

## Four Box Synectics

**Purpose:** To engage students in reinforcing their understanding of words or concepts through the use of a creative comparison

**Description:** Synectics promotes fluid and creative thinking by comparing two things that would not ordinarily be compared. Synectics, a term coined by industrial psychologists Williams Gordan and George Prince, was originally used as a problem-solving strategy. The term is formed from two Greek roots: syn, *bringing together*, and ectics, *diverse elements*.

### Procedure:

1. Prepare a chart or overhead transparency of the Four Box Synectics organizer.
2. Put students into small groups of 3-4 each.
3. Next, ask for four items in an assigned category ( e.g., commonly found household objects, animals, things found in a forest, recreational activities, and foods). Place one item in each of the four boxes.
4. Reveal the sentence "A \_\_\_\_\_ is like a \_\_\_\_\_ because..." and allow groups three minutes to brainstorm sentences using each of the four items at least once. Students should try to complete as many sentences as they can in the time allotted.
5. After three minutes, STOP. The final step is for each group to choose the two sentences they like the best to share with the rest of the class.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (1998). Patterns and practices in the learning-focused classroom. Guilford, Vermont: Pathways Publishing

## Four Box Synectic


A \_\_\_\_\_ is like a \_\_\_\_\_ because...

# Sample Four Box Synectics for Database

(using common household items)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Closet</b></p> <p>A database is like a closet because it is used for storing information.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Drawer</b></p> <p>A database is like a drawer because it helps to keep information organized.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Trashcan</b></p> <p>A database is like a trashcan because you can delete any information you no longer want.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Doorway</b></p> <p>A database is like a doorway because it is a portal to your information.</p>

A \_\_\_\_\_ is like a \_\_\_\_\_ because...