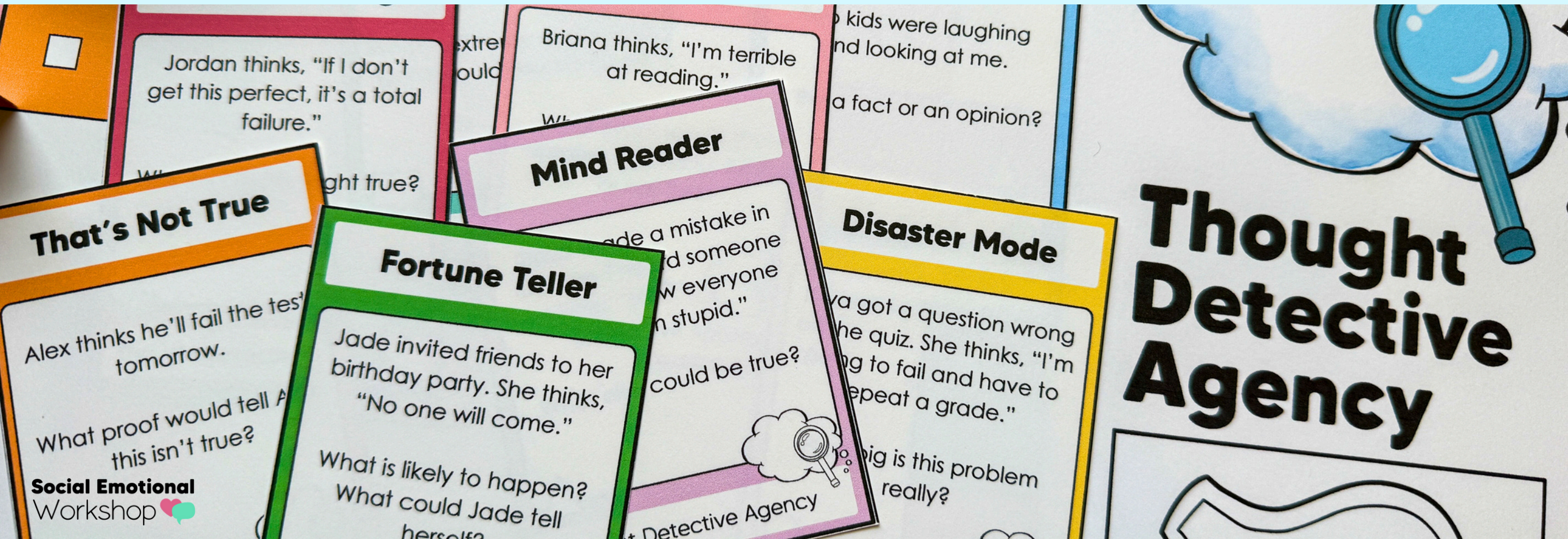


# Thought Detective Agency Game

CBT-Based Counseling Game to  
Examine Negative Thinking



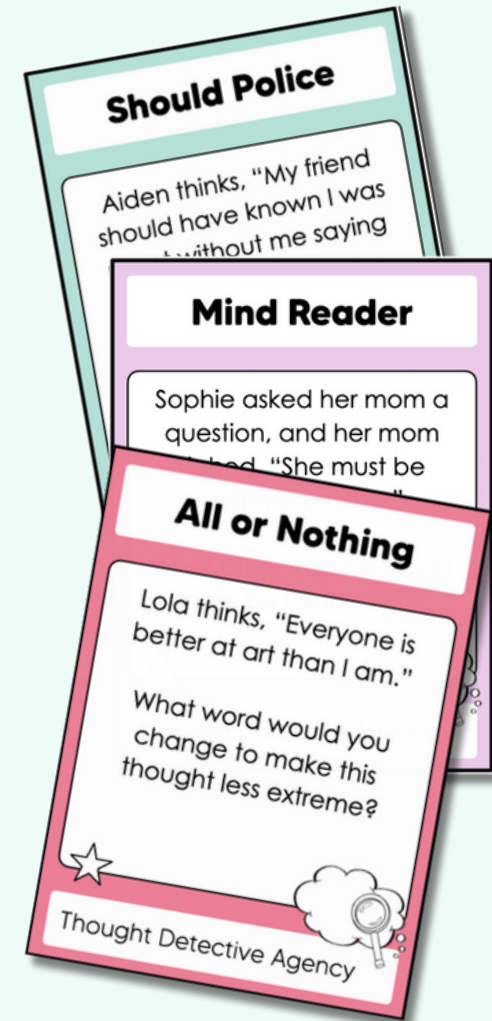


# Practice Checking & Challenging Thoughts

Students actively practice:

- ✦ distinguishing fact from opinions
- ✦ gathering evidence for and against thoughts
- ✦ identifying common cognitive distortions
- ✦ applying questions to help examine thoughts

Perfect for small groups,  
individual sessions or discussion.



