

# Flexible Thinking

Go For Your Goals, Module 5



# AGENDA



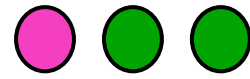
1. Brainstorm: What does the phrase “think outside the box” mean to you?



2. In a group, identify a problem in the school or community that needs to be solved.



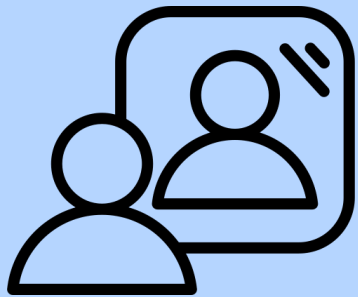
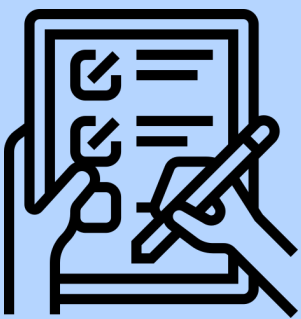
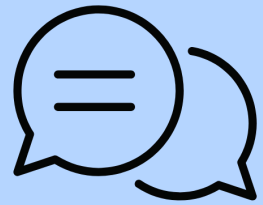
3. Reflect: Is your solution an example of thinking outside the box? If not, what other ideas can you generate?

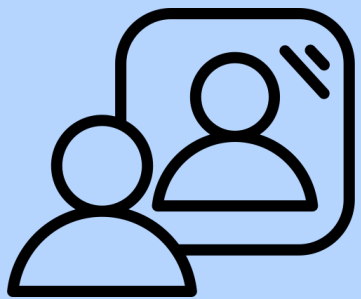
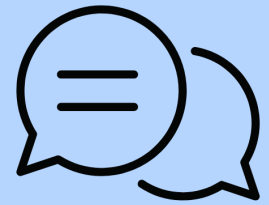


# BRAINSTORM



What does the phrase “thinking outside the box” mean to you?



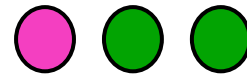
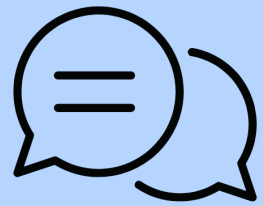


# DISCUSS



Share your responses from the brainstorm section.



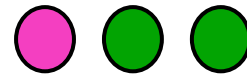
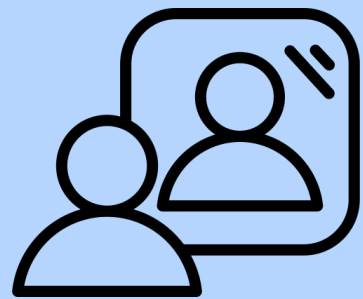
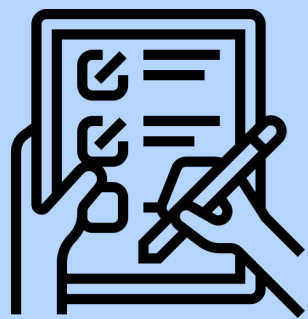


