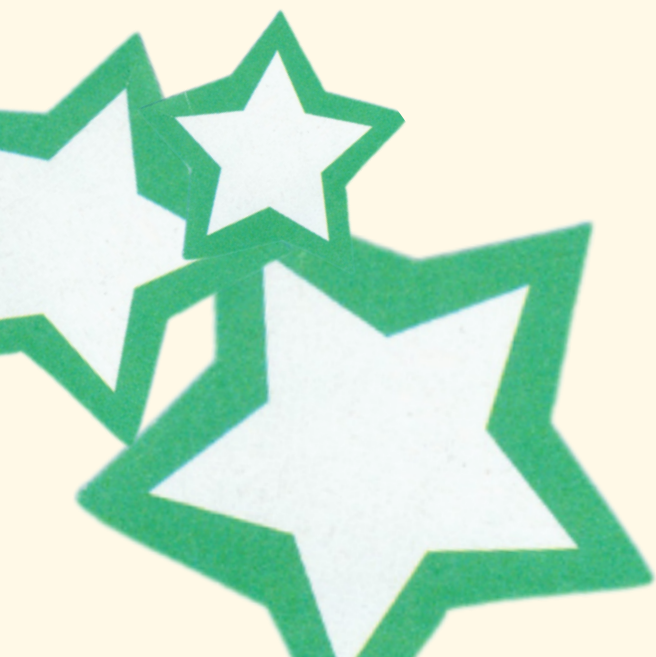


A Toolkit for Gathering

for Creativity Champions



64 Million
artists

THE
JANUARY
CHALLENGE

Welcome!

The January Challenge offers 31 days of free, accessible creative prompts. We have written a toolkit for gathering that suggests how you could use the prompts (or create your own prompts) to bring people together to explore issues that matter locally and at scale, and to mobilise change.

You can use this guide to help people:

- **Feel seen, heard and welcome in creative spaces.**
- **Unlock their creativity (no special skills required!)**
- **Use creative prompts to spark reflection, dialogue, and ideas.**
- **Explore the issues that matter to you and to them and take small, meaningful steps towards active change.**

There are 7 key steps. Take from this guide whatever feels helpful to you - and let us know how you get on by keeping in touch at hello@64millionartists.com



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Step One:

Choosing your themes, or call to action

What is on your mind? What is on the minds of the people around you? What topics do you want to explore together?

- Perhaps you're thinking about global issues; climate change, social justice, political or economic turbulence, inequality.
- Perhaps you're thinking on a local scale; about navigating unrest in your area, local youth provision, or how to advocate for better transport links.
- Or perhaps you're thinking hyper local to your place of work; about your workplace culture, about flexible working hours, or embedding creativity across your library, school, care home, NHS trust, charity or other workplace...

Your call to action doesn't just have to be about navigating challenges. You could use this to get creative and workshop ideas for your year-round provision, or how to celebrate an upcoming event or holiday.

Your call to action doesn't need to be decided by you. Ask the people around you to shape your ideas and let them bring to the table the topics they want to talk about. If you feel you can helpfully hold a space to navigate that issue - go for it!

Some of the topics mentioned, and others not mentioned here, might be sensitive issues that provoke feeling and opinion. Remember that this is an opportunity to help facilitate proactive discussion that leads to accessible action. As a facilitator, you do not need to be an expert in the issues at hand - but you do need to be informed and feel able to hold a space in which everyone can contribute and share in appropriate ways. Creative activities can fuel exciting conversation (we think and speak in a different way when our hands are busy) and your role here is to harness that into tangible steps towards change.

