Primary

Teaching for Creativity Taster Cards

Quick challenges to practise creative habits
The Five Creative Habits of Mind

A New Direction, like many others, believes that creativity can be taught, and we want to support schools and teachers to feel equipped to do just this.

The pedagogies underpinning our Teaching for Creativity work come from the five Creative Habits of Mind — a concept developed from decades of research by Bill Lucas and colleagues which has now been widely adopted into learning policies across the globe. The Creative Habits of Mind are a great tool for tracking the development of your students’ creativity.

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

How to use these cards

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.

We hope the cards help you to think about how to use pedagogies for the five Creative Habits across the curriculum.

For those that lend themselves well to remote learning, you will see this symbol:

For those that work in large spaces such as the hall or outside, you will see this symbol:
There's a First for Everything

1. Put two images up on the board of people who were the ‘first’ to do something
   
   E.g. Helen Sharman – the first British person to go into space, Sky Brown – one of the first Olympic skateboarders to represent Team GB, Mo Farah – the first British athlete to win two gold medals at the same world championships.

2. Give students one minute to discuss in pairs and write down answers to each of the below prompts using a timer:
   - Something that has never been done by anyone?
   - Something that has never been done by a child?
   - A sport that no-one from your school plays?
   - Something that you have never done that you could try this year?
   - Something you have never done that you could try today?

Reflection: What is the benefit of being the first to do something?

Go Further: Challenge students to try something new that day to discuss with the class tomorrow e.g. a type of food they have not tasted before, drawing a picture with their eyes closed etc.

Imaginative: Playing with Possibilities

This supports students to explore the possibilities of what they can achieve by thinking big and starting small.

See, Think, Wonder

1. Show the class a picture from a pride march, including colourful outfits and the pride rainbow flags

2. Ask them to write headings on a piece of paper: See, Think, Wonder

3. Put a timer on the board. Give them two minutes to write under each heading:
   
   What do you see? What do you think is going on? What does it make you wonder?

4. Share ideas as a class

Reflection: Did anyone have their questions answered by anyone else’s observations and thoughts?

Go Further: Explain that there are symbolic meanings behind the colours in the pride flags. For example, red = life, orange = healing, yellow = sunlight, green = nature, blue = harmony, and purple = the spirit. Ask them to design an outfit inspired by the rainbow flag, and ask: Which colour is the main focus in your design and why?

Imaginative: Making Connections

This supports students to make connections about what they already know and make connections between questions they have and others’ observations.
Step Inside the Climate Crisis

1. Give students a piece of paper and something to write with and put up some pictures with an animal in them related to climate change on the board.
   E.g. polar bear on ice, animals being rescued in a flood, orang-utan in destroyed forests.

2. Put students in pairs and label them Greens and Blues.

3. Greens choose a picture from the board and stare at it for 20 seconds. Blues write the following headings on their piece of paper: See, Hear, Smell, Taste, Feel.

4. Greens close their eyes and imagine they are the animal in the picture, while Blues ask Greens questions and note down their partner’s answers under the headings.
   E.g. ‘What can you see?’, ‘What can you hear?’

5. Share the ideas as a class.

Reflection: How did it feel stepping inside the photograph? For the students making notes: Do you think you would have imagined something different?

Go Further: Develop the character of the animal further. Students could write a first-person story, comic or newspaper article about their animal.

Imaginative: Using Intuition

Students use their intuition to consider ideas about the climate crisis relying on their senses and imagination over analytical thinking about what is happening.

Alternative Uses

1. Show the class an everyday object — this could be anything
   E.g. a paper-clip, a small ball, a carrot, a remote control, pan, keyring, mug, chair etc.

2. In groups, students have five minutes to think of as many alternative uses for the object as they can. They should all write down their ideas on the same piece of paper.
   E.g. the pan could be a stool, a plant pot, a hat, a lamp shade, etc.

3. Ask all of the groups to share their favourite three ideas. You could move around the class so all students can see the idea lists for themselves.

Reflection: Did anyone have similar ideas? Which do you think is the most innovative and why?

Go Further: Ask students to pick their own objects and try again. Try the 20 Circles Challenge where you have 20 blank circles to ‘fill’ with whatever you like. Ask students to create an advert promoting the benefits of their favourite idea.

