

LESSON PLAN 8

Grade 3-4
Creative Problem Solvers

Lesson Plan 8.2 Grade 3-4

Creative Problem Solvers

Lesson Title	Creative Problem Solvers
Lesson Summary	This lesson explores the ways creativity helps in problem-solving. Students will be inspired by real-life stories of wish kids and their Make-A-Wish teams, who use creativity, imagination and teamwork to “make the impossible possible”.
Year Level	This lesson is for Grades 3-4
Lesson Duration	50-60 minutes
Learning Intention	• Learn how to use creativity to solve problems and work together in groups • Learn about the wishes that Make-A-Wish grants • Practice fine motor skills
Evidence of Learning	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: • Understand and develop problem-solving skills • Reflect on their wishing wand • Start to demonstrate creativity by generating unique solutions to the problem scenario.
Things you will need	• Whiteboard • Reflection worksheets • Craft supplies (cardboard, string, paper, tape, straws, cups, rubber bands) • LEGO or building blocks • Scissors • Toy figure (the astronaut) • Make-A-Wish videos - What is it like to be a Make-A-Wish volunteer? - YouTube
Teacher Preparation Notes	• Write the success criteria and learning intention on the board before the lesson begins • Ensure craft materials are ready and organised for the activity • Allow students to share their ideas, but ensure that sharing is optional to maintain a safe and respectful environment • Teachers should adapt this lesson to meet the diverse needs of students, including those with varying abilities and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

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Creative Problem Solvers - Scripted

Introduction & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

“Hello everyone! Today we’re going to explore something really important: creativity and problem-solving.”

“Who can explain what problem-solving means?” **(Pause, take a few responses)**

“Great thinking. Problem-solving is when we identify a challenge and come up with ways to solve it.”

“Today, you’re not just problem-solvers; you’re also creative thinkers, which means you’ll be designing, testing, and improving your ideas.”

“Sometimes problems don’t have an obvious solution straight away, and that’s completely normal. Strong problem-solvers try different strategies, work collaboratively, and keep improving their ideas until they find something that works.”

Icebreaker

“Let’s start with a quick problem-solving scenario.”

Write on the board:

‘You are working in a group, but everyone has different ideas and can’t agree on what to do.’

“When you’re working in a group, it’s common for people to have different ideas. Sometimes this can make it hard to move forward.”

“Instead of getting frustrated, we can use problem-solving skills to find a solution.”

“Who can suggest some ways to solve this problem?” **(Pause for responses)**

“Can anyone suggest some possible solutions?” **(Pause for answers and write them on the board)**

Guide students toward:

- Listening to everyone’s ideas
- Taking turns choosing ideas
- Combining ideas into one plan



- Voting as a group
- Asking a teacher for help if needed

“Excellent ideas. When we generate multiple solutions, we give ourselves more options and more control.”

“Great ideas. Now let’s think a little deeper: how might these solutions help the group work better together?”

- “How would listening to everyone make people feel?”
- “What happens when we combine ideas?”
- “Why is teamwork important in solving problems?”

(Leave room for discussion; confident, nervous, proud, hopeful)

“This is great problem-solving. Now we’re going to take it a step further into creative problem-solving, where you’ll design your own solution to a challenge.”

Introduction to Make-A-Wish Australia (5 minutes)

“Who remembers learning about Make-A-Wish?” **(Pause, wait for responses)**

“As we know, Make-A-Wish grants wishes to children with critical illnesses. Each wish is unique; some children have wished to be a superhero, and others have wanted to go on a trip to the snow, so the WishForce must work together and be creative problem-solvers to make the wishes possible.”

“I’d like to introduce the Make-A-Wish volunteers, who are an awesome part of the WishForce. There are over 800 volunteers across Australia, and they are integral to Make-A-Wish.”

Video: [What is it like to be a Make-A-Wish volunteer? - YouTube](#)

Activity: Rescue Mission (25 mins)

Develop critical thinking, planning, collaboration, and creative design skills.

Instructions

“Alright team, we have an important mission.”

“Our astronaut, [toy name], has been exploring space and has become stranded in the galaxy.”

“Your task is to work as a rescue engineering team to bring them back safely.”

“You’ll be working in teams **to design, build, and test** a rescue device using the materials provided.”

Rules

- “You cannot cross the boundary into the atmosphere”
- “You may only use the materials at your table”
- “The astronaut must remain safe at all times, no dropping”
- “Your device must operate from a distance”

Modelling Creative Thinking

“Before you begin, let’s think like engineers. There are many possible approaches to this challenge, for example:”

- “Designing a grabbing tool”
hint: such as a claw or tongs
- “Creating a retrieval system,
hint: like a fishing rod
- “Building a bridge or ramp”
- “Developing a pull system”
- “Or inventing a completely new and unique solution”



“Remember there is no single correct answer. The goal is to design, test, evaluate, and improve your ideas.”

Planning Phase

“Before you start building, take a few minutes to plan with your team.”

