



A Kid's Guide to Learning About Anything

By Dr. Cheryl Peterson

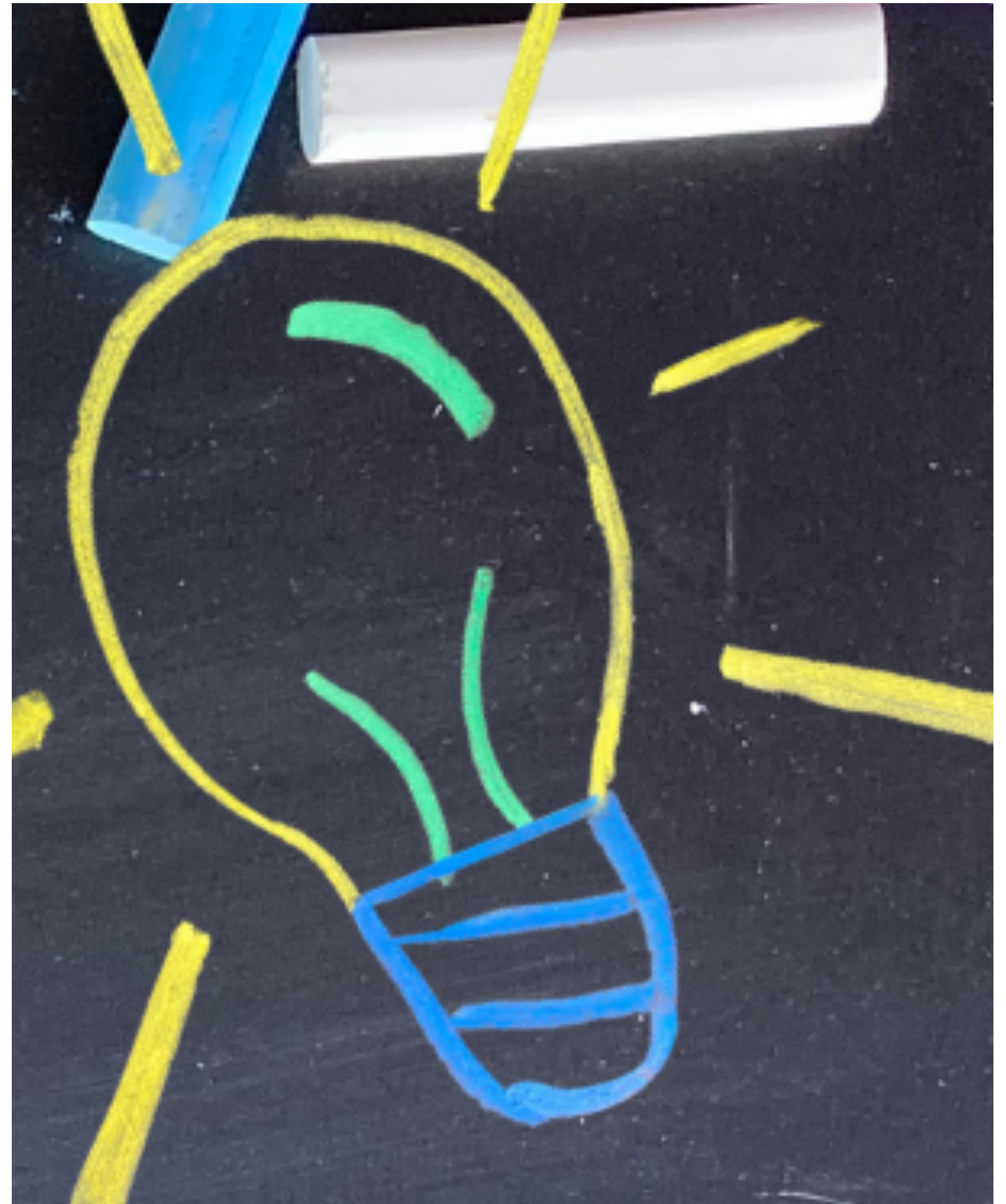
IDEAS

A Kid's Guide to
Learning About Anything

Dr. Cheryl Peterson

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This is MY idea, I thought. No one knows it like I do. And it's ok if it's different, and weird, and maybe a little crazy. I decided to protect it, to care for it. I fed it good food. I worked with it, I played with it. But most of all, I gave it my attention. My idea grew and grew. And so did my love for it. From: What Do You Do with an IDEA? By Kobi Yamada, 2013.





