Let's Play

A series of Teaching for Creativity Taster Cards

suitable for EYFS, SEND, KS1 and KS2



Introduction to Let's Play Taster Cards



To find out more, visit:
www.anewdirection.org.uk/teaching-for-creativity

Delve into our Teaching for Creativity Programme by exploring our **newly curated pack of taster cards: Let's Play.**

These activities use **play as a driver for creativity**, **engagement** and **learning across the curriculum**, exploring how playful approaches can support the development of the creative habits of mind.

Let's Play is a Teaching for Creativity **whole school Primary resource**, packed with **accessible**, **inclusive** activities to spark creative thinking in all pupils.

There are Taster Cards suitable for all ages at Primary, although many cards can be adapted for several year groups.

This short 3-minute animation introduces teachers to the pedagogy underpinning Teaching for Creativity. It could be used in a staff meeting to familiarise teachers with the five creative habits of mind.

Playful and Creative Icebreakers



These Taster Cards can be used as **ice breakers**, **starter activities**, **class assembly prompts**, **ways to start and end the day**, or as **stand-alone 10—15-minute activities**. They are quick, playful activities that support learning while practicing creative thinking skills and habits of mind. Designed to have minimal resources and preperation, or equipment already readily available, we hope they inspire you to try adding more creative play to your educational practice.

The 5 creative habits of mind can be used to strengthen children's play whether this is within a lesson, in the playground or in an after-school club. **Play is essential for children**, and we believe that by increasing the opportunities for children's play we can also develop their creative habits of mind.

Play is a foundation for creativity, naturally fostering **curiosity**, **experimentation** and **imagination**; it enables **flexible learning across subjects**; supports **motivation by being fun and providing agency**; it supports **wellbeing and emotional development**; offers **adaptable**, **accessible entry points** for learners with diverse needs and of course is key to being **imaginative** - one of the habits of mind!

Playful Storytelling

1. Sitting together in small groups of four or five, ask each pupil to bring a fictional storybook they are currently reading or choose one from the library or book corner.

2. Each pupil should roll two (or more) dice to randomly generate a page number. Finding the page, they should roll again to select a sentence number and then find and read out the sentence to their group.

3. Encourage each group to try and put together their selection of sentences to make a new story with mixed up parts.

Reflection: How has the unexpected changed the stories we made together? Would you change any part of the mixed-up story?

Go Further: Develop the randomised stories into short drama pieces to share with the wider group. Or take the beginnings of the mixed-up stories to develop the narratives further and make them into your own new books with illustrations.

Imaginative – Playing with Possibilities

Children work together to play with existing ideas and explore how they can be changed to make something new and unexpected.

Play Observations

1. Split your class or group into two halves. Each half will take turns to play and observe.

2. Ask one half of the class to go outside to 'play' – don't over instruct this, make the instruction quite matter of fact.

3. After the 'playing' half of the class has moved away, ask the other half to sit down nearby so they can observe their peers at play. Ask them to name some of the activities they can see happening. They could write these down or talk collectively and an adult could note down the things they see. After a time, swap the groups over.

4. Once both groups have experienced both 'playing' and 'observing', talk as a whole group about the experience. Encourage them to consider what they understand about what 'play' is and how we do it.

Reflection: What is Play? Who does it and how? Is it easy to define? How do you think play helps us?

Go Further: Encourage the group to think about other moments when play happens other than outside during 'playtime' and to consider its importance. You could explore with them different types of playing and see how many they can identify (e.g. with friends or alone, games with rules, role-play or with toys etc.).

Imaginative - Making Connections

Children reflect on play and its importance, thinking about when it happens in different contexts.

Playing with Objects

This resource is adapted from Dreamachine: The World Around Us: My Voice in the World

1. Sit children in a large circle around a number of everyday objects. Ask: *What objects can you see and what do we use them for?* Establish what each object is and what function it has.

2. Choose one object to concentrate on. Ask children to imagine that it is something else. Act out using it in a different way. *What has the broom become?* (E.g. an umbrella, a water hose etc.) Children then take it in turns to act out using the object as something different. Change the object when ideas seem to run out.

3. Explain how children have been using their imagination to help them and that this is the process people go through when they are creating new things and coming up with solutions to problems. *How can playing with possibilities help us with our learning in class? Playing with possibilities is a good way to approach our learning; we can try a solution to a maths problem, or we can write something in English - but then we may need to go back and find alternative solutions or edit our writing. In these ways, we are playing with possibilities and developing creative habits.*

Reflection: Did it get harder to imagine different objects the longer we played the game?

