

SIX THINKING HATS

The Six Thinking Hats is a strategy devised by Edward de Bono to help individuals extend their way of thinking about a topic. By wearing a range of 'thinking' hats, individuals deliberately adopt a variety of perspectives on a subject that may differ significantly from the one they might normally assume. Six Thinking Hats can be used effectively in situations where students are required to brainstorm or think laterally or creatively. They can also be used with a range of texts. Six Thinking Hats allow students to focus their thinking and improve their communications and decision making skills.

When using the Six Thinking Hats it is best to teach one hat at a time and provide lots of opportunities for students to apply that thinking. Teachers might choose to have the whole class wear the same hat at the same time, or have the students work in groups, where each student wears a different coloured hat. After discussing a topic, the groups report back to the whole class about the ideas generated using the six coloured hats. The teacher can then provide opportunities for the students to synthesise the different types of thinking and draw conclusions.

The six hats are:

HAT	Description	Focus Question
White (Observer)	Neutral; Identifies the facts and details of a topic. Focuses on the information available.	What are the facts? What information do we have? What information is missing How do we get the information we need?
Black (Self, others)	Judgmental, critical. Examines the logical negative aspects of a topic; why something is wrong.	What is wrong with this? Is it true? Does it fit? Will it work? What are the dangers and problems?
Yellow (Self, others)	Optimistic. Focuses on the positive aspects of a topic. Looks for benefits; what's good.	What are the good points? What are the benefits? Why should it work?
Red (Self, others)	Looks at a topic from the point of view of emotions and feelings. Deals with intuition, hunches, presents views without explanation or justification.	What are my feelings about this? What is your hunch? What does your intuition tell you?
Green (Self, others)	Creative. Requires imaginations and lateral thinking about a topic. Identifies possibilities and hypotheses and new ideas	What is possible? How can we explore these ideas, concepts, suggestions, possibilities? What are some proposals or suggestions? What are some alternatives? What are some new ideas?
Blue (Observer)	Chairperson, organiser. Focuses on reflection and the need to understand the big picture; thinking about thinking.	What thinking is needed? Where are we now? What is the next step? Can we have a summary of where we are up to? What are our observations and comments?