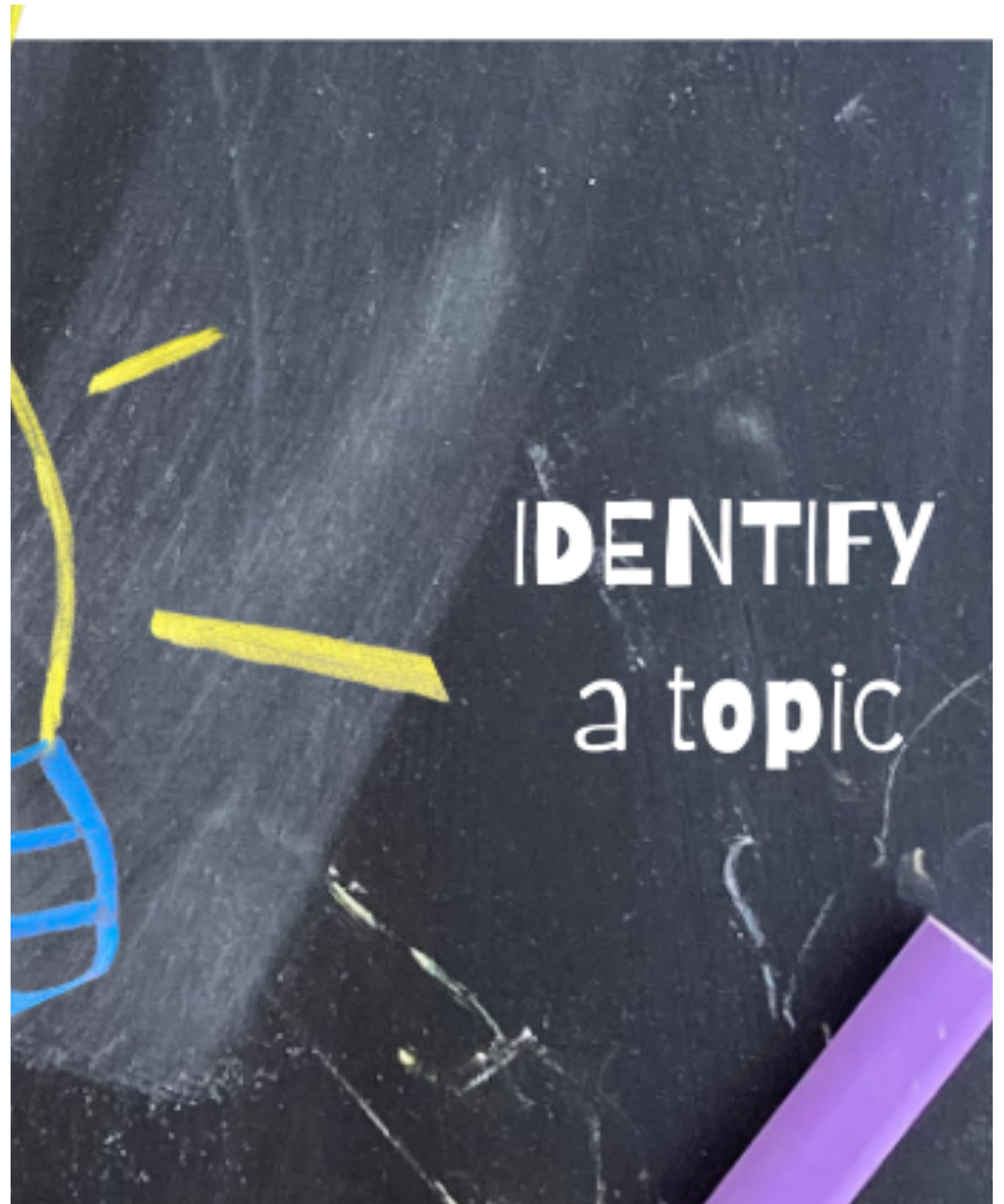
This book is dedicated to all the students and teachers who have shared their IDEAS learning with me and to my two favorite learners, my kids, Elena and Ben Peterson.

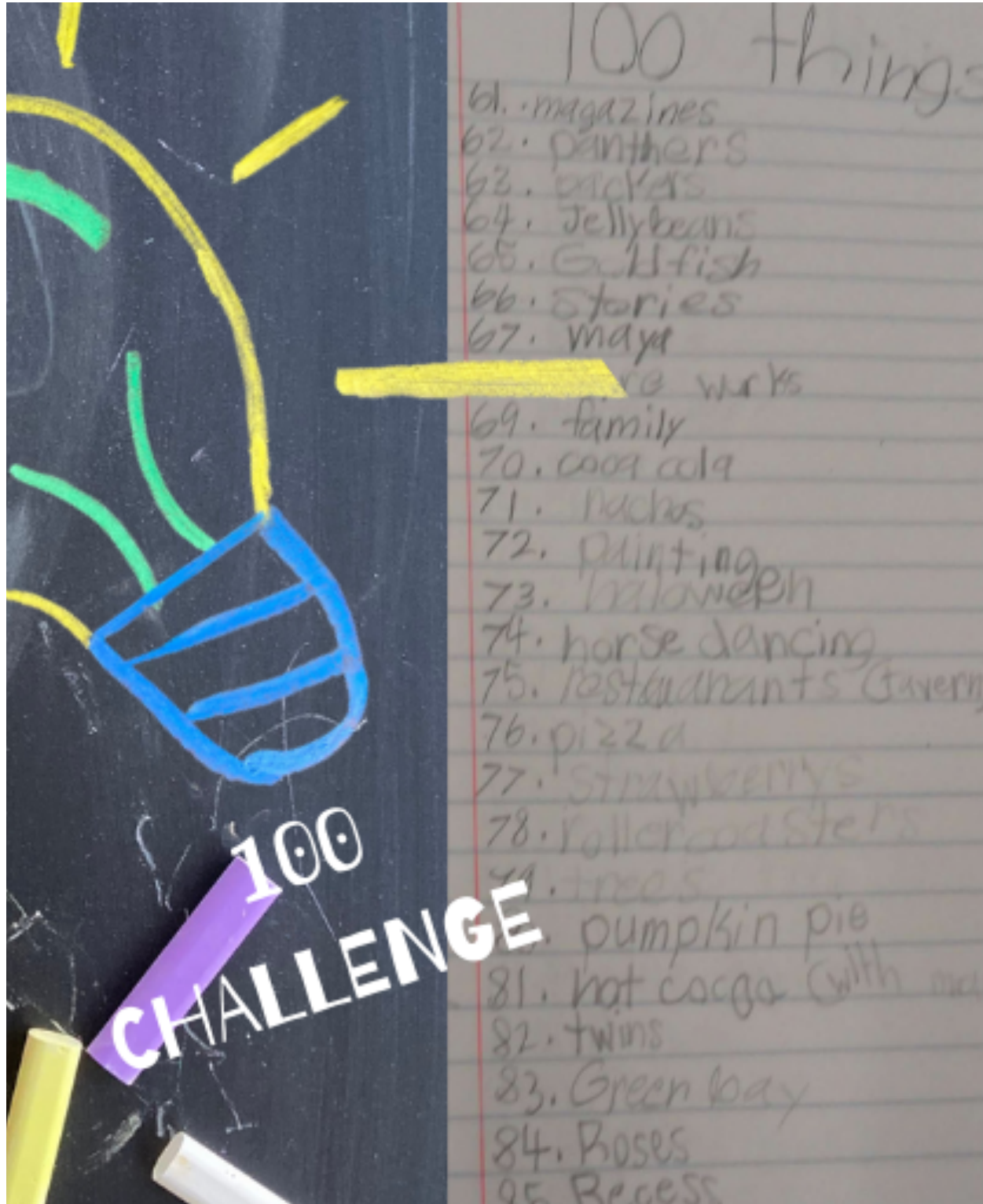


Learning is a creative process. It's fun! Sometimes it helps to have steps to follow. That's what this book is about. IDEAS stands for the steps you can take to learn about anything you want. Follow along and find out what you can do with your IDEAS!