Imaginative: Making Connections

This activity encourages divergent thinking, with students coming up with novel ideas and building on existing ideas to come up with something new and interesting.
Only Connect

1. Similar to the TV show, students need to think of connections between words that seemingly have no relation to each other. However, in this version of the game there is no right answer!

2. Display a grid of nine seemingly random words (depending on your class these can either be totally random or you might choose words that can be more easily connected)

3. In pairs, or one at a time to the whole class, students pick two words from the grid and try to come up with another word that connects them
   
   *E.g. if the words are ‘garden’ and ‘tea’ you might say ‘picnic’*

**Reflection:** What answers did you think were the most creative and why?

**Go Further:** Show a list of ten words (e.g. objects in the classroom) and challenge groups to work their way down, thinking of connections between each. The winner is the quickest to finish. Award extra points for original ideas.

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Wonder by Numbers

1. Number question starters 1 – 6 and show them to the class. If possible, write them on a cardboard cube to roll


2. Show students an interesting image of a topic of your choice to generate questions — ideally a problem that needs a solution

   *E.g. for climate change: plastics in the ocean, melting Arctic ice, wild animals in cities, a cut down tree in an area of deforestation*

3. Students take turns in rolling the dice to generate a sentence starter and come up with a question related to the image

4. Record the questions so everyone can see them

**Reflection:** What new ideas do you now have? How might we find out answers to some of these questions?

**Go Further:** Try answering some of the questions. When students present their solutions, ask them to use the frame: *Claim – Support (evidence) – Question (a new one they now have!)*

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**Imaginative: Playing with Possibilities**

This activity practises making links and constructing connections between existing ideas.

**Inquisitive: Wondering & Questioning**

This supports students to think of different kinds of questions, provokes curiosity about a topic and starts to develop deeper discussions.
Close Encounters

1. Tell the class that they are going to take part in a role play, where they will play the part of ‘experts’

2. Tell students that alien visitors from another planet have arrived on Earth, seemingly wanting to make friendly contact (set the scene as creatively as you like!) However, they cannot speak any language known on our planet. The students need to work out the best way to communicate with the aliens

3. Spend two minutes as a class listing what they might need to keep in mind for their investigation
   *E.g. we don’t know what senses they have. They might be worried we aren’t friendly*

4. In groups, students have five minutes to come up with an idea. They should include: how they want to communicate and why, what they will say, and how they will know it has worked

**Reflection:** If you were real experts what research would you do first and how would you test out your ideas?

**Go Further:** Groups present, then pick the best idea collectively. Try doing it again with another scenario, e.g. finding somewhere for the aliens to live, or try a longer, full Mantle of the Expert scenario.

Predicting with Pictures

1. Show an image to the class that is mostly covered up, apart from one small part of it
   *E.g. you could use a piece of visual art such as Hassan Hajjaj’s photograph ‘Kesh Angels’, or Lubaina Himid’s artwork ‘The Carrot Piece’*

2. Ask students to look closely and explain what they think is happening, why they think that, and then share any questions they have

3. Reveal more of the image bit by bit, asking students to comment and record their responses using the ‘Claim — Support (evidence) — Question (a new one they now have)’ technique at each stage until the whole image is revealed

**Reflection:** Were any of your questions answered when you saw more of the image?

**Go Further:** Look at the complete image and ask students to come up with what they think happened just before the image came was completed — what was happening to lead up to that moment?

Inquisitive: Exploring & Investigating

Students start to move from theory to practice and act out their curiosity, exploring a problem in a playful way.

Inquisitive: Exploring & Investigating

Students make predictions, develop their ability to ask questions and learn how to be open-minded, seeing how thinking might change when new information is available.
Fake News

1. Provide students each with a set of red, yellow and green cards
2. Read out a short news story that is unbelievable or add lies, fake facts, or opinions into a real story
   Eg. there’s been a UFO sighting, or a local cat has started speaking. There are some example texts on the The Guardian’s NewsWise site
1. As you read, students hold up:
   • Green: when something sounds true and there is evidence or proof
   • Yellow: when something sounds like it might not be true
   • Red: when something sounds made up or inaccurate
2. If you notice lots of the same colour card being held up, pause and ask for some reasons why
3. After you have finished reading, students discuss in pairs which parts they thought were fake and why

Reflection: What are the signs of something being true? If you doubt the truth of someone’s claim, what can you do? Why would the news include information that might not be accurate?

