



# THE JANUARY CHALLENGE 2026

Creativity Champions Pack  
for Schools



Pearson

ef Esmée  
Fairbairn  
FOUNDATION

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

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Graphic Design by Nathan Canty

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To save on paper and print only the creative prompts and posters - select print pages 17 - 50.

# What is The January Challenge?

**The January Challenge is 31 creative prompts to help you explore your imagination - each designed by people and communities from across the UK. Creativity Champions (that's people like you!) use the prompts to nurture creative cultures in workplace and community settings.**

At 64 Million Artists, we believe in creativity as a tool for change. Being creative, even in a quick 5 minute activity, can help us change our mood, our mind, our perspective. It can help us better understand and express ourselves - and it can help us better understand and listen to others, too. In times of stress, uncertainty or turbulence, taking small moments for creativity can have larger ripple effects. It can shift our mindset, where we are better able to problem solve, reimagine or communicate; it can help us make friends or build community; it can support us to develop the technical and soft skills needed to navigate complex situations. It can also just be...fun! An opportunity to spark joy or calm, and reconnect with our human instinct to play and explore.

You can use this pack to create the conditions for the people around you to be creative together. But that doesn't mean you're doing this alone - you're part of a community of thousands of people who also believe in creativity as a powerful tool for change, and we hope you'll draw on their support and encouragement on our social media channels throughout January.



We hope this Pack feels like a useful resource for community groups, friends, family and offices alike. In this Pack you'll find top tips, a framework for gathering, and all the prompts ahead of time and ways to adapt them for your setting. We warmly invite you to share [the download link](#) with your networks.

We also have an Easy Read resource, and Welsh Language resource to support engagement if helpful. Find the [Easy Read Pack here](#) and the [Welsh Language Pack here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

# Why take part?

The world today feels complex, deeply divided, and (often) an exhausting place to be. We're living through crisis after crisis: from the pandemic to the climate emergency, political polarisation to rising inequality. It's easy to feel like we're running out of time, energy, and hope.

But we are not running out of our capacity to be creative. **Creativity is our abundance. It's what makes us human. It fuels our ability to imagine, to collaborate and act.** The January Challenge (and our new toolkit for gathering, which you can find on page 16) is one way of activating that collective creative power, because conversation isn't enough. We need creativity to catapult us further. We need inclusive and accessible spaces to explore what comes next.

**As a Champion, you can use this guide to spark creativity, build connections, and create ripples of change in your workplace, community, or home.** You don't need to be an expert, or to have loads of time and energy to commit to it. Small can be mighty! All you need is curiosity, care, and the belief that creativity belongs to everyone. Thank you for being a part of The January Challenge.



Photo Credit: Lucian Koncz



Photo c/o Rashilee Care Home



Collage by Ruth Nixon

# The January Challenge 2026 will be our last

As many of you will know, it has been a challenging couple of years for anyone running a social enterprise. Grants are hard to come by, and whilst our creative facilitation and training work continues to thrive, it has become more and more challenging to support our public programme. For this reason The January Challenge 2026 will be our last. We are immensely proud of everything we have achieved. We have helped over 750,000 people reconnect with their creativity; supported a change in cultural policy with our Everyday Creativity and Cultural Democracy in Practice reports and done significant research into the impacts of creativity.

Having courage to make change even when it feels challenging feels like an important legacy to hand on. So, the last ever January Challenge has the theme of courageous change - supporting you to make bold decisions too in your communities, organisations, settings and personal lives. We want to end the public programme as we started it, as a bold, loud campaign for everyday creativity and its power to make change.

To find out more about this decision, and our onwards plans, visit [64millionartists.com/blog](http://64millionartists.com/blog).

Here are a few words from our CEO Jo Hunter, on the journey it has taken over the years.

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE



If you had told me 12 years ago that I'd be writing the introduction to the final January Challenge I wouldn't have believed you. Not because I thought it would be ending, but because I couldn't have imagined the amazing journey it would have gone on in between.

It started as an idea just for me. I was struggling with career indecision, and a big break up and feeling lost. So I decided to take a month off and asked friends, colleagues and family to set me a creative challenge to do every day. It helped me throw off my perfectionism, take risks, feel freer and develop new ideas. And it made me want to do that for many many more people.

The first January Challenge was me putting a post on Facebook saying 'I've got some challenges left over from my month and I'd love to do them in January - if anyone fancies joining me let me know.' It started off with around 200 friends (and a few strangers) and the following year we jumped to 750, then 1500, then more and more.

Last year we had 360,000 people taking part in schools, workplaces, communities and families up and down the country, and beyond! We've made so many amazing partnerships with artists, community groups, and national campaigns and we are so proud of the legacy of everyday creativity we've left. We will miss you all next January but we hope you'll keep up the tradition. The world needs creativity now more than ever, and your creativity can and will change the world.



# Creativity in action: The impact of The January Challenge

The [data](#) that we have collected over the years tells us that The January Challenge sparks imagination, connection and courageous change across communities, workplaces, and organisations.