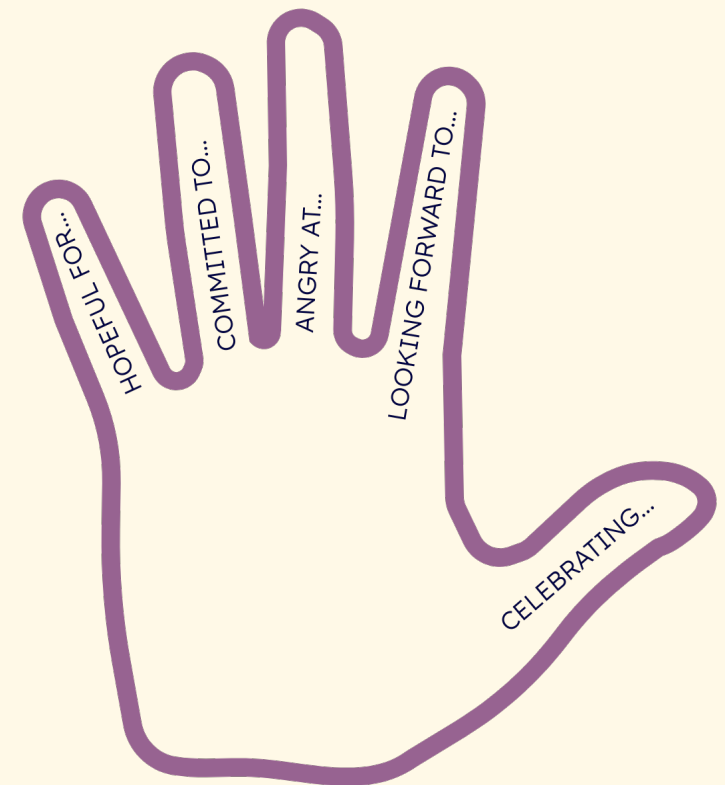
Step One continued:

Choosing your themes, or call to action

Here is a helpful exercise to help you and others take a moment to reflect on what's on your mind. Take as long as you need - but this can be done in 5 minutes.

- Draw around your hand on a piece of paper.
- In your thumb, jot down the things that you are celebrating, that feel great, that are bringing you joy.
- In your index finger, write down the things that you are looking forward to, or working towards. Where are you headed?
- In your middle finger - put the things that you are cross about! What are you sticking your middle finger up to? What is making you angry?
- In your ring finger, the things that you are committed to. What are your hardcore, non-negotiable values? What do you know to be true, about you?
- And in your pinky finger, the things that you are hopeful for. What is your wish for yourself, for others, for the world?
- Take a moment to look at the themes or thoughts that have come up for you. What is feeling relevant?
- Perhaps you've found the thing that you want to explore more, with others - waiting for you there in the palm of your hand.

Once you've chosen your call to action - it's time to gather round...!



Step Two:

Preparing to gather

There are so many ways to host and take part in The January Challenge, as discussed in earlier pages of this pack. This framework is a guide to gathering and using the prompts as steps towards change. So, how to go about it?

Choose a time and place that works best for the people you want to come along.

Meet people 'where they are' - that might be in the staff room, a local community centre or hall, a private room in the office, or even online.

Consider the time you gather; do you want people to bring their lunch, or will they have to take time out of their working day? Would you like it to be an after work/school/day event, and if so - think about parents navigating bedtimes.

Ask a few people! What time works best for them?

Your session can last as long as you like - but anything over an hour should include a **comfort break**. If you're planning on meeting several times over January (and beyond!) you might want to keep your sessions short to help you manage your time and capacity.

If you're going for a one-off event, we recommend no more than three hours, so that you keep up momentum and maximise engagement.

If you're gathering online - maintain the focus on accessibility.

You might want to activate captions in your meeting software, have regular screen breaks, or give people access to any slides you put together beforehand.

If you're gathering in person, check the space for potential barriers to access.

Is it wheelchair accessible? Are there accessible toilets close by? Is it warm, and dry? Does it feel private enough for people to be vulnerable and share their creativity? Are you able to offer hot drinks with a kettle (not necessary - but helpful!)

Step Three:

Invite your community

Write a simple invitation explaining where, when and why you are gathering - and what they might expect from coming along. Tell people in person, on social media, on email, slack, Teams, WhatsApp - use whatever you have access to! If it's an open event and you're inviting a wider community, keep a registration list so you know roughly who to expect. On Eventbrite and Luma you can create free and user-friendly event pages.

