

# Task material for teachers

Sitra and Design Museum's joint exhibition *What if? Alternative futures*, at the Design Museum on 9 September 2022–12 March 2023. In the task material you'll find additional material and tasks related to future-oriented thinking and the exhibition.

# Hi teacher!

This package of materials was produced for the Design Museum exhibition **What if? Alternative futures**, which invites us to think about the future with curiosity, challenging existing assumptions. The exhibition is based on Sitra's work on weak signals, which identifies and analyses unexpected phenomena and their possible impacts.

The material offers resources for discussing the future and futures thinking in the classroom. The materials include this presentation and printable exercises.

## Who is it for?

The tasks are aimed at primary school pupils but they and the materials can be freely adapted to meet the needs of your group. The tasks are especially suited for home language and literature, visual arts and crafts lessons. But the future knows no boundaries between school subjects, and so the tasks can be applied to many different subjects.

## What and why?

The tasks are intended for practicing futures thinking and shaping it. The task "A school day in 2050" task invites students to imagine what daily life will be like in the future. The "Future object" task involves designing a future object or thing either as an idea or by actually making it.

The aim of the tasks is to stimulate students' curiosity about the future and to listen to their ideas. What will the future look and feel like, what might be needed in the future and ideas does the future evoke?

As there are no right or wrong answers, the best way to get the most out of the future is to think and wonder together.

## How?

The future cannot be known or predicted. So this topic doesn't require any special skills or prior knowledge on the part of teacher – only an open and curious mind. Look through the material and see what material and tasks would suit your group.

This presentation includes images and discussion topics that can be used for getting oriented before starting the assignments. Printable tasks are available on Design museum's website.

