



EYE OF EUROPE

Foresight Starter Prompts

Eye of Europe Foresight Starter Sets
Finland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku



EYE
OF
EUROPE

Using the Foresight Starter Prompts

- Often, in workshop settings, it is useful to begin with a light exercise that encourages participants' interactive participation, encourages them to think outside of their ordinary lines of thinking, and which therefore helps prep them for the events to follow.
- This is perhaps especially true for foresight workshops for which people – who are often not trained in this, and might not a priori feel comfortable with it – are tasked with imagining futures, and tasked with supplying information and creative solutions beyond their ordinary and traditional expertise.
- This set of six tried and tested foresight starter prompts for use in workshop settings can therefore help organizers of foresight workshop to get off to a good start with their events. This lowers the barrier for organizing foresight workshops – and increases the fun of being a foresight workshop participant.
- Each prompt functions as a question that the organizer can show to the participants as a stimulant for discussion. The prompts can be used as is, or with individual tweaks reflecting the context, the audience, or the interests of the organizer. This set provides the prompt, as well as for each prompt a list of example responses, a guide on how to use it, and the design intent behind it. The additional material as well as the hints written directly on the question prompts (with #s) can help the organizer select and use the prompts effectively.
- Note: The six Eye of Europe prompts are modified and adapted from a preceding European project (FLxDeep 2020, supported by EIT-ClimateKIC). For the full set of the original prompts (there described as *recipes*), see [Raleigh & Richards, 2022](#).

***If you could give a birthday
gift to the planet, what would it
be?***

#novice

#digital setting #physical setting

#icebreaker #workshop

#systems perception #concern for others



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Example Responses



- A new kind of festival that everyone could get behind.
- Inclusion: a space of belonging and co-creating together.
- For everyone to have enough bandwidth to be able to see and hear each other.
- A remanufactured vintage necklace, repurposed oil rig gems strung between a lattice of plastic capturing netting, putting that which is obsolete to some real work.
- We should always be careful what we wish for, but I would hope for new kinds of wisdom that would open-up our understanding.
- A magical thing in our drinking water for empathy.
- Free COVID-19 vaccines for all



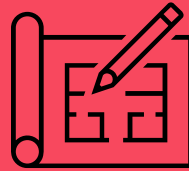
How to use this prompt



- This is a light way to open-up talking about values while inducing a state of wonder.
- People understand this prompt in different ways, “the planet” meaning nature, as well as “the planet” meaning people of the world, and so forth.
- The notion of a gift connects to the metaphor of compost thinking: thinking about the future in terms of the gifts that we are giving to future people.
- I could envision using this to explore how people are imagining planetary futures.



Design intent of this prompt



This prompt makes an explicit connection between personal and planetary scale systems. It encourages consideration of what would be a valuable contribution that we could make, surfacing our own values in the process. By using the notion of gift giving we tap into a wealth of personal experience that is universal. It invites a creative and playful engagement with systemic themes. This prompt was delivered during the run up to the winter festive season but could be adapted for use at any time of the year or for any festivity.

Contributed by Kacper Nosarzewski. First tested at the FLxDeep consortium's regular meeting on 27th November 2020.