Through the support of Creativity Champions, hundreds of thousands of people have engaged with the creative prompts over the years, building creative confidence, boosting wellbeing and a lasting momentum that continues well beyond January.

We have been working with our Research Associates [tialt](#) to explore and make the case for Creativity for Change and we are proud of the legacy that this research and data will continue to have in the sector and in the world.

Tialt have been working with us to develop an 'Impact Wheel', pictured right. We are testing it as a way for organisations (and individuals) to think about the different ways that creativity has an impact on people.

Different parts of the wheel explore all the ways that creativity has been shown to affect people. The wheel is linked to a set of questions you might like to explore as when taking part in creative activities to see what impact it's having on you or the people you work with. You can explore the wheel on the beta version of the website at [readymag.website/u38253527/5011467/](http://readymag.website/u38253527/5011467/)



**tialt**  
THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

# Our School Partner

This resource is designed for schools to use and make the Challenge their own - you could be getting creative in the staff room, classroom, hallway, form time, playground - go for it! You'll find some top tips for facilitating creative activity in a group setting in the toolkit on page 15, alongside creative prompts and suggestions for group activity from page 16 onwards. We also have an Easy Read resource to support engagement if helpful. [Find the Easy Read Pack here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge).

The Pack has been kindly informed by Pearson, but it also draws on the wisdom of schools 64 Million Artists have worked with over the previous few years, including Daventry Hill School, National Society for Education in Art and Design and Thomas Tallis Secondary School.

»Pearson

Jaclyn Wiid  
at Pearson



Creativity is the heartbeat of learning. In the art room, it's visible in every idea that takes shape, but it also echoes across every subject, helping students think critically, solve problems, and express who they are." - Jaclyn Wiid

Creativity transforms maths from a subject of rules into a space for exploration. It's not just about getting the right answer, it's about how you get there, what you discover along the way, and how you make sense of the world using mathematical thinking"- Vicky Wood, Maths and Statistics at Pearson

# Who else has designed the creative prompts this year?

We have worked with several brilliant people and organisations to co-create The January Challenge 2026. We have had lots of fun designing this year's campaign and are excited to be working with these fantastic people to bring the Challenge to life.

You can read more about them all on our website – it's a treat!



Jackson's



hapus

Ar gyfer ein  
illes meddyliol  
For our mental  
wellbeing



Pearson



The  
Charity  
Learning  
Consortium



Wales Arts  
Health & Well-being  
Network  
Rhwydwaith Iechyd a  
Llesiant Celfyddydau  
Cymru



Disability  
Rights UK



Libraries  
Connected



Here are some examples of how schools have used The January Challenge in the past...



I used (the Challenge) in a SEN college art session. The students shared more about their experience than they normally do in sessions. They were also proud of trying something different.

*Teacher*  
Creativity Champion 2025



After School Family Workshop run by Simon Batchelor - Creativity Champion for The January Challenge 2024



Poetry Workshop with Michael Rosen at Thomas Tallis School for The January Challenge 2024!



I am a second-level teacher and used several of the prompts in my Junior English classes. It not only enhanced their classroom experience but has improved the relationship I have with the students and their parents.

*Teacher*  
Creativity Champion 2025

# Using the pack

This Pack includes the 31 creative prompts, alongside lots of top tips, ideas and resources like posters and signposted links. To make the most of your Pack we recommend you follow these steps:

1.

## Explore the prompts

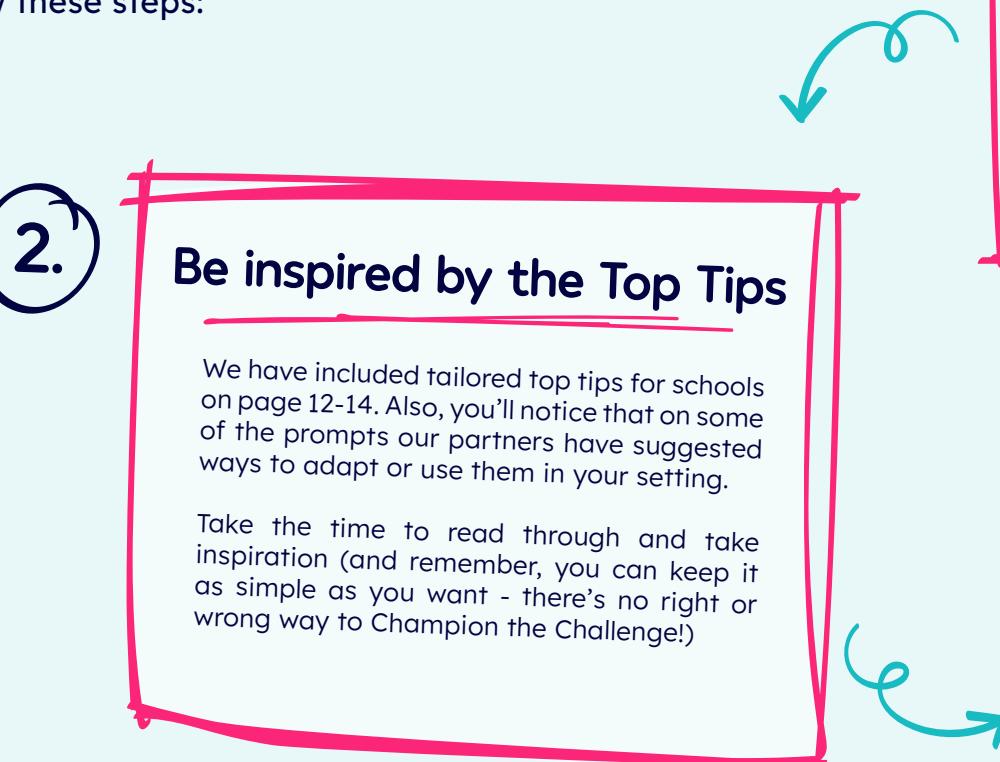
Read through the 31 prompts. What are you drawn to? What ideas come to mind about how you could get creative with the people around you.

