

THINKING PROVOCATIONS / PROJECTS

(Tony Ryan)

Many of the birds in your area love to read the 'Sticky Beak', an online magazine that delves into the private lives of the bird population.

Brainstorm at least five headlines that you think the Sticky Beak may have had in recent times, and then write one of these articles out in full.

On a faraway planet known as Zeitgeist, alien families take part in many highly unusual activities. Design at least three new ones for them, and consider the following information about their planet:

- the average family has twenty children
 - Zeitgeistians have ten hands
 - no one ever fights with anyone else
 - the planet surface is covered by billions of tiny golden pebbles.
-

A highly innovative clothing company called InGear has developed an amazing new range of clothing that actually changes colour according to the wearer's emotions. If you are happy, your shirt or dress will turn yellow, and if you are in a really bad mood, they will change to a black shade. Being embarrassed will cause your gear to turn bright red.

To promote their new designs, InGear have provided a free outfit for everyone in your family to wear for a full day.

Brainstorm at least ten (positive) things that are likely to happen during the day.

The 'Who Nose' perfume company has developed a remarkable new love potion called A-Tract.

Whenever anyone smells this remarkable new essence, they fall instantly in love with the wearer of the perfume. 'Who Nose' have decided to begin selling their product in three months time.

Name ten ways that you could use A-Tract to create a safer and more enjoyable world in the near-future.

It has become your life purpose to create a charity organisation. Design its core purpose, and its key functions. Then create an action plan for putting it all into place over the next year.

Develop a clear preference for the way that we could be living in the 22nd century. Focus on three key areas such as schooling, space exploration, eating habits.

During the 21st century, the distinction between human and robot will continue to overlap. Design what you believe will be the everyday inhabitant on Earth in 100 years from now.

Develop an environmental action plan for your home so that it wastes the fewest possible resources. Your plan must focus on reducing, reusing and recycling.

What impact do YOU make on the environment? Calculate exactly how many resources you use over a set period (e.g. a day, or even a week). This includes: food, fuel, water, electricity.

Work out what deeply motivates you to work at your best. Outline at least three key factors that inspire you to give your greatest effort. Now use this information to set a short term, a medium term and a long-term goal for the next year.

Plan a fantastic week at home that balances out your physical, social, academic and emotional needs. Then go out and fully live it. Afterwards, reflect on how you could have improved on what you planned.

What is the most important piece of technology ever invented? The wheel? The computer? The pencil? Make your decision, and design a powerful visual and oral presentation to support your choice. Include some strong evidence.

Many cyber-communities already exist around the world. Design a fantastic cyber-community in which you would enjoy being involved, and clarify the rules for engagement within the group. Then develop some ongoing activities for this group.

Develop a computer or board game that encourages people to be more friendly with each other.

Many people play games in online worlds with thousands of other people. Design a game that you could set up online, and write out the rules for play.

How well do you know yourself? Start by listing your strengths and weaknesses, and then record what you believe are your five best achievements in your life thus far. Justify every achievement that you choose.

Develop a computer war game that involves warfare, but also includes a way of seeking peace. The points system for the game is to favour the contestants who look for peace.

Find out as much as you can about the human brain. Then develop a full brain policy for your school, and outline how everyone can make the maximum use of their brain during the day.

What do you think about, all day long? Conduct a brain survey, and document what you were thinking about on every hour (eg at 11.00, 12.00, 1.00) all through the day. Then see if you can graph your results.

Imagine that you are deep beneath the ground in a rainforest, and that you can see through the soil. If you looked up, what would all of the different tree roots look like?

Draw this unusual sight.

Design a space traffic sign for U.F.O.s that could be placed midway between Earth and Mars.

The display board should include distances and directions to all of the other planets, as well as some brief information on any local dangers.

What are you thinking about RIGHT NOW?

See if you can describe or draw your thoughts.

Imagine that colours are becoming extinct. Which two colours should the Earth try to save? Give a clear reason for each of your answers.

Many comets pass close to the Earth, and then swing back on a giant orbit well outside our solar system. Imagine that you are one of these comets.

Describe and draw at least three of the most unusual sights that you have seen in the last few million years.

Insects always seem to know when the weather is about to change. Ants work faster, and many flying insects just seem to disappear.

Design a special weather reporting service that is based on observation of insects. Include the following in your plan:

- the name/title of the service
 - an example of the way a report would be read out on the radio or T.V.
-

How would it actually feel to rub your hands along the skin of a Tyrannosaurus Rex?

Describe the sensation through your fingers, your eyes, your nose and your heart. Take at least two paragraphs to write out a really exciting description.