IDENTIFY A TOPIC

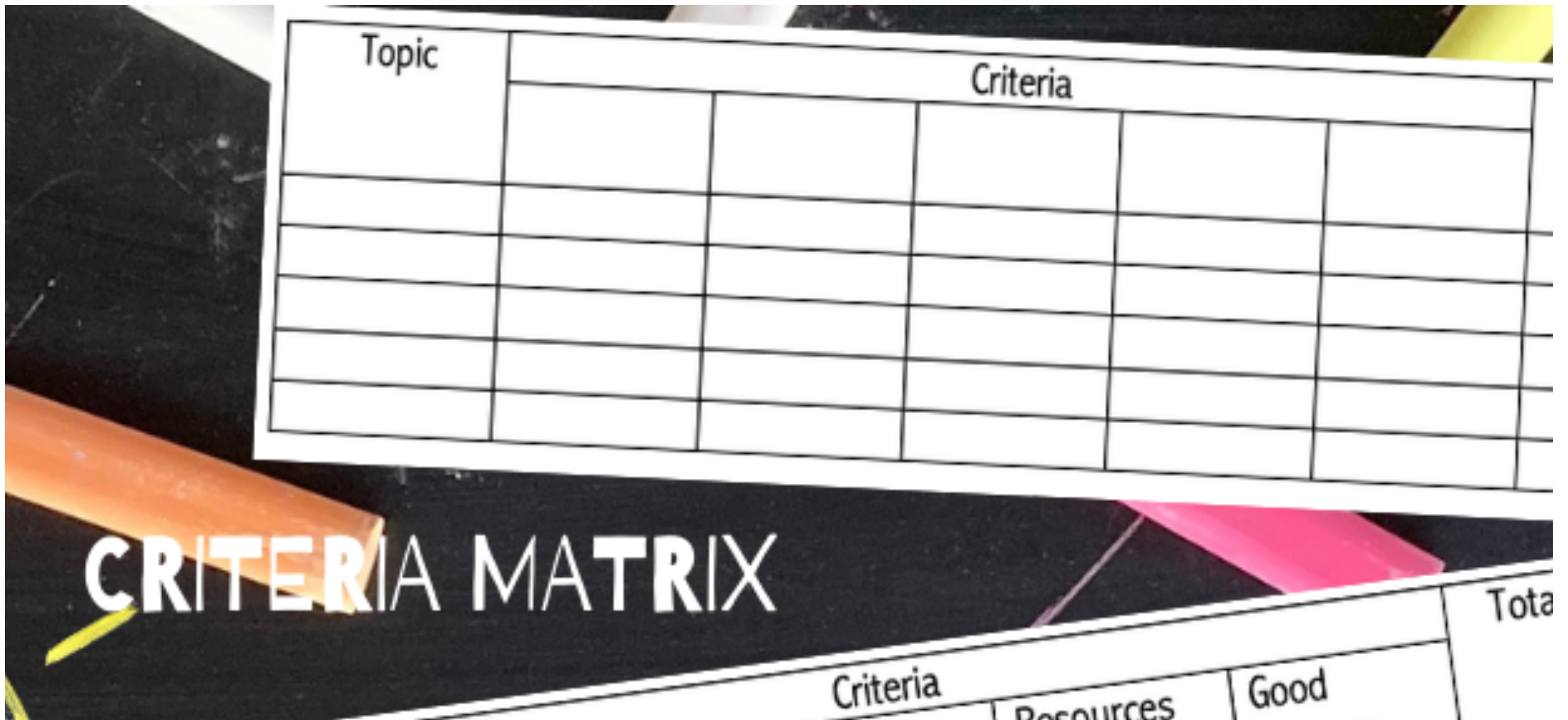
An IDEA starts with a thought, question or wondering. It is something you want to know more about. This IDEAS process will help you care for your ideas and grow them into something you can share. Start by identifying a topic.





100 CHALLENGE

Brainstorm things you are interested in learning about. Try to think of many, varied and unusual ideas. Write them down as fast as you can. Ask other people for ideas. Write down some more. One way you can challenge yourself is to try to come up with 100 things you want to learn more about.



Now it's time to pick your IDEAS topic. One might stand out to you as something you want to learn about right now. If you are having trouble picking something, you can use a criteria matrix. Here's how to do it. First, think about criteria you could use to decide if it is a good topic. You might pick something like it's *interesting* or has *resources available*. Put these on the top of the chart. Now pick five of your best ideas and list them on the side.

CRITERIA MATRIX

Topic	Criteria					Totals
	Interesting	Hands-on	Know an expert	Resources available	Good summer project	
knitting	2	2	4	3	1	12
Bee keeping	3	1	1	1	3	9
Raising chickens	5	5	5	5	5	25
crochet	1	3	2	2	2	10
gardening	4	4	3	4	4	19

Start with the first criteria and rank your ideas from 1-5 with 5 being the best. See in the example how raising chickens was the most interesting idea and crochet is the least. The one with the most points wins! Try this with your five best topic ideas. Now you have a topic you will be able to find information about, enjoy researching and have fun sharing!

