Cubing Invention Exercise

1) Describe
2) Compare
3) Associate
4) Analyze
5) Apply
6) Argue

Describe: Examine the topic closely. Can it be described physically in colors, shapes, sizes, and so on? List its characteristics, its parts, or its qualities.

Compare: To what is the topic similar? To what can it be contrasted? Explain the similarities and differences in particular detail.

Associate: Of what does this topic make you think? Of what does it remind you? List the things with which you associate it. In what ways is it associated with them?

Analyze: Identify and categorize the topic’s characteristics, its parts or its qualities. Explain how its components fit together.

Apply: How can the topic be used? What can be done with it? Apply it to some situation, person, or concept.

Argue: Take a stand for or against the topic. List as many reasons to justify your position as you can. Then take an opposing view and build an argument supporting it.

Examples of Cubing: Here is a set of information on video games which was developed according to the cubing method.

1) Describe: Computerized games, TV-like screen, controls, electronic beeps and explosion sounds. Games are timed. Depending on the type of game, player tried to “shoot it out” with attacking troops or to escape fields of meteorites. Cost, generally 25 cents for a few minutes of play.
   Video dens are darkened rooms. Colored flashes of light coming from game screens, only light. Dens located in shopping malls, near schools and colleges, or in airport terminals.

2) Compare: Video games and pinball games. Both games of skill and change in which player attempts to get a high score. In both games, players compete to beat their own best scores or another player’s. Video and pinball games are solo adventures; one individual plays at a time. Both challenge the player’s eye/hand coordination. Major differences—pinball involves playing with five solid steel balls; video involves no balls, operates on computerized electronic circuitry. Also, pinball slower than video which requires quicker reflexes. Video, more visual and auditory stimuli. Last point leads to a third comparison: like disco or hard-rock music, video games appeal to people who feel action and release of tension in the sights and sounds. Finally, can be compared to gambling; some
people become addicted to the activity, spurred by an occasional win; lost their shirts most of the time.

3) Associate: Associated with today’s computer or with yesterday’s pocket-billiard game. Some people see it as a modern, electronic marvel. For others, video games recall the heyday of pocket billiards; video dens, today’s version of “pool halls,” dens of iniquity in the darkened rooms from which warlike sounds emerge.

4) Analyze: Video games appeal to an individual’s competitive spirit. Also attract players with outer-space sights and sounds. Players escape from daily pressures into video den; sensory stimuli block worries. Player fantasizes heroic actions in the face of overwhelming odds; if player is “killed off” in one game, another quarter brings back to life. Adolescent males make up the majority of den customers. Video games combine Kids’ Attraction to TV with their fascination for computer gadgetry. Video-game business is a multimillion-dollar industry. Major game producers invest huge sums of money in development. Fierce competition to create the most popular games. Players enter regional and national competition to vie for championship trophies. Promoters support them.

5) Apply: Entrepreneurs have capitalized on attraction to TV and fascination with computer gadgetry; also have located dens where customer traffic is heavy. Some stay open all night, increasing volume of time usage.

6) Argue: In Favor. Video games personify life in the high-speed lane: intense pressure, challenge to eye-hand coordination, electronic beeps and booms all part of modern lifestyle. Just as some fine business competitors developed their independence, ingenuity, and mental toughness on the gridiron, some of tomorrow’s captains of industry are developing those qualities in video dens. Playing video games not an escape from life, but simulation of a life-and-death challenge. Spending quarters and killing time in video dens are far better then spending dollars and killing yourself with dope. Our father and grandfathers frequented pool halls without becoming crooks; video dens won’t corrupt our morals.

Against. Video games, a metaphor for all that is life-threatening in today’s high-technology world. Like TV and hard-rock music, video games mesmerize young people. Maybe they learn the motor response of pushing a button to destroy an asteroid, but can they read up to their grade level, can they concentrate long enough to solve an algebraic equation, and can they write a poem that resonates with language sense and sound?

How many dollars do people spend in a video den for an hour or two? Perhaps some people mug others or snatch purses in order to get money to play, just as junkies do to pay for drugs.

If watching too much violence on TV isn’t good for people, how can games whose whole activity involves killing or being killed be a wholesome activity? At least pocket billiards is a game of people of class, a game that requires skill and finesse. Video games are just a mass of violent sounds and pushbutton panic before the lights go out.