Go Further: Look at a range of real news articles or historical sources on a topic, with students underlining parts in red, yellow and green, adding annotation of why they made those judgements.

Four Corners

1. Label four corners of the room (or areas of the space) ‘Strongly Agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’, ‘Strongly Disagree’
2. Read a provocative statement out to the class. You could choose to relate it to one of your current topics.
   Eg. for PSHE: ‘Life would be better without social media’, ‘Privacy is not seen as important’, or ‘Friends shouldn’t tell on you if you do something wrong’
3. Give students time to think of their answer and why. They can write their answers down if they like
4. Students gather in the labelled space that corresponds to their choice and discuss their thoughts. Give them 1 minute to speak, followed by 30 seconds thinking time before the next person speaks
5. Invite people from each of the corners to summarise their discussion to the class. After each person presents, give students the opportunity to move to a different corner

Reflection: Do you have a question for any of the presenters about what they said? If you changed your mind, can you explain using the structure: ‘I used to think... but now I think... because...’?

Go Further: Have students come up with their own discussion topics. It can be used before doing discursive writing.

Imaginative: Challenging Assumptions

This activity encourages students to challenge conclusions and look for evidence to support claims.

Inquisitive: Challenging Assumptions

Through discussion students build on others’ ideas, develop their critical thinking, and start to challenge opinions - or have their own assumptions challenged.
Connection Maps

1. Display the question: ‘What connects you to someone else in your group?’
2. Students write their names on the edge of the piece of paper and then draw a line that connects their name with someone else in the group.
3. After talking to each other, they then write down something that connects them to that person. It may be something they like doing, music they listen to, places they go etc.
4. Ask pupils to make a line of connection with everyone in their group, writing as many ‘connections’ as they can on each of the lines.
5. At the end, give pupils time to search for words that might be written on several of the lines. Maps from different groups can be joined together and further connections can be made.

Reflection: Did you find out something new about someone in your class? How do we feel when we are connected to other people?

Go Further: This activity could be adapted for topic work where pupils are given key words or pictures, and in groups find ways to connect their word or picture to another in the group. E.g. plastic, ocean, recycling, sustainability, the greenhouse effect, ecosystems.

Collaborative: Co-operating Appropriately

The physical creation of a connection map supports the talking process, and pupils need to work together on a shared piece of paper.

Machines of Learning

1. Display the theme/question of your choice on the board.
2. Ask students to stand in a circle.
3. Students decide on a phrase (or sound) that shows their understanding of the topic and add a movement to it. E.g. if thinking about climate change, ‘plastic in the ocean’ might be arms rotating round and round.
4. Students are invited to step into the centre of the circle and act out their part of the machine. Encourage students to see if they can link with other students already in the centre of the circle.
5. Once everyone is involved, you can stop the machine, speed it up, slow it down, and make changes by inviting pupils to either change their phrase or position.

Reflection: Why did you choose your phrase/sound/movement for the machine? What other parts of the machine caught your attention and why?

Go Further: Groups produce a machine on a given topic and perform to the class. An ‘inventor’ then explains the different parts of the machine.

Collaborative: Sharing the ‘Product’

Students show their understanding and learning, producing a ‘product’ that can be shared, debated, and developed in an instantaneous way.
**Tableau Tree**

1. Display Frida Kahlo’s artwork ‘Family Tree’. Give students time to look at it.
2. In pairs, ask students to create a tableau (frozen poses to create a compelling picture) showing what family means to them.
3. Ask each pair to join with another pair. Create a new tableau merging or extending the ideas. If time allows, pause and invite a couple of students to comment on what they see.
4. Groups of four then join another group of four to create an even larger still image.
5. The groups can continue to join and develop images until a whole class image is made in response to the original image or word.

**Reflection:** How did your pictures about family change as the images involved more people? Was there anything missing from the pictures you created of ‘family’?