DEVELOP QUESTIONS

Develop your topic by asking questions. Make a list of questions you are curious about. Let your ideas flow and ask as many questions as you can about your topic. Look over your questions. What questions really make you think about the topic? What questions do you really want to know. Choose your top three to get started.

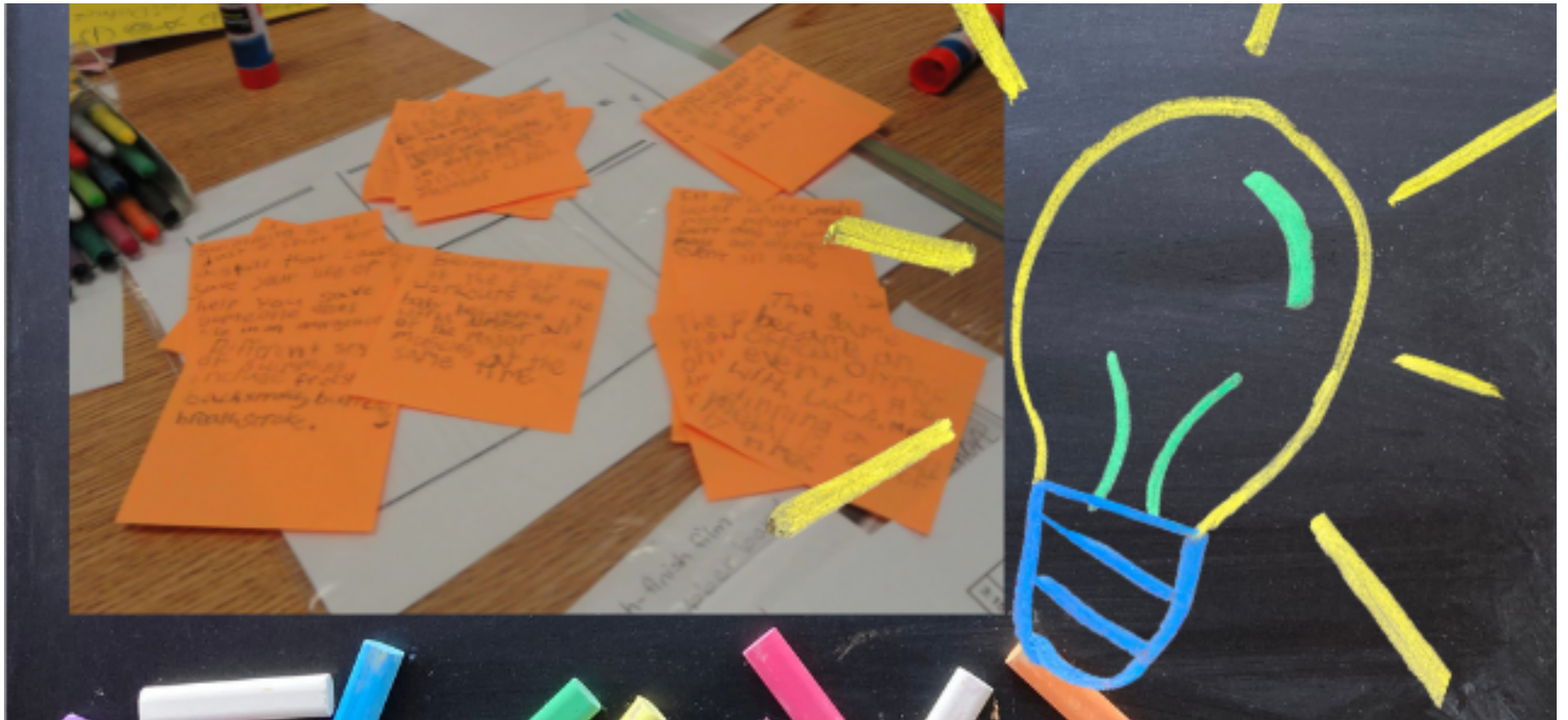




DEVELOP A PLAN

Start to develop a plan to learn about your topic. Here are some things you can think about:

- Why are these questions important to you?
- What do you hope to learn? Why?
- What materials or resources will you need?
- How can others support your project?
- In what ways might your project make the world better?

