

Cartoon hero to the rescue

This activity stimulates students to think out of the box and generate ideas using (features and talents of) characters. In addition to this principle, this activity supports Learning Through dialogue and Interaction and Learning Through Reflection and Evaluation.

Expected Outcomes – students will:

- ✓ Be able to generate ideas by using cartoon or fairytale characters.
- ✓ Be able to generate new ideas by evaluating out-of-the-box ideas and transforming them into feasible actions.

Timing

The minimum amount of time you should plan for this method is 25 minutes.

Material

Offline	Blended
Show the characters on a large paper or board. Print worksheets with the images inserted for the students to work on.	Create a Padlet for step 3 and 4 A device for your students, autonomously, in pairs or in group.
	Work with Canva to create an explanation poster for the solutions in step 5. More information?

Prepare yourself

Choose an issue or problem you want to generate ideas for, by means of a story, animation, photograph, article, ...

Offline

- Provide some images of popular cartoon heroes or fairytale characters.
- Prepare a worksheet or digital space with the images inserted.
- You can ask your students to bring cartoons or stories with them.

Blended:

- Make sure every pair/group has a device.

- Create a Padlet account and a Padlet with columns. Write the central problem in the heading as a question: 'How can/would these characters ...?' Each column stands for a character. Assign a column to each group or pair. Let your students come up with answers in the Padlet.
- Create a Canva school account to create an explanation poster about the solutions.

Extra

Find out how you can combine cartoon heroes with or integrate them as characters in these other activities: Storytelling as a concept introduction and Disruption. Find inspiration and guidelines for storytelling in [module 4](#) 'Learning Through Structured Processes'.

Step-by-step

1. Input

Present a situation, problem related to a societal issue ... inspired by a text, a story or an experience shared by the pupils. This can be a 'real' situation or a hypothetical one. Discuss the content briefly. Write or draw the issue you will generate ideas for, concisely on a board or large paper.

Explain to the students that together you will think of ideas to deal with this issue or solve the problem. Explain that you will use the support of cartoon heroes or fairytale characters.

2. Explore characters and features!

Present the characters.

Who is this? In what story does X appear? What is typical for X? How would you describe this character? What is his/her talent, special force, or feature?

Invite the students to suggest other characters.

What is your favorite character? In what story does it appear? How would you describe this character? What is typical for X? What is his/her talent, special force, or feature?

Summarize by naming the characters you are going to work with and let the students sum up their features.

Tip

You can let older students choose characters of novels, movies, social media ... as an alternative.

3. First steps

Choose a recognizable problem to make the students familiar with the method. E.g., The classroom always gets messy. Students are bored when they are not allowed to play outside on a rainy day...



Write that problem as a question on the header of the flipchart, board or Padlet: 'How would these characters *make sure the classroom doesn't get messy?*'

Remember the feature or talent of character X? How would he/she solve or deal with this issue? Will he/she use a special feature or talent? How? Can you think of another way this character would deal with it?

Let the students come up with a few ideas for several characters. The ideas do not have to be 'realistic' or 'feasible'. The students are practicing to think creatively.

4. More ideas

Let the students work autonomously, in pairs or groups.

How would character X solve or deal with this issue? Will he/she use a special feature or talent? How? Can you think of another way this character would deal with it?



If there is enough time, let the students repeat this exercise for more characters. Exchange. Let every group present an idea. Gather the ideas in keywords or sketches. Give the students room to question the ideas of the characters.

Tip

This a brainstorm to collect ideas, not to comment on them. Make sure the comment feature is turned off in the settings.

5. Evaluate

Browse through the ideas and point out the ideas that might be feasible to execute.

Which actions or ideas can we do ourselves? How/where/when could we do that? Which idea would you improve, to make it feasible? Which idea has a big impact, changes a lot? Which one doesn't? Can you rethink the idea to increase the impact?

Extra: Use [the Bullseye method](#) to select ideas using criteria.



Count and/or select the ideas the students are excited about. Take them to a next lesson or activity where you try out some of the ideas presented or create an explanation poster with Canva.

Let your students work in pairs to create a poster. Let them draw out a sketch on a paper or let them use Canva right away. They can use the poster to promote their idea in the school.

Tip

This is a crucial step because the students learn to translate the somewhat crazy out-of-the-box ideas to feasible actions. It is helpful to make this explicit.

E.g., How would Spiderman help us to make sure we don't spoil drinking water? Spiderman is agile, sticks to walls and ceilings, can jump, can weave a web >> Spiderman weaves a web where he collects water, so it doesn't disappear through the drain. Can we weave a web? How can we collect water? ...

6. Reflection

- ✓ What did you learn from this thinking exercise?
- ✓ For which issue did you think of ideas? How did you do that?
- ✓ Is it helpful to use character to think of ideas? Why (not)? What makes it helpful?
- ✓ To which other topics would you apply this thinking exercise?

Learn more about evaluation and reflection in [module 5](#) 'Learning Through Reflection and Evaluation'.

7. Bringing it home

Ask your students to think about a situation they experience at home. Invite them to do the same exercise together with their families. E.g., How would the Lion King make sure I don't forget my lunchbox? How would ... help me/us to ...?