Throughout history, human beings have always dreamed of being able to fly without any mechanical assistance.

Brainstorm at least five major consequences for the planet if everyone really could fly.

What is the most advanced personal communication device that will ever be invented?

See if you can predict it, and then draw your design.

How could you teach someone to spell the word 'co-operation' by using the sense of touch?

Work out your technique, and then try it out with someone in your family.

A company called I.T.T. (In Touch Technology) has developed an amazing headgear device that can enhance any of your senses (e.g. sight, smell, hearing) to over ten times its normal capacity.

Choose which sense you would most like to have boosted, and describe at least five things that would be likely to happen.

Fresh water is becoming an increasingly wasted resource, and much of this waste occurs around the home.

Design an innovative alarm that could be connected in some way to your home, so that any use of excess water would become known to everyone in the neighbourhood.

A scientist working in a nearby FunPark has developed a technique for taking a super-slide down the edge of giant **rainbows**. Imagine that you have been allowed to take the first ride.

In your own words, describe:

- what it felt like on your skin
- what it looked like as you sped down the slide
- what it sounded like as you slid down the curve
- what it smelt like up high in the clouds and rain.

You have been asked to memorise the following digits in correct order:

471937260873

Create a story that would help you to do this.

While exploring near the North Pole, you are suddenly caught in a freezing snowstorm which places you in a state of suspended animation.

In the year 2350 A.D., you are discovered and returned to life in a future world that has seen many changes since your own time.

Describe and draw the five most significant differences you will be likely to see.

Consider a giant clam's perspective as it looks up to the surface from the bottom of a busy harbour. Its view would include anchors, propellers, marine creatures, various forms of pollution and the bottom of many boats.

Draw this sight the way that the clam would see it.

Divide a large sheet of paper into thirty squares. Now ask thirty different people to draw their favourite natural thing (either a place or an object) in one of the squares.

Display the final product in a prominent location.

Imagine a trip in a time machine. What would it look like as you travelled through time?

Describe and draw what you think you would see.

Study the way that a crab so easily moves in many different directions.

Now apply these ideas to the design of a new type of bicycle.

Make up at least two jokes that each of the following would be likely to tell:

- dogs
 - fish
 - rocks
 - trees.
-

You have been given the magical power to actually 'dive into' the real world of any photograph in your hand.

Find at least three photos that you would most like to enter, and create an incredible adventure that happens with one of them.

Design a manmade weatherproof cover for a football field so that the ground would remain dry during rain. Try to base your design on some or all of the following natural objects:

- rainforest trees
- flowers
- spider webs.

Draw your design, and include all necessary features for opening and closing this structure.

Choose ten different smells. Now decide on a colour that best represents each of those smells, and create a special 'fragrance mural'.

Write the name of the smell below each colour.

Here are two examples of an equation:

$$7+4+3 = 14 \text{ and}$$

flour + water + yeast = bread.

Now, by combining different words and numbers, write out your own recipe for world peace.

Draw a timelapse photographic sequence of one of your favourite outdoor locations.

Compress the last twenty million years into just twenty frames.

Windy weather is one of our most wasted resources. Redesign the following so that they are fully wind-powered:

- oil tankers
 - cars
 - rollerblades.
-

Draw a chain of events in cartoon form to show how helping a little old lady across a busy street could eventually stop a war in the Middle East.

Life in Atlantis, an ancient mythical city deep under the ocean, would have been very different to our present land-based lifestyles.

Write down how these aquarian people would have done the following:

- have a drink
 - cook their food
 - warm up their houses.
-

If other creatures really do live in distant parts of the universe, what type of musical instruments do you think they might have created? They would probably be unlike anything that has ever been seen or heard on Earth.

Draw and caption at least three of their possible instruments. Then try and create the sound that these instruments would make.

Draw what the same tree would look like from the perspective of:

- an elephant
 - an ant
 - a human
 - another tree.
-

Divide your sheet of paper up into four sections, and place one of the perspectives in each part.

In a 'global village', we should try to break down language barriers whenever possible.

Develop ten signals (and their meanings) that would enable you to communicate at a basic level with anyone who speaks in a different language.

Now practise these with some friends.

There are a number of theories about the extinction of the dinosaurs. Create an entirely new and highly unusual theory that has never before been published.

Write it out, and include illustrations to support your idea.

Many different types of furniture are designed for human beings. See if you can draw a specific lounge chair that would be suitable for each of these creatures:

- a cat
 - an elephant
 - a giraffe
-

Develop a lightweight all-weather car that could actually be powered by the physical strength of the driver.