Let people know:

- When and where you are gathering
- Why you are gathering - for example, 'Join us to explore how we collectively navigate cuts to public funding. We will use simple creative activities to help fuel our discussions, and we'll leave with some tangible actions...'
- If it is a closed or open event?
- What access support you have available (and ask them if they need anything further)
- If you want them to prepare or read anything in advance (keep this to a minimum)
- If they need to bring anything with them (again - keep this to a minimum)



Step Four:

Choosing and adapting the prompts to work for your session aims

The January Challenge is full of quick, everyday creative prompts. Each one is designed to take just a few minutes, but as a Champion, you can stretch or adapt them into group activities that open conversation, spark ideas, and build connections. Think of the prompts as doorways. They give people an easy way in, but once you're inside the room you can move the furniture around...!

You can invite people to use them:

- **Individually:** everyone responds to a prompt on their own, then comes together to share what they want to of their responses or reflections.
- **In pairs or small groups:** people create something together.

You can select them:

- **Thematically:** pick prompts that connect to the theme or call to action you've chosen, and use them to explore it from different angles.
- **As a springboard:** start with a prompt, then let the group shape where the conversation or activity goes next.

Whenever you can, use or adapt the prompts to link them to bigger conversations. The prompts are deliberately simple, but when people's hands are busy, they might think differently. Use that energy and encourage people to reflect on what they have created, how it makes them feel and why.

You can also design or use your own favourite creative activities! The 31 January Challenge prompts are helpful inspiration. The creativity does the work of opening the thinking and the conversation. Your role is to help people connect the dots between the playful activity and the bigger theme you're exploring together.

Step Four continued:

Choosing and adapting the prompts – examples in action

Prompt example: “Capture the view from your window. What do you see when you look out of your window each day? Has your view of the world, or yourself, changed over time?”

Individually: Each person spends five minutes sketching their view and share the creations. Prompt them to link this to how we imagine change - what happens when we see our world differently?

Group adaptation: What do you want to see out of the window/ in the world? Why is this? What do you see if you imagine a better future? Prompt the group to communicate and listen to each other and create a collective vision.

Prompt example: “Create a chain of hope.”

Small groups: As the group crafts a chain together (you can use paper, material, paper clips – anything you can find!) encourage conversation about the ‘chain’ ingredients or actions needed to take steps towards the change you want to see.

Write them down as you go – perhaps the group can already identify what they could do to proactively take a step forward.

Reflection: Ask, what does this tell us about how we’re feeling as a ‘chain’ or connected group?

Prompt example: “I come from... (insert location)...and therefore I CAN”

In pairs: Encourage conversation between partners invites them to share where they come from, and why that gives them a certain skill/knowledge/ way of being that they are proud of. It can be something small or big.

Reflection and sharing: What are we capable of doing being from this location? How can we harness this collection of unique individuals with unique talents and ideas?

Step Five:

Delivering your session

There's no one right way to go; your session should feel comfortable for you to host, and accessible for those who join. Here is a suggested structure.

1. Welcome & Warm-up

- Start by welcoming people in and setting the tone. Remind them there's no right or wrong way to participate and that they can take breaks when they need.
- Lead a quick check-in to help people arrive. Ask everyone to share one word about how they're feeling, or invite them to doodle their mood on a scrap of paper. You might choose one of the 31 prompts as a check in.

2. Creative Exploration

- Choose one to three of The January Challenge prompts (or your own!) and invite people to have a go.
- You might encourage individual responses, pair work, or small group exploration.
- Keep it lightly structured - the prompts are springboards, not instructions.

3. Sharing & Reflection

- Come back together and offer people the chance to share what they made, thought, or felt. Sharing is optional, some people prefer to reflect quietly, but always give people the opportunity.
- You might ask: What surprised you? What did this spark? What connections are you making?

4. Closing & Next Steps

Before you close the session, take 10–15 minutes for a whole-group reflection. This is where ideas and connections can become action. You might ask questions like:

- What did you notice or learn today?
- What themes came up in our conversations?
- What do we want to take forward - individually or together?

