

Six Thinking Hats

Developed by Edward De Bono, *Six Thinking Hats* is a framework for group discussion and individual thinking involving six colored hats. Utilizing this framework encourages parallel thinking and helps us switch between different modes of thinking simultaneously. The original book is here: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/0241257530> and a guide is here: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_07.htm

RED HAT



- Feelings
- Legitimizes emotion and intuition
- A “gut” reaction
- Try to verbalize it using one word, e.g., happy, upset, unsure

WHITE HAT



- What do we know?
- What do we need to know?
- Where are we going to get it?

YELLOW HAT



- Benefits and value
- Both existing and potential
- The logical positive

BLACK HAT



- Aspects to focus particularly careful attention on
- Critical analysis
- Pitfalls to watch out for
- Existing and potential downsides

GREEN HAT



- A more creative approach or strategy
- Deeply challenging the status quo
- Alternatives and possibilities

BLUE HAT



- Manages the thinking Process
- Plans the meeting agenda
- Thinks about the thinking
- “Bookends” hat that can appear at beginning and end of the full sequence

Notes:

Tip: It's useful to have someone facilitate the activity, explaining the Hats and leading the movement from Hat to Hat. Have someone else write up the observations. When the group has filled one big flipchart page, move on to the next Hat!

The discipline of a sequence of Hats can be really useful when exploring big new ideas, as it brings a sense of order to a journey which can, for many, seem confusing or unfocused (an inevitable part of diverging from past practice).