Go further: Ask children in groups to think of a problem where a new gadget/object/machine could make a difference. Ask them to use their creativity to come up with a design solution. Give children a range of questions to help them with their design process: What problem will their design solve? What will it be made of? How will it work?

Imaginative — Playing with Possibilities

Children use their imaginations to find new uses for objects.

Inside Out

1. Bring together a selection of old boxes — large enough for a child to sit inside and ideally one per child.

2. Providing a selection of drawing or painting materials, encourage your group to decorate the boxes, but instead of starting on the outside, ask them to start by sitting inside their box and decorating the inside. This offers a different physical perspective to their making and gives each child a personal experience of the things they choose to draw or decorate with.

3. Ask children to visit each other's boxes, by getting inside different boxes themselves.

Reflection: How does it feel to look and experience something from a different perspective inside your box? How did it feel being in someone else's box?
Did you learn something new about a friend today? Did anything surprise you?

Go Further: Where possible, allow time and space for these inside-out spaces to develop. They could be something that gets added to over several sessions.

Inquisitive - Challenging Assumptions

Children experience different physical perspectives for reflection on their own creative expression and explore the creative choices of their peers.

Bilateral Drawing

1. Give each pupil a piece of paper and fasten down each of the corners with tape. Give each pupil **two** instruments to draw with e.g. pencil, pen, crayons, paint sticks, one for the left hand and the other for the right hand.

2. Explain they will be drawing with both hands at the same time.

3. First, the pupils are going to mirror what their hands are doing (whatever their left hand does, their right hand does and vice versa). You may wish to demonstrate this.

4. Then, carrying on with the same image, encourage your pupils to still use their left and right hands but rather than mirroring each other, this time they can go in different directions. For those who may be a bit self-conscious, you could encourage them to close their eyes as they are doing the activity.

Reflection: How did it make you feel? (The making of your image and the final image!) If the left side and right hand of your page were having a dance, how would you describe the dance? If the left side and right side of your page were having a conversation, what would they be saying to each other?

Go Further: Try bilateral drawing standing up, adding large sheets of lining paper to the wall to encourage bigger and freer movement. Experiment with playing different genres of music to see how it influences the marks on the page. Introduce different drawing materials at each round. Perhaps each hand could hold a different type of drawing material.

Inquisitive - Exploring and Investigating

Children play with mark-making, finding out what happens when they use different parts of their bodies to express themselves.

My Voice in the World

This resource is adapted from Dreamachine: The World Around Us: My Voice in the World

1. Divide the class into groups to create a frozen picture, using their bodies, that shows a collection of objects of their choice (e.g. a table, chair, lamp and rug).

2. Encourage children to exaggerate their positions and ask them to add a facial expression showing how each object feels. E.g. *'I notice we have a grumpy pencil and a tired looking chair!'*

3. Ask: *What would a chair say to a table? How does the lamp feel when it isn't lit up? Do the objects have opinions about how the humans are treating them and the world? For example, a bin may complain, "I know everyone must put their rubbish in me but the amount of rubbish these humans throw away is awful. Years ago, things were never wrapped in plastic. I just seem to get filled with so much packaging."*

4. Each group spends a short time devising a conversation between the objects before they perform to the rest of the class. Ask: *How did the objects feel towards each other? Did they feel the same about the world? How were they treated differently by those in the world?*

Reflection: What similarities can you see about our relationships to each other and the world? How did people's voices and opinions start to come through in our activity? What has it made you think about the world being fair, being equal or inclusive? How do you feel about your own voice and opinion in the world?

Go Further: How can we make our own community that we live in more inclusive? Create a class campaign or display to highlight the children's ideas.

Inquisitive - Challenging Assumptions

Children challenge everyday assumptions through imaginative thinking and consider different perspectives and voices.

Pushing Hard Things

1. Give each pupil a piece of paper and fasten down each of the corners with tape. Give each pupil an instrument to draw with e.g. pencil, pen, crayon, paint stick.

2. Give each pupil a variety of obstacles which they need to move around the page, which range from small and light (e.g. pom poms, dice, grain of rice) to large and heavy (e.g. pebble, bottle of paint, jar).

3. Explain to the class that their task is to use their drawing instruments to make contact with the paper and at the same time they need to push the objects around their page.

4. Every few minutes, encourage the pupils to swap objects.

Reflection: Which object was the easiest/hardest to move? What did you notice happening with your body when you were moving the objects? If the artwork gave you a message, what would that message be?

Go Further: Play the same activity out in the playground using chalk. For larger objects, can the pupils work together to move them? Introduce different drawing materials at each round.

