



WORD BRAINSTORM

Random words provide inspiration when coming up with new ideas.

 **Participants**
Individual

 **Design skill**
Think in all directions

 **Prior design experience**
None

 **Duration**
10 – 30 minutes

 **Design step**
Generating ideas

Description

Once the participants have put their initial ideas on paper, each participant or team receives a set of pre-selected word cards. This happens when participants get stuck with coming up with ideas. This works for participants who have difficulty getting started, and for participants who linger at one idea for a long time.



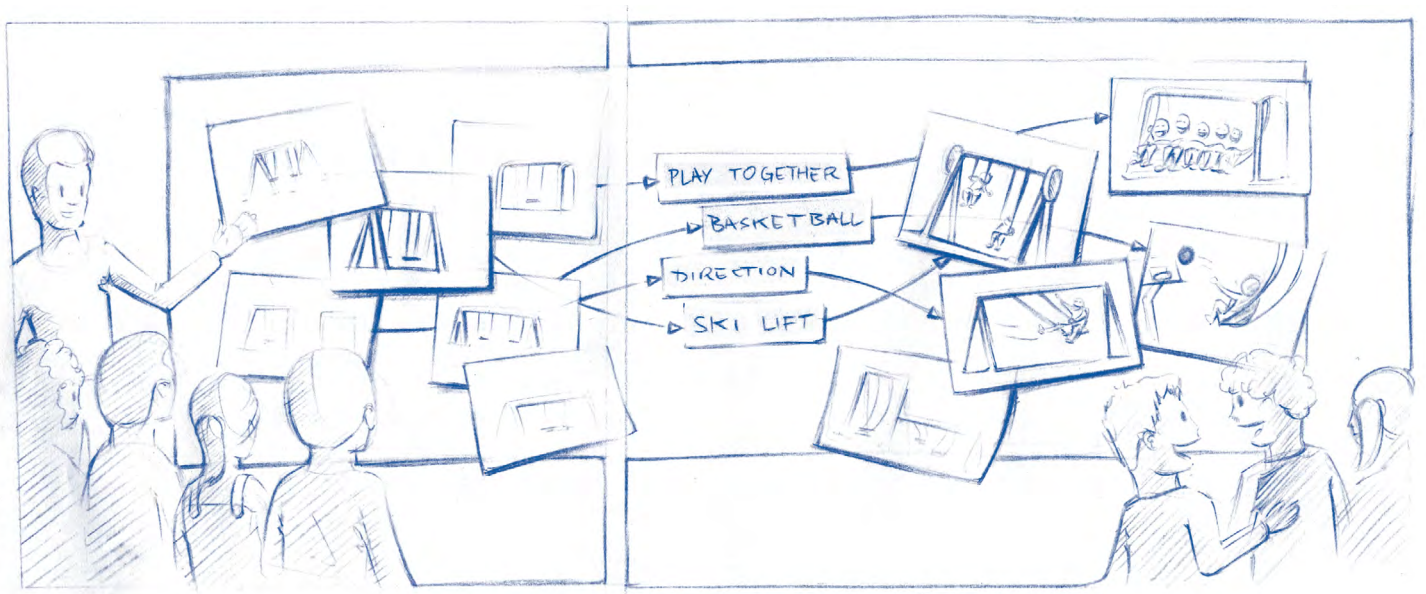
The word cards give the participants new inspiration, reminding them of something. Variation in words gives them a new direction of thinking. Randomly offering different words helps participants to come up with new ideas.

Effect

A larger variety in words increases the chance of original ideas. The Words brainstorm stimulates participants to create new ideas from different perspectives.

Without the Word brainstorm

With the Word brainstorm



Example

Year group 6 pupils were asked to design a new playground for the school. A key design requirement was that the playground would make children share knowledge and experiences with each other whilst playing. Most of the students' ideas involved a standard playground game with some sort of quiz. Most of the students were able to come up with some variation, but nothing innovative and special.

The teacher Mrs Green used the Words brainstorm to help the children to invent new ideas. Through words such as 'whisper' and 'cartoon character' the students were able to come up with completely different ideas. For example, they came up with solutions that focused on different modes of communication. The word 'sidewalk chalk' made Achmed create a game with digital tiles.

Step by step

- 1 Think of at least 16 different words or use the set from the Word brainstorm worksheet. Do not choose words that directly relate to the design problem, instead think of words from different domains. Include a variety of verbs, nouns, adjectives and prepositions.
- 2 Print the words in a large font, cut them into separate cards and put them in an envelope. Give an envelope to each design team.
- 3 Decide how you want the participants to work in advance. E.g. Do you let them brainstorm individually or in a group?
- 4 Introduce the Words brainstorm and explain how the associations can help them think of new ideas.
- 5 Once the participants have put their initial ideas down on paper, give them the words.
- 6 Ask the participants to pull one card from the envelope at a time, and come up with at least one new idea for each word. This will force them to think beyond their current ideas and get the imagination flowing.

Tips

- ▶ Use words that participants have used previously, for example words that came up in the Inverse brainstorm tool.
- ▶ Discuss a number of ideas in class and let the participants tell everyone how the words helped them get to their new idea. The value of the tool will then become clear.
- ▶ Vary the word brainstorm with the Picture brainstorm tool or make a combination of both tools. Words inspire language-oriented thinkers, images inspire visual thinkers.

You should try another nice tool!



Materials

- ▶ A set of 16 Word cards in an envelope



reward

everywhere

guessing

feeling

talking

stress

pawns

drawing

playing dice

breaking

buttons

trick

elephant

snake

Donald Duck

looking

dancing

friends

playing

hands

soccer goal

egg

screen

net

rope

gloves

protecting

floating

shoes

flexible

goal

questioning

stealing

time

fighting

hiding

walking

running

turning

Snowy white

martian

Big bad wolf

talking

touching

colours

angry

floating

sitting

hitting

corners

net

rope

paperclip

protecting

team

feet

screen

paddling

ripping

breaking

culprit

grabbing

shadow

together

high

ball

winning

looking

eating

own boss

city

meadow

running

magic

sword

happy

tapping

pipe

pain

sand

listening

direction

after each other

sunny

quicker

sad

cheap

umbrella

heavy

wind

tree

elastic

fruit

ditch

fun-fair

navel

candle

wheel

paper

wing

wheel

reversed

tube

back

flower

circle

ridges

water

window

cat flap

penguin

pillows

view

cake

fishing rod

searching

magnet

mud

tongue

meatball

cell

queen

soldier

blocks

shop

cactus

shiny

picking

grandfather

glove

broom

under

karate

rope

lint

teacher

relishing

slowly

whispering

rainbow

golf

splash

telephone

lawnmower