# DIVE IN

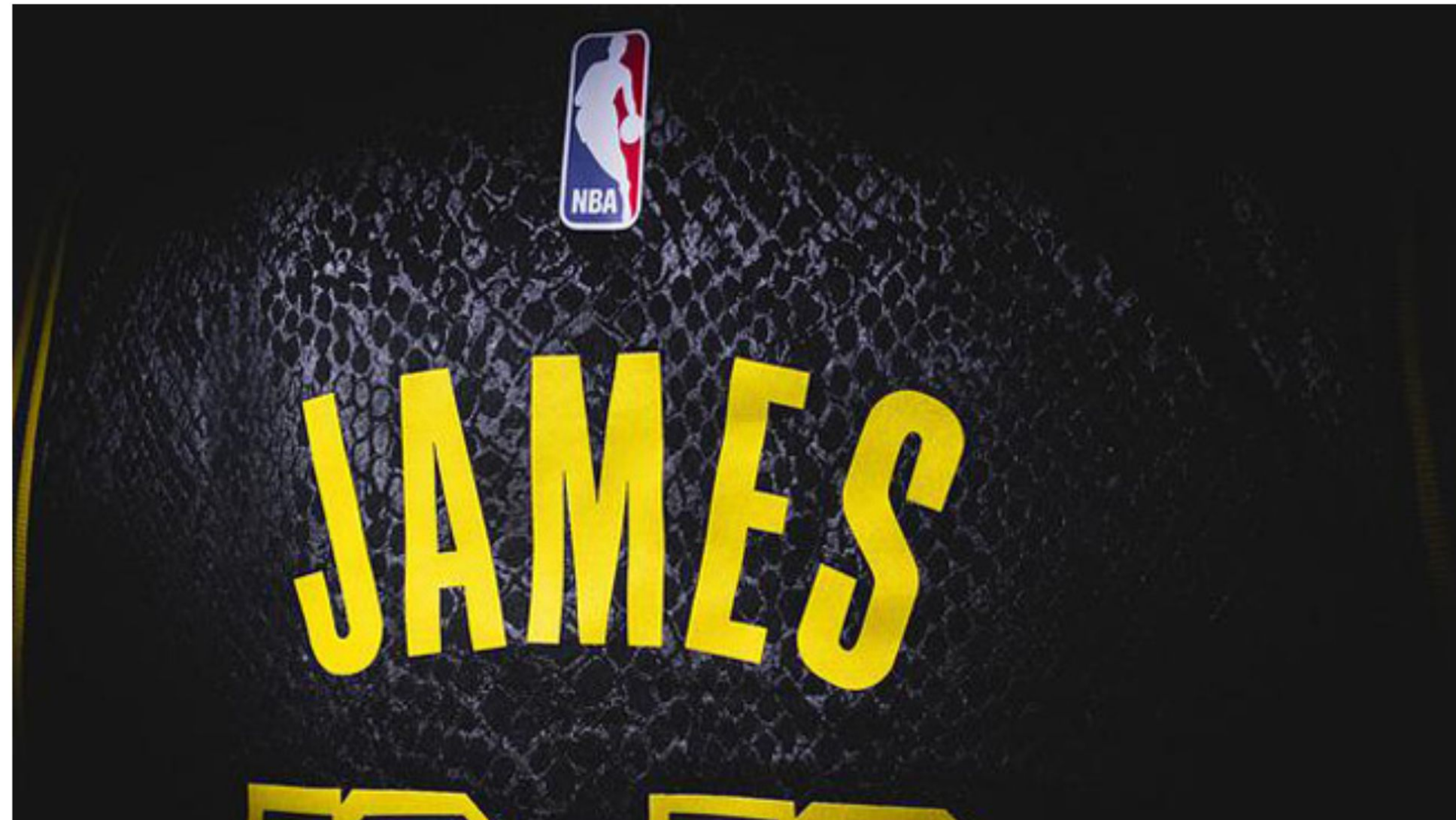


## Flexible thinking

**Flexible thinking** is sometimes also called divergent or elastic thinking and it includes the ability to think and adapt or adjust to new situations easily. It also means being able to use logic, reasoning, and imagination to come up with new ideas in new situations. This kind of thinking can help you come up with unconventional solutions to conventional problems.

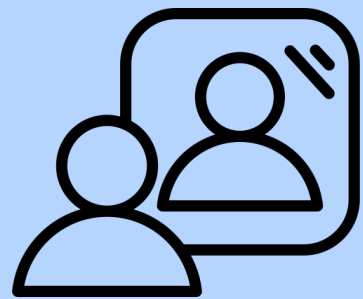


# DIVE IN



NBA player LeBron James was looking for a way to make a difference in the community of Akron, Ohio, where he grew up. The LeBron James Family Foundation partnered with the public school system to open the IPromise Academy in 2018.



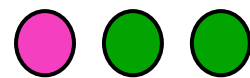
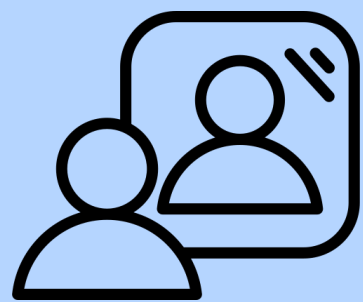
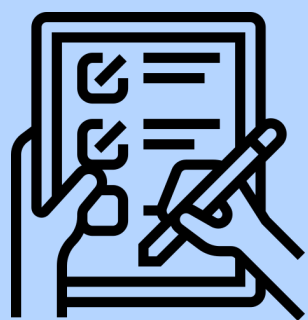


# DIVE IN



This school is unlike any other public school in the US. The school day is extended and so is the school year. Students wear uniforms. Students and parents have access to food, housing, haircuts, bikes, clothing, tutors, and medical and dental services.