Persistent - Sticking with Difficulty

Children explore navigating obstacles playfully while mark making.

Playful Interruptions

1. Think about ways playful interruptions can be added into a normal day in your classroom or setting. Decide upon a rule that happens throughout the day that means everyone in the class has a certain playful action to do.

2. Come up with actions which best suit your group. For example:
   - Whenever an adult says a certain word (e.g. whiteboard / book / drawer) everyone has to jump up, turn fully around and then sit back down.
   - Whenever anyone else enters the classroom, everyone has to touch their nose.
   - Whenever anyone gets out of their seat, everyone else must strike a pose.

Reflection: How does adding a bit of playful fun change our day in the classroom?
How did it feel to be doing it as a group? Would it be different if some people didn't know the rule?

Go Further: Ask your class to try this out with a larger group — in a school assembly for example. For this, perhaps use a pre-written script that has trigger action words deliberately placed throughout and ask the children watching to take part in the playful interruptions.

Collaborative - Cooperating Appropriately

Children explore how they can be playful while still working well with adults and peers.

Puppet Show Producers

1. Provide a selection of puppets or invite children to create simple puppets using everyday materials such as paper designs attached to lolly sticks. Encourage the children to explore who their characters might be (e.g. a brave dragon, a forgetful wizard, a talking dinosaur or a mischievous monkey).

2. Challenge children to work in small groups to create a short puppet show. Encourage them to invent a setting, characters and a simple problem for their story.

3. Invite children to develop their ideas through play (e.g. *What happens when the dinosaur gets lost? How will the wizard solve the problem? What unexpected adventure could the characters experience?*)

4. Encourage children to share their puppet shows with another group and explain the choices they made when creating their story.

Reflection: Did you change any of your ideas after hearing someone else's idea? How did it feel sharing your ideas with the group?

Go Further: Challenge children to swap puppets with another group and create a completely new story using the same characters. How do different children interpret the same puppet in different ways?

Collaborative - Sharing the Product

Children use imaginative play to create characters, stories and performances, exploring different possibilities through puppetry.

Adventure Bus

1. Invite children to arrange chairs into rows to create a bus. Encourage the children to decide who will take on different roles such as driver, passengers or ticket inspectors.

2. Ask children to choose a destination for their journey (e.g. Dinosaur Island, a magical castle, the moon, a jungle or an underwater world).

3. Encourage children to role play the journey and describe what they can see through the windows as the bus travels (e.g. dinosaurs crossing the road, dragons flying overhead or monkeys swinging through trees).

4. Invite children to arrive at their destination and continue the adventure through imaginative play, creating characters, stories and experiences linked to the location they have chosen.

Reflection: How did you use your imagination to transform the classroom into a new environment? Did other people's ideas change the play?

Go Further: Challenge children to revisit the same destination on another journey. How might a different group of passengers experience a completely different adventure in the same place? You could do further drama activities to explore how the characters feel or do some creative writing.

Collaborative - Cooperating and creating a story as a group

Children use imaginative play to work together, share ideas and create a shared adventure.

Bookshop Builders

1. Invite children to create a bookshop using books, shelves, tables or classroom resources. Encourage the children to take on roles such as booksellers, customers or authors.

2. Allow children time to explore the bookshop through play (e.g. recommending books, organising displays, helping customers or creating special offers).

3. Pause the play and encourage children to reflect on the bookshop experience. *Were books easy to find? Which displays attracted customers? What could make the bookshop better?*

4. Invite children to make improvements before re-opening and continuing their play.

Reflection: Did the book-shop work better after you made the changes – how?

Go Further: Challenge children to re-design their bookshop for a different audience, such as for dinosaur enthusiasts, fairy tale lovers or younger children. What changes would they make and why?

Disciplined - Reflecting Critically

Children use role play to create, review and improve bookshop experience.

Rip It

1. Give each pupil a piece of paper (coloured or from a magazine or newspaper). Ideally there should be a mix of colours. Invite your pupils to rip up the piece of paper into different sizes and lengths (e.g. long strips, squares etc). They could do this with their hands or using scissors.

2. Gather all the ripped-up pieces of paper onto a table and mix them all together so there is a pile.

3. Invite your pupils to take the pieces of ripped paper from the shared pile to make a collage image. They will need a new blank piece of paper and a glue stick. This image could respond to a theme you set (e.g. nature) or left open.

4. If the pieces of ripped paper aren't the right shape, encourage your pupils to adapt them further by ripping or cutting them.

Reflection: Is ripping always destructive? Is ripping a form of creating? How does ripping paper with their hands feel different to cutting paper with scissors?