“In your discussion, think about:”

- Different possible solutions
- Which materials will be strongest or most effective
- How your design will keep the astronaut secure
- What challenges you might face

(Leave room for discussion)

“Once you have a plan, you can begin building.”

“Also remember to use scissors safely; ask for help if you need it.”

Testing Phase

“Alright teams, it’s time to test your rescue designs. Let’s see how each team solves the challenge.”

(Give adequate time for each group to save the astronaut and test their designs)

If successful:

“Excellent work! That’s a great example of creative problem-solving and teamwork.”

If not fully successful:

“That’s okay, engineers often improve their designs after testing. What might you adjust next time?”

Wrap up and Reflection (10 minutes)

“Amazing effort, everyone. You’ve shown persistence, creativity, and teamwork. Let’s come back together and reflect on what we’ve learned.”



(Give adequate time for each group to save the astronaut and test their designs)

Hand out reflection worksheets

"I'd like each of you to fill out the reflection worksheet as best as possible and answer the following prompts."

1. What was your favourite part of the challenge?
2. How did your team work together to solve the problem?
3. What changes did you make to improve your design?

"Great work today, everyone! Today you showed fantastic teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving, just like the team at Make-A-Wish. Keep believing in your ideas, because they can make really great things happen!"

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Creative Problem Solvers - Unscripted

Introduction & Icebreaker (15 minutes)

- Introduce the lesson focus: creativity and problem-solving
- Ask students to explain what problem-solving means and take a few responses
- Clarify that problem-solving involves identifying challenges and finding ways to address them
- Emphasise that students will act as both problem-solvers and creative thinkers
- Highlight that problems don't always have immediate solutions, and that effective problem-solvers:
 - Try different strategies
 - Work collaboratively
 - Improve their ideas over time

Icebreaker

Write a simple scenario on the board:

- You are working in a group, but everyone has different ideas and can't agree on what to do.
- Discuss how this situation can occur in group work and why it can be challenging
- Prompt students to suggest possible solutions
- Record responses and guide toward strategies such as:
 - Listening to everyone's ideas
 - Taking turns selecting ideas
 - Combining ideas into one plan
 - Voting as a group
 - Asking for support if needed
- Highlight that generating multiple solutions provides more choice and control
- Extend thinking by discussing:
 - How these solutions improve teamwork
 - How listening makes others feel
 - Why collaboration is important
- Transition by explaining that students will now apply these skills in a creative challenge

Introduction to Make-A-Wish Australia

- Introduce/reintroduce Make-A-Wish and ask who remembers learning about them
(pause for answers)
- **Highlight that** Make-A-Wish gives special wishes to sick children. Some children have wished to be a superhero, and others have wanted to go on a trip to the snow, so the WishForce must work together and be creative problem solvers to make the wishes happen
- Introduce Make-A-Wish volunteers, and highlight that they are an integral part of the WishForce
- Play video: [What is it like to be a Make-A-Wish volunteer? - YouTube](#)

Main Activity: Rescue Mission (25 minutes)

Develop critical thinking, planning, collaboration, and creative design skills

Materials

- Craft supplies (cardboard, string, paper, tape, straws, cups, rubber bands)
- LEGO or building blocks
- Scissors
- Toy figure/soft toy (the explorer)
- Timer (optional)

Task Overview

- Introduce the scenario: an astronaut (toy) is stranded in a dangerous zone
- Students work in teams as “rescue engineers” to design, build, and test a rescue device
- The goal is to safely retrieve the astronaut using provided materials

Rules

- Students must not cross the boundary zone
- Only materials on the table may be used
- The astronaut must remain safe (no dropping)
- The rescue must be completed from a distance

Examples of Designs

- A grabbing tool (**hint if needed** claw or tongs)
- A retrieval device (**hint if needed** fishing rod style)
- A bridge or ramp
- A pulling system
- A completely original invention

- Reinforce that there is no single correct solution; focus on designing, testing, and improving.

Planning

- Allow teams time to plan before building
- Prompt students to consider:
 - Possible solution ideas
 - Which materials will be most effective
 - How to keep the astronaut secure
 - Potential challenges

Building

- Students begin constructing their designs
- Monitor and support groups as needed
- Reinforce safe use of materials (e.g. scissors)

Testing

- Each group tests their rescue device
- Allow time for demonstrations
- Acknowledge:
 - Successful solutions
 - Effort and creative thinking
 - Adjustments made during the process
- Encourage reflection on improvements if designs are not fully successful

Wrap-Up and Reflection (10 minutes)

- Bring students back together as a group
- Highlight persistence, teamwork, and creative thinking
- Distribute reflection worksheets
- Students respond to:
 1. Favourite part of the challenge
 2. How their team worked together
 3. Changes they made to improve their design
- Congratulate everyone on their work
- Highlight that they showed fantastic teamwork, creativity, etc.
- Relate the lesson back to the team at Make-A-Wish