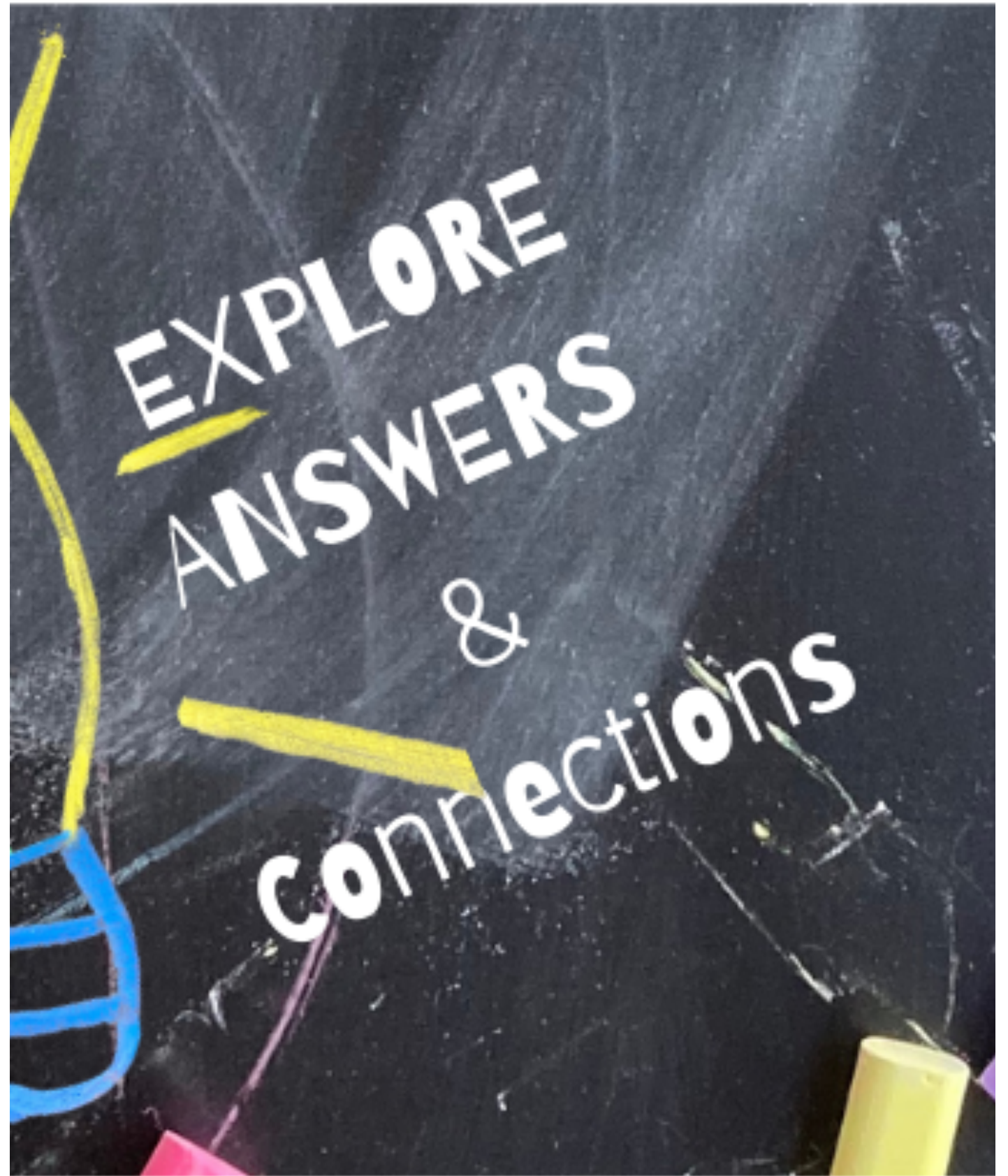


Sticky notes help you move your notes around. –Saanji

It's helpful to start a notebook or journal to keep track of your questions and later your answers. You can use a notebook you purchased or make one by putting paper in a binder or folding a stack of paper and stapling it on the side. Another good organizer is a file folder. You can make pockets and write questions on each pocket. Then when you find information, write it on a note card and slip it in the pocket. You can also use sticky notes to keep track of questions and answers.

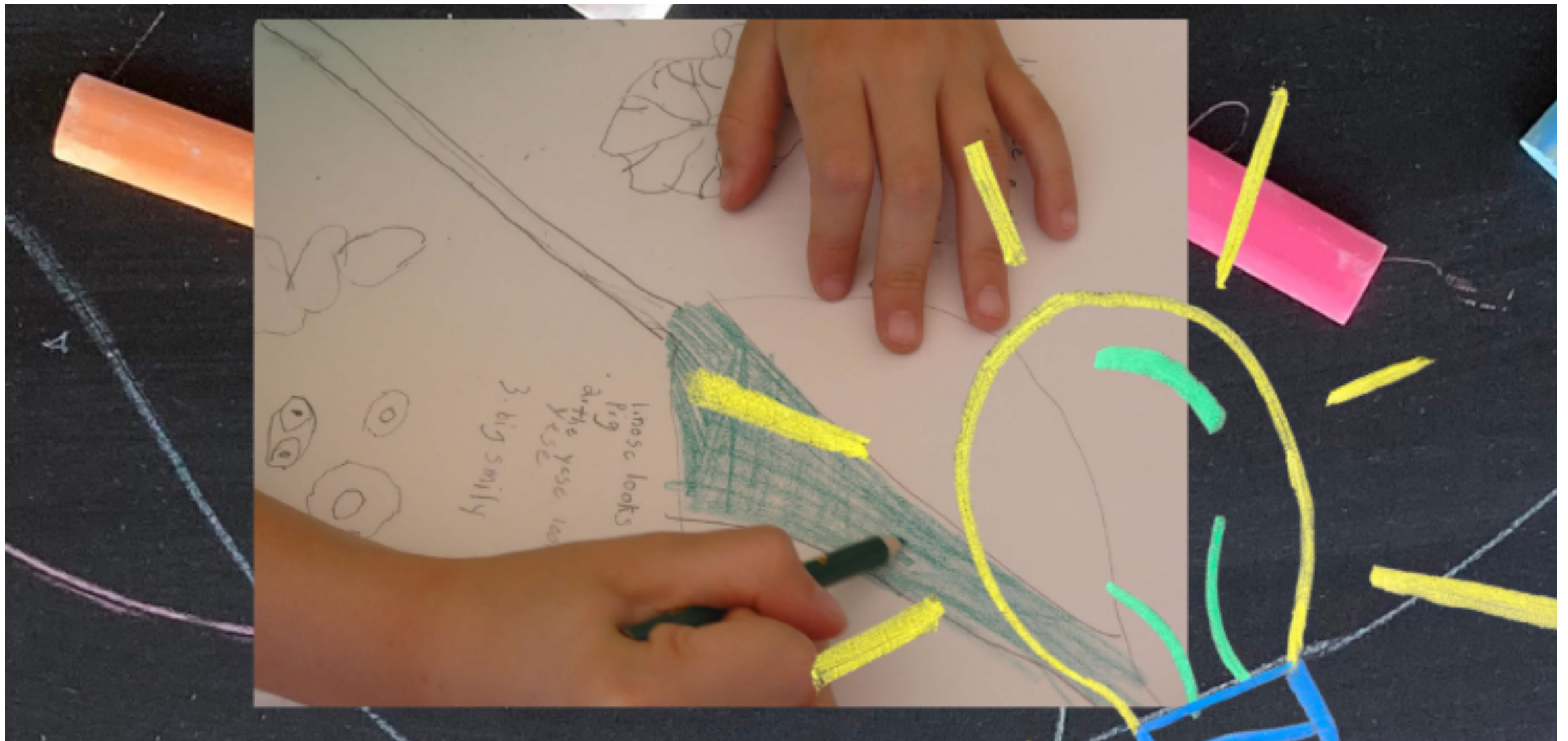
EXPLORE ANSWERS & CONNECTIONS

Now you are ready to EXPLORE answers to your questions and make connections. Answers to your questions can come from a variety of sources. You may start your journey by doing a search on the internet, reading books, watching films, listening to podcasts, asking experts or people that may know about your topic, observing or by conducting your own experiments.





