



**COGNITIVE
FLEXIBILITY**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FLEXIBLE?



WHAT IS COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY?

- The ability to disengage from one task and respond to another.
- To think about multiple concepts at one time.



CHANGE YOUR ROUTINE

Share with your shoulder partner your morning routine, from the moment you wake up until you get to school.

WHAT ARE some WAYS YOU CAN CHANGE UP YOUR ROUTINE?

- Try brushing your teeth or your hair with your non-dominant hand.
- Eat breakfast before you get in the shower.
- Mix up the way you put on your clothes, pants then shirt?

SEEK OUT NEW EXPERIENCES

Each time you experience something new, the brain creates new synaptic connections. These new experiences trigger dopamine, which increases motivation and enhances memory and learning.

HOW CAN YOU CREATE new EXPERIENCES?

- Travel to a new place.
- Try volunteering at an assisted living home or serve food at a shelter.
- Eat lunch with different people.

PRACTICE THINKING CREATIVELY

One study showed that when students were taught to think in both creative and practical ways, not only did their grades improve, but they were also able to transfer the knowledge they gained to entirely different areas.

HOW CAN YOU PRACTICE THINKING CREATIVELY?

- Try thinking in terms of unlimited possibilities rather than a limited set of choices.
- Combine ideas
- Embrace the “strange!”

DON'T ALWAYS TAKE THE eASY WAY

Research shows that introducing so-called “desirable difficulties” can lead to deeper learning, by making a point of not always choosing the easiest way of doing things, you can keep your mind sharp!

HOW CAN YOU GET AWAY FROM TAKING THE EASY WAY?

- Try removing autocorrect from your phone.
- Try using a map instead of your GPS when you go somewhere new.
- Instead of reaching for your phone to do a math calculation, try doing it in your head or on a piece of paper.

GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO meet new PEOPLE

Meeting people from different cultures whose perspectives are different from your own can help you be less rigid in the way you think.

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO meet new PEOPLE?

- Meet people out of your normal social circle.
- Try going to a new club after school.
- Volunteer!
- Take a different path to your classes.

LET'S PRACTICE BEING OPEN MINDED

- How many times does the letter “o” appear in the following sentence?

The brain filters out objects that we've seen many times before when they are presumed not to be relevant to a current goal or task.

LET'S PRACTICE BEING OPEN MINDED

- Eight times!

You may not have seen all eight because your attention filter doesn't always attend to data that's too familiar to stand out-- such as the "o" in out, not, to and or.

LET'S PRACTICE BEING OPEN MINDED

Even more importantly, without looking back at the sentence, can you recall what it was about?

This is something called inattentional blindness, that restricts attention to the designated task so that one fails to notice other things in plain sight.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

What do you see in this picture?

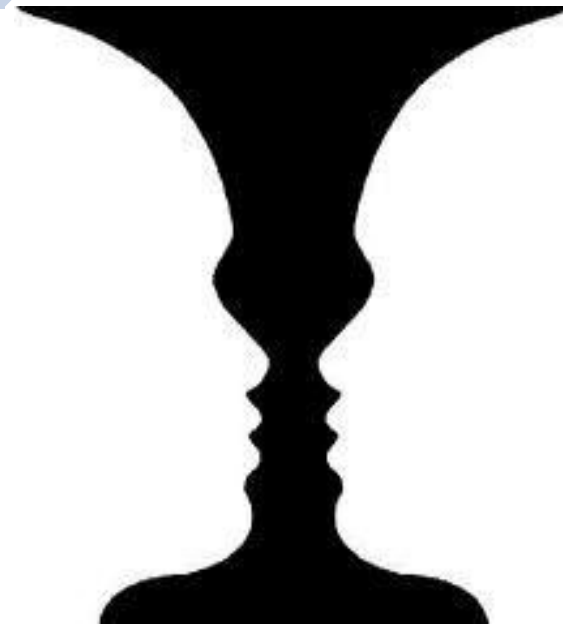
Do you see a person's face or the word liar written in script? Can you switch your brain to see both?



DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

What do you see in this picture?

Do you see two faces looking at each other
or a vase?



DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

What do you see in this picture?

Do you see a young woman looking over her shoulder with a feather in her hair or an old woman with a scarf covering her head?



DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

What do you see in this picture?



Do you see the word good in black or evil in white?

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Were you able to switch your brain to see both images? If so you were able to demonstrate cognitive flexibility. Our brains oftentimes have a hard time letting go and seeing something in a different way!

THIS IS NOT!

In a circle pass a familiar object like a pencil, and reporting in turn, “this is not a pencil, it’s a _____ (ex. It’s a tool to hold your hair in a bun)