

About This Book

Quick Thinkers is the perfect solution to those spare moments in every classroom when there is not enough time for a new lesson but there is too much time for doing nothing at all. There are over 300 brain teasers, logic puzzles, word play problems and more to fill those unexpected free moments throughout the school year. The book is written in a 'ready to go' format. Simply pick it up, open to any page and read a problem aloud to your students. They will be challenged to think and respond quickly.

Quick Thinkers has been written for use in any classroom for the intermediate, upper and even adult levels. Subjects covered vary widely, including everything from geometry to geography, from astronomy to alphabetisation. You will also find logic questions and general knowledge topics, making this the perfect resource for cross-curriculum classes. Throughout the book, you will find a wide range of difficulty levels. If some questions seem too difficult or too easy for your group, simply skip over them. Remember: since students are listening to the problems and doing much of the work mentally, some questions may be harder than they appear.

Answers are included with the questions for your quick reference. Some questions have precise answers, while others are open-ended. In these instances, possible answers are listed so you will be able to guide discussion and contribute sample solutions easily.

Suggestions for Use

Brainstorming: Some questions ask students to list a maximum number of answers to a particular problem. For these, you may wish to record a composite classroom list on the blackboard which can then be copied on paper and added to later. Or you may wish to divide students into two or three cooperative teams, with each team making its own list. Another idea is to have teams come to the blackboard, relay-style, and see which team can come up with the longest list of answers within an allotted period of time. Finally, you may wish to have students write lists individually and then share their outcomes with the class.

Whenever possible, allow time to discuss a wide variety of outcomes so that students are exposed to as many correct answers as possible.

Computation: Some questions involve mental computation. Read the question quickly to yourself before reading it to students to determine if your students can solve it without paper and pencil. If so, do not allow them to write! However, if your students are young enough to need to jot down numbers or instructions, be certain they have scrap paper and pencils ready.

Research: Some of the Quick Thinkers ask about historical facts, dates and people. After asking the question, if no one in the class knows the answer, you may wish to assign it as a bonus research challenge. Students could be required to dig up the answer on their own time, even taking it home and asking their families for input.

Geography: Some questions deal with bodies of water, physical features, foreign countries etc. Encourage students to give their best answers without looking at a map. Then review correct solutions with them while they check their maps.

Word Play: Many questions are fun spelling and vocabulary puzzlers. The class may be able to list some solutions quickly, but you may want to challenge them to come up with additional, less obvious solutions that require more thought. In these instances, write the problem on the blackboard and leave it up for a day or two while students delve more deeply into the situation. For a very few questions, there may be no obvious answers at first. For example, how many words can you list immediately that end in **dous**? There are only four common ones in the English language!

Calendar Conundrums: There are a number of questions dealing with days and dates on the calendar. Encourage students to jot down numbers or to sketch a rough diagram of a monthly page on a calendar to help their problem-solving skills.

1



A chess board has eight squares per side. How many black squares are there on an entire chess board?

Answer: 32; Since a chess board is 8 x 8 squares, there are a total of 64 squares, half of which are black.

2



Three neighbours live next to one another on the same street. Listen to find out the order in which they live from west to east. Mr Smith lives next to Mrs Jones. Mrs Jones does not live next to Mr Dunne, who lives in the eastern house.

Answer: From west to east – Mrs Jones, Mr Smith, Mr Dunne

3



What is the smallest number of coins needed to equal 40 cents?

Answer: Two twenty cent coins

4



In a theatre there are 20 rows of 12 seats each and 20 rows of 10 seats each. All but 30 of the seats are full. How many people are in the theatre?

Answer: 410; $(20 \times 12) + (20 \times 10) - 30 = 410$

5



Name at least five countries whose flags are red, white and blue.

Possible answer: Australia, New Zealand, United States, France, United Kingdom

6



Tell what the items in each set have in common.

A. milk jug, teacup, bathtub

B. mouth, zipper, gears

Answer: A. All items are containers to hold liquid.

B. All the items have teeth.

7



Rearrange the numbers I give you to equal the target number. Use any of the four operations, and remember to arrange the numbers so that they can be solved from left to right, either with or without parentheses. For example, use the numbers 4, 12, 3 and 7 to hit a target of 6. One possible solution is $(12 - 7) + (4 - 3) = 6$. You may wish to jot down numbers and possible solutions on paper.

A. Numbers: 3, 7, 5 Target: 26

B. Numbers: 8, 9, 5 Target: 5

C. Numbers: 30, 40, 50 Target: 3

Answers: (others may be possible):

A. $5 + (7 \times 3) = 26$

B. $(9 - 8) \times 5 = 5$

C. $30 \div (50 - 40) = 3$

8



Think of the longest sensible sentence you can in which every word begins with the letter A.

Possible answer: Always ask Alice about apples and awful advertisements.

9



Name four items that could be found inside a computer's CPU (central processing unit).

Possible answers: motherboard, memory chips, hard drive, video card, sound card.



10



Three clocks show these times: 1.20 p.m., 2.15 p.m. and 12.30 p.m. One clock is fast, one is slow, and one shows the correct time. What time is it?

Answer: The time is 1.20; 12.30 is the slow clock and 2.15 is the fast clock.

11



I will spell a word backwards. When you think you know what it is, raise your hand and I will stop spelling the word. Try to figure out the word just by listening, without writing down the letters. I will be spelling words of 7 letters.

- A. REHTORB
- B. SEVLEHS
- C. ERUTCIP

Answers: brother
shelves
picture

12



What is the date of the fiftieth day of the year?

Answer: February 19: January has 31 days. Add 19 more days to equal 50.

13



List as many animals as you can that begin with the letter H.

Possible answers: hog, hare, hawk, hyena, hippopotamus, hen, horse, heifer, hedgehog, hamster, hart.

14



List five European countries and their capitals.

Possible answers: Italy – Rome, Spain – Madrid, United Kingdom – London, Ireland – Dublin, France – Paris.