Be a Curious Curator
A curator seeks out information and tries to organize it in some way. As you seek answers to your questions stay curious and keep collecting information.

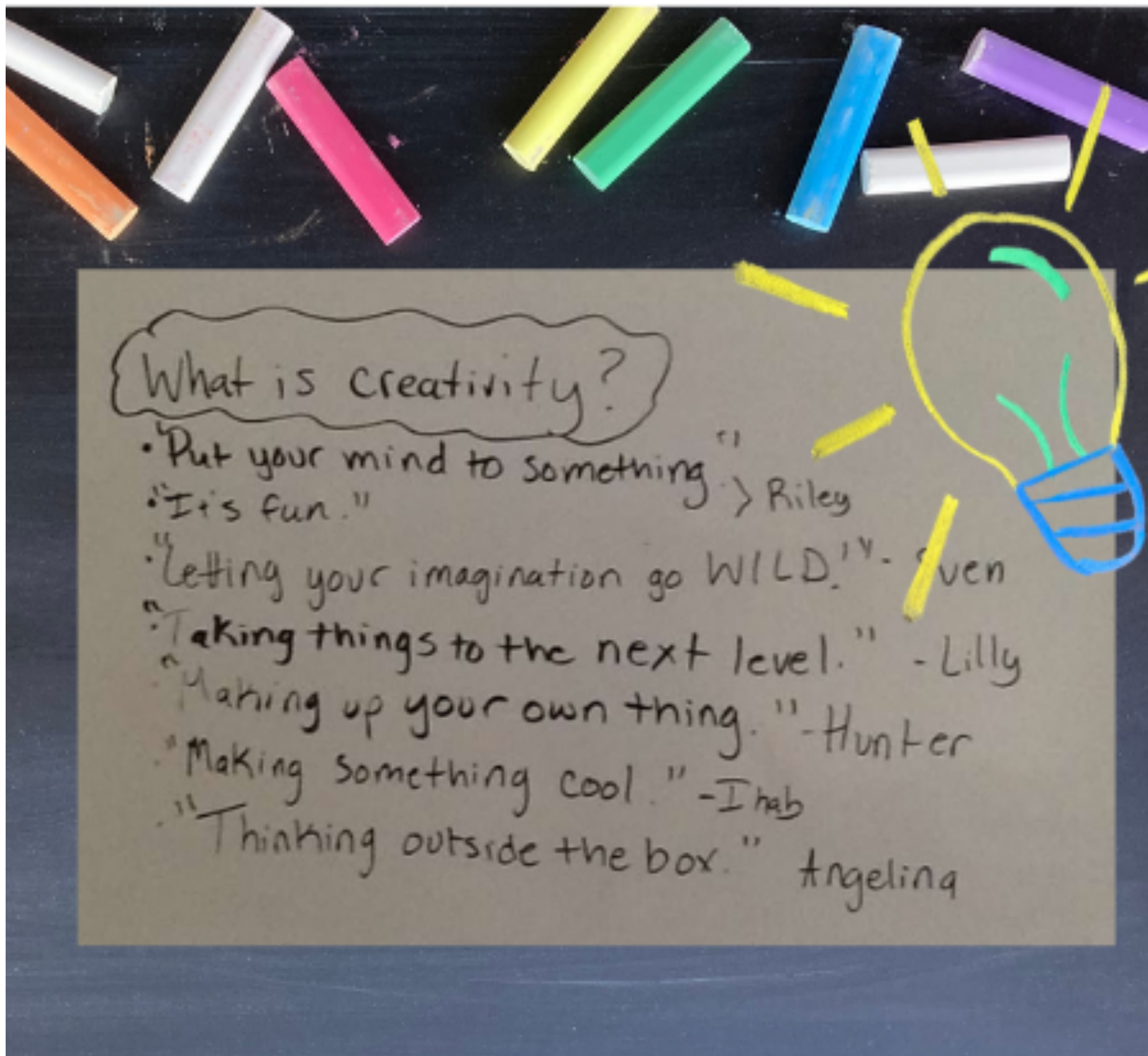


Be sure to record where you find your information. Remember the internet is big. You have to write down the web address. You can't just say you found it on the internet. Any fact you don't think of yourself is not yours and you need to tell where you found the information. If you get information from books or magazines, record the title, author and publication date. If you talk to an expert, write down their name and contact information. No matter what the source, always record the date.



Mistakes Help Your IDEAS Grow

Don't worry about mistakes. You will learn a lot from them. They might even help you make a better project. If you don't make any mistakes you are probably not trying hard enough. If you come up with new questions or your project starts to go in a different direction, it's ok. That's part of the fun of growing IDEAS.



Recording Information

Keep track of what you learn using webs, charts, diagrams, note cards or post-it notes.