**Go Further:** Use the same process to respond to a phrase, a word or image linked to a topic.

**Pause for thought**

1. Put a large sheet of flip chart paper on each group of desks, or a long piece of paper on the floor. Hand out a pen to each student (preferably different colours).
2. Play a song which is relevant to the theme or question you want to explore with the class.
   
   *E.g. Happy by Pharrell Williams: ‘What is happiness?’*

3. Pupils dance around the room. When the music pauses, they write/draw their ideas on the paper. For younger students you can break the question down further.
4. Repeat several times.
5. At the end, pupils silently move around the ‘gallery of ideas’ and finish by reflecting on all the ideas contributed.

**Reflection:** Can you spot ideas that are similar/different? Is there anything you would like to add or something you’d like to share that isn’t written or drawn here?

**Go Further:** Draw in lines of connection or place different questions on different tables.

**Collaborative: Sharing the ‘Product’**

Students are actively engaged in sharing their ideas, having to verbally express opinions and negotiate with each other about what to include.

**Collaborative: Co-operating Appropriately**

The music breaks give pupils time to think and by moving to different pieces of paper they have an opportunity to read the ideas of others in the class.
Wonderful Wonders

1. Display the sentence:
   ‘It is wonderful that you’ve........ but I wonder if............?’

2. Give students time to watch/read each other’s work in relation to the success criteria for the lesson. They then take it in turns to comment using this sentence to structure their response and give feedback to each other

3. For example, a student might listen to their partner reading out some writing. When they want to make a ‘wonderful wonder’ comment, they clap their hands. Their partner stops and listens to the wonderful wonder of their partner

   E.g. ‘It is wonderful that you have described how exercise produces endorphins but I wonder if you can explain what endorphins are?’

Reflection: Which ‘wonder’ will help you the most to edit and improve your work?

Go Further: Create a wall of wonders so that pupils are encouraged to use a range of wondering questions: ‘I wonder why?’, ‘I wonder how?’, ‘I wonder what?’

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Five Line Poem

1. Students choose a word, write it on a piece of paper, fold it, and put it in a pile. You could relate this to a topic you are studying or it can be random

2. A volunteer picks out five pieces of paper

3. Together, the class creates a five line poem using those five words

4. Can it be improved by adding another word from the pile?

5. Continue to craft — improve by removing, replacing, or adding words from the pile

Reflection: Do you feel you got it right the first time?
How did it feel to listen to other people’s ideas to improve our work?

Go Further: Bring a new word daily/weekly and add to the class pile of words and continue to improve the poem. Add a theme or rules.

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Collaborative: Giving & Receiving Feedback
This supports students to give positive feedback to each other, whilst also encouraging them to consider how ideas can be developed or refined.

Disciplined: Crafting and Improving
This activity illustrates the important process of moving beyond the first attempt or first answer and the power of working collectively to improve and edit.
**Image/Artist of the Day**

1. Pick an image of an artwork to share with the class
   
   *E.g. Sonia Boyce’s ‘She Ain’t Holdin’ Them Up, She’s Holdin’ On’, Yinka Shonibare’s ‘The American Library’, or Lubaina Himid’s ‘Carpet’*

2. Describe the image together. How does the artwork make your students feel?

3. Now discuss the medium and what materials the artist was using

4. Ask students to discuss in pairs how the artist might have grown their skills to create this artwork

**Reflection:** How do you think this artist has become skilful at this technique? If we did this every day or every week, how might this develop our own artistic skills?

**Go Further:** Try to do this daily or weekly with a new image. Students could pick their own images (e.g. from the Tate Kids website) and move to doing it in groups or independently.

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**Butterfly Evolution**

This activity takes inspiration from the video ‘Austin’s Butterfly’

1. Put students in pairs with a few pieces of plain paper and pencils

2. First, they have 10 seconds to draw a butterfly. They must then speedily tell each other one thing they like, and one thing to work on to improve it (give them only 30 seconds for this)

3. Ask them to draw butterflies again (starting from scratch!) — this time thinking about the feedback. Give them 20 seconds this time. Repeat the feedback process, keeping it to 30 seconds

4. Continue the process, giving them one minute, two minutes, and finally three minutes to draw. For the final piece, instead of asking for feedback, ask students instead to explain to their partner how their own butterfly has improved

**Reflection:** How did drawing the same thing repeatedly help you improve?

**Go Further:** You could try using different mediums or techniques.

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**Disciplined: Developing Techniques**

This is an illustration and discussion about the significance of skills development and the discipline of artistic practice.
10-Minute Art Task

1. Create a prompt on any subject — it could be one you are studying at the moment
   E.g. for RSE: Online Privacy, Bullying, Types of Family, Stereotypes

2. Students create a very simple drawing in response in only three minutes

3. They then swap their drawing with a partner and discuss the similarities and differences with each other, paying attention to what they like and what they might change or add:
   E.g. ‘This would be even better if...’

