

# 50 BURNING QUESTIONS A SIZZLING HISTORY OF FIRE

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## Abstract

This guide offers a collection of activities to explore the children's book *50 Burning Questions*. We believe that this resource offers multiple invitations that engage children in inquiry. We hope the following invitations will both complement and extend Kyi's fun and informative resource.

## Welcome to the Teacher's Guide!

### *Our intention:*

We created a resource that supports *50 Burning Questions* because we believe Kyi's resource presents non-fiction text in an interesting and fun way that appeals to children and engages them in inquiry. The text is easy to read, the vignettes are short, and the supporting images not only draw the reader, but also augment the text. We like that the vignettes are well researched and historically relevant; they offer great starting places for discussion with learners of any age. In short, *50 Burning Questions* is approachable, inviting, and engaging.

### *Our hopes for teachers:*

We hope that this resource makes it easy to use *50 Burning Questions* with your students in an authentic way. Because the activities are designed to foster rich discussion and extend the child's experience, children use what they already know along with new information to gain understandings that may extend or even challenge prior beliefs. This creates a space for meaningful learning.

We are inquiry-minded teachers and as such, we hope this resource promotes inquiry and assists with differentiating the curriculum. We have provided scaffolding techniques through black-line masters, model dialogues, sample questions, and a variety of activities that will appeal to a myriad of interests. It is user friendly: each activity requires little to no prep and the Scope and Sequence offers a compilation of pages relating to curriculum topics. As such, you can simply glance at the topics listed, with your curriculum in mind, turn to the suggested pages, and find a vignette that will complement your topic. While we recognize that some vignettes are better for older children, most are appropriate for all ages. We've designed activities to be multi-age and open-ended.

In the following pages, you will find a collection of activities to use for stand-alone lessons, drama, literature circles, and inquiry. If you have ideas to share, suggestions to give, or compliments to pay, please contact us: we'd love to hear from you!

## Scope and Sequence: Linking Text and Curriculum

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Page Numbers in Student Book</b>
Civilization	3-7, 19, 29, 30, 32, 33, 42-46, 49, 55-57, 66-69
Native Peoples	4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 44, 45, 92
Religion	17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 55
Fables/Gods	12, 17, 18, 21-22, 25, 26, 31
Communities	6, 11, 13, 19, 29, 30, 32, 36, 39, 40, 43, 44, 49, 93
Space & Earth Science	31, 35, 39, 80-82
Survival	3-6, 9, 11, 13, 43, 44, 47, 50
Inventions	14, 32-34, 40, 49, 51, 66-70, 72-77, 89
Famous People	24, 46, 50, 67, 74, 82
Human Body	7, 15, 25, 40, 54
Weather	49-52, 83-88
Natural Environment	62, 80, 88-91
Habitat	11, 90, 91
Chemistry	14, 15, 32, 35, 78
Society and Culture	54-61
Science	25-27, 32, 41, 84
Hands-On Activities	10, 27, 41, 48, 63, 64, 71, 84

# Rainy Day Activities

Whether you have a few moments on a Friday afternoon, you're out with the flu and need stand-alone activities with quality learning value, or you are looking for meaningful ways to help your students make connections, the Rainy Day Activities has something for you. With a copy of *50 Burning Questions* and the following list of activities, students will be challenged in their thinking, excited by the content, and hopefully intrigued to learn more.

While suggested readings and their page numbers make conducting activities in your classroom simple, you will notice that almost any activity can be used with almost any section of the text.

## Timelines

### ***Description:***

Creating a timeline is a concrete way to have children solidify their learning of given events over time. When students track changes through time, through pictures and/or words, they are given an opportunity to see history in a linear fashion and can draw their own observations through examining their product.

### ***Method:***

Children can work individually or in small groups to order events chronologically. A piece of text or a story may act as the guiding material. Students identify and organize the information within the text, with the possibility of adding their own thoughts, questions, etc. Once ordered, each event is recorded. The Timeline black-line master found on page 35 may help students in their beginning preparations.

### ***Kids In Action:***

Page 14 in *50 Burning Questions* shows a completed timeline depicting the invention of matches. This is an excellent example of one way students may want to organize their work. "Girl Power, Medieval Style" (p. 24) tells the story of Joan of Arc and contains at least seven events that could be explained through a timeline. Students may want to augment their timeline by adding their own observations or questions either alongside their renderings or as a conclusion. For example, how might things have turned out differently for Joan and France if Charles VII had stood up for her? Students may also enjoy sharing their timelines and final thoughts with their class or small group. Here is an opportunity for further reflection and inquiry if children engage in questioning and rich discussion.

### ***Other Notes:***

The following are a few examples of other vignettes that may make interesting timelines.

Page 36: "Isn't all this fire a little...dangerous?"

Page 38: "Famous Fire Disasters"

Page 39: "Who were the first firefighters?"

Pages 43-49: "Fire-signals"

## **Letters to the Author**

### ***Description:***

Students brainstorm their thoughts, opinions, and ideas about the book, then write a letter to the author. This activity is a great way to explore the basics of letter writing in an authentic, real-life way.

### ***Method:***

After spending time working with and reading *50 Burning Questions*, students discuss as a large group how they felt about the book: What did they like or not like? What would they like to read more about? Was anything missing? What did the book leave them wanting or thinking?

Once complex, rich questions emerge, each student or pair of students writes a letter to the author posing the question(s) and any other feedback the child wishes to share. The teacher may choose to give a mini-lesson at this time on formal letter writing etiquette or on powerful writing. Letter to the Author black-line master found on page 36 may be helpful. Letters can be sent to Tanya Lloyd Kyi, c/o Annick Press, 15 Patricia Avenue, Toronto, ON M2M 1H9.

### ***Kids In Action:***

After reading the book, students brainstorm questions; the above questions may serve as a model. The teacher may choose to complete this task as a whole class activity or have students work in teams, recording their ideas on chart paper then sharing with the larger group. Students might consider what makes something interesting to read. If you're going to send a letter to a real live author, you want it to hold her attention!

## **Board Games**

### ***Description:***

Teaching something is an excellent way to learn. In this activity, children use the game-board found in the black-line masters or create their own to put their understanding into practice. Students peruse the book to find interesting facts and integrate them into their games.

### ***Method:***

Have students discuss their favourite board games, how they work, and what makes them so fun. You may wish to record these responses with the aim of building criteria. Then, ask the class to collect facts from the book to be included in the games. While many groups may further their list on their own time, the class compilation provides some students with a framework or starting place to begin the project.

### ***Kids In Action:***

After discussing what makes a good board game and what information from *50 Burning Questions* would be fun to include, students follow the “How To” guidelines found in the black-line master section on p. 37 to create a captivating board game that teaches, reviews, or extends the material found in *50 Burning Questions*.