# What's Included



## Printable Game Board

two 8.5x11 pages



## 72 Game Cards

8 card types



## Facilitator Guide

setup, gameplay, introduction script



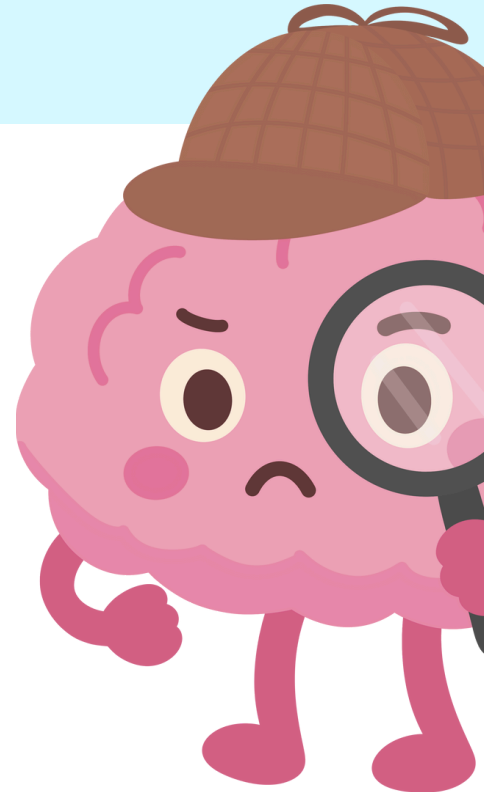
## Answer Key

sample responses for each card



## Black & White Friendly

game play works in color or BW



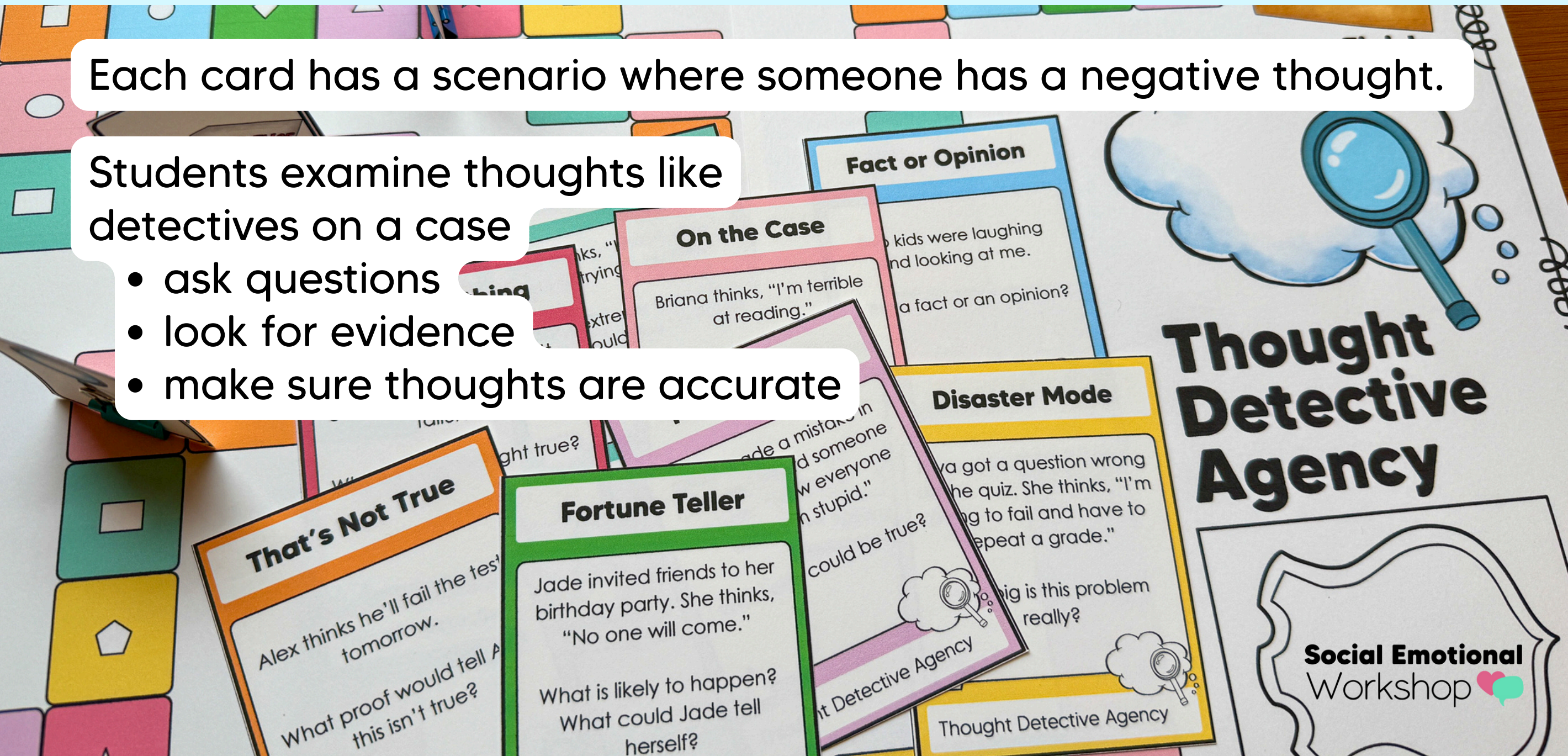


# 72 Playing Cards

Each card has a scenario where someone has a negative thought.

Students examine thoughts like detectives on a case

- ask questions
- look for evidence
- make sure thoughts are accurate





# Print & Play Game

## Quick Prep

1. Print gameboard on cardstock or tape inside a file folder.
2. Print and cut cards.
3. Print player pieces and use binder clips to stand them up.
4. Play!

Use the full game or skip the board and use just the cards as discussion prompts.





# Facilitator Guide & Answer Key

Intro script

## Setup & Game Play Instructions

### Detective Case File Board Game

### 2 - Check

practice identifying and examining different types of negative thinking by role of a detective. Through gameplay, students learn to spot cognitive distortions, distinguish between facts and opinions, gather evidence, and apply Check Your Beliefs to determine whether thoughts are accurate.

#### 1. Set Up

Roll the die to determine the number of the space you will start on and places it on the board.

#### 2. Game Rules

You are detectives working on cases of negative thinking. Your job is to examine these thoughts carefully, look for evidence, spot unhelpful thinking, and solve each case by checking if the thought is accurate. Good detectives ask questions and don't jump to conclusions!"

