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*The World is Your Classroom*

Critical Creativity in Action: An Overview

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# What is Critical Creativity in Action?



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# What is Critical Creativity in Action?

- A resource developed by the US State Department for English teachers
- Can be used in a wide variety of contexts
- Highly flexible
- Requires minimal resources/preparation
- FREE FREE FREE!
- Really, free: not even any required registration



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<https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/critical-creativity-action>



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## CRITICAL CREATIVITY IN ACTION

*In this Critical Creativity kit, you will find a printable 50-card deck containing 49 activities and one reference card, and a PDF comprehensive instruction manual. The Critical Creativity Activity Cards are a flexible collection of literacy strategies designed to help EFL teachers add opportunities for creative thinking to their classrooms.*

In this Critical Creativity kit, you will find a printable 50-card deck containing 49 activities and one reference card. Each card features icons that represent the literacy skills and critical thinking skills most developed by that strategy. The front of each card includes a brief set of directions for the activity. The back of each card includes reflection questions.

Critical Creativity is based on learners using creative expression to demonstrate deeper thinking and the nuances of understanding content. When we make connections, transform knowledge, and articulate the reason behind our creative choices, learning becomes more sticky, meaningful, and authentic.

The majority of the activities can be accomplished with limited resources (paper, writing utensils, colored pencils, crayons, etc.). Technology is not required to complete any of the activities. However, access to digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, or laptops can greatly enhance student experiences. The sharing of work is always encouraged, be it in a gallery walk or a digital slideshow.

### Resources

#### Teacher's Manual

[Text \(PDF\)](#)

#### Critical Creativity Cards: Print and Play

[PDF \(Text\)](#)

#### Digital cards for your classroom

[Text \(PDF\)](#)



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**Q-LISIONS**

Students generate a number of open-ended questions about current events in their community, nation, or world. Direct students to choose one question and ask at least five people their responses. They should record or write down the exact responses. Use the responses in a mash-up video, song remix, or piece of art to reveal insights and understanding.

**BUILD A BRIDGE**

Direct students to brainstorm a list of current events happening in their communities or recent personal experiences. Now, introduce a new concept or topic in a brief lecture while students take notes. Finally, direct students to identify connections, comparisons, or relationships between any of the items from their lists and the new concept. Students then explain their connections to a partner.

**PARODY LYRICS**

Provide students with the lyrics to two well-known songs. Play the original songs so all learners can familiarize themselves with the tunes, rhythms, and melodies.

Then direct students to create alternative lyrics that make the songs relate to a current event or topic of study. Encourage students to use humor and rhyme in their lyrics. Conclude with a performance.

**TAG WALL**

Provide learners with three categories that could describe current events happening in their local community, their nation, or the world. Use sets of adjectives such as "weird, wonderful, and worrisome" or "typical, terrific, and terrible." Then direct students to brainstorm and sort events into these categories. Students write brief arguments to support their reasoning.

**BUILD A BRIDGE****Ask students:**

- How is what you are learning now like something you have learned about in the past?
- How might you make connections between your learning and what is going on in the world or your community?
- How might this learning connect to an experience in your own life?

**Q-LISIONS****Ask students:**

- What qualities separate a powerful question from an ordinary one?
- Which questions prompted the most interesting responses? Why do you think that is?
- If you could ask anyone these questions, who might you interview and why?

3 POINTS



3 POINTS

**TAG WALL****Ask students:**

- What did you notice about the process of sorting the three lists?
- What category would you add to the wall and why?
- What might you and/or other students be able to do to make one of the worrisome items more wonderful?

**PARODY LYRICS****Ask students:**

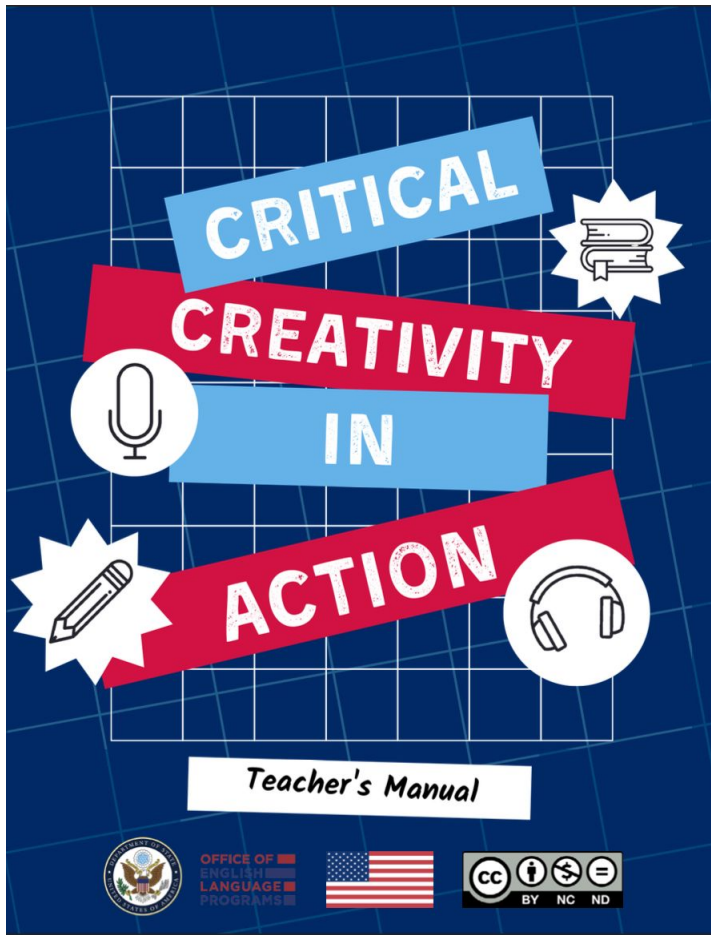
- How might you use songwriting to share the culture of your community with others?
- Which part of your song did you find most challenging to create and why?
- How might you use rhyming words and other word patterns to remember important information?

