

Imagine If... (For Younger Children)

A routine for finding opportunity.



Choose an object or system. Ask questions such as:

- How could you make it **more effective**? (*work better*)
- How could you make it **more efficient**? (*easier to use; faster to use*)
- How could you make it **more ethical**? (*better for the community; easier to share; safer; more fair*)
- How could you make it **more beautiful**?
- How could you make it _____?

PURPOSE

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine encourages divergent thinking by prompting students to think of new possibilities for an object or system. It can also encourage convergent thinking by giving students a basis from which to narrow down their ideas so they can redesign or hack an object or a system. Ultimately, this thinking routine is about finding opportunity and pursuing new ideas.

APPLICATION

When and where can I use it?

You can use this thinking routine to explore any object or system. Though you can use this thinking routine on its own, we suggest you use it in combination with other Agency by Design thinking routines that encourage students to think more deeply about the object or system they are working with.

- This routine provides an opportunity for children to make their thinking visible. Children can show their ideas through drawings, role play, and/or writing.

- If you are using this thinking routine with young learners, consider having them think about an object or a system they have direct experience with. This way, all children can apply and build upon their prior knowledge in meaningful ways. We suggest you start with objects or systems in your classroom or community that students use regularly.
- Help children develop their language and literacy skills by facilitating class discussions and/or by encouraging them to brainstorm and share ideas with a partner.
- This thinking routine asks students to imagine how to make an object or system “more ethical.” You will likely need to define “more ethical” for young learners by narrowing the scope of the term (for example, replacing “more ethical” with “better for the community” or “better for the environment”). When doing this, consider drawing upon your school community for guidance to ensure that you are focusing student thinking in ways that support the ethical behaviors that your school community is working to promote.
- To prepare children for using this thinking routine, consider using the Think, Feel, Care thinking routine. This will help children think about the desires and needs of people within the system, which will give them the background they need to imagine ways to improve the system for these people.

Note: This thinking routine is adapted from the Agency by Design “Imagine If…” thinking routine.

FACILITATION

This activity is recommended for the following learner age ranges:

Preschool

15-30 minutes

Heavily facilitated by peer/teacher/caregiver

Elementary School

15-30 minutes

Heavily facilitated by peer/teacher/caregiver

This thinking routine was developed as part of the Agency by Design project at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Explore the full PZ Thinking Routine Toolbox at pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines.