

# THE THINKER

GATE/SAS Student Newsletter

Winter 2011



All knowledge is connected to all other knowledge. The fun is in making the connections.  
Arthur Aufderheide, Paleopathologist

## Welcome to *The Thinker*!

Welcome to *The Thinker*, a newsletter designed for Los Angeles Unified School District's GATE/SAS students. *The Thinker* will examine what it means to be gifted and talented (hint: it isn't always as easy as people think). *The Thinker* will also highlight helpful resources for academic and social-emotional support, enrichment, and boosting your brain power. This newsletter will be published quarterly and will be available to view/print out on [www.lausd.net/gate](http://www.lausd.net/gate) under Student & Parents. If you have ideas or helpful resources to share for the next issue of *The Thinker* (available March 2012), please submit them in writing to:

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### Interesting GATE Facts

#### Did you know...?

- There are an estimated **3 million** gifted students (grades K-12) in the United States (according to the National Association for Gifted Children, [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)).
- There are approximately **63,000** identified gifted students in LAUSD — and countless more who are potentially gifted!
- LAUSD identifies gifted students in **seven different categories** — High Achievement, Specific Academic Ability, Intellectual Ability, Creative Ability, Leadership Ability, Visual Arts, and Performing Arts (dance, theatre, and voice). You don't have to be gifted in everything but you can be identified in more than

### Scholarly Traits

Which of these characteristics of a scholar do you possess? Which do you struggle with?

- Scholars come with a half a "cup" of knowledge ready to learn more. They practice academic humility.
- Scholars ponder ideas.
- Scholars take intellectual risks. They think "outside of the box."
- Scholars take pride in the quality of their work!
- Scholars look at the world using many perspectives.
- Scholars have questions and want to seek the answers.
- Scholars save ideas.
- Scholars exercise their intellect. They learn to persevere.
- Scholars have goals they want to reach (long and short term)
- Scholars use a variety of resources and references.

(Dr. Sandra Kaplan, USC)

### Nobody's Perfect!

It is important to have high expectations for yourself, however, when you start to become too self-critical, just remember...

- ✓ Walt Disney was once fired by a newspaper editor because he "lacked imagination and had no good ideas."
- ✓ Albert Einstein did not speak until he was four years old or read until he was seven.
- ✓ Oprah Winfrey was let go from her job as a news reporter because she was "unfit for TV."
- ✓ J.K. Rowling's first *Harry Potter* book was rejected by twelve publishing houses before being published.

### Arts Enthusiasts!

Did you know that the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) offers FREE memberships to kids and teens (ages 0-17) through their Arts for NextGen program? NextGen members can also get one free adult admission with each visit. Go to [www.lacma.org/arts-for-nextgen-lacma](http://www.lacma.org/arts-for-nextgen-lacma) for more information.

### Khan Academy

Khan Academy is a website with over 2,700 educational videos about math, history, science, and more. If you are struggling with a particular standard, check out [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) to see if there is a video to help out. Khan Academy also has a section on "brainteasers" and practice exercises.

## A Gifted Child's Bill of Rights

Del Siegle, National Association for Gifted Children (2007)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. You have the right to know about your giftedness.                             | 5. You have the right to feel good about your accomplishments.               | 9. You have the right to choose which of your talent areas you wish to pursue. |
| 2. You have the right to learn something new every day.                          | 6. You have the right to make mistakes.                                      | 10. You have the right to not be gifted in everything.                         |
| 3. You have the right to be passionate about your talent area without apologies. | 7. You have the right to seek guidance in the development of your talent.    |  |
| 4. You have the right to have an identity beyond your talent area.               | 8. You have the right to have multiple peer groups and a variety of friends. |  |





## Exploring Optical Illusions

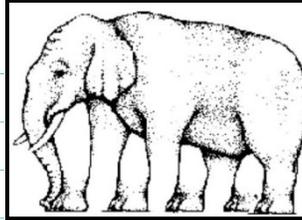
What do you see?

Look again... do you see something different?



How many legs does this elephant have?

Now count again!



Everyone sees and experiences visual illusions in different ways. You might see one thing and your friend might see another... or even more frustrating, some people can't see the illusion at all!

For more amazing optical illusions, visit the following websites (ask your parent or teacher first):

- <http://opticalillusions4kids.blogspot.com>
- <http://slodiver.com/inspiration/optical-illusions-for-kids>
- <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/illusions/index.htm>
- <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/chvision.html>
- <http://www.michaelbach.de/ot/index.html>



Wow... how does that work?

Optical illusions (also known as visual illusions) are all about visual deception. Through arrangement of images, lines, and dots, as well as the impact of light, our eyes and brains get "tricked" into seeing something misleading.

## Brain Teasers: Critical Thinking Required!



"Brain teasers" are puzzles that require you to think creatively and logically. The answers may not come to you quickly — instead, you may need to ponder for awhile using multiple strategies like taking notes or drawing pictures.

Try the following brain teasers to challenge your mind (don't peek yet, but the answers are listed at the bottom of the page):

1. Name three consecutive days without using the words Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.
2. The island of Elbonia has an eccentric postal system. Postage for an item can be from 1 dinar to 15 dinari, depending on the weight and size of the package. Exact postage must be used and

there is only space for up to three stamps maximum. What's more, there are only three different denominations of stamps. Can you figure out what they are?

3. Using eight eights and addition only, can you write a number sentence that totals 1,000?

Adapted from <http://brainbashers.com>

## Heads Up: Common Core State Standards

As a student, you are likely well-aware that all students in LAUSD are held accountable to academic standards (content/skills you need to learn for each subject and each grade level). Teachers design lessons to address these standards, and the California Standards Test (CST) administered each May is a measure of your mastery of these standards.

Interestingly, these academic standards differ from state to state. This means that you could be considered proficient

in one state but not another, simply based on the standards and assessments used in your resident state. This has huge implications when you remember that students from different states will be competing for the same university spots and jobs once they graduate from high school! Where is the consistency? What is the solution?

LAUSD is joining a national movement to implement Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2014-2015. This means that the current standards and

assessments for English Language Arts and Math will be replaced by common national standards and assessments, adopted by 45 states so far. Stay tuned at your school for more information.

**Brain Teasers Answer Key:**

1. Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

2. 1 dinar, 4 dinari, and 5 dinari