Related to R&I foresight

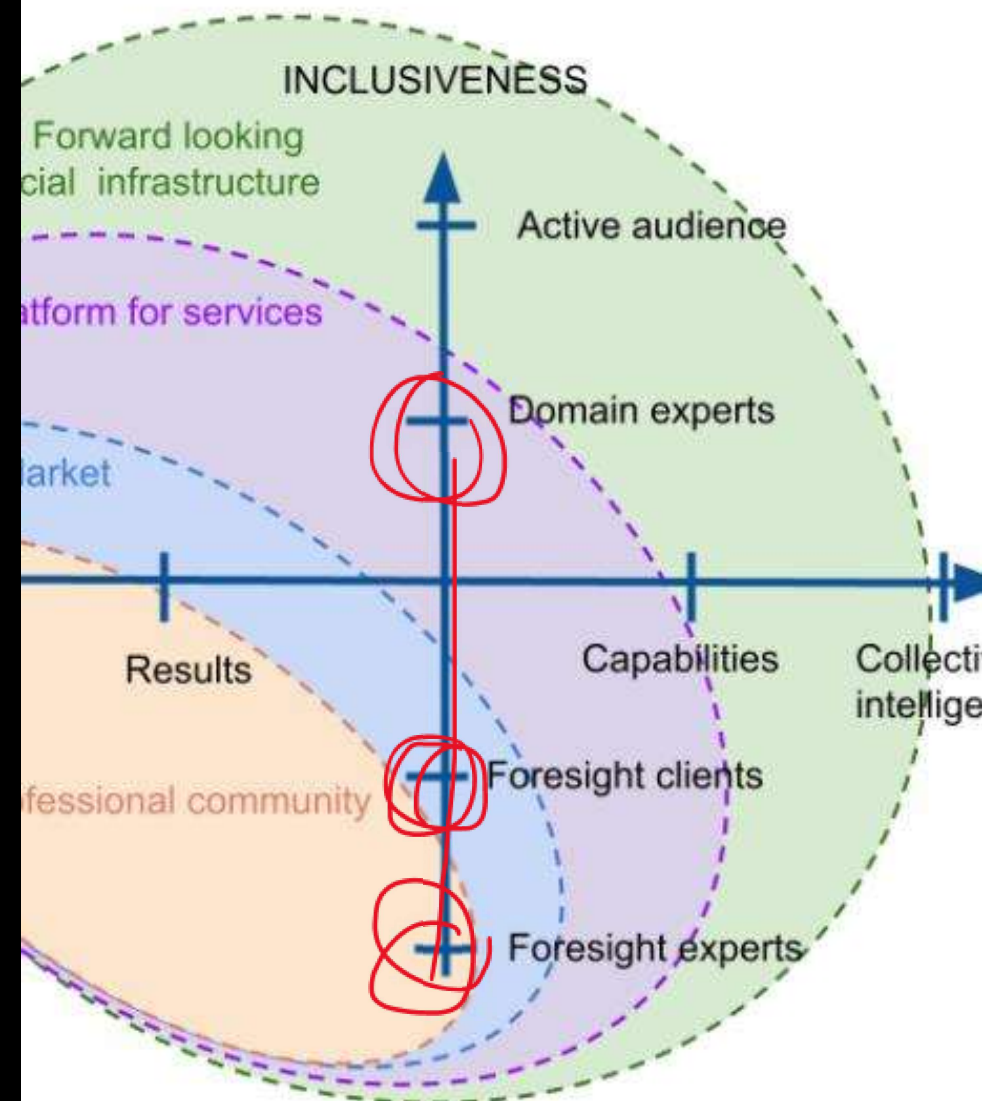
Text on using foresight for research and innovation – helping to shape and define innovation policy, in terms of resource allocation, priorities, relevance.

Participatory science policy – incorporation of inputs from participants into R&I – experts typically, or admin personnel.

Environmental scanning for R&I policy.

Contributed by Kacper Nosarzewski. First tested at the FLxDeep consortium's regular meeting on 27th November 2020.

& Phases of developing the R&I foresight commu





**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

To what degree do you follow the recipe when cooking?

#novice

#digital setting #physical setting

#icebreaker #presencing

#agency beliefs #openness to alternatives



Example Responses



- I precisely follow the recipe the first time, I am precise and tidy that way but after the first time I will begin to hybridise and improvise.
- I always feel like a recipe needs to be improved, I have the same feeling about technology, I take things apart and put them back together again, I don't care whether they get broken in the process. I do figure out some fundamentals however over the years, one pot recipes, finding the formula/fundamentals then you can begin to improvise.
- Intuitive cook, I try to recall my parents' recipes, over time they evolve based on a memory of their taste. I never follow instructions, relying on my senses.
- I have a lot of stress and anxiety about recipes. But then I don't tend to read the whole thing. I miss the end. And then I panic in the final stages. The second time is better. Lately I have been channelling a character from a TV show who makes whatever his customers ask for - attentiveness to whatever people want.