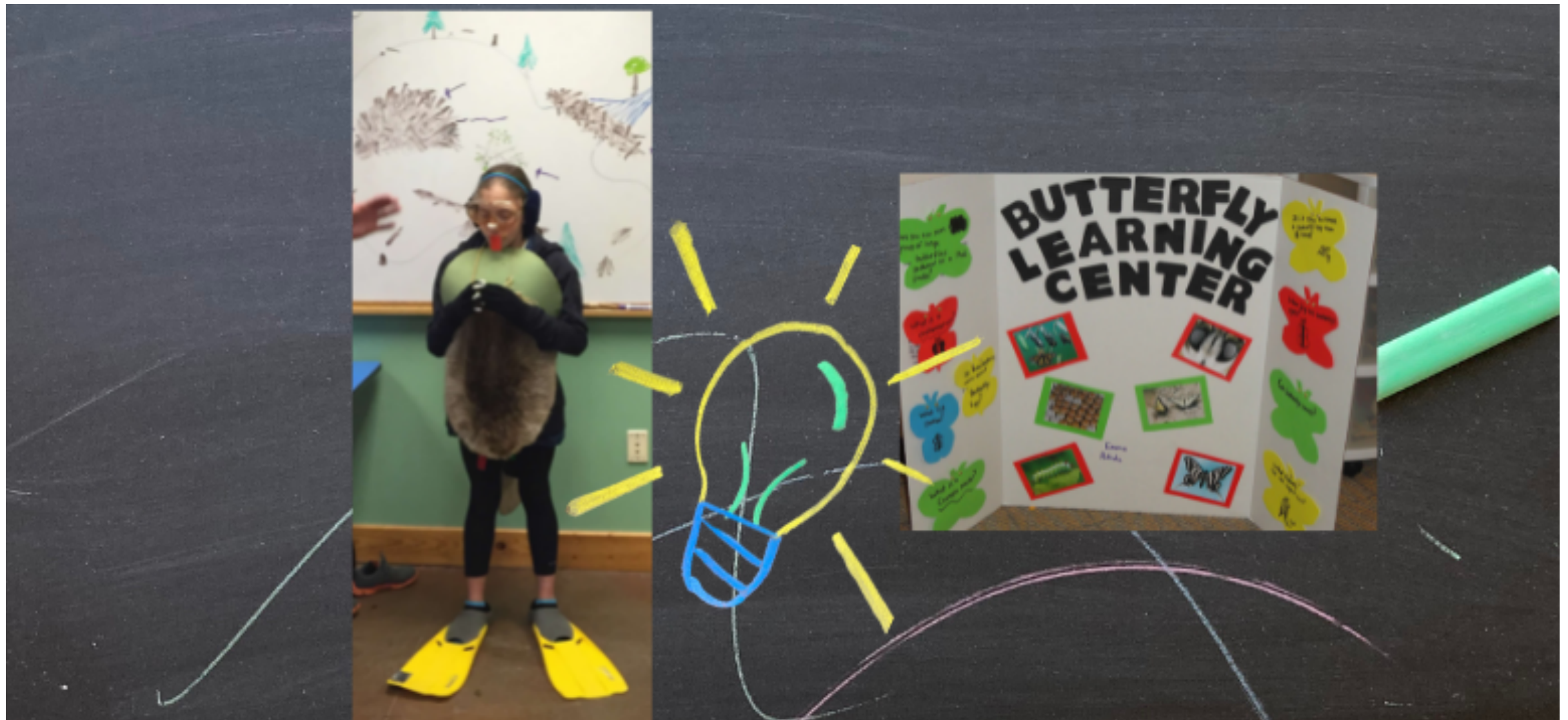
Here are some tips from kids just like you:

- Get help from someone like a friend, parent, teacher or someone who knows something about your topic.
- Record your ideas in a notebook so you don't lose them.

ANNOUNCE FINDINGS

It's time to share what you have learned and ANNOUNCE it to an appropriate audience. Authors usually publish their work in a book, magazine or blog. Musicians create music to record or perform. Play writes and actors produce movies, plays and shows. Artists share their work through various mediums including paint, sculpture and more. Athletes participate in games or competitions. Scientists share their experiments and data.