Remember, you don't have to take part in all 31! Pick and choose your favourites, swap around the order...make it work for you.

## Be inspired by the Top Tips

We have included tailored top tips for schools on page 12-14. Also, you'll notice that on some of the prompts our partners have suggested ways to adapt or use them in your setting.

Take the time to read through and take inspiration (and remember, you can keep it as simple as you want - there's no right or wrong way to Champion the Challenge!)



2.

## Discover the Toolkit for Gathering

The theme of this year's Challenge is Courageous Change, and we hope the prompts inspire you to make small (and big!) changes in your world.

We have written a toolkit for gathering, in which you can use the prompts to spark meaningful conversation and positive action. Find the toolkit on page 16 and consider how you could gather the people around you...

3.

# Before we begin

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The January Challenge is a celebration of creativity - 31 accessible creative activities to help inspire doing, thinking and sharing in the (long!) month of January. Each prompt is designed by different people and communities, and they are activities that belong 'in the everyday' - you should be able to take part no matter who you are, where you are, how old you are, or how creative you believe you are.

Creativity is a big word! It's a word that can make people recoil, or make people feel at home. You have probably seen both happen in real time. How do you feel about your own creativity?

**We believe in eight guiding principles that help you create the conditions for a creative, change-inspiring January for the people you want to get creative with:**

1. **Creativity belongs to everyone.** No special training or talent is needed to participate in The January Challenge and associating workshops or meetings.
2. **Safety and care are essential.** People must feel respected to participate fully.
3. **Let it flow.** The creative prompts will open doors for conversation and ideas. Let your participants shape where things go.
4. **Small steps count.** Focus on connection and small actions, not big outcomes.

5. **Keep it simple.** People and conversation matters more than materials.
6. **Keep it free.** We know that we all have free access to our creativity. Limit as many barriers to participation as possible and demonstrate that creativity is something that belongs to all of us.
7. **Keep it accessible.** Consider timing, childcare, translation, step-free access. Ask your audience what they need to take part.
8. **Make it work for YOU, too.** This guide is simply a guide, make it your own, use it within your capacity and bite off only what you can chew.

## Fun incentives:

How many creative prompts can each staff member, student or tutor group complete? Who is the first to complete the creative prompt? Could you offer simple things for people taking part, like entry into a raffle for (chocolate) goodies or creative supplies. Small incentives can encourage more people to join in!

## Collaborative creativity:

Encourage community involvement through collaborative creativity, like a community mural or collage, or a shared piece of writing, where everyone can contribute. Several of the prompts can be adapted for use in this way - and we've left a note on the ones we think might work nicely!

## Work with the students:

Do you have a school council, a perfect system or student leaders group? Introduce them to the campaign, and ask them how they could support you to introduce it to their peers. They will have plenty of ideas to get you going - and it's great to have their buy in and insights.

## Provide multiple ways to take part:

If it's within your capacity, you could offer various ways for people to interact with the creative prompts. Set up weekly creativity groups, organise workshops, drop-in sessions, themed events, or set up creative stations around the home where users can engage in activities at their own pace.

# Some Top Tips!

## **Involve everyone – if that works for you:**

Involve everyone - if that works for you: You could encourage participation from students, staff, and families. Consider creating a buddy system to foster collaboration and community spirit, and chat to parents about it if you have the chance. You could set up the creative prompts as homework and encourage families to take part together outside of school. However - you might have very specific goals in mind, and limited capacity. Don't overwhelm yourself, it's better to do something small well then to try and do too much and burn out!

## **Be flexible:**

This is an important one! Adapt the prompts to fit your school's unique environment. Feel free to modify the activities based on age groups, interests, and available resources. Although we have already identified some ways to adapt and utilise the prompts in different environments - all schools, and all learners, are different. So go for it! Make it your own.

## **Use available resources:**

Leverage materials already present in the school, such as magazines, craft supplies, or even everyday objects, to keep activities accessible and budget-friendly. The January Challenge will not require you to use any special equipment - but occasionally will invite you to use the things around you to get creative.

## **Encourage reflection:**

After each prompt, invite participants to reflect on their experience. This can deepen engagement and help everyone appreciate their own creative process.

