

Let's Start Thinking!

Welcome to “Start Thinking!”, a mini-curriculum for the elementary grades designed to give children a daily dose of critical thinking and creativity.

“Start Thinking!” draws from a wealth of activities developed by Tin Man Press over the past 35 years. We’ve carefully sorted through that body of work to offer 150 unique activities specifically tailored for fifth graders. We’ve modified these activities for this project and have also developed new material.

Too often, the education of our children is dominated by rote learning and test preparation. We certainly understand that this type of learning is necessary—but it should not come at the expense of helping children become critical, creative, flexible thinkers. We believe fostering that kind of learning translates into greater success in all parts of a child’s education. That’s what “Start Thinking!” is designed to do.

These activities are ambitious. They are unlike any other materials available. We’ve taken pains to ensure that they are easy for children to understand. Tin Man Press also has a reputation for producing thinking challenges that children actually enjoy doing. We’re proud of that reputation—we believe thinking *should* be fun.

We understand that teachers struggle to find time to wedge enrichment activities into a busy school day. These activities are designed to be done in a short period of time—in just five or ten minutes. If at all possible, we encourage you to offer them at the beginning of the school day. And here’s the good news: All of the activities are designed to be done independently.

A note about format: We’ve printed all of these activities on just one side of the paper. There’s a good reason for that—we want to make sure children focus exclusively on the one activity they are doing on a particular day, without being distracted by the next day’s challenge. We do, however, encourage you to put those blank sides to good use. Many of the activities can be extended with just a little bit of thought and effort. Feel free to have children do any extra work on the blank sides of their activity sheets.

We hope you and your students enjoy these lively challenges over the course of the school year!