This issue of Parent Perspectives comes from contributor, Carole Savitsky, of the Indiana affiliate. Carole has been involved with the Future Problem Solver Program for many years in a variety of roles including coach, evaluator and Affiliate Director!

The Category List: What is the FPS Category List?

Categories. You may have heard your Future Problem Solver talk about categories and wondered, “What are the categories?” Categories are a focused way of thinking. For example, when you decide to purchase or not to purchase a new cell phone, you might consider the financial cost (Economics) to you and the cost in family experiences with/without technology, (Social Relationships) as well as an easy way to maintain contact with your teenager (Communications). You naturally consider the pros and cons of purchasing a cell phone. An introduction to the FPS Category List might lead you to think about that purchase in a broader way. For example, (Physical Health) the discussion you will have about driving and texting, or (Transportation) your teenager can call you for a ride, and (Recreation) your teenager may stay after school for an activity that wasn’t preplanned. Once you have seen and used the FPS Category List, you may find yourself thinking or problem solving beyond the natural first response; in this case, the cost of the cell phone.

FPS students are asked to be fluent in their thinking and writing, flexible in their ideas, as well as original and elaborate throughout each step. So, what are fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration and what do they have to do with categories?

- **Fluency** – The number of clearly-stated ideas
- **Flexibility** – Ideas from many different perspectives
- **Originality** – Unique or one-of-a-kind ideas
- **Elaboration** – Ideas that contain details

When FPS students consider a variety of viewpoints, flexibility points go up, fluency is enhanced, original ideas flow and ideas are elaborated. Students use the list of categories to enhance their thinking skills. Parents, you may consider using the FPS Category List as family issues are discussed.

Strive for FFOE!
Consider some of the following situations that might arise at the dinner table:

- How late a teenager can stay out
- When a new cell phone can be purchased
- Keys to the car and who pays for the gas
- Style of clothing that is worn to school
- When homework is done
- To look for a summer job or take a class

Deciding when homework should be done in your household - multiple categories or viewpoints could factor into the decision-making process. If finished before dinner, what was learned at school may be still fresh (Education); if finished after dinner, a student has time to participate in after school sports (Recreation); if finished early in the day, there may be time for a family activity such as participating in a local library program (Social Relationships).

Using the FPS Category List broadens the communication skills in a family as discussions take place. There is no right or wrong response, just many responses from which the final decision can be made. Consider assigning the role of scribe to one family member so ideas are not lost. Using strips of paper for each idea will allow you to keep ideas from a particular category together and it is easier to identify duplicates and original ideas.

Consider cutting the categories into strips and placing them into a small jar or cup that you can keep in the kitchen or a convenient place. When an issue comes up for discussion, pull a category from the jar and look for the connection between the category chosen and the topic under discussion. Realize that not all categories fit all topics; discard those that are not relevant. Before long you will think outside the box (or jar on your table) and broaden your thinking skills. But be careful, you may have already decided that you do not want to purchase a cell phone for your teenager and find yourself giving in, so to speak, as your thoughts become more fluent and flexible.

For your information, the complete official Category List can be found on the next page!

Listed below are the answers to the Christmas quiz from our last issue!

“Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man!” ~Benjamin Franklin~

Noel Baba
Hoteiosho
Father Christmas
Santa Claus
Sinterklaas
Ded Moroz
Pai Natal
Kanakaloka
Babbo Natale
Santa Claus
Jultomten
Kris Kringle
Santa Claus
Santa

Turkey
Japan
United Kingdom
New Zealand
Belgium
Russia
Portugal
Hawaiian
Italy
Australia
Sweden
Germany
United States
Malaysia

Please send your questions or comments to the Parent Committee via Chair, Deb Woythal at dwoythal@gmail.com

Would you like to read past Parent Newsletters? Go to the fpspi.org and click on "Get Involved" and then "Parents->Newsletters."
## Category List for Generating Ideas

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<tr>
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<th>Category</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Aesthetics</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Basic Needs</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Business &amp; Commerce</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Defense</td>
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<td>Economics</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Environment</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Ethics &amp; Religion</td>
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<td>Law &amp; Justice</td>
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<td>Recreation</td>
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<td>Social Relationships</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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