## **Engage your local community:**

This is a great opportunity to create or enhance local connections. You could reach out to your local library, perhaps organise a trip to the library to run a creative session there, explore their resources or share your creations with them! Let your local paper or radio station know you're taking part - it's exciting and encouraging to have the support of local media cheering you on.



### Join in:

By modelling the activity (and not being perfect) you give others permission to take a risk and not worry about 'getting it right'. School is often a place where there is a right or wrong - a pass or a fail. This is an opportunity to embrace mistakes or simply doing something for the sake of it. Remind everyone that creativity is about exploration. Encourage a culture where creativity is the end goal - not necessarily a beautiful outcome.

What would you add to the mix...?

### Provide support:

Offer resources, light touch materials, and share guidance for teachers and staff. Consider hosting workshops or meetings to brainstorm ideas and share best practices.

More  
Top Tips!

open more doors

### Celebrate outcomes and the creativity of your school:

Creativity is even better shared! Create a way to share and celebrate the work. It might be an exhibition, gallery or a sharing session where participants present their work. You might share online, in assemblies or within a weekly email bulletin. Although we always value process over product, it can boost pride and confidence to share the work created.

### Encourage reflection:

After each prompt, invite participants to reflect on their experience. This can deepen engagement and help everyone appreciate their own creative process.

# A Toolkit for Gathering

The January Challenge offers 31 days of free, accessible creative prompts. With lots of change in the air at 64 Million Artists, and in the world, this year's theme is around 'Courageous Change' - supporting you to make bold decisions too in your communities, organisations, settings and personal lives.

So, new for this year, 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 the toolkit to support people to:**

- **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.**

You'll also find helpful tips on how to facilitate inclusive spaces, and creatively evaluate your sessions.

**There are 7 key steps in the toolkit. We encourage you to 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](mailto:hello@64millionartists.com).**



Photo Credit: Lucian Koncz

**Download the  
toolkit [here](#).**

If this Pack is printed, find the toolkit at  
[64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



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# The Creative Prompts



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# Versions of You

## Day 1:

Imagine you are in a photobooth, ready to capture four different images of you. Capture four photos or drawings of yourself, in four different ways.

We all have different sides to ourselves, moods we find ourselves in, roles we might play in communities or relationships, or ways we respond to our environment.

You could choose to capture the four versions of you during one day...waking up, on a commute, eating lunch, relaxing at home. It could be four feelings...silly, angry, surprised, relieved. It could be the four versions of you during one week...in solitude, in a public place, caregiving or socialising.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
64 Million Artists.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



### Top tip:



You could use this activity for a form-time identity & wellbeing check-in: Students (and staff!) create four self-portraits showing different moods, roles or strengths e.g. "me as a friend," "me learning," "me when I'm tired," "me being brave".

In a SEND or primary setting, this could be done through emojis or collage. You could start a discussion on how we all change and adapt throughout our days/weeks/lives!



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# Find Your Rainbow

Day 2:

Create a rainbow.

Find a selection of materials around you that are different colours and layer them to build your own rainbow. Size, shape, colours and materials are up to you!

You could find your materials in nature, and build your rainbow outdoors for someone else to discover...

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Bexley Wellbeing Partnership



**Bexley Wellbeing**  
Partnership

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

Top tip:



From the team at Pearson:  
This could work well as a group activity too, such as in tutor group or an art classroom!



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# Hope in the Dark



## Day 3:

January can feel long, cold and dark. It might not feel like there is much hope to be found in the world right now. Or you might feel full of hope for the year ahead!

Take 5 minutes to draw or create something in response to the prompt title 'Hope/light in the Dark.'

You might collage, sketch, create with words, food or pencils.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Gloucester Community Building Collective

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



### Top tip:



From the team at WAHWN:  
This could work well with young people in a school, maybe where there is climate anxiety.

It offers something positive to focus on and imagine a brighter future.



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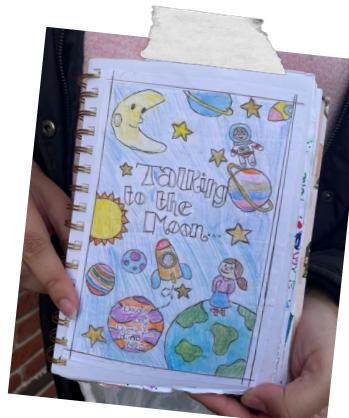
# Draw the Lyric

## Day 4:

Choose a quote or song lyric that is meaningful to you.

Write the words down, and surround it with doodles and drawings that represent its significance.

If it's a song lyric, why not play the song whilst you create!



Here is an example from Young Pioneer, Renee!

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Young Pioneers at Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living.  
In partnership Disability Rights UK

Read more about them [here](#)  
or visit [64millionartists.com/  
thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



### Top tip:



Lovely for a music lesson!  
But also great for English  
(interpreting text), art (visual  
symbolism), and wellbeing  
(self-expression).

Teachers can share their  
own examples to model  
vulnerability and creativity.