# **What is the future?**

Orientation material

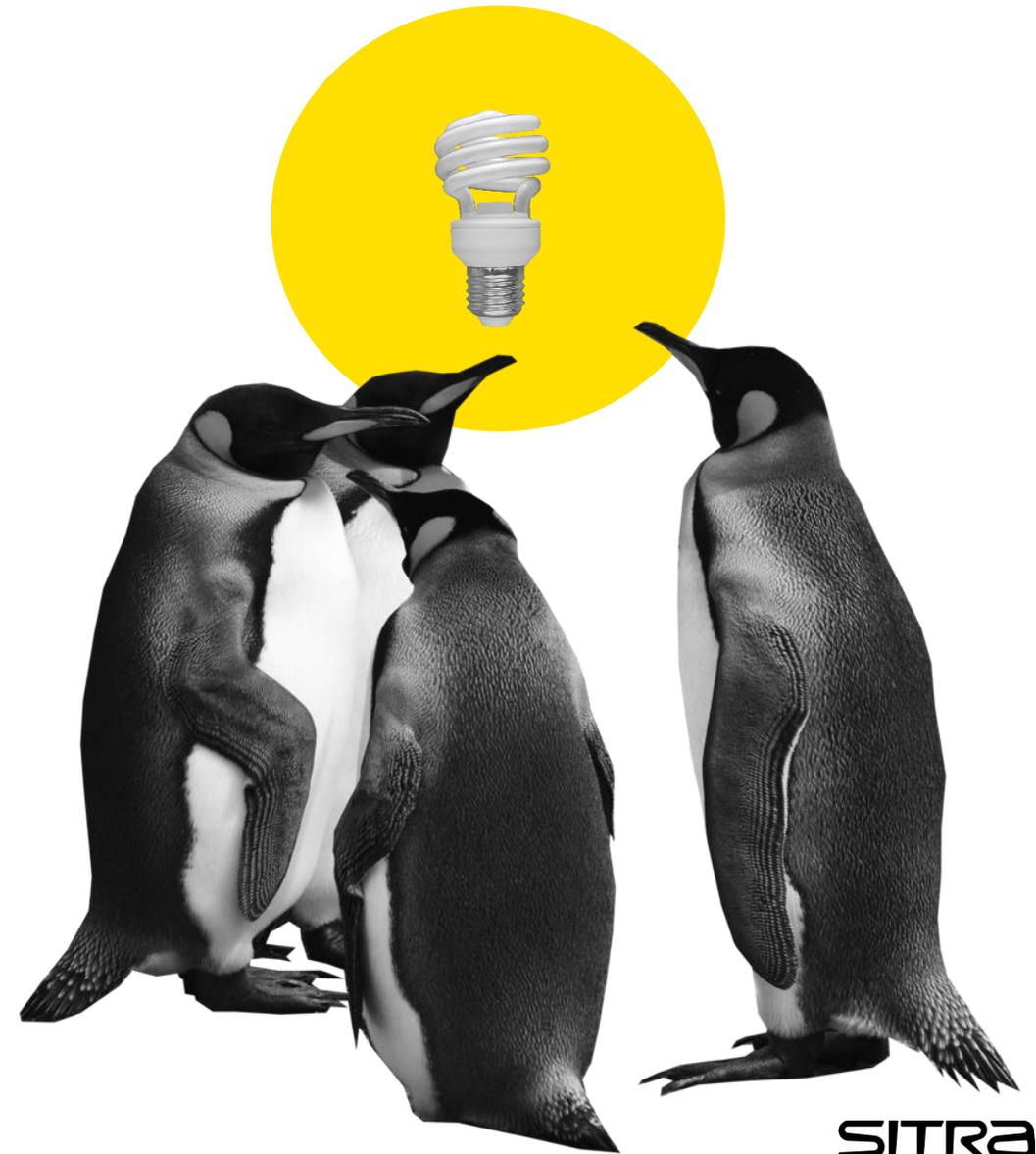
# Consider

What exactly is the future? Is it tomorrow, a year from now or 100 years from now?

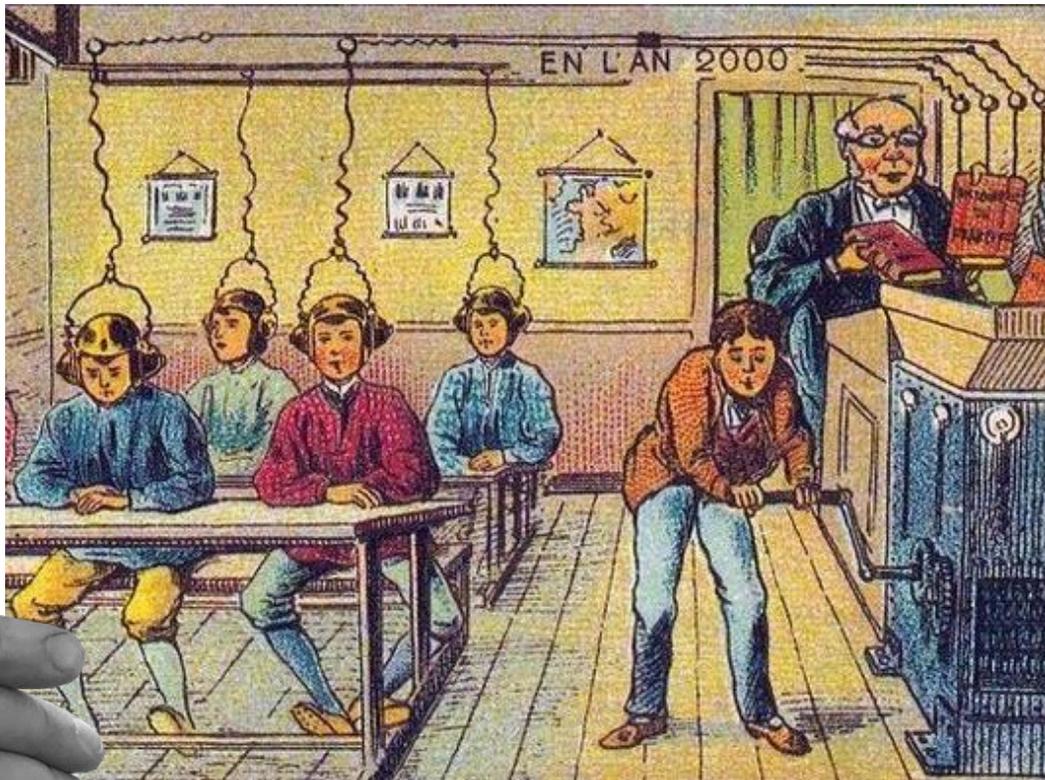
Can you predict the future?

How can you influence the future?

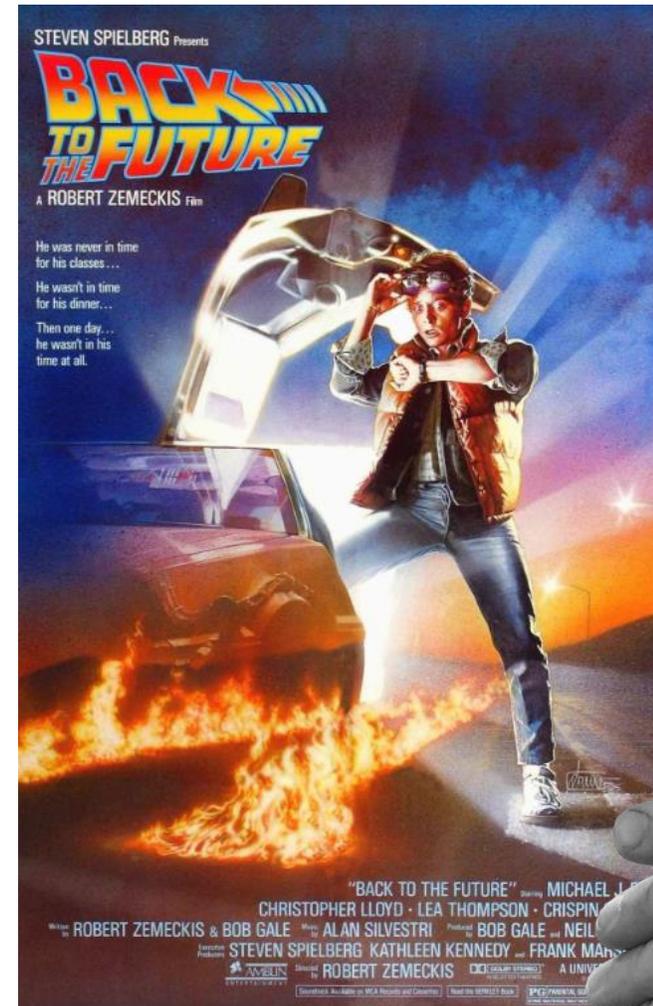
What might be different in the future?



