

# Brains Storming!

In *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek*, the Cayuga Island Kids want to rid the park and creek of litter. Together, they brainstorm ideas. They consider holding a contest, but then they look in a new direction. They get an even better idea, and organize a community event! Here are some activities to get students' brains storming!



## Activity 1: The Alley on the Way to the Park

Show students a recyclable plastic container, such as one that holds fresh lettuce, or a large recyclable bottle, such as a soda bottle.

Give students a few minutes to list as many uses as possible for the container.

Record ideas.

Review and discuss.

Explain that what they just did is called **brainstorming**. As a group, develop a definition of brainstorming. (Brainstorming is a way to solve problems by gathering information, thinking creatively, and discussing ideas with others.)

In the story, Mrs. Schieber says, "Brainstorming is the first step in teamwork. Working together keeps your brains storming." What does the image of **brains storming** bring to mind? (Thinking up and "pouring out" all ideas: like clouds pouring out rain during a storm.)

## Keys to Brains Storming Success

- All ideas are welcome.
- There are **no bad ideas**. No judging of ideas while brainstorming.
- **Listen** to others. One idea often sparks another idea. As Mrs. Schieber says, "Teamwork makes the dream work." When brainstorming with others, notice how ideas often grow from good to better to **BEST!**



## Activity 2: Idea Tag Team

Arrange students in a circle. Brainstorm items that fit in a specific category. For example: plastics in our home. As you move around the circle, students cannot repeat an item that a classmate suggested, but they can tag team ideas! Suggest that students listen to what others say and build on that. For example, if someone says *pens*, that might spark the idea to list mechanical pencils. If someone says *high chair*, they might tag team that idea by adding booster chair to the list.

### **Activity 3: All Ideas Are Welcome**

Throughout *The Adventure of the Big Fish by the Small Creek* the Cayuga Island Kids brainstorm ideas. Some are better than others. Ask students to identify something that could be improved in the classroom, in the cafeteria, or on the playground. Then brainstorm ideas. Remind students that all ideas are welcome. Encourage sharing any idea, even if it doesn't seem to be the “best” suggestion. Tag team ideas.

Record ideas.

Review and discuss. Encourage students to add to a good idea to make it even better. When students agree on the best idea, work on how to put the plan into action!

### **Activity 4: What if?**

Have students brainstorm answers to questions that go beyond the book. For example: What if Pesky could talk? What would he say? What if Mac had been snacking on something else instead of cheesy fish crackers? What if the mayor hadn't agreed to help with the community project? What could the Cayuga Island Kids have done?

Record all answers. Review and discuss when done brainstorming.

### **Follow-Up Discussion**

- Why is brainstorming helpful?
- What does “*Teamwork makes the dream work*” mean?
- Why is brainstorming important to inventors, creators, and those who want to make changes for the better (like the Cayuga Island kids!)?
- How can we use brainstorming in our classroom? Outside of school?



CCSS.SL.1.1; SL.1.6; SL.2.1; SL.2.6; SL.3.1; SL.3.3; SL.3.6

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