

Thinking speed.



No 2: Thinking Speed

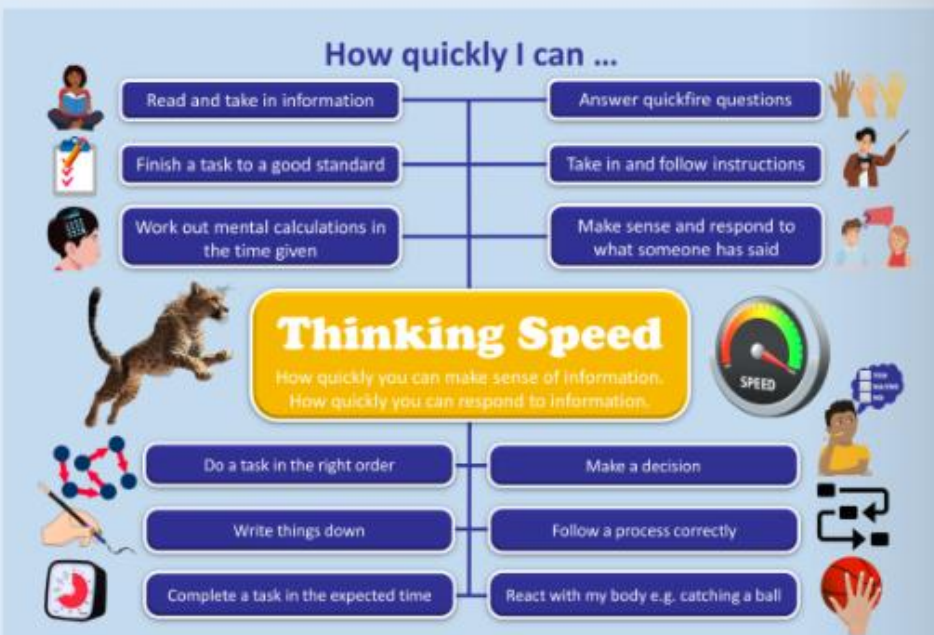


What is Thinking Speed?

Thinking Speed is how fast you can take in information you have heard or seen, make sense of it and then react.

Thinking Speed makes a difference to how quickly we can reply to a question; how fast we can read or how quickly we can finish a task.

Here's a mind map to explain Thinking Speed more:



Different Speeds of Thinking: Introducing Cheetah & Elephant

How fast is your thinking?



Cheetah Thinkers:

Some people are cheetah thinkers. They can take in information and reply at super-fast speeds.

You probably know some cheetah thinkers: people who can work out a maths calculation really quickly or answer questions in a flash.

Cheetahs are the jokers who give fast, witty replies or react quickly in a card game.

Elephant Thinkers:

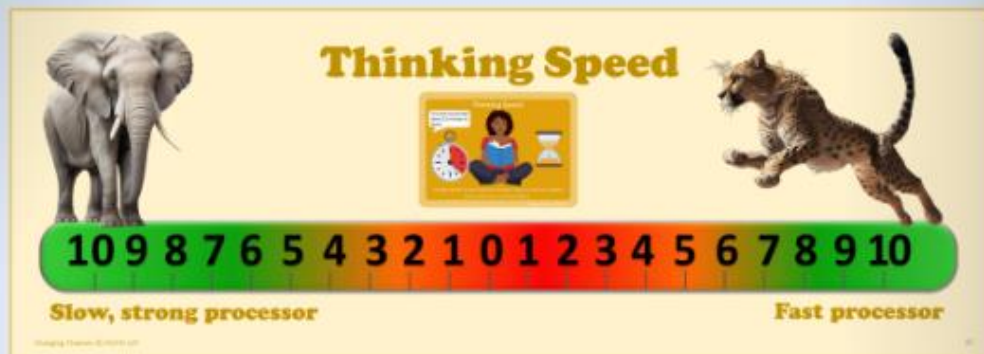


Other people may be strong, deep thinkers who take longer to make sense of information and respond.

They might take ages to reply to a question or follow an instruction.

They may still be reading the first page of a book when others are half-way through.

Thinking Speed



Elephant thinkers are great at:

- Checking things through and making sure the details are correct
- Thinking things through carefully and weighing up options
- Thinking deeply and coming up with new ideas and inventions
- Imagining and thinking of creative ways to solve problems

Cheetah thinkers are great at:

- Finishing a job quickly
- Getting changed quickly
- Answering a quickfire question
- Finishing a piece of work on time

Which is best? Fast Cheetah or Strong, slower Elephant?

Neither. Each is just helpful in different situations.

Cheetah thinking is great when you are:

- Playing a fast game of cards like snap



- Taking part in a timed quiz

- Reacting fast in a sports ball game



- In an emergency when you have to make a quick decision.

Cheetah thinking is **not** so great for things that need careful reflection and planning.

It is not so good for thinking through lots of different ideas or the pros and cons of doing something.

Elephant thinking is best at those times.

Which is best? Fast Cheetah or Strong, slower Elephant?