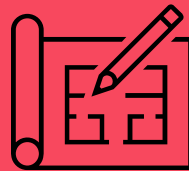
How to use this prompt



- A lot that can be read into the different styles in terms of attitudes towards preparation and planning.
- Understanding of systems and processes. Your ethical approach is revealed, and your comfort zone in doing work. Also, perhaps we uncover wholly different process-es. This is also very anticipatory, futures oriented.
- Personal element for building trust in a process - no personal details revealed: comfortable and familiar entry point.
- This points to all the practices associated with cooking beyond the recipe – the other kinds of knowledge you are expected to have.



Design intent of this prompt



I have used many variations of this to push people to think of something else. I often use the example of Monty Python's "And now for something completely different". A follow up to this would be to dig deeper into the notion of emergence, "and what is new, in what is the same" what is new in the usual. Part of emergence is seeing the new/different in the old. This is linked to noticing transformation. Emergence is something else aside from weak signals or trends, novelty is not necessarily just something new.

*Contributed by Amos Taylor and Martyn Richards.
First tried at the FLxDeep consortium's regular
meeting held on the 30th October 2020.*



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

***What futures do you fear, which
are you hopeful about, and what
futures do you think might surprise
you?***

#intermediate

#digital setting #physical setting

#reflection #presencing #teambuilding

#openness to alternatives #time perspective



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Example Responses



- That [our consortium] continues with new and exciting frontiers (hopeful); fragmented funding makes it hard to hold the consortium together (fear); super-venture funded by George Soros that requires us all to move to the Mediterranean (surprising)
- Fear that there is no funding; hope/surprise would be that the venture turns into a “proper business” in which I can be an entrepreneur, although this would require significant adjustment on a personal level
- Do not fear lack of funding, other opportunities can be found; hope to use more creative methods; fear that other upcoming projects will eclipse this with their pressing issues and prevent deep engagement with what we have learned so far.



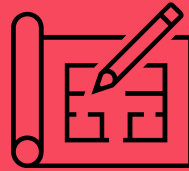
How to use this prompt



- Use this prompt to highlight how hard it is to think of strange or surprising futures. Being creative and open to the unusual is not what we are familiar with.
- Its possible that an inappropriate or disturbing thought may bubble to the surface, which you may then want to push away or feel uncomfortable sharing. This feeling is not unusual, it could be an indicator of an assumption or norm being questioned. Depending on your setting, you could use this as a starter for a conversation about the elephant in the room.
- This prompt cane be used to highlight difference in mode of engaging with the future – through imagining what the future could be, or through imagining how different the future could be and contrasting that with the present in order to identify assumptions, mindsets, and values in play.

