

A DE BONO TEACHERS' ACADEMY PROGRAM

# CoRT Thinking Lessons

# CoRT 1: Breadth Thinking Tools

*The Complete Learning, Planning,  
and Teaching Guide for Teachers,  
Administrators, and Home Schoolers*

Name \_\_\_\_\_



CoRT 1 Breadth Tools  
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# Contents

A Message from Edward de Bono . . . . .	v
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## Section One: CoRT 1 Breadth Thinking Tools

Welcome to CoRT Thinking Lessons . . . . .	3
Quick Summary: CoRT 1 Breadth Thinking Tools . . . . .	4
Prepare to Teach CoRT Thinking Lessons . . . . .	5

## Section Two: Lesson Notes

Introduction to Lesson Notes . . . . .	13
1. <b>PMI:</b> Plus • Minus • Interesting . . . . .	15
2. <b>CAF:</b> Consider All Factors . . . . .	25
3. <b>Rules</b> . . . . .	35
4. <b>C&amp;S:</b> Consequence & Sequel . . . . .	45
5. <b>AGO:</b> Aims • Goals • Objectives . . . . .	55
6. <b>Planning</b> . . . . .	65
7. <b>FIP:</b> First Important Priorities . . . . .	75
8. <b>APC:</b> Alternatives • Possibilities • Choices . . . . .	85
9. <b>Decisions</b> . . . . .	95
10. <b>OPV:</b> Other People’s Views. . . . .	105

## Section Three: CoRT Resources

Why CoRT Thinking Tools Work So Well . . . . .	117
Perspective and Purpose for the Lessons . . . . .	121
Additional Lesson Planning Considerations . . . . .	123
CoRT Lesson Insights by Grade Level . . . . .	127
Advanced Thinking Assignments . . . . .	133
The Complete CoRT Thinking Program—Overview . . . . .	139
CoRT 1: <b>Breadth</b> . . . . .	140
CoRT 2: <b>Organization</b> . . . . .	141
CoRT 3: <b>Interaction</b> . . . . .	142
CoRT 4: <b>Creativity</b> . . . . .	143
CoRT 5: <b>Information and Feeling</b> . . . . .	144
CoRT 6: <b>Action</b> . . . . .	146
Support Resources . . . . .	147
Reproducible Student Work Cards . . . . .	148
About Edward de Bono . . . . .	191

# A Message from Edward de Bono

*CoRT Thinking Lessons* have been taught in schools since the mid 1970s. They have since become the most widely used school materials for the direct teaching of thinking as a basic skill worldwide.

All of this experience has contributed to developing *CoRT Thinking Lessons* that

1. Are practical and hands-on in nature.
2. Can be taught as a separate subject—thinking skills—or embedded in existing curriculum to strengthen student learning and develop independent thinkers.
3. Are focused on equipping students to become effective, open-minded thinkers—critical, creative, constructive, and comprehensive.
4. Address the increasing interest and recognition for the need to teach thinking as a basic skill along with reading, writing, and mathematics; the traditional basics.
5. Can be used in a wide variety of situations from schools in disadvantaged areas to elite schools to students being home schooled.
6. Appeal to a wide range of ages (6–adult) and abilities (IQs of 75–140).

It used to be felt that a person with a high IQ would naturally be an effective thinker. This doesn't seem to be the case. Some people with high IQs turn out to be relatively ineffective thinkers. Some people with much more humble IQs turn out to be more effective thinkers. Here is my definition of thinking:

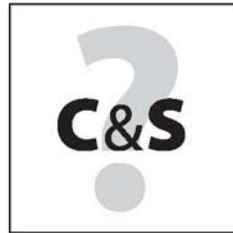
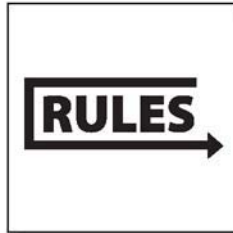
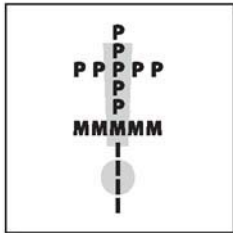
**Thinking: “The operational skill with which intelligence acts upon experience.”**

For example, if IQ is equivalent to the horsepower of a car then thinking skill is equivalent to driving skill. Just because a car has huge horsepower doesn't mean the car will be driven well. It takes a skilled driver.