Construct a human machine, using at least four people in the process. Your machine either can stay in the same place or move around the room.

Each of the people should contribute a particular movement in some way that fits in with the final design.

The Picture Perfect Paint Company has just invented a controversial new product known as Emotional Paint. When applied to the outside walls of a house, it changes colour according to the emotions of the people inside.

If everyone is happy, it glows yellow. If someone loses their temper, it turns to purple.

Brainstorm at least five consequences of this new product.

Draw up the plans for a giant ride that could be harnessed to rainclouds in some way.

Create a new type of human residence that is based on some or all of the following structures:

- a bird's nest
- a beehive
- a spider's web
- a tortoise's shell.

Carefully examine the eyes of a fly. You may notice that their eyes are multi-faceted (like a diamond), and cover most of their head.

Draw a kitchen the way that you think a fly would see it.

A huge oil tanker has just run aground, and is spilling oil near the local beach.

Develop a plan for cleaning up the oil by using the following objects:

- a giant bag of carrots
- 200 pairs of broken sunglasses
- a discarded spacesuit.

King Canute tried to stop the tides going in and out. How could you harness the power of the tides in some way?

Design a special device that would be placed on the beachfront, and would not harm the environment.

Illustrate and caption your idea.

Imagine that you are a blade of grass in a peaceful forest. Describe, write or draw how each of the following would make you feel:

- ants
- excited children
- the sound of bulldozers.

You have become hopelessly lost in the middle of an unknown swamp. You have no compass or any other equipment.

Brainstorm at least three ways that you could work out in which direction North would be.

Draw a map of your school or your local neighbourhood.

Now create a 'sound map' that shows the types of sounds you are likely to hear in different locations.

Draw up a suitable set of symbols for each of these sounds that could be placed onto the map.

Think of your favourite book, and choose one of the really interesting parts of the story.

Now re-write and draw that scene into 'comic book' format (six squares per page would work well).

Without any talking or prior discussion, hold onto one pencil with another person and draw a sports car.

Then try to draw a house, with three people holding onto one pencil.

In basketball, one team usually wins and the other team loses. Change the rules of the game so that the two teams will always be on the same score at the final siren.

Clearly write out these new rules in a proper sequence.

Many people enjoy fishing, but others claim that the use of a sharp hook is cruel to the fish.

Design an innovative new way of catching fish one at a time so that they are killed in a painless manner.

Draw twenty circles. Now, by only using simple Smiley-type faces, try to draw twenty different expressions that people sometimes use.

Choose the best possible title, e.g. frowning, quizzical, to describe each of the faces.

You have been allowed to visit the largest Inter-galactic zoo in the universe. What would the creatures look like?

Draw at least five of the zoo's residents, and include the following information:

- their names
 - their peculiar behaviours
 - their eating habits
 - the type of enclosure that is needed to contain them.
-

While travelling on a microscopic ride through a human body, you become caught inside a main vein that leads directly to the heart. You can now see the massive structure just in front of you.

Describe what it would:

- look like to your eyes
 - sound like in your ears
 - smell like through your nose
 - feel like in your emotions.
-

If you were able to talk for one hour with a famous person from the past, who would you choose?

List at least five questions that you would like to ask, and focus on their feelings rather than facts, e.g. 'How did you feel when...?' rather than 'What was the name of the person who...?'

Write out a full day's T.V. timetable for Dolphin Television.

Include the titles of each show.

You are a small ant that has accidentally climbed onto a fireworks rocket just before it is lit.

Describe how it would feel as you blast off into the night air. Consider the following:

- the sensation of speed
 - the view far below
 - the final explosions of colour and noise.
-

Instead of being on your tongue, your taste-buds have been transferred to your fingertips. Think about the way that you would change your eating habits.

Describe the way that you would eat: toast; an apple; a pizza Supreme.

Blind people sometimes use a system called braille (a raised series of dots on paper) to read a story.

How could you develop a reading system that is based on your sense of **smell**?

Design a book that uses this system.

Imagine that you are an ambitious baby octopus.

Write a story entitled 'What I'd Like To Do When I Grow Up'.

A very expensive pill called a Time Capsule has just been released on the market. When swallowed, it transports you back to a random time and place in the Earth's history.

If you were given a Time Capsule, where would you most like to go?

What would you do when you arrived there?

An exciting new design in clothing, known as T-Shirts (**Think-Shirts**) is now available in many shops. A special panel on the front of the material actually displays whatever you are thinking at the time.

Would **you** dare to use it? What would be some of the consequences?

Brainstorm at least five things that would possibly happen if you did decide to wear it.