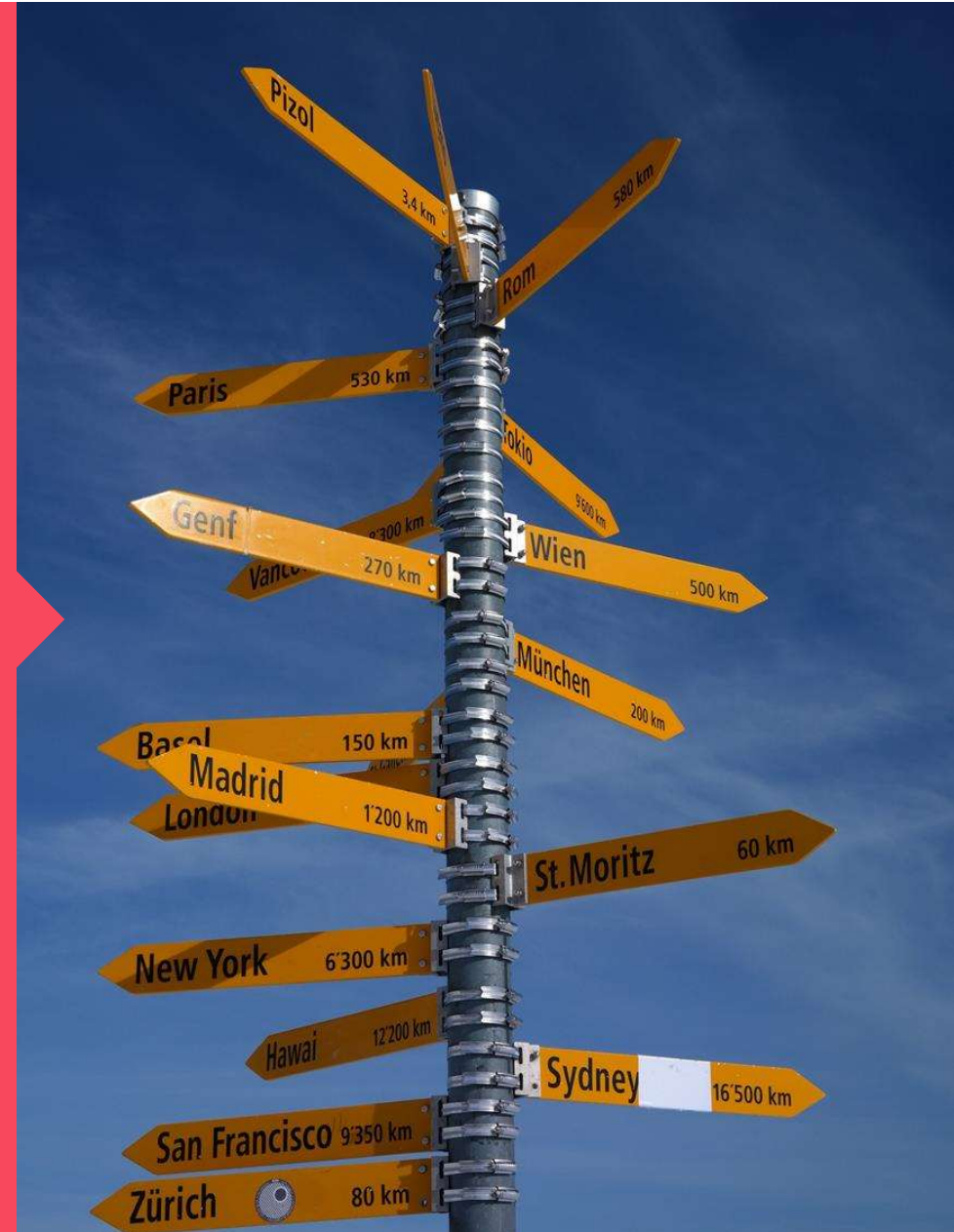


Design intent of this prompt



This prompt was created while our consortium was discussing the strategic options available to our consortium in the coming year under conditions of high uncertainty. It gave us an opportunity to surface our fears and hopes but also to imagine some positively surprising futures. This is an example of a question that can be used to begin moving outside the typical mode of using futures (hopes & fears) towards being more receptive to the opportunities of change. Our reflections on this experimental check-in included the observation that futures are made in the present and very near future, what seeds can be planted now, or opportunities followed up on that would open up further possibilities further down the line? This is a reminder that the focus of futures literacy is on making better informed decisions in the present using not only long-term futures but also near-term futures.

Contributed by Nicolas Balcom Raleigh. First tried at the FLxDeep consortium's regular meeting held on the 2nd of October 2020.





**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Which of your present ways of thinking do you think could be radically different in the future?

