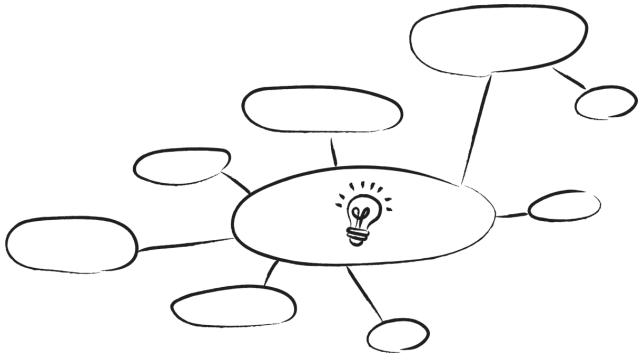
BRAINSTORM

IDEA SPRINT ROUTINE



FACILITATOR GUIDE
GRADES: 6-12
TIME: 20 minutes
MATERIALS: sticky notes, pencil/pen, markers

Designers **brainstorm** by thinking of lots of ideas.

PROCESS

Apply this brainstorming method anywhere. This can be used for any prompt that requires ideation!

1. MODEL IT
While generating ideas might come naturally to some students, it can be challenging for others. Begin by modeling what it looks like to produce many ideas quickly as a whole group. You might think aloud:

- *I'm going to come up with as many ideas as possible. It doesn't matter yet if these are doable.*
- *I'm not sure if that one would work, but I'm going to write it down anyway and see.*
- *This is a really big, wild idea! Now is the time to think big. We can edit later.*
- *This idea is similar to another one, but that's ok right now.*

2. WRITE OR DRAW AS MANY IDEAS AS POSSIBLE
Individually or in groups, give each student 10-20 sticky notes and challenge them to add 1 idea per sticky note. Set a timer to keep the pace fast, encouraging, and energetic!

3. CATEGORIZE IDEAS
As a whole group, small groups, or individually, give students five minutes to categorize their ideas. Invite them to place sticky notes on a wall, desk, or table space, then group them based on similarities or category.

You may need to model this thinking:
- *What do my ideas have in common?*
- *Are there multiple versions of the same idea?*
- *Grouping these ideas will help us narrow things down. Maybe I can even combine some of these ideas.*

4. NARROW IT DOWN

Once ideas are grouped, give each student a colored marker or 4-5 dot stickers. Ask them to vote on ideas that best suit the prompt and excite them the most. In a group setting, this provides quick, inclusive feedback without requiring whole group discussion. After voting, consider if combining popular ideas is possible before deciding on the final direction.

SCAFFOLDING

- **Gradual Release:** Complete this process as a whole group first before asking table groups or individuals.
- **Extended Ideation:** Ask students to work on this over the course of a few weeks as a warm-up.
- **Awards:** Motivate students to go for wild ideas by awarding ideas even if they aren't used: most ambitious, wildest idea, etc.

EXTENSIONS

- Gradually challenge students by giving them more sticky notes as you go.
- Constraints are a natural part of the design process. After a few rounds, build a few constraints in (budget, time, etc.) to help students narrow ideas

LEARNING STANDARDS

ELA (CCSS)

- Grades 6–12: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1; SL.7.1; SL.8.1; SL.9-10.1; SL.11-12.1 — participate in collaborative discussions
- Grades 6–12: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4; SL.7.4; SL.8.4; SL.9-10.4; SL.11-12.4 — present ideas, findings, and design directions clearly

Science & Engineering (NGSS)

- Grades 6–8: MS-ETS1-2 — evaluate competing design solutions using criteria and constraints
- Grades 9–12: HS-ETS1-2 — design a solution to a complex problem by breaking it into smaller, more manageable problems
- Grades 9–12: HS-ETS1-3 — evaluate a solution based on criteria, constraints, and trade-offs.

Visual Arts (National Core Arts Standards)

- Grade 6: VA:Cr1.1.6.a — combine concepts collaboratively to generate innovative ideas
- Grade 7: VA:Cr1.1.7.a — apply methods to overcome creative blocks
- Grade 8: VA:Cr1.1.8.a — document early stages of the creative process visually or verbally
- High School Proficient: VA:Cr1.1.HSI.a — use multiple approaches to begin creative work

Common Core Math

- Grades 6–12: CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP1; MP4; MP6; MP7 — make sense of a design challenge, model many ideas quickly, communicate precisely, and identify patterns or categories across brainstormed ideas.