5. Invite each person to leave with one small action.

Invite people to share an action they are taking away from the session out loud in a closing circle. Write them down to help you keep a track. They don't need to be grand, in fact, the smaller the better.

Some examples might be:

- Share today's prompt with a friend.
- Start a conversation at work about something that came up.
- Set up a WhatsApp group with your group to keep the conversation going
- Write a letter to someone with influence expressing your ideas
- Look up a local group or resource related to your theme.
- Try another January Challenge prompt tomorrow...!
- Look ahead: if there's energy, plan a follow-up session. It could be as simple as meeting again in a month to share how people's small actions went.

Step Five continued:

Delivering your session – example agendas

Quick session (30–45 minutes)

- Welcome & warm-up (5 minutes)
- One prompt activity (20–25 minutes)
- Reflections and closing (10–15 minutes)

Standard session (60–90 minutes)

- Welcome & warm-up (10 minutes)
- One or two prompt activities (30–45 minutes)
- Reflections and sharing (20 minutes)
- Closing (5–10 minutes)

Longer session (2–3 hours)

- Welcome & warm-up (15 minutes)
- Multiple prompts or activities in small groups (60–90 minutes, with a break)
- Sharing and plenary reflection (30 minutes)
- Closing circle (10–15 minutes)

Remember, change doesn't just mean big campaigns or sweeping reforms. It might look like:

- A group of colleagues feeling more open and connected.
- Somebody rediscovering their creativity or a long lost skill
- A small idea that gains momentum

Step Six:

Facilitating safer spaces

You don't need to be an expert facilitator to host a creative gathering. Your role is to hold the space with care, and to keep things moving. Here are a few top tips.

You can find more facilitation tips throughout the [Champions Pack](#), and in our [Guide for Facilitation](#) online, and in person.

Encourage equal voices:

If someone is dominating sharing back, gently invite others in ("let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet").

Set the tone early:

Remind people this is about curiosity and exploration, not performance or perfection.

Acknowledge emotions:

Sometimes creativity touches on things that feel vulnerable. If emotions that feel hard surface, treat them with kindness, acknowledge and make space for them.

Allow for quiet:

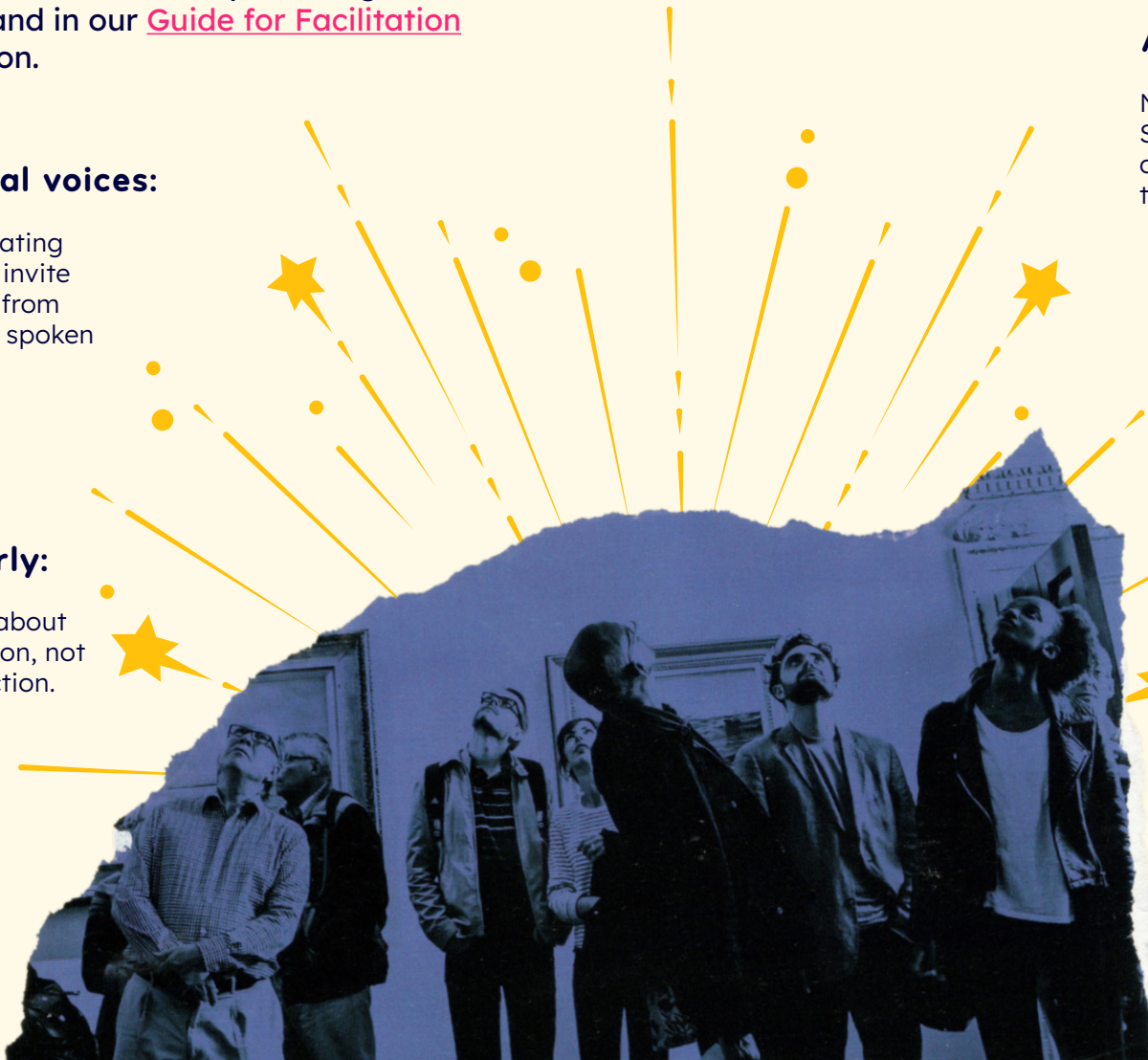
Not everyone wants to share verbally. Silence, doodles, or a thumbs-up in the chat (if hosting online) are all valid ways to participate.

Keep it proactive:

People are more likely to return if they leave feeling energised, not drained.

Reflect as a facilitator:

Afterwards, give yourself a few minutes to jot down what worked, what felt tricky, and what you'd like to try differently next time.



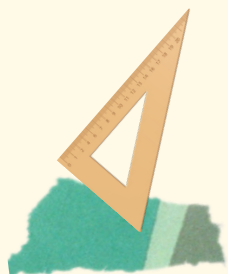
Step Seven:

Creative Evaluation

Evaluation is an important part of any process, helping us to identify what worked well, what was more challenging – and to understand why.

Knowing what you, and the people that you work with gain from your creative activities will support you to do your work, and to advocate for creativity in your group or team setting.

What do you hope to achieve with your creative gathering and how you will know if you have met your impact goals?



Measuring impact

Knowing who takes part and how it makes them feel is helpful learning for all of us! Take some time to consider what impact might mean for you - where is your baseline? And where do you want to go?



Creative tools

Use creative feedback methods like a feedback wall or a walk and talk or simply asking people what they've enjoyed, or found challenging, within an activity.

You can find more ideas for creative evaluation tools on our online '[Impact Wheel](#)', designed by our Research Associate's tialt.



Accessing support

We are running a free training session on November 6th to support you to use this toolkit and the Creativity Champions Packs..

Sign up at 64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge - and find a recording on the website after the date.

Let's connect

The January Challenge 2026 will be the last hosted by 64 Million Artists - so we want to hear from you more than ever!

Let us know how you get on with your creative gatherings, what you're celebrating and your ideas for the future.

Thank you for being 1 of 64 Million Artists.



www.64MillionArtists.com

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hello@64millionartists.com



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Thank you!

We hope this was a useful guide, let us know how you use it or share any feedback by keeping in touch at hello@64millionartists.com