Reflection: Were some bits harder to draw than others? What would you do differently if you were given the task again?

Go Further: Over a period of time, add to, develop, and collate the drawings into a collective piece. Try new techniques such as paper cutting and folding, painting, writing, collaging, and montaging.

Freestyle Portraits

1. Put students in pairs and give them one minute to draw each other in each of the following ways:
   - Without taking the pencil off the paper
   - Using the non-dominant hand
   - With dots instead of lines
   - With eyes closed

2. When the portraits are finished, partners look at the other person’s drawings and pick out three things they like

Reflection: How did you find each task and how were they different? How did you encourage yourself to complete the tasks?

Go Further: You could use this as an opportunity for pupils to discuss a PSHE or RSE topic while they draw. For ‘Healthy Friendships’ they might ask things such as: ‘How does someone show they are being a good friend?’ or ‘How do you resolve a disagreement you have had with a friend?’

Disciplined: Reflecting Critically

With the challenge of a time limitation, students consider ways to develop initial ideas and start to recognise areas that may need more work than others.

Persistent: Sticking with Difficulty

This activity gets more challenging as more constraints are added, so students practice not giving up. It demonstrates the positive, and sometimes surprising, results of persistence.
Circling the Hard Parts

1. Give students a large piece of paper with three concentric circles on it, or ask them to draw one big circle on a plain piece of paper.

2. On another piece of paper or mini white board, ask students to list ideas that come to mind for your chosen topic, or a problem that needs a solution.

3. Students then add those words to their circles, placing the most ‘central’ or important ideas towards the middle, working outwards so the more vague connections are at the edge. They can also draw lines to connect their ideas.

4. Students then circle the ‘difficult’ ideas — i.e. the ones they know the least about, or think would be tricky to think about. They note down why, and how they might start to tackle this subject. If it is connected to another easier idea, this might be a starting point.

Reflection: What made you circle something as hard? How can we start to tackle difficult ideas or problems?

Go Further: Use as a starter for a topic or project and focus on tackling the hard bits first. Students could also find out more about the parts they circled independently and report back.

Figurative Finders Keepers

1. Give students five sticky notes each.

2. Students have three minutes to hunt around the playground or classroom for everyday objects to describe, ideally using similes and metaphors.

3. They then write their description on the sticky note and stick it to the object.
   E.g. ‘the tree is a tall skyscraper touching the sky’, ‘the sink is an empty swimming pool’.

4. After all the sticky notes have been placed, students move around the space reading all the descriptions and collecting five notes each (but not their own!).

5. Students then turn their collected descriptions into a five-sentence poem about the space, and share it with a partner.

Reflection: How did you feel using someone else’s ideas?

Go Further: Hold a class poetry slam where students perform their poems. You could also expand this to other types of figurative language, linking to what the class is learning in literacy — e.g. personification, hyperbole, alliteration etc.

Persistent: Daring to be Different

This activity encourages students to experience and use ideas that are not their own, building self-confidence to take risks in their creativity.
**In Their Shoes**

1. Choose a character or a selection of characters. They can be real or fictional
   
   *E.g. use a storybook the class know, a historical event you have learned about, or even a topical news story*

2. Students should close their eyes and imagine they are the chosen character. They could mime putting on the character’s shoes to inhabit their head space

3. Ask students to record on paper answers to the following:
   - Who are you?
   - What are you thinking about and why?
   - How are you feeling and why?
   - What is important to you?
   - Do you have questions or concerns about anything?

4. Pick some students to share with the class

*Reflection:* Are your responses different to what you might have said if you were yourself? Are they different to other characters in the story or event?

*Go Further:* Repeat with other characters in the same scenario who might have different viewpoints about a similar event.

