



# What Can You Do with a Paper Clip?

Creative Calisthenics

**Grade Level:** 2 through 8

**Participants:** Individuals and teams

**Objectives:** Exercise fluency, flexibility, originality, and brainstorming skills

**Time:** 15 to 30 minutes

## Quick View

In this exercise in creative brainstorming, students work individually to think of as many uses for paperclips as possible. Students then combine their lists with their teammates and compete for both fluency and originality.

## Examples

There are many possible uses for paperclips: Bracelet, key chain, earrings, pendulum, photo holder, sculpting tool, braces for teeth, jump rope, hamster cage. See sidebar, “The Many Uses of Paper Clips!”

## Take Home

Enhanced brainstorming skills and a collection of new ideas for paperclips

## Materials

- Pencils
- Paper
- Dozens of regular size paperclips
- 1 box of large paperclips
- Chalk and chalkboard or equivalent
- Timer

## Getting Ready

- Review the “Rules for Brainstorming,” on the last page of this lesson plan. These rules are important and shouldn’t be overlooked.
- Provide a small pile of paperclips for each student to use as a brainstorming aid.
- Ask the class to think of as many uses for paperclips as possible within a three-minute timeframe, and list each idea on the board.

## Activities and Procedures

- 1 Inform students that they will be participating in a contest called “What *Can* You Do With a Paper Clip?”
- 2 Ask students to review the list on the board and begin thinking of additional uses for paper clips.
- 3 Encourage students to observe, touch, and manipulate their paperclips to facilitate the brainstorming process.
- 4 Divide the class into two teams, and instruct each student to create an individual list to contribute to the team’s “master” list at the end of the contest.
- 5 Set the timer for three to five minutes, and encourage students to strive for quantity, not quality.
- 6 When time is up, have students combine their individual lists and select students from each team to take turns reading their master lists out loud. For example, Team A reads one entry, then Team B reads one, and so on.

*SAFETY WARNING: The ideas listed are just that, ideas only. Don't allow children to do anything that could cause harm to themselves or others.*

- 7 Award Teams 2 points for each item on their list (fluency), and 5 points for each use that was not duplicated by the other team (originality).

For example, Team A reads “necklace.” If Team B has “necklace” on their list also, they call out “We have it.” Both teams are “awarded” 2 points for “necklace.”

If Team B did not have “necklace,” however, then Team A is awarded 5 points.

NOTE: For extra fun, award large paperclips instead of points.

- 8 Have students continue reading until both lists are completed.
- 9 Tally up the points, and announce the winner!

**Extensions**

Complete the activity above, but instead of asking students to think of uses for paper clips, invite them to think of uses for:

- Ball of string
- Bars of soap
- Bricks
- Buttons
- Cans of soup
- Crayons
- Drinking straws
- Erasers
- Pocket combs
- Rolls of tape
- Tennis shoes
- Toothbrushes

**The Many Uses of Paper Clips!**

- Attaching things to ring binders
- Bell swinger
- Belt
- Book mark
- Braces for teeth
- Button hook
- Chain
- Chain used as a jump rope
- Chains to support a swing
- Compass
- Craft tool
- Dog leash
- Door knocker with hard item attached
- Ear cleaners (don't try this!)
- Electric light component
- Electrical current conductor
- Fill a bag and use as an anchor
- Fish hook
- For supporting hanging vines
- Fork
- Game part
- Gardening tool
- Garland support for flowers
- Glue to floor mat
- Hair clip
- Hold papers together
- Inside a rainstick
- Inside box to make noisemaker
- Jewelry – necklace, bracelet
- Key chain
- Keyboard cleaner
- Magnetize it to make magnets
- Magnetized to create sculpture
- Magnetized chain for retrieving things from narrow spaces
- Make a covering for something by attaching pieces of paper
- Make a cage for a small pet
- Manicure tool
- Melt them to cast into candle holder or other household items
- Mobile
- Net for fishing
- Pants/blouse fastener
- Paper weight – fill a container with them
- Pendulum by making a chain and attaching a weight
- Percussion musical instrument
- Pick a lock
- Plumbline by making a chain and attaching a weight
- Printing tool by attaching pieces of sponge, clip is handle
- Puncture holes in pie crust
- Radio component
- Sculpting tools
- Shoe fastener
- Spring – form it into this
- Staple puller
- Stirrer
- Stopper for model airplane glue
- Strainer
- Stylus for etching
- Support for baking
- Texturizer on canvas for painting
- Texturizer tool for marbling paint
- Thumb tack
- Tiny fence for a doll house
- Tooth cleaner (don't do this!)
- Tree ornaments
- Weapon (slingshot part)
- Weight for helium balloon
- Zipper pull

From the book “Creative Genius” by Marjorie Sarnat

If you liked this lesson plan, be sure to visit [www.jrimagination.com](http://www.jrimagination.com) for more, including freebies and other fun stuff.