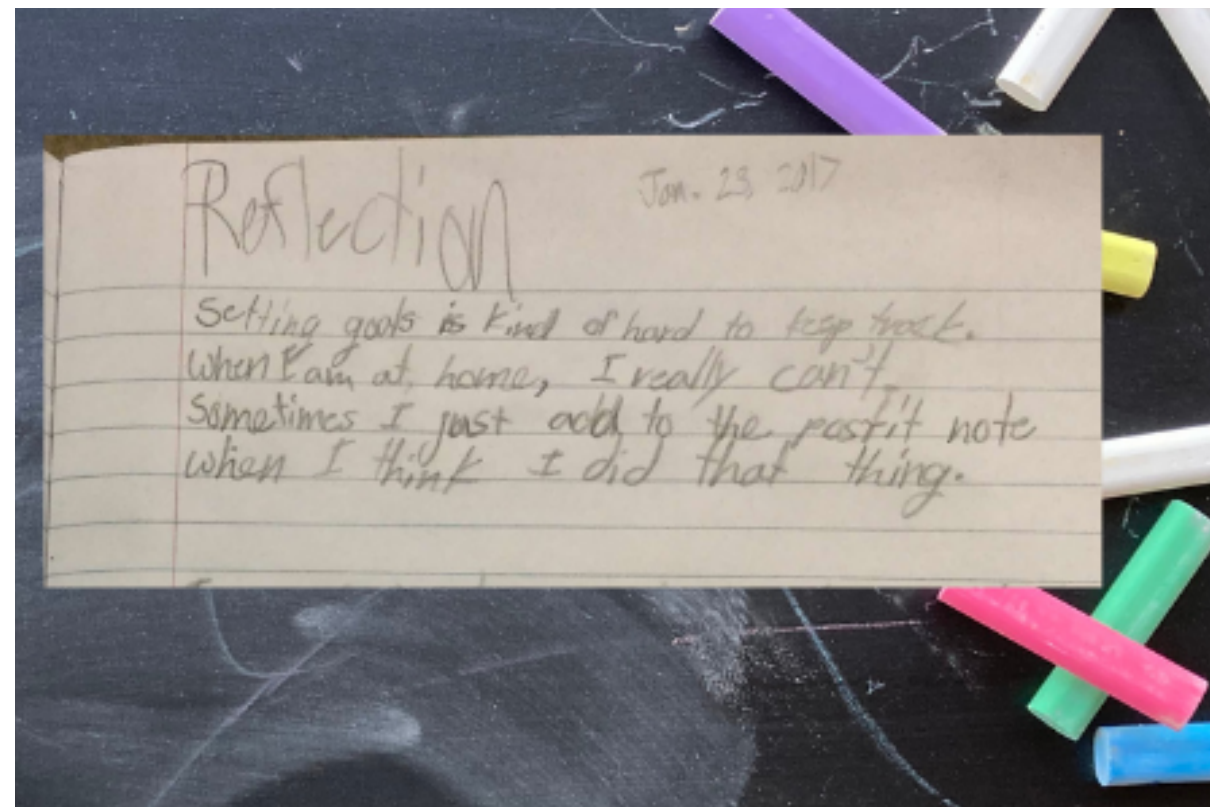
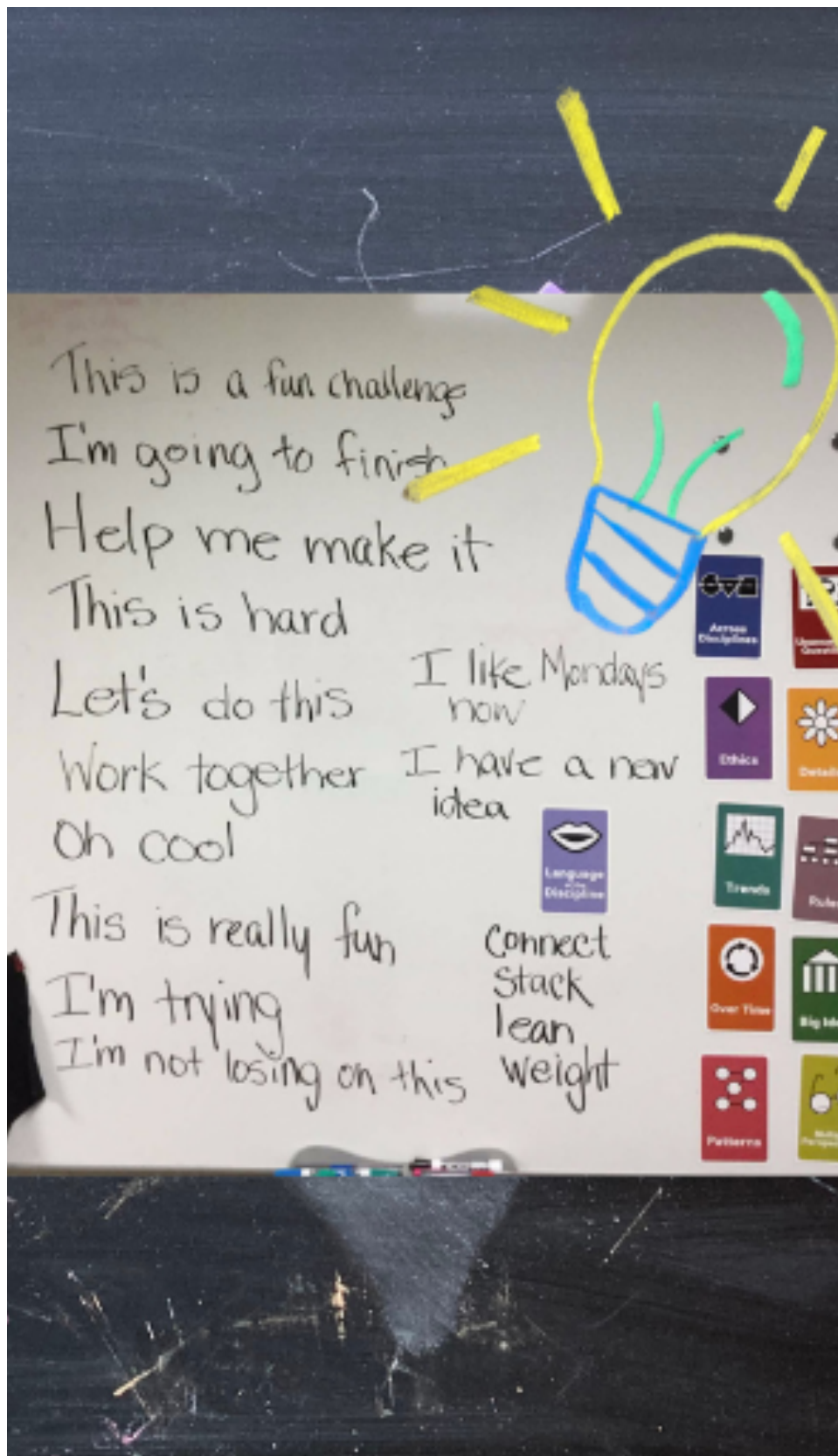
We used just about every way to announce...books, posters, clay animations, games, plays, etc. - Megan

Think about who might benefit from your learning. What is the best way of sharing with them? What technologies can you utilize to share your project? How can you use what you learned help make the world a better place?

SELF-REFLECT

Most kids think once they make and share a project they are finished. The real learning comes when you take time to SELF-REFLECT. It is important to think about your learning journey, the process, the project and what you learned about yourself.





Reflection Questions

- What did you learn about the topic?
- What did you learn about how you learn?
- What would you do differently next time?
- How will you improve the next time you learn something on your own?
- What did you enjoy learning and doing?



While finding facts we learned more about ourselves. - Maddie

You did it! You used IDEAS to learn about something.
Now it's time to celebrate your IDEAS and do it again!

About the Author

Cheryl Peterson, Ph.D. created IDEAS in 1992 and has been continuously improving it ever since. Countless students and teachers have had amazing learning experiences with IDEAS! She loves to engage students in learning with play, practice and purpose.

You can connect with her at drcherylpeterson.com.