### ***Other Notes:***

It is important that students follow the order given in the ‘How To’ section so that they don’t become sidetracked nor overwhelmed. Remember to notify students of approximate working time so that students finish the project in the time you have allotted, thus guiding children in their own expectations and workload. It is this type of project that allows children to show off their talents, but clear guidelines will ensure they also meet with the success of a finished project.

## **Newspaper Creation**

### ***Description:***

For many children, the idea of being a reporter, comic strip writer, publisher, or editor is an exciting one. Students pair the information in the book with their talents as artists, writers, or comics to create a group newspaper.

**Method:**

Students work individually or in small groups to create a newspaper based on *50 Burning Questions*. Example headlines may read: Firefighters Needed, Fire-walkers Fight the Fear, or Lighthouse Legend Lives to Save Another Day.

**Kids In Action:**

Students choose a topic within the book (hint: the topic guide on p. 3 in this Teacher's Guide will help students find vignettes in similar veins) and synthesize their understanding by writing a newspaper column. Children may be given the option to add current events or other historical events to enrich their stories. This may depend on how much time you have. While some students will thrive with this kind of challenge others may wish to create a comic (based on "Can lightning strike twice?" on p. 85, for example) or write an advice column (e.g., They could write in role as Joan of Arc, p. 24, or Alfred Nobel, p. 74, then respond to the letter with advice).

**Other Notes:**

Having students brainstorm the components of a newspaper will help them decide what role they would like to play. This is a great activity for a class with a wide range of abilities as there is something for everyone. You may also want to give the students some newspapers to help familiarize them with the different sections. The very act of relating a given section to the book involves inquiry and higher level thinking skills. For example, someone may use the story of Paul Revere, p. 46, or the vignette entitled, "Does NASA really 'fire' rockets?," to create a travel entry.

**Brochures and Advertisements***Description:*

Students create an informative and illustrative brochure based on a vignette of interest, with the aim of appealing to a specific audience (e.g., potential travellers, employees, consumers, etc.).

*Method:*

Students choose a vignette and create a brochure that would entice the reader. This is a great time to teach kids about "tongue-in-cheek" material. For instance perhaps someone decides to create a brochure advertising for a research assistant to work with Alfred Nobel (the chemist who invented dynamite, p. 74). The story of the Fishy Candles on page 8 may also make a humorous brochure for students who think they can sell anything!

### *Kids In Action:*

Students chose the vignette they wish to base their brochure on, then brainstorm ways they will “sell” the story. Students can create a rubric together before beginning so they are aware of the components needed (text, title, illustrations, etc.).

### *Other Notes:*

For some students, this activity may require some modelling. Choose a few vignettes and have the class work together to come up with some fiery brochure ideas. Struggling students can then use one of the ideas and successfully complete the assignment. A graphic organizer is provided on pages 38-39.

For example:

Gunpowder: it'll get you fired up! (“Who invented guns?,” p. 72)

Lightship workers wanted: See the world from above with only a moderate chance of death! (“What’s a lightship?,” p. 52)

London: A great place to live! (“Isn’t all this fire a little...dangerous?,” p. 36)

## **Mind Maps: Fire of the Future**

### *Description:*

After reading the book, students will have numerous examples of how fire has been used, or abused, throughout history. Now it’s time to take some time to think about how fire may affect our future.

### *Method:*

Students account how fire has developed and how we now use it in our daily lives. Students then consider the role fire may take in our future. Students create a mind map showing how they think fire will impact or shape our future. Children may consider contexts such as space travel, medicine, or energy.

### *Kids In Action:*

It is important to have students talk with one another about where we see fire in our daily lives. The teacher may want to record these topics in web form so that everyone can see them. From this, students can work alone or in small groups to investigate how fire may change our future. The web allows students to make connections between different ideas.

*Other Notes:*

The mind maps on pp. 40-41 in the black-line masters section may help the teacher to lead the discussion, but be aware that showing the finished work to students may overly guide, curtail, or even stop their thinking/creativity.

## **Writing in Role**

*Description:*

Students take on the role of a figure from the text and respond in writing. Roles can change over the course of the reading or stay the same. Taking on a variety of perspectives may enlarge our world-view and possibly build new understandings and empathy.

*Method:*

The teacher reads a vignette and stops a few times throughout the text. During these pauses in reading, the students choose a person in the story and write as if they are that person. This is a good “reading between the lines” activity as students must consider what that person would be thinking or feeling at the time. Note that students do not need to write as the same person each time.

*Kids In Action:*

The teacher begins reading, “Isn’t all this fire a little....dangerous?” (p. 36) and stops after the second paragraph. Students may choose to write as the mayor, the king’s brother, a towns person, the baker in the shop where the fire started, or the king. The teacher may also write in role on the board to model for students during each pause. After a two or three minute write, everyone stops. Student may choose to share their writing aloud. (Hint: If you have limited time, ask the children to highlight a sentence, phrase, or even just one word to share.) The process is then repeated until the text comes to a close or the children lose interest.

*Other Notes:*

Sometimes students refrain from telling their classmates who their chosen role is until after they have read their writing and peers have had a chance to guess who they are portraying.



## **Script Writing**

### ***Description:***

Students write a script between two or more figures from a given vignette. The script can focus purely on dialogue or can include additional information such as stage directions or use of props.

### ***Method:***

Students can read almost any vignette from *50 Burning Questions* then discuss who they would like to give a voice to. This is an excellent activity if you are looking to have students discuss on the line (meaning: that the answer is written word for word in the text), between the line (information you can infer from the text), and beyond the line (ideas or meaning the words make you think about or question) messages within writing.

### ***Kids In Action:***

Students read a vignette then discuss whom they would like to create a conversation around. Children may use the Script Writing black-line masters on pp. 42-43 to help record possible ideas before they begin writing. For example, “Who is the Hottest Fire God?,” p. 18, may inspire students to create a dialogue between the god Atar and the god Ho-Masubi as they debate who is the most important or influential.

### ***Other Notes:***

The teacher may choose the vignettes for this activity, especially if he or she would like students to focus on a specific skill such as debate or retelling; however, students may feel passionately about a given vignette and wish to choose their own. Again, modelling a script on the board allows students needing more support to visualize your expectations as well as providing scaffolding through a teacher-created model.

## **Infomercials: Marketing Fiery Inventions**

### ***Description:***

Students look at the inventions mentioned in *50 Burning Questions*. Then, after choosing a specific invention, they create an infomercial to present to the class. The Infomercial black-line master on p. 44 may help students to organize their thoughts. This is a great time to teach students about what “tongue in cheek” means.

**Method:**

After watching an example infomercial, students work in groups to brainstorm their plan and create their own marketing marvel. These may be quite funny as obviously some of the inventions were not such great ideas.

**Kids In Action:**

Have students watch an infomercial so that they can visualize what they are trying to do. Then review the inventions from the book. Have students sign up for the invention they wish to market, then fill in the black-line master as they brainstorm their ideas with their group. When they are able to come to some agreement on their plan and can show you their planning sheet, they can begin scripting and acting out their infomercial. Hint: Provide a time limit and guides around prop use.