1 POINT



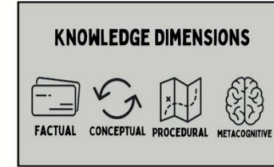
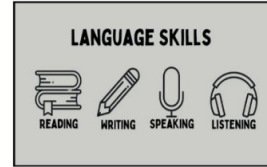
3 POINTS



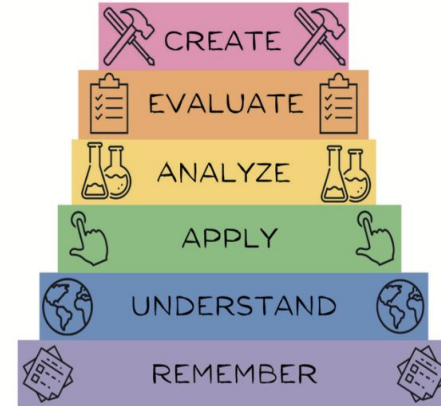


## ICON KEY

Here you'll see the icons and color-coding used for each card.



### COLOR CODING FOR CRITICAL CREATIVITY ACTIVITY CARDS



The Critical Creativity Activity Cards are color-coded using the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (2001). For more on Bloom's Taxonomy, see the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching guide: [cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/](http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/)



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## ICON CHALLENGE

### Ask students:

- How could you develop a story using only icons?
- How might you demonstrate your understanding of a recent class topic using these icons?
- What other icons could you use to tell your story?

2 POINTS



# 37



## ICON CHALLENGE

- How could you develop a story using only icons?
- How might you demonstrate your understanding of a recent class topic using these icons?
- What other icons could you use to tell your story?

**A** **E**  
2 POINTS



# TOOLS FOR CRITICAL CREATIVITY



duct tape



sticky notes



newspapers



headphones



pebbles



tape measure



sculpting clay



colored pencils



markers



blocks



paper clips



marbles



glue stick



crayons



string or floss



graph paper



golf ball



toy bricks



magazines

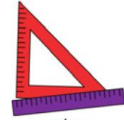


folders



cookies

masking tape



rulers



yarn



# Possible Drawbacks

- Occasionally somewhat vague
- Extension activities in the book are uneven
- More examples would be helpful



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## VISUAL VERSE VOLLEY



Divide students into partners and provide the class with a topic, theme, or concept. One partner writes a brief poem on the topic while the other draws an illustration or takes a photo of the topic.

Then, the two partners exchange their work. The poet writes a poem inspired by the received image, while the artist illustrates the received poem. Repeat for three cycles, then students swap roles.



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## VISUAL VERSE VOLLEY

- What did you notice when looking at the other illustrations and reading the other poems?
- How does it feel to collaborate with someone else to create a poem?
- What other forms of art might make interesting collaborations?

**A E**

3 POINTS



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## ARE YOU LISTENING?



Direct students to sit back-to-back with a partner with pencils and paper. One partner creates a geometric doodle using simple shapes. Then the artist describes the steps for recreating the doodle to their partner, who follows the directions. The partners compare the two doodles and assess their communication skills. Swap roles and repeat.



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## ARE YOU LISTENING?

- After finishing this activity, how could your communication with your partner been made better?
- What did you learn about the challenge of providing clear directions?
- What might be a situation where you would need to give clear directions and hear clear directions?

**A E**  
2 POINTS



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## THREE OF ME



Direct students to doodle three scenes that represent three stages of their lives: where they have been, where they are now, and where they are going. Students then write explanations for each of their doodles. Finally, students deliver those image explanations as an autobiographical presentation.



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## THREE OF ME

- Why did you include these three moments from your life?
- What are some important moments from your life that you decided not to include?
- How might you turn your images into a complete comic book?

**A E**  
2 POINTS



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