This important realization has led many schools for the exceptionally gifted to teach *CoRT Thinking Lessons* as a deliberate attempt to help their gifted students avoid the “intelligence trap” which occurs when a high IQ is not accompanied by effective thinking skills.

The general method used is what I call the “glasses method.” If you have poor eyesight you cannot see the world clearly. With glasses you can see the world more clearly. As a result your actions can be more appropriate and your behavior more effective. Experience has shown that students who learn these thinking tools develop a much broader view of situations. They are more complete in their thinking.

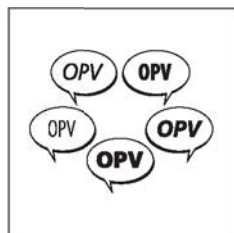
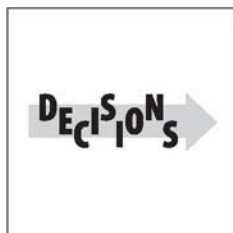
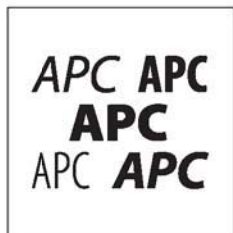
*Edward de Bono*



# Section One

# CoRT 1

## Breadth Thinking Tools



# Welcome to CoRT 1: Breadth Thinking Lessons

CoRT stands for Cognitive Research Trust. CoRT can also be regarded as being short for *cortex* where all thinking takes place in the brain. This handbook is designed to equip you with the information you need to teach these thinking tools to your students regardless of their grade level or age. The objective is to help students' master lifelong thinking skills that will help them in any situation. Once you've taught each tool to your students you will be able to customize each lesson to meet your specific needs.


## CoRT Thinking Tools Key Points

1. Effective thinking, like literacy and numeracy, is not inborn—it has to be learned and practiced to be effective. Think of a person setting out to learn to be a carpenter. Each carpenter's tool is designed to carry out a specific function. The carpenter learns when and how to use each of the tools one by one. A lot of practice is required to become a skilled carpenter. Learning to become a skilled thinker is the same approach.
2. It's easy to explain and understand each of the tools. This isn't enough to make your students skilled thinkers. It's their practice using the tools that promotes their skill development.
3. Each tool has a name—one word or a short acronym that's easy to remember. For example—**CAF** is pronounced “caf” and stands for Consider all Factors, **PMI** is pronounced “p,” “m,” “i” and stands for Plus, Minus, Interesting. The word or acronym provides a shorthand instruction for directing thinking attention to help your students manage their thinking processes. With practice they will be able to apply each thinking tool at will and will be able to decide which tool or tools to use.
4. The tools are designed to be used objectively with an open mind—to broaden perception instead of defending a particular point of view. The tools provide frameworks for changing perception, seeing more broadly into the future, and into people's minds.
5. The tools emphasize thinking as a deliberate act rather than a reactive one.

## CoRT 1 Breadth Thinking Tools Highlights

- We recommend you teach *CoRT 1 Breadth Thinking Tools* first.
- There are ten tools which can be taught in ten lessons over the course of ten weeks. Each tool is a separate thinking lesson.
- Breadth tools are designed to equip your students with fundamental thinking skills that will broaden their perception about everything they choose to think about.