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# Tear and Transform

Today's creative  
prompt has been  
dreamed up by:  
Pearson Subject  
Advisors

Pearson

Read more about  
them [here](#) or visit  
64millionartists.com/  
thejanuarychallenge

## Day 5:

Take a piece of paper - anything will do (plain, lined, scrap, newspaper, leaflet, post-it...)

Tear, cut or fold the paper to create a shape or object inspired by your plans for today - Monday 5th January 2026. Perhaps your back to school or work today, or perhaps something else entirely is on the agenda. Transform the paper into something new for the week ahead.

### Top tip:



This could be a nice ice-breaker for students and staff!

Give each group a scrap of paper, they tear or fold it into an object that represents "something we want to bring into the new term."

Everyone explains their creation. Fun, low-barrier and tactile.



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# Text to Song

Day 6:

Sing what you see! Perhaps it's words you can find around you - a utility bill, newspaper, a street sign. Perhaps it's things - you might describe your view, your outfit, or the person next to you in your melody!

Experiment with quiet and loud sounds. What rhythm do the words inspire? How does what you see make you feel? Perhaps you can express different feelings with different sounds.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: the 64 Million Artists Community.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



In a primary setting this could be a nice exercise to practice sounds and phonics.



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# Bold Thoughts, Bold Images



## Day 7:

Today's challenge is for you, however old you are now. Take a moment to sit comfortably, pause, and connect with yourself. Let your imagination lead you.

Now, imagine a future version of yourself, older than you are now. What are you doing? How are you being creative? Does that image of the future make you feel **BOLD**?

Create an image about your future older self. You could include images of yourself, objects or symbols that represent you, words or statements that matter to you, and your inspirations - music, poems, art, dance, anything you love.

You could have a go at turning your creation into a collage or a zine.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
CADA; Creative Ageing Development & Agency

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

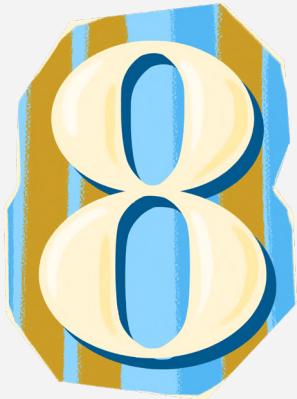


### Top tip:



You could pair older and younger students (or older staff with younger students!) to share their images and ideas, building intergenerational understanding.

[Explore CADA's radical creative ageing fanzines](#) - celebrations of creative reflections on ageing that invite us to think differently about later life.



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# One Brush Stroke



## Day 8:

Make an image with one continuous stroke, using a brush, pen or another mark making tool. Focus on capturing the essence of whatever it is you are drawing. Think about simplicity and let your marks flow. Focus on the process, not the outcome.

Share your creation with others, 'I challenged myself to express everything in a single brush stroke - no edits, no layers, just presence. Want to try? Pick up a brush, take a breath, and share your own.'

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Jackson's Art Supplies

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



### Top tip:



From the team at Pearson:  
Really focus on the process, not the outcome here. This is something we try so hard in Art to help students with as they can fixate so much on an outcome it stifles their creativity.



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# Flag of Unity

Day 9:

A flag is a sign, signal or symbol of something. Design a flag that symbolises unity, as a demonstration of love, inclusivity and belonging.

Think about what messages or images you'd like to share on your flag. Maybe it's words of welcome or affirmation, or symbols or imagery of different things that represent unity in your neighborhood. Design your flag using whichever materials you like.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Pearson Subject Advisors

 Pearson

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

Top tip:



From the team at Pearson:  
This could be also great idea for a tutor group or a class activity - adapt the prompt to create a flag that represents their group.



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# Your Journey

## Day 10:

Your body takes you on a journey throughout every day. Today, take up to 10 pictures of where you are at different points. Notice where your feet are throughout your day. What are you standing, sitting or lying on? Do your feet move a lot, or a little? What can you see or not see?

At the end of the day, reflect on your 10 pictures or drawings. Does anything surprise you? Write down any thoughts or feelings that come up.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Gloucester Community Building Collective

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



### Top tip:



Encourage reflection on the daily journeys we take - big and small.

Could you find a collection of great books about great journeys in the school library?



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# Body Portrait

Day 11:

Draw a picture of your body, but not of how it looks, rather how it feels to be in it.

You might want to draw your picture with your eyes closed so you can use all your senses to feel into your body, or maybe even use your other hand to feel it as you draw.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: the 64 Million Artists Community.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



From the team at Pearson: This could be a nice activity to do with students who have exams coming up this year.

Get them to imagine they are sitting down to their first exam and do one portrait to imagine how their body feels in that moment, then get them to imagine themselves a year from now fulfilling a future ambition (whether that is being in college on the course they really want, or working as an apprentice etc.) and do another portrait imagining how their body feels then.



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## Paper Planes

Day 12:

Find a piece of paper, and on it write down one intention for the year ahead. It could be a place you'd like to go, a connection you'd like to make, or a feeling you'd like to foster in yourself or those around you.

Once you've written it down, turn it into a paper plane and fly it high in the sky!

Find a quick paper plane video tutorial [here](#), or search for one online.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Charities Learning Consortium.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



The  
Charity Learning  
Consortium

Top tip:



Write one intention for the term, fold into a plane, and "launch your goal."

