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| **Add Strange Restrictions** | |
| 1. Tiny Time limits | Take a task that has become simple, give a time limit, and complexity increases. On the other hand, give more time to reduce complexity. |
| 1. Very Short Lengths | 140 characters, or 10 words, or three sentences, etc. Interestingly, this can both increase and decrease complexity: advanced students must cram their ideas into a small space, while struggling students have less content to produce. |
| 1. Reduce Resources | Sometimes a strange set of tools produces an interesting result. This could mean limiting research materials, writing tools, electronics, writing surfaces, size of paper, type of paper, etc. For example, have 6th graders write an essay on kindergarten paper. You can bet this changed their approach to writing. |

\*Note that these restrictions parallel what you see in shows like Top Chef, Project Runway, of Chopped. Take a group of experts and give them unexpected limits. The results are often incredible feats of creativity.

### \*\*Restrictions Change Expectations

If the time limit is five minutes, you don’t expect the same results as if students had a week. If they’re limited to writing on a notecard, the expectation is not the same as if they had a computer to type on. The point is for students to see what they can do *with* the restriction.

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| **Complicate the Content** | |
| 1. Dig into the ethical issues of an idea. The pros and cons. What’s good and what’s bad? | A previously dry topic might come to life with ambiguity and conflict. |
| 1. Explore multiple perspectives | What would **\_** think about this? It gets even more interesting if this new perspective is a bit of a surprise. What would George Washington think of Ancient China? How would Juliet, from *Romeo and Juliet* judge Hermione Granger? |
| 1. Change over time | What was this idea like in the past? How will it be in the future? How have people’s views towards it changed? |
| 1. Teacher-led small groups | Think about the power of bringing your five top kids together (even for ten minutes a week) and pushing them a little.  In a small group, you can facilitate a deeper discussion, ask probing questions, tease out better responses, and push your expert students further. Is it a math lesson? Give them a couple “tricky” problems and see how they do. Reading a story? Ask about more advanced ideas: ethical dilemmas, similarities to other stories, theme, or author’s tone. |

\*Examples of these tools in action:

* Alexander the Great writes a tweet critiquing or praising Napoleon’s leadership.
* Compare and contrast a success or a problem in the U.S., looking at 1776 versus 1812. Write your response as a haiku.
* Create a scripted conversation between The Boy in *The Giving Tree* and Brian from *Hatchet.* One character must give the other advice about their main problem. You have ten minutes. GO!