

Critical Thinking: Think About It

Objective:

To help students practice critical thinking skills by thinking about how life would be different if something important suddenly changed.

Time:

10-15 minutes.

Materials:

Chalkboard or Dry Erase Board (optional)

Procedure:

Tell the group that you want them to practice thinking differently about things, so you are going to give them scenarios to think about and discuss. There are no right or wrong answers- encourage creativity in their responses. After working through the scenarios, discuss whether they found the exercise difficult or easy, and whether they came up with some ideas they could actually use in real life.

Discussion questions:

1. Explain that there are some places in the world like parts of Alaska, Russia, Norway, and Iceland near the North Pole where it is daylight even at night during some days in summer, and some days in winter where it is dark all day. How would life be different if it was always daylight? If it was always dark out?
2. Before engines were invented for trains, cars, and boats, people could only travel as far as they could walk or as far as a horse or camel or other animal could go in a few hours. What would life be like if you could only get to place to place by walking? How would things be different?
3. When astronauts are in space there is no gravity so people and things float around instead of staying down where you put them. How would things be different if there was no gravity on earth? How would you handle eating food? Going to the bathroom? Moving from place to place? Keeping your things in particular places?
4. What would life be like if every adult on earth looked exactly the same? How would you meet or talk to people? What would stores be like if everyone was the same size? Do you think people would do things other than changing how they look to make themselves different? Do you think more people would want plastic surgery or make other changes to their appearance to be different?
5. What if you woke up one morning in another country surrounded by people who spoke another language and with only the clothes you slept in? What would you do? How would you communicate?
6. People have only had electricity for about 150 years. 100 years ago, only half of homes in the US had electricity. Recently there have been days where the power companies in California have had to shut off power to whole towns because of the dangers of fire. What would life be like if you didn't have electricity? (Think about hospitals, cell phones, schools, travel, etc.) Would it be easier to live in 1875 when no one had ever had electricity, or to live right now and have it taken away?