



Exploring Leadership

PROBLEM SOLVING: ANALYSIS

Many students struggle with analysis—understanding facts and what they mean. But analysis isn't just for school; we use it every day. Whether comparing products, evaluating news, or making decisions, strong analytical thinking helps us break down information, spot patterns, and solve problems. Practicing this skill builds confidence and prepares us to think critically in all areas of life.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Salman Rushdie said, "The only people who see the whole picture are the ones who step outside the frame." What do you think this means?

Like any skill, analytical thinking improves with practice. It involves identifying key details, making connections, and drawing conclusions. Strong analytical thinkers solve problems efficiently and work well in teams. Whether in school, at work, or in daily life, sharpening this skill helps us make smarter decisions and better understand the world around us.

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

What makes a cereal appealing? This activity will help you break down packaging, ingredients, and advertising to see what really drives our decisions.

FACILITATOR TIPS:

- Before the activity, transfer cereals into labeled sealable bags and note which box each belongs to.
- Discuss these analytical questions in groups:
 - Share a complex problem you faced and how you solved it.
 - Describe a challenge in your life and how you overcame it.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Understand why adaptability is important in everyday decision-making.
- Develop analytical thinking skills by evaluating and comparing information.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 5 different boxes of cereal (1 name brand, 1 generic equivalent, 3 others).
- Sealable plastic bags
- Paper and pens for group observations

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Hand out a sealed bag of cereal to each group
- Have groups analyze their cereal by discussing:
 - What brand do you think this cereal is?
 - Who is the target audience?
 - What do you think the main ingredients are?
 - What type of milk would pair best with this cereal? (Whole, skim, soy, oat, etc.)
- Hand out the original boxes and have groups compare their initial guesses to the actual marketing, nutrition facts, and branding.
- Facilitate a group discussion using these questions:
 - Were your predictions accurate?
 - How do companies use packaging to influence buyers?
 - How can analytical thinking improve our consumer choices?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What skills did you use while analyzing different cereals?
- How do these skills help with everyday decisions, like comparing products or checking information?
- How can you tell if the information you find—on cereal boxes, online, or anywhere else—is accurate and trustworthy?
- Did this activity change how you think about advertising and product packaging? Why or why not?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- How can you use analytical skills in your daily life?
- Think about a time in school when you had to analyze something complex. Maybe it was a book in English, research in social studies, or data in science. How did you break it down and understand it?
- Have you ever had to manage money, like tracking an allowance or budgeting for a school project? How did you decide what to spend or save?
- Why is it important to think critically before making decisions about school, money, or everyday choices?



CONCLUSION:

Many people mistake analysis for simply collecting facts, but true analysis connects ideas and leads to informed choices. Once you learn how to break down and interpret information, you can apply this skill to writing, research, and real-world situations. Analysis isn't just for school—it's a lifelong tool that helps you think critically, solve problems, and navigate complex situations with confidence. The stronger your analytical skills, the better your decisions will be.

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REFERENCES

- Cereal Exercise for Rhetorical Analysis: <https://thelinebreak.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/cereal-exercise-for-rhetorical-analysis.pdf>