# How did we envisage the future in the past?



An artist's (Cote/Villemard) view of school in the year 2000, from the early 20th century.



The movie "Back to the Future" from 1985.



# Consider

What if the future will be completely different?

What is important to us now and in the future?

What kind of future would we like to create?



# **Imagining and shaping futures**

Teacher's instructions for the tasks

# There are two tasks and you can choose one or both

## Task A: a school day in the year 2050

**Idea in a nutshell:** students are given a ready-made story template that they fill in to create an imagined school day in the future. The task is done in groups, so students can freely discuss and speculate together about what the future might be like.

## Task B: future object

**Idea in a nutshell:** students are given a blank product information label, on which they will describe an object, thing or service that might be needed in the future. The task is done in groups, so students can freely discuss and speculate together about what the future might be like. Students may also draw or make the item.

# Task A: a school day in 2050

**Duration: about 30 minutes**

**The teacher divides the students into groups of 3–4 and the small groups** are given a writing task, in which they think about a normal day in the future. The task template has blank spaces that they fill in together to create their own story about the future. Instruct the students to first read through the whole structure of the story once and then discuss what kind of future they would like to create. They should then fill in the gaps in the story as they wish.

Review the task either by allowing each group to read their own story or continue the task by having the groups draw a picture related to the story. The small groups can then also continue to task B, which is to invent an object that the main character of their story would need in the future.

# Story template

“It is the year 2050. \_\_\_\_\_ (Who is the main character of the story?) wakes up. For breakfast they make \_\_\_\_\_ (What will people eat for breakfast in the future?). After eating, they take \_\_\_\_\_ (How do people go to school?) to school, located in \_\_\_\_\_ (Where?) and is \_\_\_\_\_ (Describe the school of the future in a few words). The subject of the first lesson is \_\_\_\_\_ (What will children learn at school in the future?) and the students \_\_\_\_\_ (Do what? Will lessons be different from today?). For lunch, the students gather in \_\_\_\_\_ (Where? Where do students eat in the future?) and have \_\_\_\_\_ (What will people eat in the future?). During break \_\_\_\_\_ (What will children do during break?). After school, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of the main character) hurries \_\_\_\_\_ (To do what? What will children do after school in the future?). There, they need \_\_\_\_\_ (What? What kind of an item or device will they need?). Then, it is time to go home. Their home is \_\_\_\_\_ (What is it like?) and they share it with \_\_\_\_\_ (Who do they live with?). In the evening, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of the main character) will still \_\_\_\_\_ (What might the main character do in the evening?). As night falls, it is time for \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of the main character) to \_\_\_\_\_ (What will people do before going to bed in the future?) and then go to bed \_\_\_\_\_ (Where does the main character sleep?).”

# Task B: future object

**Duration: approx. 30 minutes**

**The teacher divides the students into groups of 3–4 and the small groups** are given a blank product information label, on which they describe an object, thing or service they have invented that might be needed in the future. The assignment is completed in groups, where the students can freely discuss and speculate together about what the future might be like. They can also draw and/or build the item.

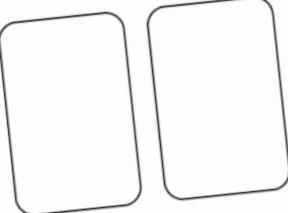
Instruct the students to first consider some place or situation as a basis for their object, such as the school, home, transport, work, games, birthday party of the future. Alternatively, the teacher can assign each group a theme and it then invents an object related to that theme.

Review the task by having each group present its future object: what is it and what will it be used for. You can create a future exhibition on the classroom wall using the product descriptions or objects.

# Future object: write a product information label and draw the object and/or make it using recycled materials

**Product description: information for users**  
*Read the product description carefully before using.*

1. What is it?	2. What is it used for?
3. Who is it for?	4. Why does it exist?
5. Adverse effects and warnings	



Handle WithCare  