesson.



# STRETCH

and

# Challenge

for **ALL**

**is packed with activities to get the most out of learners in any lesson – in any subject or with any age group.**

Torsten Payne set out to write a book that he, as a full-time teacher, would want to use: crammed full of ideas, strategies and resources – all explained as quickly and simply as possible. Designed to reduce teacher workload without compromising on the quality of students' learning, the photocopiable activities will cut down on planning time and really get students thinking.

The easily accessible resources don't require a lot of explanation from the teacher but they do encourage students to think for themselves; developing independence, resilience and metacognitive skills in the process. There is no ceiling on the potential for learning: see how far students will stretch themselves when given the challenge.

The activities can be used at any stage of the lesson and include ideas for: interactive aims, stimulating starters, challenging questions, writing strategies to stretch the student, showing the progress, plenaries and revision, and mastering metacognition. Discover practical strategies to add challenge to all types of lesson, across all subjects and age groups.

## **Suitable for all teachers.**

A beautifully structured cornucopia of ideas new, borrowed and adapted, all selected to meet the author's admirable criteria. Are they accessible to all? Do they promote high level thinking and independence? Do they allow pupils to shine? They are and they do, and teachers will shine too. A valuable new resource – a *Teacher's Toolkit* of our time.

**Dr Barry J. Hymer, Emeritus Professor of Psychology in Education, University of Cumbria**

What a useful and practical book for teachers to use within the classroom to stretch and challenge all their pupils, including those with high ability. With photocopiable sheets and clear instructions for the busiest professional, this book will help teachers to ensure that every child maximises their potential.

**Denise Yates, Chief Executive, Potential Plus UK**

Torsten delivers seven chapters of practical, useful, accessible, ready-made strategies that any teacher can instantly use with their learners. With too much to do and too little time, discovering new activities to pique your learners' interest in less than a minute is excellent value! Every teacher should have this book on their desk.

**Paul Bannister, Head Teacher, Junior School, Jerudong International School, Brunei**



**Torsten Payne** is a full-time teacher with over 20 years' experience. He values practical strategies that work in the classroom and small changes that make a big difference. A regular contributor to teaching publications and national conferences, he delivers staff training in schools across Europe.