You have been exposed to a strange combination of unknown gamma rays, and have now turned totally invisible. There is little hope of you ever becoming visible again.

Brainstorm five significant consequences for the rest of your life.

A far-off galactic space-quake has badly shaken the Earth, and slowed down its daily rotation. Instead of spinning around once every twenty-four hours, it now takes seven days to complete a revolution.

Brainstorm at least five serious implications for all life on the planet.

When human civilizations do some archeological digs in one million years from now, which five objects from our era will confuse them the most?

Give a reason for each of your answers.

You have just landed on Pluto, and you want to find out as much as you can about the planet. A local Plutonian has offered to answer ten questions, but each of these questions has to begin with either 'Why' or 'How'.

Brainstorm the ten questions you would like to ask.

In the far future, outer space explorers may be able to travel to other stars through giant inter-stellar Wormholes at many times the speed of light.

Describe what this experience would be like through:

- your skin
 - your eyes
 - your ears.
-

Choose ten colours that denote different temperatures (e.g. 'red' for hot; 'yellow' for warm; 'blue' for cool; 'white' for cold).

Now use some colouring pencils to colour in a temperature map of the world for the month of December.

Body Tech Incorporated has recently marketed the Bionic Eye, a robotic attachment that is placed on the back of the head. This special device allows you to see everything that is happening behind you.

Brainstorm at least five ways that this would change your life, and describe what would happen in each case.

As a fish, you are very jealous of the humans who can travel around underwater in their submarines.

Design a special vehicle that would allow you to travel around in the human's world on dry land.

Pretend that the Earth itself is a living entity, and has written entries into a special diary for every day of its four billion year existence.

Choose five specific days from its history, and write out the entries that may have been recorded on those occasions.

How would you weigh a mountain? Design a special strategy.

Name 5 presents that you would never give teenagers for their birthday.

Draw a 'future timeline', and mark on your next 10 birthdays. Now write down the present that you think you are most likely to receive on each of those birthdays.

Give 5 disadvantages of the present rubbish collection system in your neighbourhood. Now work out an improvement for each of these disadvantages.

Name at least 10 things that will never be done by a computer or some form of artificial intelligence.

Predict the most common form of mobile communication device that will be used in 100 years from now.

Redesign a 15th century sailing ship so that it would not be able to sail off the edge of the 'flat' Earth.

Where will people be exploring in 100 years from now? Name the places, and the methods that will be used to get there.

How could chocolate be posted in the mail? Develop a special envelope that would stop the chocolate from melting or being crushed.

Invent a remote-controlled knife and fork, so that you would not have to use your hands.

Predict 10 present day words that will not be used in 20 years from now.

Place the letters A to Z down the side of a page. For each letter, try to decide upon the most important word in the English language that starts with each of the letters.

Give at least 5 common points between a headache tablet and a rollercoaster.

What if everyone (including school students) worked on the weekend, and then had 5 weekdays of leisure time? Give 10 different consequences.

Name 10 things that you cannot buy with money.

All of the money in the world should be distributed evenly between everyone. Give 3 good points and 3 bad points for this proposal.

Develop a new sport for playing on the moon, by taking advantage of the greatly reduced gravity.

Give 4 disadvantages of an umbrella. Now work out an improvement for each of these disadvantages.

Some older people become disheartened when they have birthdays beyond 60 years of age. What would happen if our country introduced a law that required your age to officially DROP after you turned 60, i.e. 61 would be 59, 70 would be 50, 80 would be 40, and so on.

Give at least 10 things that would possibly happen because of this new law.

You have decided that your family's pet dog should have a birthday party each year. Write out your plans for this gathering, and place them under the following headings:

- the invitations
- the guests
- the presents
- the games

- the food
 - the entertainment.
-

Create some highly original presents by combining each of the following pairs in some way:

- candles and wallets
 - skipping ropes and watches
 - dolls and computer games
 - frisbees and running shoes.
-

Because Glyzotians from the starsystem Zorax live for tens of thousands of years, they only celebrate their birthdays every one hundred years. The chief Glyzotian will soon be having its birthday, and invitations have been extended to creatures from throughout the Universe.

Draw up plans for this huge party, and include details on:

- the venue
 - the entertainment
 - the costumes
 - the food
 - descriptions of some of the presents.
-

In the far future, human beings will live to a much older age than now. The average age may even extend beyond 150 years, which means that most people will have many more birthdays than is presently the case.

By the time that someone turns 150, they will have received lots of different presents throughout their lives. See if you can brainstorm at least five 150th birthday gifts that could not possibly be a 'repeat' from an earlier birthday.