In assemblies or staff meetings, everyone could fly their plane at once.

You could also swap writing for drawing. Can also tie this into physics lessons about flight!

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# Shape the Day



## Day 13:

Today's prompt is to create shapes using your body. You could put on a song, and make big or small shapes in response to the beat and rhythm.

You could draw a shape on a map, then go for a stroll or run and let the shape determine your route.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Bexley Wellbeing Partnership



**Bexley  
Wellbeing**  
Partnership

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

### Top tip:



This could be a nice movement energiser or morning stretch moment...



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# Blwyddyn Newydd / A New Year



## Day 14:

Does the new year inspire change in you? What kind of change (or not)? Write a short poem that captures how you feel about the new year. You could call it 2026.

“Poetry is integral to our culture as Welsh speakers, as is clear from the National Eisteddfod and the popularity of poetry in radio programmes and live events. This is an opportunity for our advanced learners to get to know one of the foremost practitioners in modern Wales and encourage them to engage more with this aspect of being a Welsh speaker.”

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
National Centre for Learning Welsh



Y Ganolfan  
Dysgu Cymraeg  
Genedlaethol —  
National Centre  
for Learning Welsh

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

### Top tip:



A great moment to celebrate multi-linguism in your school!

# 15

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## Creativity is Potential!

Day 15:

Look around you, and find one small object that stands out. Observe its color, texture and shape. What else could it be?

Change it to something outside of its normal use. Can you transform into something new - a sculpture, a poem or a story?

What are the hidden potentials in the object? Did this change the way you see it and open up new possibilities? How does it relate to other objects around it?

Share a photo of the object and a short story description that explains the exciting new possibilities it might offer the world. Invite others to think about what else the object could become, and explore more potential in the object together.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
The Agency of Change

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



If you have a creative writing group - this could be a great warm up! Place one random object on a table each week - such as a key, spoon or stone. Invite the group to write about what else it could be or what story it might tell.

# 16

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## Messy Play

Day 16:

Lay out a big piece of paper or an old sheet, or old newspaper - anything that can cover a large surface area.

Now get messy!

Use paints or any mark making materials around you to throw them at your canvas..."yes, even in a library!"

You could gather people together for a messy party...crack on and get the energy out!

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Public Libraries with Libraries Connected



Libraries  
Connected

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

Top tip:



From the team at Pearson:  
This could help with discussions of breaking out of the restraints that inhibit creativity.

The physical movement and lack of care about 'mess' can be so liberating, but often in classrooms it is limited so having this time to be 'free' is fantastic.



THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

# Your Favourite Place

Today's creative  
prompt has been  
dreamed up by:  
National Youth Arts  
Wales. In Partnership  
with Hapus

Read more about  
them [here](#) or visit  
64millionartists.com/  
thejanuarychallenge



## Day 17:

Visit a favourite nearby place - it could be a quiet park, a bustling museum, a cosy kitchen or a windy countryside trail. Pause, close your eyes and listen. You might hear the chirping of birds, the crunch of leaves underfoot, the hum of a microwave or the soft chatter of voices.

Use your phone (or any recording device) and capture some of these sounds. Then add your own contribution to the sounds around you - recite a poem, sing a song or play an instrument. Let your voice or melody blend with the sounds around you. Record it all at once or mix the sounds later on your phone (or computer) to create your own unique soundscape - capturing the magic of your special place and how it feels in that moment.

### Top tip:



Ask everyone to bring a sound, image, or description of a place they love.

You could combine the results into a shared soundscape called "The Sounds of Our Community."



THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

# Treasure Hunt

Day 18:

What treasures are there in your home, place of work, community or local neighbourhood?

Spend 5 minutes or more exploring and collect anything you consider precious (that you are allowed to take!)

Gather your items and photograph, draw them or make a sculpture out of them, make a display to share with your neighbors or community. You could invite others to build on your treasure drawing or sculpture to build a bigger picture of what is treasured and spark connections.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Gloucester Community Building Collective

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



You could go on a “school treasures” hunt and find objects, places or people that make school special.

Display drawings or photos as a collective gallery of gratitude.

# 19

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## Chain of Hope

Day 19:

Create a Chain of Hope. The chains could be paper chains or textile chains, or linked paper dolls - anything that links together to demonstrate a sense of connection and belonging.

In Warm Welcome Spaces up and down the country, friendships are forged and community is built. Who can you invite to continue your chain of hope?

Share an image of your chain of hope during [Warm Welcome Week](#) - 19 to 25 January 2026, let's chase the winter blues away with a surge of colour.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: Warm Welcome Campaign.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](https://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



You could level this up to be a whole-school project - and combine into a display around hallways.

Great for Anti-Bullying Week or SEND inclusion projects.



THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## Find a Face



### Day 20:

Find a face or a smile hidden in the things around you. It might be hidden in the objects on your table, a pattern you find in a wall or pavement, or perhaps you even find your hidden face in nature.

When you notice a 'smile' say something kind to yourself in your mind, or one positive thing about yourself "I am..."