**Other Notes:**

The invention vignettes are found on pages: 14, 32-35, 40, 49, 66-70, 72-76, 89

## **Drama Activities**

Drama in itself is a kinaesthetic activity, inviting students to enter into their learning through active participation. The short vignettes of *50 Burning Questions* are the perfect stage to allow students to demonstrate their learning and question their understandings. The following activities are designed to engage learners in the text while encouraging inquiry, creative thought, and of course a platform on which to perform.

### **News reporter**

**Description:**

Children work in groups to broadcast a news story, just as you might see on TV. Imagine one child as the reporter while the other members of the group act out the report.

Arrange children into groups of three to five and provide a vignette to read. Ask each group to select one person to be the news reporter who gives an in-character summary of the article. The fellow group members become actors depicting the scene. These children can either create still images (tableaux) or dynamic productions complete with dialogue, action, and even improvisation!

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel: A dynamite inventor!**

Arrange children into groups of five. Provide each group with copies of Question 38, “Didn’t his mother tell him not to play with fire?” (p. 74-75). Ask each group to translate the story into a news report complete with a headline. Depending on the needs of your class and the time devoted to this activity, you may suggest that the children write a script. Ask each child to take on a role. Roles may include: News reporter, Alfred, Emil, Researcher(s), Stockholm city leader(s), or businessperson, depending on the scene. Invite children to select a scene from the vignette. Scenes may include: Alfred in his lab creating nitro-glycerine; Alfred in a meeting to gather research funds; protests by Stockholm’s city leaders, etc. The whole vignette can be acted out chronologically by dividing the class into six groups with each group reporting on one particular event: Alfred discovering nitro-glycerine; Emil blowing up the lab; Stockholm leaders protesting; entrepreneurs demanding the superchemical; warehouse and lab explosions; and the successful creation of dynamite.

### **Hot Seat**

#### ***Description:***

One or more actors take the “hot seat” as they agree to be interviewed by the audience. The actors can be in role as characters from the vignette or they can “play” themselves. Questions can be planned or spontaneous; however, it is important that the actors maintain their assigned roles in order to create an authentic dramatic experience.

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **King Taejo takes the hot seat**

Read or provide Question 22, “How did you dial 911 in ancient Korea?” (p. 43) to the class. Ask one child to take on the role of King Taejo. Invite the remainder of the class to take on the role of the country people, anxious to know about the King’s smoke signals. Hot seat questions might include:

How will we know raiders are coming?

How did you discover smoke signals?

How do you know the smoke signals are effective?

## **Fast Forward/Flashback**

### ***Description:***

Imagine pushing a fast-forward or rewind button on your DVD player. Fast Forward and Flashback work like this: they allow the viewer to experience events that occur prior to or after the present event, inviting the participants to explore the network in which specific events occur.

A group of actors is assigned a scene, which they may rehearse in advance or improvise, depending on their age and on the time available. (Older students may be more comfortable with improvisation, while younger students may need more practice before performing their scene.) As the scene progresses, the teacher will call out “fast forward” or “flashback,” or assign a student to do so.

This strategy allows for the whole class to participate depending on the number and context of scenes. Different groups may be assigned different scenes, or improvising actors can be added to the performance as needed.

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **The history of gunpowder**

Read or provide Question 36, “Would you like some gunpowder in your stew?” (p. 70) to the class. Invite an actor to play the alchemist and one to play the wife of the alchemist. Use Fast Forward and Flashback to explore the discovery and development of gunpowder by drawing upon the text, other sources, and the children’s imaginations. This strategy allows for the whole class to participate depending on the number and context of scenes.

Consecutive Sample scenes include:

The Chinese women using saltpeter while cooking

The alchemists searching for a formula

The wife using saltpeter in her cooking

The alchemist experimenting in his laboratory, and causing explosions

The first use of gunpowder in weapons

Gunpowder used in fireworks today

## **Group Sculpting**

### ***Description:***

Children work in groups to create a still image. One child becomes a sculptor and the fellow members become the clay. The sculptor gently moves each group member into the desired shape and requests the sculptee to hold the position until the sculptor says, “release.” There are many ways that the audience can be involved. For example, viewers can question the sculptor about the event (e.g., feelings of the characters).

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **Talk about a guy who couldn't share!**

Read or provide Question 30, “Burn the books or bury the writers?” (p. 57) to the class. Elicit the possible emotions felt by different parties involved. Write children’s responses on the Emotion Cards found on page 45 of the black-line masters section. Arrange the class into groups of three to five and letter each group (Group A, B, C, etc.). Ask each group to nominate a sculptor. Explain to the class that you are exploring the perspectives and emotions of the people affected by Emperor Shi Tuang’s decision by playing a guessing game. Provide each sculptor with an emotion card ensuring that these are kept “secret” from the other groups. Ask the class to form a circle. Decide on the order of presentations. Each group has a turn in the middle of the circle. For example, Group A comes up first. The sculptor then sculpts each group member to depict the emotion on the card provided by the teacher. This may be a scene or simply various gestures to express the emotion. Group A freezes while the remainder of the class guesses the emotion.

## **Mantle of the Expert**

### ***Description:***

Mantle of the Expert invites children to become an “expert” in the related field of the current topic of study. For example, children might become rocket scientists when studying Astronomy, or grave robbers when studying Ancient Egypt. The role becomes especially fun and convincing when children assume the language and demeanour of the expert.

## ***Kids In Action:***

### **Fire safety and you: A smokin' hot convention!**

Explain to the children that you will be holding a Fire Safety Convention with a panel of experts and that you will be in role as the main facilitator. All children will take on a role although only six students will be nominated to speak on the panel. The remainder of the class will become participants at the conference and will be encouraged to ask questions (in role) and/or take notes. Split class into small groups, assign roles, and provide related reading as listed below:

Firefighters: pp 39 & 40

Fire Inspectors: pp 36-38

Arsonists: pp 60-61

Inventors: pp 32-33, 67, 70, 72

Scientists: pp 27, 41, 34-35, 84

Firewalkers: pp 25-26

Group members read the text, discuss, and create answers for the following questions:

What is your role?

How do you do what you do?

Why do you do what you do?

What time period are you from?

What do you like/dislike about your job?

What are the important features or interesting details you want to share?

When the children are prepared, call the class together with six chairs at the front. Take on your role as facilitator and welcome participants to the conference. Invite the panel to come forward and let the fun begin! Remind children to stay in role and answer the questions as an expert, even if they have to "make up" the answers as they go.

## **Sound Effecting**

### ***Description:***

Have you ever listened to a radio play or experienced a reader's theatre? You know the power of sound to ignite your imagination and create a visual image. In this strategy, children use realistic or stylized sounds to vocally create a soundscape depicting a scene, story, or event from the text.