On a small and highly advanced planet called Aria in the Andromeda star system, the mini-Arians do not go to a place called school.

They are on holidays all of the time.

How do you think they learn all that they need to know?

Describe the futuristic learning system that you think they might be using, and illustrate it if possible.

Do insects have holidays? Create a typical tourist resort for the following insects, and then design a publicity brochure for each proposal:

- cockroaches
 - ants
 - mosquitoes
-

With the use of their new ReducerRay machine, Nano-Technology Incorporated has developed a series of exciting adventure holidays for serious thrill-seekers. To take part in these activities, people are reduced to microscopic size, and then placed in their choice of different locations (e.g. inside a human body; near an ant colony; on a bird's wing).

Choose the five ways that you would most like to have a holiday, and draw cartoons to illustrate an amazing adventure that you would possibly have in each location.

Co-operating with other people is an important part of life. For your sports day, design five different team games where everyone will win. Your outline should include:

- the detailed rules for each game
 - a diagram of the court or field markings needed for each game.
-

Your school has very little space for running around, and the only available area for your sports day is on the side of a steep hill.

Design at least six different events that would take advantage of this sloping ground.

One innovative school has redesigned the shape of their athletics track. Instead of the normal oval, they now make use of a figure-of-eight track.

Design some new running events that could take advantage of this track.

As the chief reporter for your school newspaper, you have decided to conduct some very unusual interviews for the Sports Day. Describe how each of the following felt about the day, and write down what they said when you talked to them:

- an ant that lives in the grass in the middle of the track
- a sock being worn by a long distance runner
- the starting gun
- the finish line.

Radio station WKRT has adopted a Valentine's Day theme, and has decided to present all of its news items with a romantic flavour. The station has asked you to write the script for some of the topics on the next news bulletin, and each item needs to conclude with "...and they lived happily ever after."

The topics include:

- an outbreak of street gang violence
- the near-extinction of Chinese Giant Pandas
- the plight of homeless teenagers in major cities.

On Valentine's Day, people generally send presents and messages of love to other people. However, for this year's Valentine's Day, GreenPeace has asked everyone to treat the **Earth** as their Valentine, and to give a special message or present to the planet in some way.

What would you give?

Re-write the story of Cinderella so that it is set in the present-day era. Your version should include the following features:

- a reference to Valentine's Day in some form
- at least two examples of modern technology.

Coconuts are the only available commodity in the Alpha Islands, and they are used in all sales and bartering. They are also the only item that can be given as a Christmas present, but the locals are becoming very tired of receiving coconuts as a gift.

Help them out by developing some different presents that could be created with coconuts.

Draw at least five of the photos that you are likely to find in your family photo album in ten years from now. Consider issues such as:

- the way that everyone will look different as they grow older
 - the changing backgrounds
 - new family members and friends.
-

Many people study the history of their families by drawing up a 'family tree', with lots of lines that show the connections between the different generations.

Try to move into the future, and predict the way your family tree will look in one hundred years from now.

In the year 2050, the World Governing Council may pass a law stating that each family on Earth is only allowed to have one child. List at least three consequences of this law for these groups:

- toy companies
 - schools
 - chocolate manufacturers
 - car manufacturers
-

A revolutionary confectionery company had developed an amazing DietChoc. This new product actually causes adult people to lose weight when it is eaten.

As the advertising manager, you have been asked to organise the publicity campaign for the release of this wonderful DietChoc.

A group of highly creative scientists have developed a species of trees that can actually talk. Although the trees' speech is slow, and a little difficult to understand, most people can hear the words quite clearly.

In honour of the next World Environment Day, one of these trees has been chosen to present a speech to all of the members of your national government. On this momentous occasion, the tree will be placed in a giant pot, and stood in front of the microphone.

Write out the speech that you believe should be presented by this tree.

As a special activity for World Environment Day, your class has decided to focus on the previous 200 years in the life of a tree.

Choose one of the oldest trees in your area. Then divide a large sheet of paper into ten sections, with each section representing 50-year frameworks from the past. Include the actual year, e.g. 2020, 1970, 1920, 1870, 1820, and so on.

Now draw the tree as it would have appeared in each of those years, and include its surroundings (as well as the people in that time) in detail.

Your leisure company has decided to develop a new product called the Global Toy for the world market. This Global Toy is a detailed full-colour model of the Earth, and is the size of a basketball.

Design at least five innovative features of this toy that would encourage people to be more environmentally conscious. These features could include:

- that it turns brown when it is held up in highly polluted air
- that it emits a piercing alarm when it is placed in polluted water.

When you complete your design, draw up a visually exciting advertising poster for this Global Toy.