Go Further: Give pupils a sticky note to collage ripped paper onto, encouraging them to work at a miniature level.

Disciplined - Developing Techniques

Children play with ripping paper and collaging.

Play Prompt Cards



Children are already playing. The question is: how can we make the most of those moments? The following Teaching for Creativity Taster cards are our **new play prompts.** We have highlighted some familiar play set-ups that can be organised in a **playground**, **classroom** or other setting and matched them to the **creative habits of mind** with some suggested questions to ask the children.

They are designed for **teachers** and **anyone working with children in educational or play-based settings**, including **teaching assistants**, **lunchtime supervisors**, **playworkers**, **after-school club leaders**, **childminders**, and other practitioners.

While many of these activities are commonly seen in **EYFS environments**, they can also be adapted and explored with children in **other key stages**. If these activities are already part of your setting, the cards can serve as **a useful prompt** to help adults notice how children's play is developing and identify opportunities to **extend learning further**. By asking the right questions and responding thoughtfully to children's interests, adults can help **deepen engagement**, **encourage reflection**, and **support the development of creativity** through play.

Act with Me

Imaginative

Children are given opportunities to make connections and play with possibilities through their play.

Activity ideas

- Dressing up clothes with a stage area
- Mud Kitchen
- Small world trays (shallow tray and themed toys to set scenes e.g. animal figures and leaves)
- Cardboard box play
- Junk modelling station

Storytelling prompts for adults to give:

- Once upon a time...
- In the deep dark forest...
- It was a bright sunny day...
- Can you tell a story using these props?

Questions for adults to ask:

- What do you think we could make from all these objects?
- If you were to make this again, what would you change or do differently?
- What are we searching for today?
- Is this climbing frame a boat, a spaceship, or a mountain?
- What happens if a big storm comes to our base?
- Which of these materials feels the most like what you want to build?
- If this model could talk, what would its first words be?
- What other objects in the room does this shape remind you of?

Explore with Me

Inquisitive
Children are encouraged to be curious and investigate through their play.

Activity ideas

- Seed growing / creating a school garden
- Nature trail around the playground with magnifying glasses/binoculars
- Leaf art e.g. rubbing or flower pressing
- Make a bug hotel
- Movement trail
- Scavenger hunt
- Map making
- Exploring with sieves and different materials

Questions for adults to ask:

- Why?
- What if?
- How?
- Tell me more.
- I wonder?
- What's possible?

Design with Me

Persistent

Children are given opportunities to stick with difficulty and play with uncertain outcomes.

Activity ideas

- Lego building
- Sandpit play
- Drainpipes and water / balls
- Building towers with building blocks / planks of wood
- Obstacle courses with equipment or upcycled materials such as old tyres
- Playing with cars and trucks in obstacle courses

Questions for adults to ask:

- What happens if?
- How many bricks will it take to build?
- Can you make it heavier, larger or longer?
- How can we make this part even stronger or lighter?
- I noticed how you didn't give up when the tower fell. How did you feel when you finally got it to stand up?
- If this were a real machine and it broke, what would the inventor do next?
- How does it feel to not be sure?
- What can we tell ourselves to help us keep going?

Play with Me

Collaborative

Children take part in activities enabling them to work together through play.

Activity ideas

- Team games
- Parachute games
- Board games including large scale outdoors versions
- Line dancing
- Conga round the playground
- Outdoor art studio and gallery
- Ball games (with balls of various sizes)

Questions for adults to ask:

- How shall we split the jobs?
- What does your teammate need from you right now?
- How can we make sure everyone has a turn to lead?
- What is a fair way to decide which dance move to use next?
- What was one thing your friend did today that really helped the team?
- How did it feel when we all worked together to lift the parachute?
- What is one thing we could do even better as a team next time?

Try with Me

Disciplined
Children try out new skills and refine techniques through repeated practice.

Activity ideas

- Mark making with different materials (e.g. a range of household items and paint)
- Playdough or clay modelling
- Collage
- Weaving and puzzles

Questions for adults to ask:

- What are you most pleased with?
- What did you change?
- What helped you solve that problem?
- What might you try next time?

About this Resource

A New Direction believes that creativity is an essential skill and we aim to support schools and teachers to help children reach their creative potential through dynamic lessons designed to develop critical creative thinking skills.

The pedagogy underpinning our work comes from Bill Lucas and Ellen Spencer's work on the five Creative Habits of Mind — a concept developed from decades of research that has now been widely adopted into learning policies across the globe.



More Taster Cards online here

To find out more about Teaching for Creativity & browse more free resources, visit: www.anewdirection.org.uk/teaching-for-creativity

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