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **We're a'moving and a'oozing!**

Read Question 42, "Why do I feel like I'm floating?" (p. 80) aloud. Brainstorm the sounds you might hear during that event and record children's responses on the board. Arrange students into groups of two to four. Invite each group to choose a unique sound effect to add to the story as you read it aloud a second time. The story will come alive with sounds such as lava oozing, plates grinding, trees burning, etc.

#### **London is burning!**

**Warning: This vignette may be better suited to older children.** Read Question 19, "Isn't all this fire a little...dangerous?" (p. 36-37) aloud. Brainstorm the sounds you might hear during that event and record children's responses on the board. Arrange students into groups of two to four. Invite each to group choose a unique sound effect to add to the story as you read it aloud a second time. The story will come alive with sounds such as running feet, frightened voices, crackling wood, etc.

## **Storyboarding**

### ***Description:***

Think comic strip...picture sequencing...movie set design...graphic novels... literature in still frames. The story is fragmented into events, then ordered chronologically to create a storyboard. Storyboarding can be used to visually play out the story as a prewriting activity or as a post-reading comprehension strategy. Pair this strategy with tableaux and bring the text to life!

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **A frightening menu**

Provide Question 1, "Who's for dinner?" (p. 4) to each storyboarder. Invite the children to illustrate Broom's discovery in storyboard fashion. Events may include an introductory slide featuring Broom and his archaeologist friends, the team uncovering the first layer of remains, a possible conversation between the archaeologists, uncovering the second layer, etc. Artists will need access to paper, illustration supplies, and/or a computer.

## **Machine**

### ***Description:***

Children pair voice with movement to depict a machine. This strategy works especially well when students work collaboratively: each child mimics one part of the machine, making a repeated sound and movement. One actor begins, then each group member adds on, one at a time, to depict the entire machine. For example: to make a car, you may have four children be the wheels, one as an engine, another as a horn, another as windshield wipers, etc. Voices and movements are layered as each child adds their part to finally depict the cohesive machine.

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **Chugga, chugga, chugga... Toot! Toot!**

Arrange the class into four groups. Provide each group with supportive reading (outlined below). Invite each group to depict their assigned machine by reading the text provided. Depending on the age of the children, groups can be responsible to independently research their machine and assign individual parts to group members.

Locomotive: p. 33, 34, 66

Sending messages with fire (e.g., Fire Beacons): p. 43-47

Lighthouse: p. 49-51

Rockets: p. 35

## **Tableau**

### ***Description:***

In a basic form, a tableau takes the shape of a still image, comparable to a photograph. To enhance the power of the strategy, encourage actors to use levels, reactions, and subtleties imbued in the text. In this way, the “photograph” or image can become a site of tension, inviting the actors and the audience to **problematize** the event depicted: a powerful tool to promote classroom conversations and inquiry!



***Kids In Action:***

**Fijian Fire Masters: A Gift from the Gods?**

Read or provide the vignette entitled, “Fijian Fire Masters” (p. 26) to the class. Although this is a very short vignette, each sentence can be transformed into a tableau. The beauty of this brief text is that it leaves room for the children’s interpretations and imaginations. For example, encourage the actors to really consider what it might mean to be gifted with the ability to walk on coals—how might this gift affect the quality of life of men... and therefore the quality of life for women!

**Teacher In Role**

***Description:***

The teacher takes on the role of a character in order to facilitate a role drama. For example, the teacher might become a major character to be interviewed at a public meeting, or perform as a minor character, working alongside the children, to facilitate decision making or perspective taking. Assuming the role of a minor character can be a powerful way to hear the voices of minorities or those whose voices are often dismissed, ignored, or undervalued. Depending on the age of the students, the teacher may want to establish a sound or signal to illustrate when you are “in role” and “out of role.” A hat or other easy-to-wear piece of clothing can be helpful in this regard.

***Kids In Action:***

**It’s my party and I can burn if I want to!**

Read or provide the vignette entitled, “One shrub’s quest for personal space” (p. 91) to the class. Explain that you will be digging deeper into the text by engaging in a role drama with you in role as the shrub. The children can either choose a role (if you set a broader context like a convention) or stay “in role” as themselves. You may wish to allow a few minutes for children to record their question(s) and/or plant the following questions to get a rich discussion going:

- Why do you love fires so much?
- How long does it take you to grow back?
- Do you feel guilty about killing everything around you?

## **Voices in the Head**

### ***Description:***

Voices in the Head invites the audience to be privy to the inner voices of the “characters” in a text. Add complexity and surprise to the drama by seeking to hear inanimate objects such as trees or buildings. Voices in the Head is a powerful strategy to encourage perspective taking, empathy, and inquiry as it reveals a rich collection or layering of thoughts and feelings imbued in the text.

This strategy can be used in many ways. For example, children can tap the shoulders of actors in a tableau and ask them to reveal their inner thoughts and feelings. Or, the teacher/actor can freeze a drama and ask the actors to turn-take, each revealing his or her responses to the event being dramatized.

### ***Kids In Action:***

#### **The great black dragon...a dark tale**

Read or provide Question 47, “Are those giant matchsticks?” (p. 87) to the class. Explain that you will be digging deeper into the text by exploring the various thoughts and feelings of those involved in the fire. Group students and assign roles to the children ensuring a balance of perspectives as reflected in the text: worker(s), trees, campers, firefighters, citizens, Chinese military, and firetrucks. Ask guiding questions to elicit feelings/concerns/questions of their character. Sample questions might include:

- Citizens: Who do you feel is responsible and why?
- Firefighters: What’s made your task challenging?
- Campers: How do you feel about the outcome of your actions?
- Trees: What do you have to say about this?
- Chinese Military: Do you have any regret about your decisions?
- Fire trucks: What have you been able to do here today?
- Worker: Where do you go from here? What might happen next?

# Inquiry Invitations

This section offers a collection of invitations where students and teachers come together to make connections, explore meaningful questions, and “spark” interests. Each **Inquiry Invitation** provides a provocation designed to disrupt preconceived ideas and values in favour of new understandings and deeper awareness of the human connection with fire. As such, the activities are not closed, but are springboards that will hopefully ignite passionate debates, alter preconceptions, and raise interesting tensions.

These **questions and activities** will likely take longer than those found in the Rainy Day section and may lead to further investigations or larger projects.

## **Carousel: Collecting student-authored inquiries**

### ***Description:***

Children work in groups and rove from station to station, reviewing and inquiring into various materials on a topic of interest. Responses are recorded on chart paper, thus yielding a record to be used to inform future lessons/inquiries.

### ***Approach:***

Various captivating and diverse materials on a topic of interest are set up in stations around the classroom prior to the children’s arrival. Children are assigned to work in numbered groups and directed to start at one lettered station. For example, group 1 starts at Station A, then moves to Station B. Group 2 starts at Station B and moves to Station C, etc. You may want to set up a timeline and signal to indicate when to move stations. Children work in groups to peruse and discuss the material at each station and record their responses (questions, thoughts, wonderings, etc.) using markers and chart paper provided. The following group adds to the previous group’s response, but does not edit that response. In the end, the class will have created a mass of questions, thoughts, and wonderings in which to inform future inquiries. For example, you may see a collection of questions reflecting a similar interest or question. This question will now guide your next lesson plan/future teaching.