#### 3. Game Play

On each turn, a player:

1. Draw a card from the deck, go to the next available space that corresponds to that card (color/shape) and read the card aloud.
2. Answers the question or completes the task on the card
3. Other players can help if needed (this is collaborative, not competitive)
4. If correct, they keep the card as a "solved case"
5. If they land on a special space, they follow those instructions

#### 4. Special Cards

- Case Closed! You Solved It! Go Again!
- Bad evidence was used. Lose a turn.

#### 5. Winning the Game

You can play collaboratively so that the game ends when all players reach the finish space or a certain number of cases have been closed. You could also have a winner with the student who has the most closed cases.

#### Time

25 minutes

#### Materials

Game Board

Game Cards

Example Answers

Players Markers

#### Prep

Print and assemble the game board

Print, cut, and shuffle cards into one pile

Use a binder clip to have player markers stand up.

Review cards ahead of time to be familiar with scenarios and possible answers.

### Thought Detective Agency Cards with Example Answers

#### That's Not True - Orange Square

1. **Scenario:** Gina thinks she won't make friends at her new school. **Question:** What's something that would prove to Cara this isn't true? **Example Answer:** She has friends from her previous school, so she has made friends before.
2. **Scenario:** Marcus thinks he's bad at math. **Question:** What proof could Marcus look for to check if this thought is accurate? **Example Answer:** Check his test scores, think about which math topics he understands, ask his teacher for feedback, remember times he solved problems correctly.
3. **Scenario:** Lily thinks her teacher doesn't like her. **Question:** What evidence would help Lily need to know if this thought was true or not? **Example Answer:** Does the teacher help her? Does the teacher treat other students? Does the teacher help her with her homework? Has the teacher done anything specific that was unkind?
4. **Scenario:** Jordan thinks he always messes up. **Question:** What evidence would help Jordan prove this thought is NOT true? **Example Answer:** Think of times he has succeeded. "Always" and "everything" are extreme words. Ask others what they think he is good at.
5. **Scenario:** Emma thinks everyone had fun at the party except her. **Question:** What evidence would help Emma check if this is accurate? **Example Answer:** Did she have ANY fun moments? What did other people say or do? Did she actually see everyone having fun? Did anyone else look bored or uncomfortable?
6. **Scenario:** Alex thinks he'll fail tomorrow's test. **Question:** What proof would tell Alex this isn't true? **Example Answer:** He studied and prepared; he's passed tests before. This is a prediction, not a fact; he won't know until he takes it.
7. **Scenario:** Maya thinks her friend is avoiding her on purpose. **Question:** What proof should Maya look for to check if this thought is true? **Example Answer:** Has her friend been busy with something? Is her friend sick or dealing with family stuff? Has Maya tried talking to her directly? Did the friend respond when Maya reached out?
8. **Scenario:** Sam thinks he's the only one who doesn't understand the new math unit. **Question:** What evidence would help Sam know if this is true? **Example Answer:** Are other students asking questions? Do classmates look confused? Has he asked anyone else if they understand? What did the teacher say when others asked questions?
9. **Scenario:** Ryan thinks nobody ever wants to be his partner. **Question:** How would Ryan decide if this is true or not? **Example Answer:** Has he asked anyone yet? Who was his partner last time? Do people talk to him in class? Has anyone said they don't want to partner with him?

Sample responses for each card



# Practical Details



## Grade Level

3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>



## Made For

Individual or Small Groups



## File Format

PDF



## AND

Low prep

Use in multiple sessions



## Printing

Color & BW



# Looking for more like this?

Challenging Negative  
Thinking Activities



Positive Thinking Activity  
and Craft



School Counseling CBT  
Tools Bundle





# Hi! I'm Laura

I create research-driven, uncomplicated tools and resources designed to build students' social and emotional skills in counseling or the classroom.

During ten years as a school psychologist, I wore all the hats - but the one I never took off was supporting my colleagues.

Whether you're a first-year counselor or a seasoned teacher, I want you to have the tools you need to support each student.

Visit [my blog](#) for more ideas and [subscribe](#) for exclusive resources!

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