If you can't find a smile in the things around you, how might you make someone smile today?

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Hapus

hapus

Ar gyfer ein  
illes meddylol  
For our mental  
wellbeing

#### Top tip:



This activity promotes mindfulness and noticing - so could be a nice tool to use when working with an anxious child.



THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## Turn It Up

Day 21:

Listen to a piece of music that makes your heart SOAR!  
Turn it up and listen again.

Respond to the music in any way you desire - dance, sing, lie down, share it with someone and invite them to share a song with you.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Bexley Wellbeing Partnership

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



**Bexley  
Wellbeing**  
Partnership

Top tip:



Do we hear a whole school playlist coming on...?!

# 22

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## I Aspire...

Day 21:

Use the writing template below to explore the things that you can do, or the things that you know, because of the place or community you are from.

I come from....therefore I CAN.....

“In my library, I notice that local young people can lack aspiration, and tell me it’s because of where they’re from. They say if they were from a big city they could do this, and that, but not here. I want them to think about what they CAN do, because of what they know about themselves and the world, BECAUSE of where they’re from. It could be a really small thing!”

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Public Libraries with Libraries Connected



Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

Top tip:



From the team at Pearson: You could give students some inspirational examples using diverse role models from your subject. For example, for maths, show them one of [these posters](#) and give example quote, e.g for Katherine Johnson “I come from hard-working parents (her mother was a teacher and father was a farmer and handyman), therefore I can do maths at NASA”



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CHALLENGE

# Pen Explorer

Day 23:

Imagine your pen is an explorer.

Begin on the left hand side of a page, what kind of landscape or path does the explorer first encounter? Spiky mountains, winding squiggly roads, a deep sea? Continue to take your pen through a landscape of textures until you reach the end of the page.

Can you recognise any patterns in the journey of your pen, and any journeys you have taken in your life?

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Hannah Gorf, NHS Gloucestershire

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



A nice quiet form time activity whilst students arrive and settle!



THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

# A Memorial for...

## Day 24:

Think of something you have been meaning to let go of. It might be a chapter in your life, a piece of clothing or an old banana in the fruit bowl...

Hold a memorial for it. Celebrate or mark the time you had together with it. If it's a feeling or event in your life, you might write your thoughts down and speak it aloud - letting it go into the wind. If it's an object, you might pass it forwards, re-purpose it, or simply take the time to say thank you, and goodbye.

This prompt was co-created in a 64MA community group with DEAD GOOD, creative death workers and arts-based death educators.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: the 64 Million Artists Community.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



### Top tip:



Create a reflective space where people can write down something they want to let go of, a worry, an old habit, or a memory.

Notes can be placed in a "Letting Go Box" and, if appropriate, symbolically recycled or composted later. A thoughtful wellbeing activity.

# 25

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## Window Reflection

Day 25:

Use your phone or camera to capture either the view from your window. Don't overthink! Take what feels honest, not perfect.

Consider how light, shadow, time of day, or weather influence the view. Take multiple shots, from different angles, with/without you in it.

Has your view of the world, or yourself, changed over time? How does the world appear through your current lens?

"I collaborate on creative projects with people of all ages and I've had the privilege of working with older people in care home settings. I use cameras and technology and this has been a very accessible way to make work. This prompt is designed in a way that can be done as a solo challenge or one with a carer, friend or relative. Participants of all ages can give it a try."

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: Graeme Roger. In Partnership with Luminate.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



This works beautifully for home-learners too, as a point of connection and reflection.



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CHALLENGE

# Connect the Object

Day 26:

Pick 5 random objects around you and gather them together. Find a connection between all of them, no matter how random your selection! What do they have in common?

Write about what connects them. The connection might just be you! You could write about what they all mean to you. Do you feel differently about them now you see them together and in relation to one another?

If you can't make a connection between them, create one! Write a story that includes all the items and link them through a narrative.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: the 64 Million Artists Community.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



This could be a fun storytelling game.

Groups collect random classroom objects, then create a story connecting them. Boosts teamwork, literacy and imagination.

Staff could use the same idea for creative CPD energisers.



THE  
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CHALLENGE

# Weave Together

Day 27:

Today's theme is 'weave'. To create a weave, use natural materials like sticks or leaves and weave them together to create a simple pattern. WAHWN are working with Chris Elliot to explore the craft of weaving - [learn more about weaving and find instructions on how to create a weave in nature here!](#)

You could also use strips of paper or material or pastry...or your fingers!

Reflect on what you have woven together in your life - the people, places, ideas and experiences. What do you hope to weave together in the future? What weaves are you part of?

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: Wales Arts Health and Well-being Network. In Partnership with Hapus.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

[Weave | Gwehyddu](#) is Wales' national arts, health and wellbeing conference. The conference organised by WAHWN in partnership with Wrexham University and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, aims to bring together 150+ creative practitioners, health and social care professionals, and policy makers from across the country.



Wales Arts  
Health & Well-being  
Network  
Rhwydwaith Iechyd a  
Llesiant Celfyddydau  
Cymru

Top tip:



As noted, there's several ways to approach this task!

