



Exploring Leadership

PROBLEM SOLVING: PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem-solving skills are essential in every area of life. Classroom problem-solving activities can help young people get ready to tackle real-life challenges with confidence. These skills not only prepare them for the future but also boost self-esteem, build independence, and improve mental health.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

Why do we hesitate to solve problems on our own? It's often fear of failure that holds us back. Sometimes the first solution might not work, but we have to keep trying.

Show the YouTube video about the Broken Escalator. Whether at school, work, or in personal relationships, being able to critically analyze a problem, break it into parts, and create a workable solution is one of the most valuable life skills. Problem-solving isn't just about fixing things—it's about learning to think clearly, act decisively, and adapt to new challenges.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Solve a problem by applying critical thinking skills.
- Suggest possible solutions, even if they aren't correct.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Computer and projector to show this YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrSUE_m19FY
- One copy of the handout per group (see Appendix)
- Scissors to cut out the shapes

EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES:

Arrowheads Activity - This puzzle challenge will test your problem-solving skills as you work together to create five arrowheads from seven pieces. Can your team figure it out in time?

FACILITATOR TIPS:

- Read the Arrowheads Activity thoroughly to understand it.
- If time is limited, consider cutting out the puzzle piece shapes in advance.
- Split the participants into small groups.
- Give each group a set of arrowhead puzzle pieces (see Appendix) and a pair of scissors. Have them cut the pieces apart.
- The goal is to use the seven puzzle pieces to create five arrowheads. One arrowhead is already complete and serves as the size template for the other four. All five arrowheads must be visible at the same time when the puzzle is complete.
- Groups have 8 minutes to work on the puzzle.
- If a group finishes early, they should raise their hands for you to verify their solution.
- Once time is up, let groups share their solutions with the others. If no group has found the correct solution, reveal the answer and explain how the four arrowheads fit together to form the fifth.

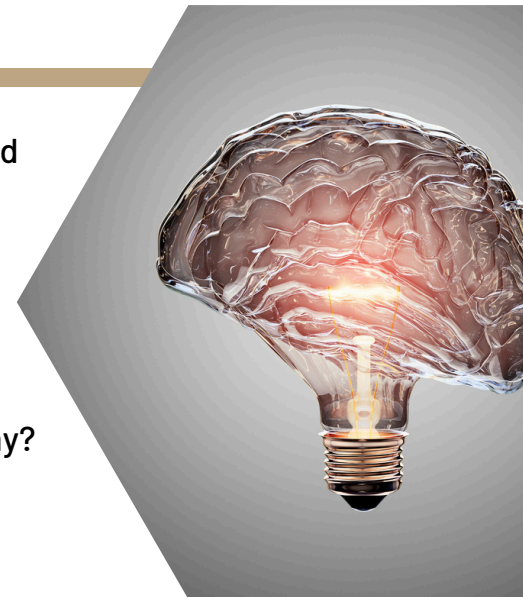


REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Did your group solve the puzzle in time?
- What strategies did you use to come up with the solution?
- What mistakes did your group make, and how did you adjust your thinking?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What real-life situations require you to solve problems with limited resources or time?
- How did working with a team influence your ability to solve the problem?
- Do you see mistakes as an important part of problem-solving? Why?



CONCLUSION:

It's normal to feel "stuck" when faced with a tough problem, but this activity will encourage you to approach challenges head-on. By using your critical thinking skills, you'll learn how to work through obstacles and find solutions. Remember: don't get stuck on the escalator—there's always another way forward.

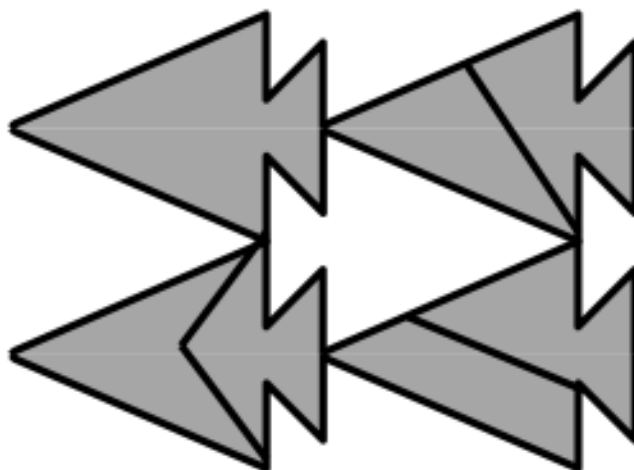
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REFERENCES

- 5 Problem-Solving Activities for the Classroom: <https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/5-problem-solving-activities-for-the-classroom/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrSUE_m19FY
- Arrowhead Puzzle: http://www.teamworkandteamplay.com/resources/tt_arrowhead.pdf

APPENDIX:

Solution: Don't show the image below to participants until after the activity. When the pieces are arranged to create four identical arrowheads and positioned as shown, they form a fifth arrowhead facing the opposite direction.



Activity: Print one copy of all seven shapes for each group.

