

Traffic light thinking: Pause / Think / Answer

Metacognitive skill targeted: monitoring, self-regulation

Age group: 8+

Materials needed

You can use the attached pictograms to help you follow the steps every time you need.

Activity Description

This exercise helps you slow down, **think carefully**, and **understand better** before speaking, asking a question, or solving a problem.

Instructions

If you are given a task to complete, always remember the three steps: red, yellow, and green.

Step 1: RED = PAUSE

STOP and take a breath.

Don't answer right away. Give your brain a moment to get ready.

Ask yourself:

- What is the question really asking?
- What do I already know about this?

Wait for **20–30 seconds** before moving on.

Step 2: YELLOW = THINK

THINK it through.

Take time to reflect. You don't need to rush.

Ask yourself:

- What are some possible answers or ideas?
- Can I explain this in my own words?
- Is there something I don't understand?

Write or whisper your thoughts if that helps!

Step 3: GREEN = GO!

GO ahead now.

You're ready to ask your question or try to solve the problem.

Options:

- Say or write your answer.
- Raise your hand (if in class).
- Talk it through with a partner.
- Write down your question if you're still unsure.

Useful Tip

You can use this Traffic Light Thinking any time you feel stuck, confused, or excited to answer quickly. It helps you **be a smart thinker, not just a fast one.**

Here's a quick practice activity:

1. Read this question:

Why do we have day and night?

2. RED (Pause):

Take a deep breath. Count to 10.

Think: What do I already know about this?

3. YELLOW (Think):

Think of 2 things you know.

Write or say them:

- _____
- _____

4. GREEN (Go!):

Write your answer or your question:

- My answer: _____
- OR My question is: _____

Traffic Light Thinking