Elephant thinking is great when you need to:



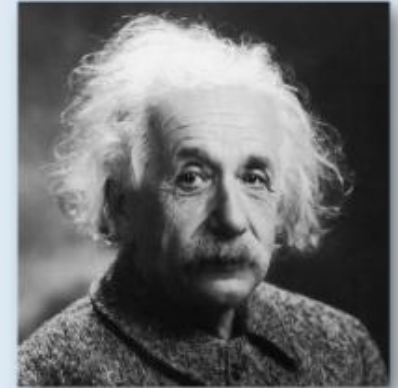
- Plan a big project
- Think through an important decision and there's lots of things to take into account



- Work out a complicated problem
- Think about the ideas and views of different people

Are Cheetah Thinkers more intelligent than Elephant Thinkers?

Definitely not! Some of the cleverest people in history have been elephant thinkers.



People think that Albert Einstein (pictured right), one of the best scientists ever, may have been a slow, deeper thinker.

Having slower thinking speed **does not mean a person is not clever.**

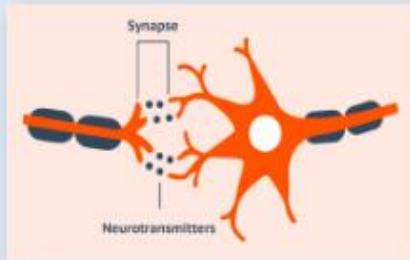
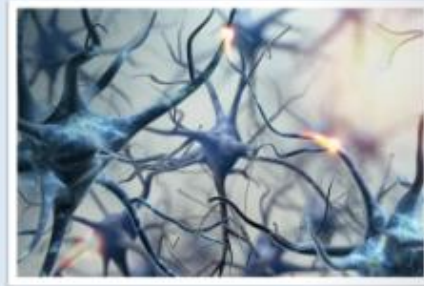


Just like someone can have poor eyesight **and** be an amazing athlete, someone may have very slow thinking speed **and** be very intelligent.

Why do some people have slower Thinking Speed?

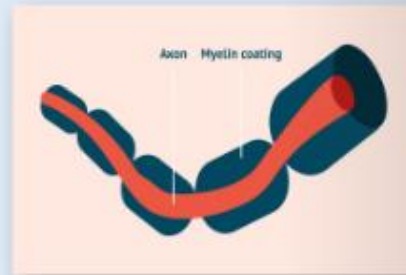
Remember the neural firing described at the start of this book?

We described how messages get passed from one neuron to another over a gap called the 'synapse'.



Scientists think that some people have bigger gaps between their neurons because the dendrites (those branches) are shorter.

They think some people may also have a thinner myelin sheath (that fatty coating along the trunk which helps messages to travel faster).



The bigger gap and the thinner myelin means that it takes longer for the signal to travel. And this makes thinking a bit slower too!

Do people have the same Thinking Speed for everything?

No. We may be able to react super fast when reacting with our body in football yet take AGES to read something.

We may be super fast at reacting with our hands on the X-Box yet take AGES to write.



We may be super fast at thinking of ideas and telling people what we think yet take AGES to process what someone is saying to us.

That means we may blurt out our ideas really quickly yet take a long time to respond to a question someone asks.

We may be able to process information in a graph or flowchart quickly but take longer to make sense of writing.

What can stop us from thinking so quickly?

Just like our Working Memory, **Thinking Speed** can get worse when our physical or sensory needs are not met well.



If we are in pain ...



If we feel too hot or cold.



If we are tired ...



If it is too noisy ...



If our clothes feel itchy or too tight ...

What can stop us from thinking so well?



If we feel left out ...



Or feel adults are not on our side.



If we don't feel capable at something.



Or we are worried about what might happen to us.

All these things can slow our thinking down even more. That means it is important we talk to someone we trust and work out solutions together.

How fast is your Thinking?

It's really important to know your own Thinking Speed for different tasks and situations.

It means you can Prep4Best and let people know what speed of information will be best for you.

How fast or slow is your own Thinking Speed at different times and for different tasks?



Are you more of a fast, quick-thinking **Cheetah Thinker**?

Or are you more of a stronger slower **Elephant Thinker**?

- **When do you think faster?**
- **When do you slow down and think more deeply?**

How **others** can help you to process information well

If you are a slower, stronger thinker, there are lots of things that other people can do to help:



How others can help you

- 1. Slow and clear:** ask people to speak slowly and clearly.
- 2. Thinking Time:** ask for extra thinking time – work out how long you normally need and ask for that much at least.
- 3. Preview and Practice:** Ask for lots of time for pre-learning and practice for any tasks which will require quick fire thinking. This will help you to learn the information so well that it comes to your mind easily and is automatic.
- 4. Time reminders:** Ask people to let you know how long you have to complete a task. Ask for regular time reminders or set yourself reminders.
- 5. Less is more:** ask adults to keep the same level of challenge and difficulty for you but give you less to do e.g. in maths – keep the calculations the same difficulty but give you 5 instead of 10 to complete.
- 6. Reduce the 'cognitive load' in tasks** – the number of different things to think about at once. (We know when 'cognitive load' is bigger it can slow a person's Thinking Speed). A diagram showing two human heads in profile. The first head has a large, dark, multi-colored shape on top representing a high cognitive load. An orange arrow points to the second head, which has a smaller, simpler dark shape on top, representing a reduced cognitive load.
- 7. Clear and brief:** ask for information in a clear, organised way with visual supports such as simple diagrams or pictures.
- 8. Chunked:** ask for information and instructions in groups of 3 things to remember or less.
- 9. Make it practical:** ask for lots of practical, real examples.