This strategy can be repeated throughout a unit to assist the children in creating their own inquiries/class investigations.

### ***Kids in Action:***

After reading Chapter 3: When Fire Goes to Work, the class could be split into groups and asked to examine four small collections, noting how each material is made, how it is used, and how it relates to fire. The following are examples of materials which could be used.

Station A: A pottery bowl, a metal pot, a cookie sheet, a set of silverware, and a kettle

Station B: A DVD, a computer mouse, a pair of scissors, and a hammer

Station C: A necklace of glass beads, a pair of eyeglasses, a magnifying glass, binoculars, a water glass, and a glass jar (such as a jam jar)

Station D: An electric pencil sharpener, an air pump, a handheld vacuum, an a remote-controlled toy car

### **De Bono's Six Hat Thinking: taking on new perspectives**

#### ***Description:***

Children work in groups (or individually) to engage in one of the six perspectives (or “hats”) described by De Bono. *Beyond Monet* by Barrie Bennett and Carol Rolheiser (Barrie Bennett, 2001) offers a detailed description of De Bono's work and its classroom application. The following description is derived from this resource and offers a brief summary of each “hat” or perspective:

*Blue Hat:* Metacognition, or Thinking about Thinking. This hat invites the inquirer to self-reflect on his/her thinking.

*Red Hat:* Emotions/Feelings. This hat invites the inquirer to consider the emotions felt in the situation either by him/herself or the characters in the text.

*Yellow Hat:* Positives/Pros/Upside. This hat invites the inquirer to consider the positive aspects to the situation under investigation.

*Black Hat:* Negatives/Cons/Downside. This hat invites the inquirer to consider the negative aspects to the situation under investigation.

*Green Hat:* New developments/Creative ideas. This hat invites the inquirer to consider new perspectives, new ideas, or future plans that may stem from the situation under investigation.

*White Hat:* Information/Details/Data/Facts. This hat invites the inquirer to consider or draw out the facts provided in the situation/text.

### **Approach:**

Note: You will need to teach the Six Hat Thinking strategy before you do this activity. A sample lesson is provided in *Beyond Monet*.

Arrange children in six groups and assign each group one hat. Provide all children with the same text (one vignette) and ask the group to dialogue about the text in a way that reflects their assigned hat. Provide markers and chart paper to record responses. You may want to make it especially visual by matching the marker to the colour hat (red marker for red hats). This strategy is especially powerful when children dialogue with other groups about their thinking. In this way, all children are exposed to and invited into conversation with each of the six perspectives. One way to organize this conversation is to set up numbered heads (each child in the group is assigned a number such as 1-4). Then all the 4s become a group. A class of 24 children would yield 6 diverse groups comprised of all of the six coloured hats.

### **Kids in Action:**

If a group were to read the information about lightships provided on page 52, they might ask the following questions:

Blue Hat: Why would someone take this job?

Red Hat: How frightening would it be to rope yourself to the deck and keep working during a storm?

Yellow Hat: Would employees get danger pay? This would be a good job for risk takers! Plus, you'd be very fit.

Black Hat: The job involves danger and loneliness. You'd be away from family for long stretches of time.

Green Hat: What equipment would they have wished for in this job? Survival suits would have come in handy!

White Hat: The first lightships were in England; similar ships later operated in the United States.

# Literature Circles

Literature Circles allows students to dig deeper into their books while also giving time to discuss what they think with others. However you chose to run your Literature Circles, we would suggest considering *50 Burning Questions* as a key text. The book is interesting, engaging, and has lots for students to consider, ponder, and research further if desired.

Literature Circles can be a critical part of a strong Language Arts program. Many teachers prefer to give their students roles such as Discussion Director, Summarizer, Connector, Artist of the Day, and so forth, which would require the book to be broken into parts so that students knew which vignettes they were to cover.

For example, if the teacher wanted students to focus on fables and gods, students could look at the vignettes on pages 12, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, and 31. The summarizer would prepare a one-page synopsis of what happened in each vignette while the Discussion Director would come up with questions to guide the discussion. Questions such as, “Why do you think the people in these selections agreed to such extreme sacrifices?” or “Why do you think people followed the rules of the Aztecs, who believed that if they didn’t sacrifice enough people the sun would fail to rise?” would be appropriate for these vignettes.

Meanwhile, the Connector may bring questions such as, “How do people make sacrifices to their gods today?” while the Artist of the Day may draw a picture he or she feels represents the reading along with a write-up explaining why.

This style of Literature Circles can offer students the opportunity to look at text from different perspectives and *50 Burning Questions* again provides meaningful text in manageable chunks. Faye Brownlie’s approach to Literature Circles would also be very effective. We have summarized the strategy here. If you choose to use these ideas, we recommend that you read her book, *Grand Conversations, Thoughtful Responses; A Unique Approach to Literature Circles*. While the title is long the book itself is short and easy to read, giving clear instructions and easy to follow examples.

As outlined in Brownlie’s book, students read the book at their own speed. Twice a week, students meet in their small groups, with the teacher, to discuss what they are reading. They are encouraged to give their opinions and comments without “spilling the beans” but rather “teasing” fellow students with selections they enjoyed. Each member of the group is encouraged to participate through the use of the “Say Something” strategy (Harste, Short, and Burke). This strategy is taught in previous lessons.

Brownlie suggests reading a poem and having students offer their responses. This gives the teacher an opportunity to point out examples where students are using their thinking by making connections, sharing big ideas, creating images or analysing word choice; clearly, the same behaviors needed for a fruitful book discussion.