It's a simple, tactile metaphor to help you reflect on the community that the school brings together.



THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

# My Book

Day 28:

Imagine the title of the book you've always wanted to write or read.

Create the front cover and title front cover of that book. What images, symbols and colours could you use to represent the themes in the book? What do you imagine the characters or world in the book to look like? If you like, you could create a simple zine to further imagine the book you want in the world

[Here](#) is a quick tutorial on how to make a zine, or search for one online!

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
Public Libraries with Libraries Connected



Libraries  
Connected

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)

Top tip:



You could expand this into some creative writing exercises - or it could compliment an exercise in which you are asking a student to better understand another person in history, or in drama - what book would they want to write?



THE  
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CHALLENGE

# A Quiet Conversation

Day 29:

"In social care, and in life, no one thrives alone. People, objects, and environments are constantly in quiet conversation, supporting us in ways we sometimes overlook. A hand reaching for another, the comfort of a familiar chair, the shared rhythm of daily routines, these connections help us all get through the day. For people living in care, these moments of interdependence are not only vital, they are deeply human.

Sometimes, what stands out most is something that looks or feels

different from its surroundings. A single flower breaking through concrete, a person whose story takes another path, an object placed out of place. Yet even in difference, connection and support hold these things steady, just as the care system helps carry those who need it most."

Your challenge: Look closely for hidden connections.

- Where do you notice people, objects, or places relying on each other?
- How do small, ordinary interactions create extraordinary meaning?

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
HIVEMIND

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



- Where does difference find its strength through connection?
- What stories do these connections tell us about belonging, care, and resilience?

Respond in any form that speaks to you, a photograph, a sketch, a poem, or a reflection.

**Top Tip:** You could use this prompt to celebrate random acts of kindness students and staff notice in the school.

# 30

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

## Pass It On



### Day 30:

Write a letter to someone. Anyone of your choice. Pick the first person who came into your mind.

Express how you feel about them or share something you'd like to tell them.

Once you've written your letter, think about what you'd like to do with it. You could hand deliver it, post it, read it aloud whilst thinking about or remembering them - or you could burn it!

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by: Charities Learning Consortium.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](http://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



The  
Charity Learning  
Consortium

#### Top tip:



You could make this a gratitude exercise - write a letter of thanks or encouragement to a peer, teacher, or community member.

Letters can be shared, delivered, or kept private. Staff can do the same to boost collegial support.

# 31

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

# Creativity for Change

Day 31:

Today is the last day of The January Challenge 2026 - and the final day of the final January Challenge! We have LOVED the last 12 years of creativity, and hearing about, seeing and sharing so many wonderful moments of creativity with everyone who has taken part. We know that moments of creativity create ripple effects in the world. We'd love to hear about yours.

**Today, your prompt is to take a moment to reflect, and then share a story about how creativity has made a change for you in your life.**

Use this link [padlet.com/64MA/thejanuarychallenge2026](https://padlet.com/64MA/thejanuarychallenge2026) to share your story or upload images or a voice note about a moment of impact creativity has had in your life. You might choose to write or talk about The January Challenge - or any of the (64 Million) ways creativity shows up in the world.

Today's creative prompt has been dreamed up by:  
64 Million Artists.

Read more about them [here](#) or visit [64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge](https://64millionartists.com/thejanuarychallenge)



Top tip:



Celebrate the stories of your school in an assembly!

# Share what creativity is... to you!



Thousands of people take part in The January Challenge and we love connecting with those people online. We've built an incredible community over the years, and by giving away these resources and toolkits we hope that you will carry on the creativity long after we've stopped hosting The January Challenge! Next year, using the ideas and frameworks in this Pack, you can be running your very own January Challenges wherever you are. You can find a wonderful creative community on Facebook [here](#).

Share your experiences with The January Challenge loudly and proudly online, in person and with whoever will listen to you! Who knows, you might inspire others to Champion creativity in their own ways, in their own communities, too.

To share what creativity means to you - you can print the next page, fill it in and take a picture with it. Include your groups and colleagues - or fly solo! Tag us @64millionartists



[Instagram](#)



[Facebook](#)

CREATIV!T iS ...

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THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

64 Million  
artists

WE ARE  
ALL CREATIVE

THE  
JANUARY  
CHALLENGE

64 Million  
artists

# Let's connect

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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, what you're celebrating and your ideas for the future.

**Thank you for being 1 of 64 Million Artists.**



[www.64MillionArtists.com](http://www.64MillionArtists.com)

Contact us via email:  
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[@64M\\_Artists](https://www.linkedin.com/company/64-million-artists)

# Thank you!



We hope you enjoyed The January Challenge 2026 and exploring how creativity can be a tool for courageous change in the world.

Although the Public Programme and The January Challenge as we know it is ending, 64 Million Artists continues to offer creative facilitation and training opportunities. [Sign up to our mailing list](#) to be in the loop of our next steps, and we hope to walk alongside you soon.

**We are so grateful for your support during The January Challenges past and present and are so proud of everything this amazing community has achieved.**

With love and courage,  
64 Million Artists



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**