

## TED Connection: Original Thinkers

### Overview

Mensa for Kids' TED Connections are short, easy to use guides that help teachers, parents and youth use TED talks in a classroom or home setting. Rather than a lesson plan format, they have a list of discussion questions, all at higher levels of thinking.



Organizational psychologist **Adam Grant** discusses the concept of “originals” and shares the unexpected habits they all seem to share.

**WATCH THE TED TALK AT:**  
[ted.com/talks/adam\\_grant\\_the\\_surprising\\_habits\\_of\\_original\\_thinkers](https://ted.com/talks/adam_grant_the_surprising_habits_of_original_thinkers)

## Think about it

1. Adam Grant says he passed on investing in Warby Parker because creators did not have a functioning website finished the day before the company launched and they all had back-up jobs lined up. Would you have invested if you were him? Why?

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2. Grant describes nonconformists as people who have new ideas and champion them; they stand out and speak up; they drive creativity and change in the world. What does he call these people? Who are three Grant mentions?

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3. Grant states that he has been a precrastinator all of his life. What does it mean to be a precrastinator? Do you think being a precrastinator is a good thing?

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4. Explore how you think Grant's early years of playing Nintendo tied into his idea of being a precrastinator from the beginning.

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5. What were the results of the study on how often people procrastinate? Did you agree with the results? Why or why not?

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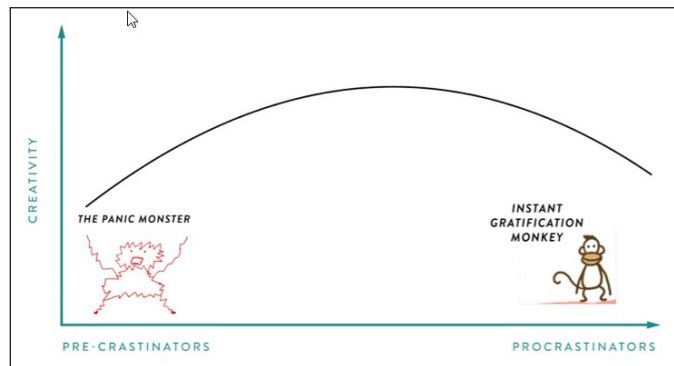
6. Do you think people were honest about how often they procrastinated? Would you have been? Analyze how dishonest answers could have impacted the results.

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7. Explain what the “sweet spot” for creative productivity is and draw a line where Grant says it can be found.

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**8.** When the concept of “moderate procrastinators” is introduced, Grant says that “procrastination gives you time to consider divergent ideas, to think in nonlinear ways to make unexpected leaps.” Can you recall a time when this has happened to you?

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**9.** Grant quotes Aaron Sorkin as saying, “You call it procrastinating. I call it thinking”. Analyze the differences between thinking and procrastinating. Do you think they are the same? How do you differentiate between them?

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**10.** Ultimately, Grant says, originals have three qualities that make them stand out:

- They are quick to start but slow to finish
- They feel fear and are afraid of failing, but they embrace it
- They have a lot of bad ideas before they get a few good ones

List five character traits you can infer from these qualities.

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## Do it

- Spend a whole day being the opposite of what you are – either a procrastinator or a procrastinator – and document how it feels.
- Start an “improver” list. Find things that you could improve and document how you would make the improvements.
- Research some of your favorite things and find out if they were first-time successes or if they were borne of failed attempts at other things.

## Read about it

- *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*, by Adam Grant

## Watch it

- *Original Thinkers: Dr. Mark Batey, Manchester Business School*: [youtube.com/watch?v=zuVMsyilBUE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuVMsyilBUE)
- *Adam Grant: Decoding the Psychology of Original Thinking*: [youtube.com/watch?v=PTuyCZd20m4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTuyCZd20m4)

## Surf it

- Visit Adam Grant’s website: [adamgrant.net](http://adamgrant.net)