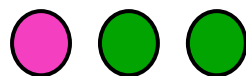
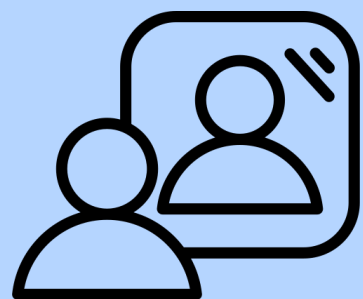
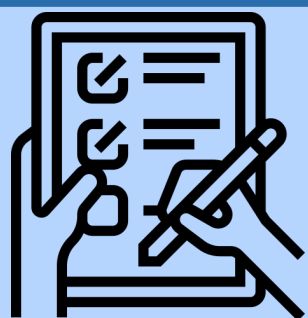


# DIVE IN



Students who graduate from high school get free tuition at the University of Akron. There's a Family Resource Center that offers parents help to get a high school diploma, legal advice, job coaching, and other resources. In return, parents are required to participate in school activities. This out of the box thinking is showing results.





# ACTIVITY



Working in pairs or small groups, identify a problem in the school or community that needs to be solved.



## Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Flexible Thinking

**Step 1:** Identify one problem in your school or community that needs to be solved.

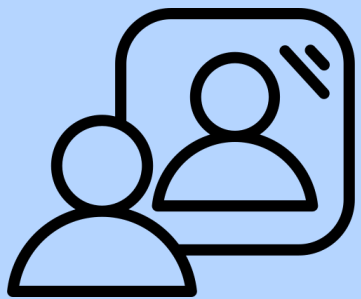
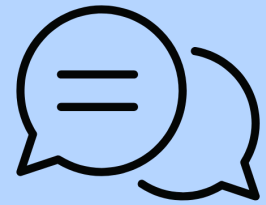
**Step 2:** Think outside the box to come up with some solutions for the issue.

**Step 3:** Plan the steps to get there.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3

Reflect

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# REFLECT



Is your solution an example of thinking outside the box? If not, what other ideas can you generate?



# Extend & Enrich

## Extend and Enrich

Project based learning (PBL) activities often give students the opportunity to practice flexible thinking skills. The Bucks Institute for Education has free lesson plan ideas teachers can use to integrate PBL into their classroom. To find activities, visit: [www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl](http://www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl).





# Home Connection



## Home Connection

### Flexible Thinking

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I wanted to share with you what your student has been learning about the importance of flexible thinking and problem-solving. In our recent lesson, we explored the concept of "thinking outside the box," which means coming up with alternative solutions for a problem, thinking differently from everyone else, using adaptive and critical thinking, and being innovative.

We discussed the importance of flexible thinking, also known as divergent or elastic thinking. This skill includes adapting to new situations easily using logic, reasoning, and imagination to generate new ideas. One way to practice flexible thinking is by approaching problems with a unique or different perspective. An example we explored was the story of Katherine Johnson, a black female scientist at NASA in the 1950s, whose ability to think outside the box helped solve complex calculations for space flights and ultimately contributed to the success of the first manned moon landing.

To continue this conversation at home, please ask your student: "What does 'thinking outside the box' mean to you, and can you give an example of when you used this thinking to solve a problem?" This can be a great opportunity to discuss the importance of flexible thinking and share personal experiences.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Best,

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Professional Development



Take 5 minutes to consider: Are there ways you can integrate more flexible thinking activities into your classroom?







# Further Study

## For Further Study

- USA Today, *LeBron James: Opening school is my most important professional accomplishment:*  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nba/2017/11/30/lebron-james-opening-school-most-important-professional-accomplishment/909374001/>
- NY Times, *Lebron James Opened a School That Was Considered an Experiment. It's Showing Promise:*  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/12/education/lebron-james-school-ohio.html>
- Scientific American, *The Power of Flexible Thinking:*  
[www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-power-of-flexible-thinking/](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-power-of-flexible-thinking/)







**Lesson Complete!**