## Quick Summary: CoRT 1 Breadth Thinking Tools

	<p><b>PMI:</b>  <b>Plus • Minus</b>  <b>Interesting</b>          The Treatment          of Ideas</p>		<p><b>Planning</b>          Thinking Ahead to          Get Things Done</p>
	<p><b>CAF:</b>  <b>Consider All Factors</b>          The Prime          Information          Input Tool</p>		<p><b>FIP:</b>  <b>First Important          Priorities</b>          What Must be Done First?          What's Most Important?</p>
	<p><b>Rules</b>          Make Life          Easier and          Better</p>		<p><b>APC:</b>  <b>Alternatives          Possibilities • Choices</b>          The Tool for Creativity</p>
	<p><b>C&amp;S:</b>  <b>Consequence          &amp; Sequel</b>          A Prediction and          Evaluation Tool</p>		<p><b>Decisions</b>          Think Clearly          and Thoroughly</p>
	<p><b>AGO:</b>  <b>Aims • Goals          Objectives</b>          What Is the          Purpose?</p>		<p><b>OPV:</b>  <b>Other People's Views</b>          An Exploration Tool to          Broaden Perception</p>

## Prepare to Teach CoRT Thinking Lessons

The purpose of these thinking lessons is to develop thinking as a skill that can be applied to any situation. The lessons are designed to be taught once a week for ten weeks. Average lesson time can be as short as 35–40 minutes.

### Tips to get started:

1. Learn the tools first to develop your competence and confidence.
2. Become comfortable with this new vocabulary by using the word or acronym for each of the tools.
3. Complete the practice topics provided on the student work cards.
4. Apply the tools to topics that are relevant to your work and personal life to further develop your thinking skills and your confidence with the tools.
5. Make a master copy of the reproducible student work cards. Print a supply on heavy card stock to be ready for your students.
6. Plan to visually reinforce the tools in your classroom.
7. Decide how you are going to keep track of time during practice exercises in order to keep your lesson pace brisk and to avoid drift.
8. Decide how you are going to introduce *CoRT Thinking Lessons*. Here are some different ways:
  - a. Include CoRT Thinking as a curriculum subject.
  - b. Embed in one of your curriculum subjects—history, political science, media studies, humanities, and language arts are just some examples.
  - c. Hold a student seminar.
  - d. Start a school thinking club.
  - e. Include as part of your school's debate team training.
  - f. Hold Saturday morning thinking classes.
  - g. Include an overview or training at a parent symposium.
  - h. Hold a school assembly to overview the program.
  - i. Include, as professional development, training for teachers and administrators.
  - j. Hold a think-a-thon.
9. Get a local business or foundation to provide funding if you need a budget.
10. Create a flyer to share with students, parents, and administrators.
11. Post your course description on your school's website.
12. Start to develop your own library of custom topics to use with your students once they have learned the tools.

# Resources to Support Student Learning

## Reproducible Student Work Cards

Student work cards are designed to reinforce each tool. They all follow the same format for ease of use and to ensure consistency while teaching each of the tools.

### The Format

1. The visual icon with the word or acronym is on the front to reinforce the tool and to make it easier for students to remember and learn each tool.
2. A description of the tool follows the icon.
3. An example is given that demonstrates the tool in use.
4. Practice topics are listed.
5. Process discussion questions are provided.
6. Five principles are listed for discussion and to reinforce the tool.
7. Project topics are listed that can be given as homework or writing assignments.

To help keep student materials affordable for budget-pressed school districts, we have included reproducible student work cards in a section at the back of this handbook.

- Two sets of reproducible student work cards are included. One set is in black and white and one set is in color.
- You could make a master copy and then create a two-sided copy of each student work card on heavy card stock. Card stock is suggested because it is more durable than regular copier paper.
- Three-hole punch if your students keep their work in binders.
- If you use colored card stock, you could produce each CoRT Tool on a different colored card stock to help your students navigate quickly among the tools during classroom use.

## The Minds of Your Students as a Resource

Thinking is the skilled use of already available information. In these lessons your students aren't required to absorb other material before they can start thinking. The student work cards serve only to trigger your students' minds. This is why the student work cards can be used with a wide range of ages and abilities. The practice topics reinforce the idea that students should be able to think on demand about anything.

Since your students aren't required to absorb materials before they begin to think, students who aren't good at absorbing materials because of disability or inattention find they can function well in thinking lessons.