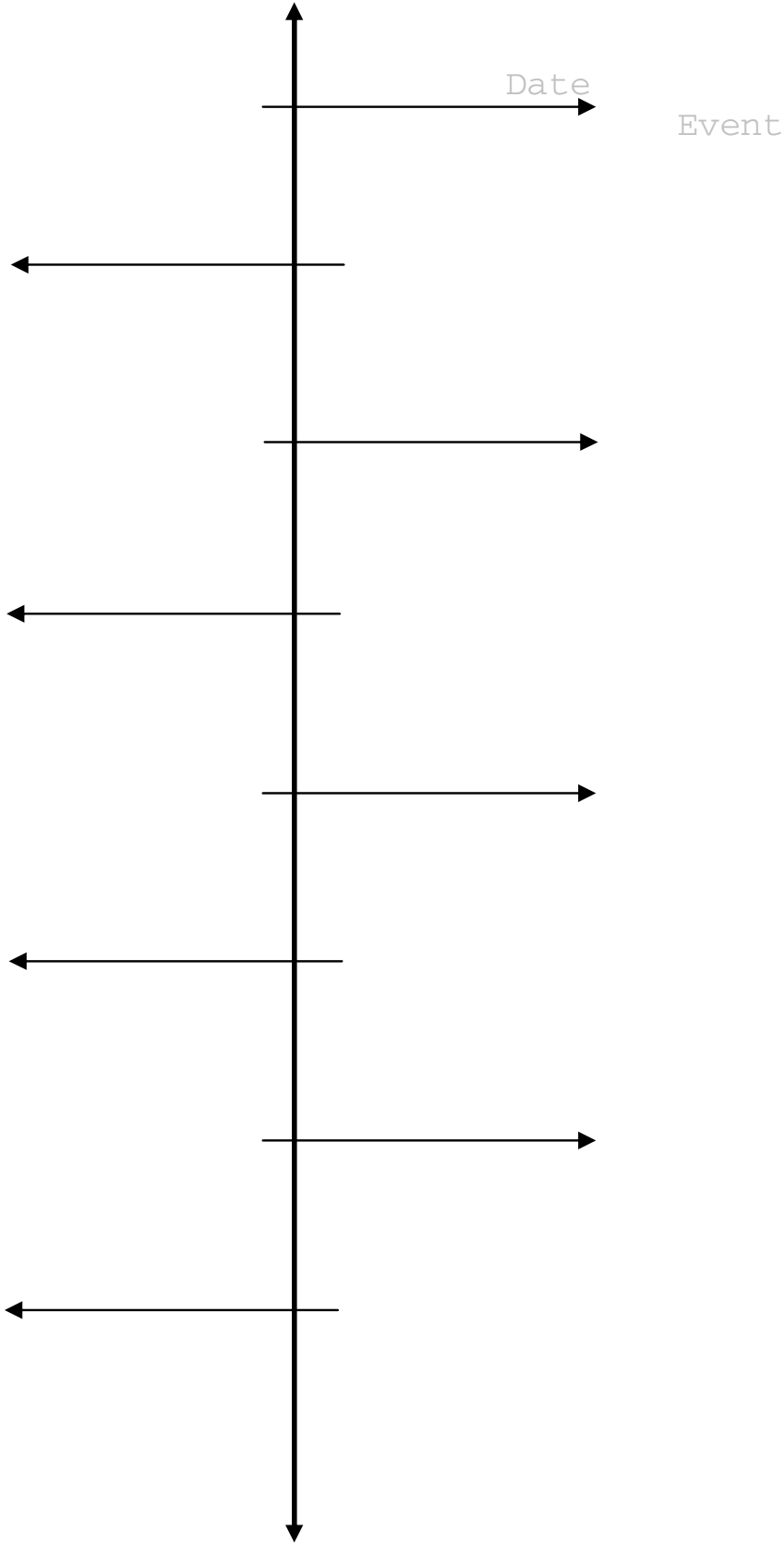
We love that Brownlie's method encourages students to be active participants as they learn to listen to their classmates, make connections, and build on the ideas of others. Brownlie's approach has small groups of kids reading the same book, and students move from group to group as they complete each book. Using this method would allow hesitant readers to join the discussion with confidence as *50 Burning Questions* is nicely broken into short vignettes, making the book more manageable. It should also be noted that Brownlie's approach allows struggling readers to stay in a group for a longer period of time without feeling rushed, as everyone in the group is at a different spot.

While one group is engaged in their book talk with classmates and their teacher, other students are either reading their book or completing individual activities in their response journal. Double-sided journals are one way Brownlie suggests as a straightforward method to have students authentically interacting with the text. With the page folded in half, one side is labelled "What Happened" and the other side is labelled "My Thinking." This is a great strategy as it has the students think more deeply about their reading and helps them to prepare for their book discussion.

Other books being read by different groups in the class will of course depend on the theme in the classroom or a specific goal the teacher is wanting to explore. Note that Kyi has also published two other non-fiction books, *True Stories from the Edge: Fires* and *Burn: The Life Story of Fire*, which pair nicely with *50 Burning Questions*.

*50 Burning Questions* integrates well into any non-fiction readings or themes such as history, disasters, survival, and, of course, fire.

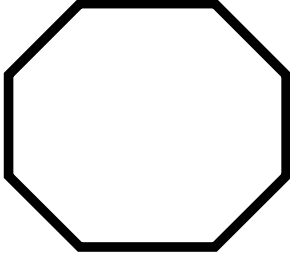
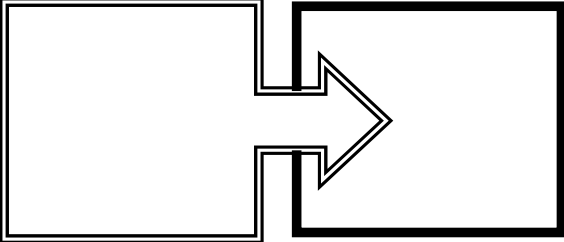
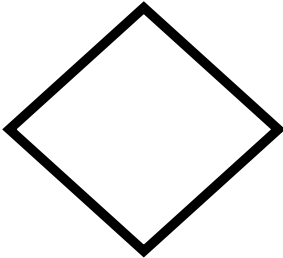
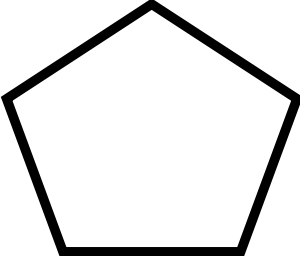
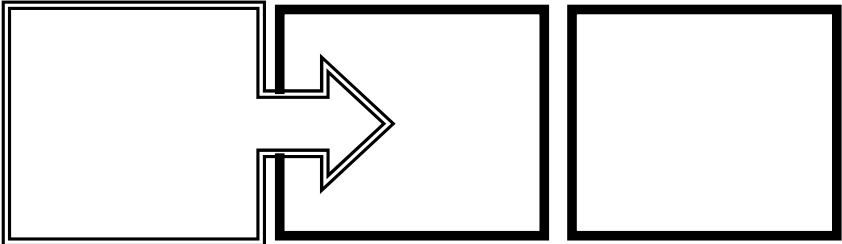
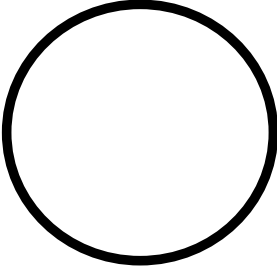
# Timelines