**Persistent: Sticking with Difficulty**

Students think about a topic from different perspectives. This might result in new thinking and questions that may not otherwise have occurred.

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**Behind the Door**

1. Read Miroslav Holub’s poem *The Door* and discuss all the images that are described behind the door

2. Students then write down all of the things they would like to see behind their own door. It should be things they really care about. Don’t reveal why they need the lists
   
   *E.g. they can be physical things like ‘a river of chocolate’ or abstract like ‘there is love behind my door’. It could be things that are personal like ‘my favourite type of rice’, or things that are more global like ‘world peace’*

3. Once they have their lists, ask students to verbally perform a poem to a partner or small group using only their lists as inspiration. Each poem should start with the first line of Holub’s poem: ‘Go and open the door…’, but they can then be as free as they like with the poem. There are no rules.

   *E.g. Go and open the door
   Maybe a river of chocolate is flowing
   My grandmother’s smile is looking back at me
   Peace is bright like the sunshine*

*Reflection:* How did you find having to think on the spot? Do you think you could improve your poem?

*Go Further:* Repeat this process again until students run out of ideas.

**Persistent: Tolerating Uncertainty**

This activity encourages students to be creative in the moment without a clear goal or structure.
Quick Categories

1. Divide students into teams and give everyone the same category
   *E.g. board games, sports, breakfast foods etc.*

2. Give students three minutes to write down as many things in that category as they can. Do not give them any other instructions

3. When the time is up, take the answers and write them on the board, but divide them between a pre-decided set of sub-categories
   *E.g. for sports, there might be ‘ball sports’, ‘athletics’, ‘combat sports’ etc.*

4. Note if any of the sub-categories have a lot more answers, or far fewer answers

   **Reflection:** Did we focus on or dismiss any of the categories in particular?

   **Go Further:** Ask students to try and come up with a different set up sub-categories for the list of words.

**Persistent: Tolerating uncertainty**
This activity helps students deal with uncertainty and shows how preconceptions and assumptions might hinder considering some ideas.

Chalk Talk

1. Display a question to explore in a staff meeting
   *E.g. ‘How can we teach creativity through science?’, ‘What are the best ways to start the day with the class?’, ‘How can we make wet play more fun?’*

2. In groups, staff write their ideas down on a shared piece of paper. Ideally, each person in the group has a different colour

3. While writing, staff should draw lines to link ideas and answers that are connected, noting next to the line a brief explanation of how they are connected

4. They should make as many ‘connections’ as they can, and if using different colours, aim to connect with each colour at least once

5. At the end, give staff time to review other group’s notes and search for words or ideas that have come up repeatedly, or ones that have no connections. Are they things that need addressing or require further thinking?

   **Reflection:** How could you use this routine in your own class?

   **Go Further:** visit the [Thinking Pathways website](#) and look at other types of visible thinking routines to try out with your classes.

**Collaborative**
The physical creation of a connection map builds on group thinking and allows everyone to have a say.
A Handful of Thoughts

This activity can be used to discuss a particular issue that need to be focused on, or you could use it as an assessment exercise after trying out some of the Taster Card activities.

Everyone draws around their hand on a piece of paper and then completes it with the following:

- Thumb – something good or something you enjoyed
- Index finger – something you would like to point out. This could be good or something to be developed
- Middle finger – something you didn’t enjoy or that doesn’t work
- Ring finger – what are the takeaways? What was special?
- Little finger – a new thought or idea
- Palm – what are your next steps?

The exercise can also be done verbally in pairs or groups.

Reflection: What will you need to do or think about for your next steps, and could anyone here help?

Go Further: ‘shake hands’ with some of your colleagues by sharing your handful of thoughts.

Disciplined
A quick way to reflect constructively on their own progress and/or an activity presented by others to generate instant feedback.

We hope you enjoy exploring the activities in these Taster Cards!

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

We’d also love to hear your thoughts! Drop us an email or get involved on social media:

#TeachingforCreativity
@anewdirection.org.uk
@A_New_Direction
@anewdirection_ldn

Resource writers: Adisa the Verbalizer, Erin Barnes, Hannah Joyce, Jessica McDermott, Maria Amidu, Marina Lewis-King