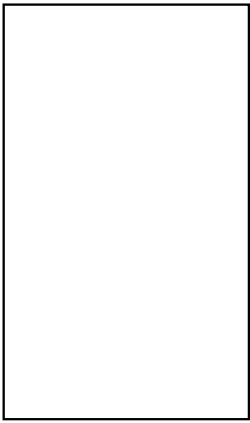





**Board Games**



# Brochures and Advertisements

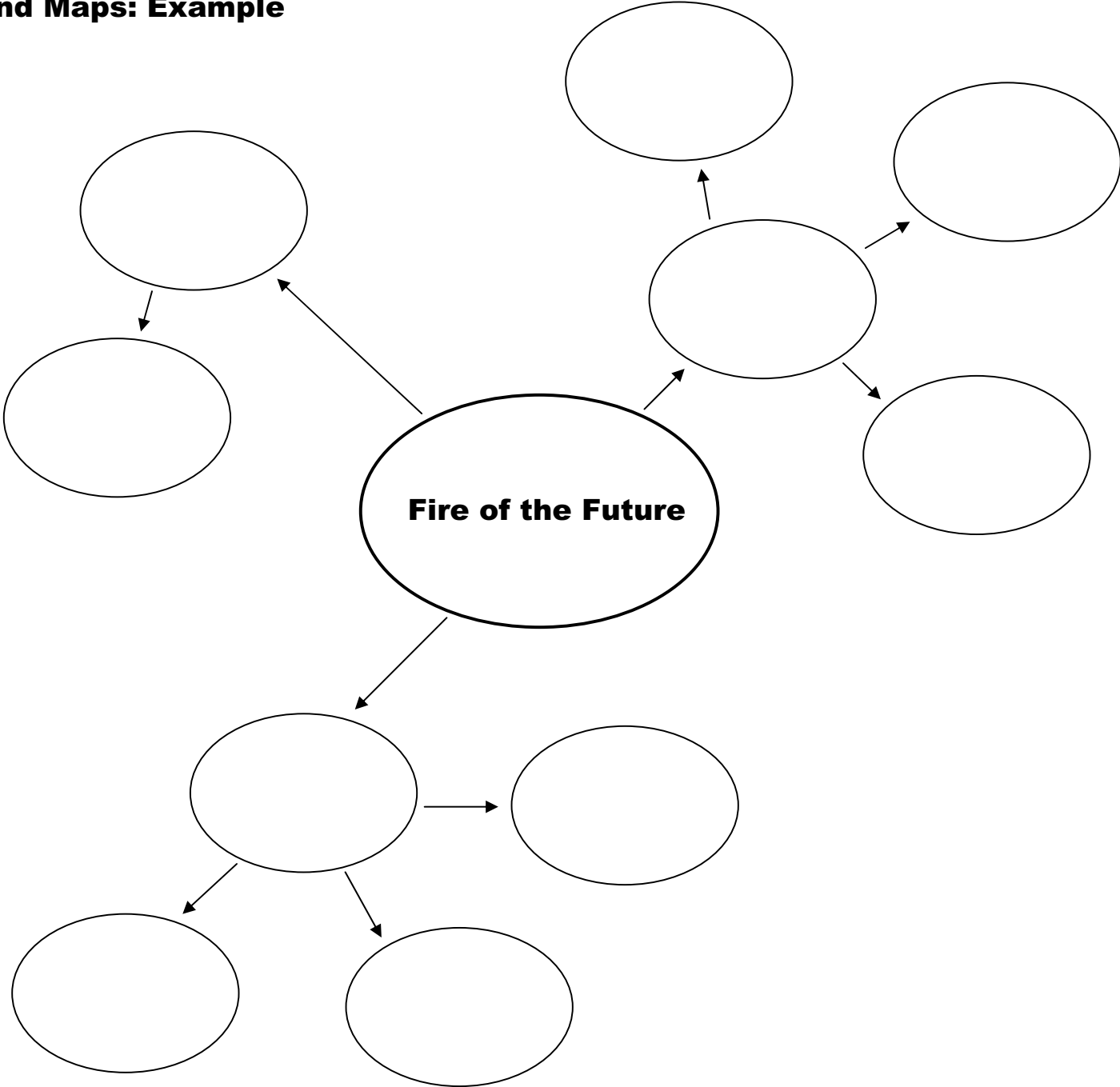
		
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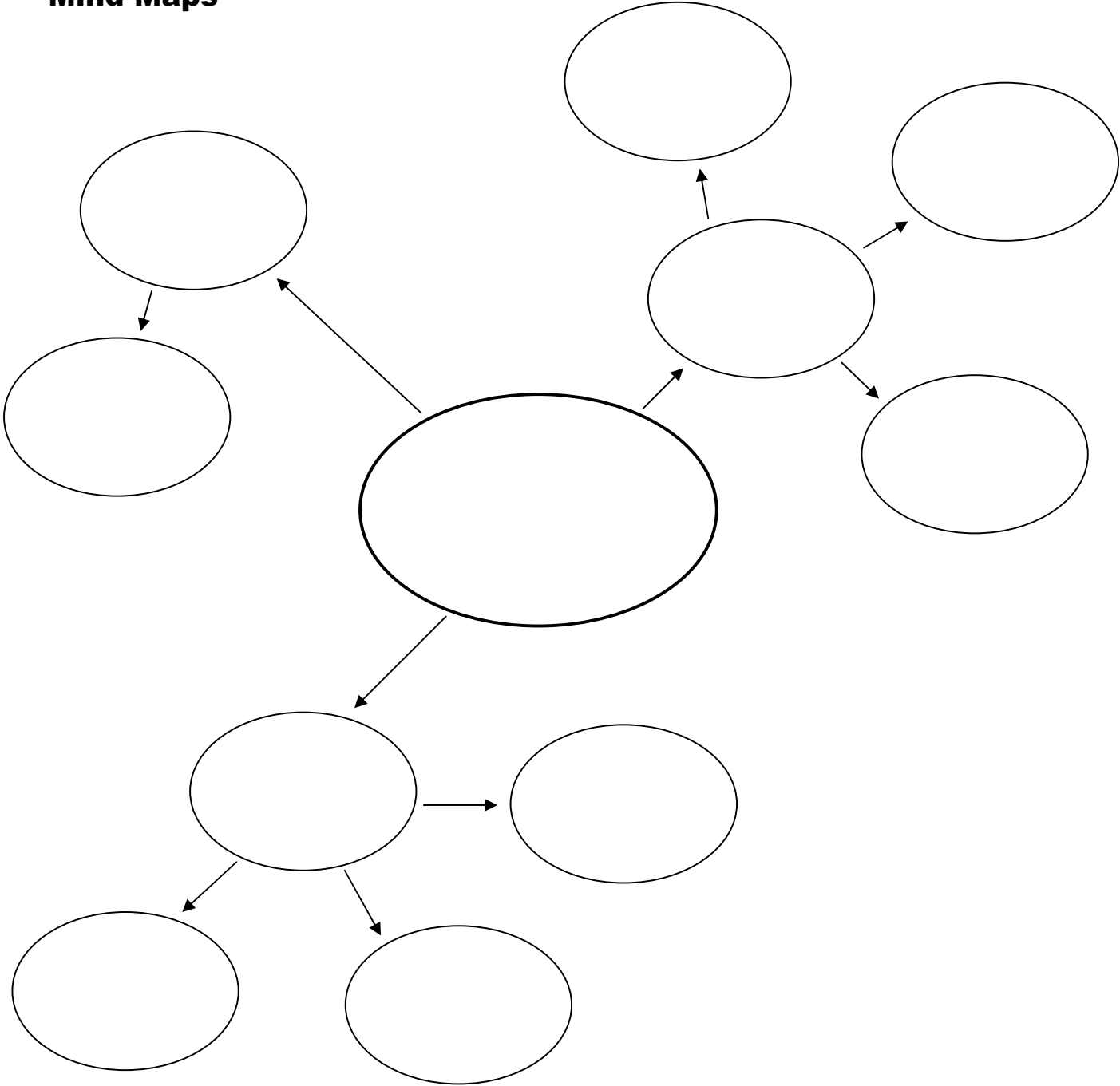
	
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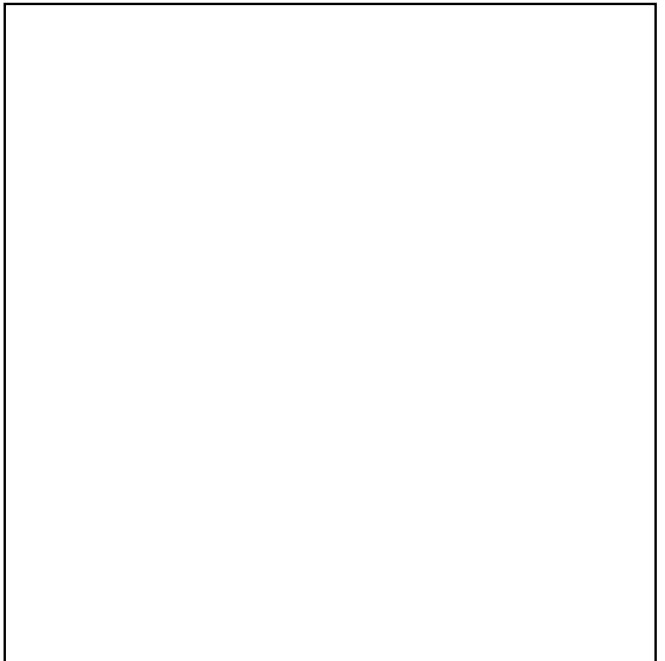
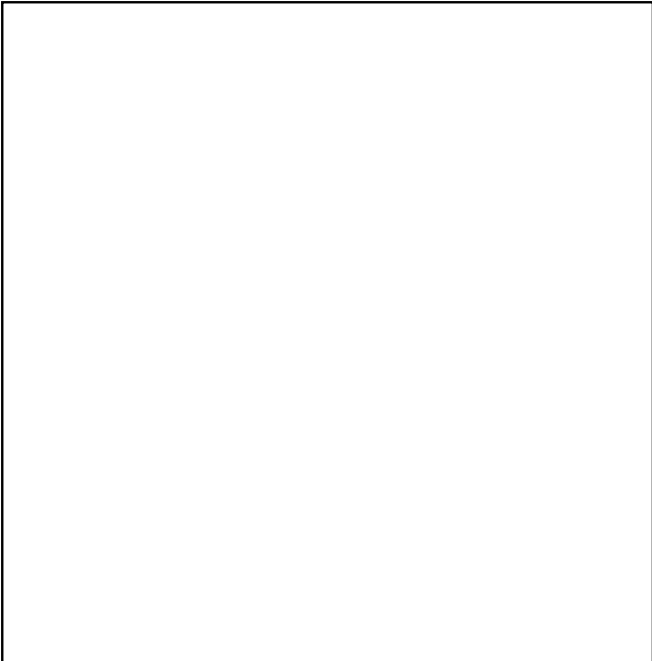
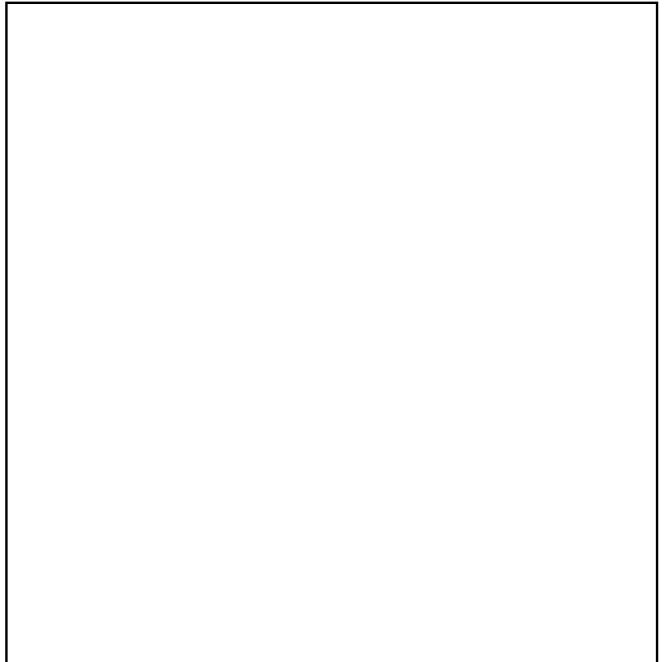
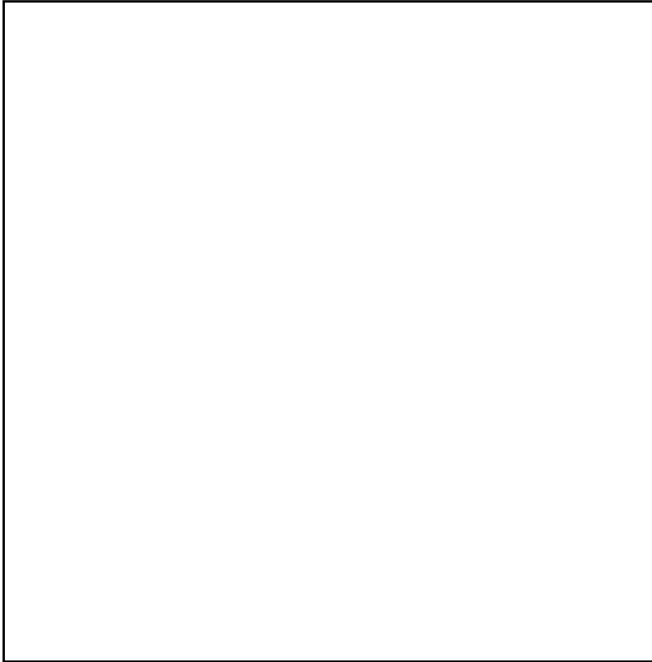
**Mind Maps: Example**



**Mind Maps**



# Script Writing: Brainstorming



# Script Writing

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# **Informercials: Marketing Fiery Inventions**

Invention:

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Possible Market:

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Marketing strategy:

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Character(s):

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Props:

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## **Group Sculpting**

**Anger**

**Shock**

**Fear**

**Despair**

**Joy**

**Calm**

**Envy**

**Grief**

**Pride**

**Relief**

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