#advanced

#digital setting #physical setting

#reflection #presencing

#openness to alternatives #time perspective



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Example Responses



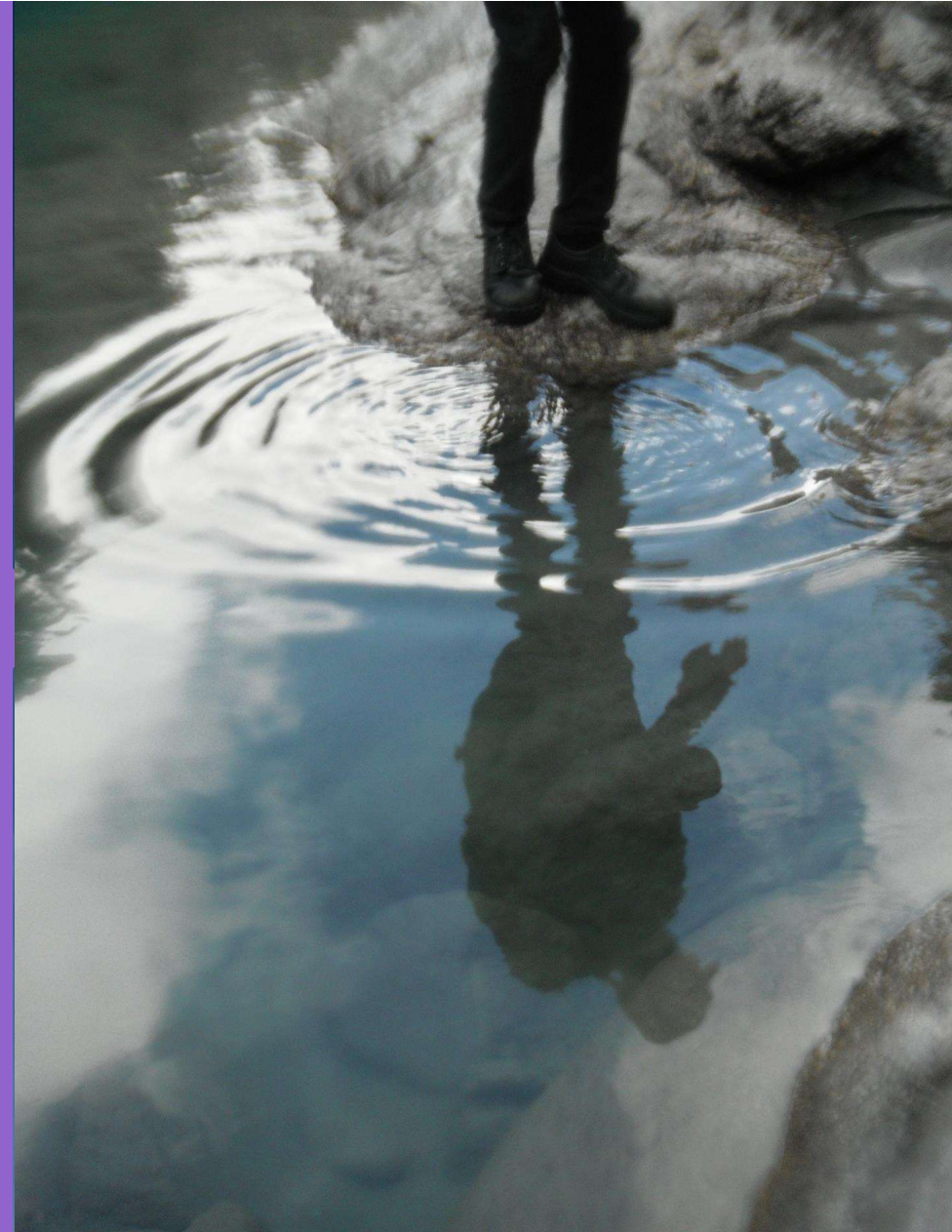
- Starting a course soon by Bayo Akamalafe (...) tapping into indigenous wisdom and emergent learning. I think that it will change the way that I think about learning.
- When applying for PhD studies I have been thinking about this process a lot, I think that my belief that degrees matter will change.
- I am the product of an aspiration, conflictual and judgmental world, the opposition of ideas and beliefs, I wonder if i could change my own judgmental behaviour and position. It would be a fundamental change for me. I come from a place of judgement.
- We are on the verge of having a second lockdown because of covid here, the way that I think about what is normal will change soon, from politics to economics to other paradigms may radically change.



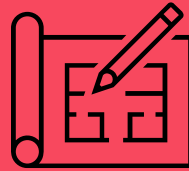
How to use this prompt



- We invite people to notice things, especially change and the conditions of change. These ways of thinking establish the conditions for the way things are, as we acquire new knowledge the conditions change. A lab changes those conditions of change.
- Thinking about your thinking, some groups find it challenging to think on that meta level.
- We can use this prompt to introduce the new questions phase of a workshop.
- An FLL develops a new capability—consciously using the future, being more reflexive. Our goal is not to change participant's thinking patterns. That is futures therapy. They have to raise their hand and say that they want to be involved in this kind of change.



Design intent of this prompt



This prompt explores the intersection between Futures Literacy and Transformative Learning theory, which understands deep learning as the transformation of habits of mind. Futures Literacy gives us a process for acting on the habits of mind that relate to the future. This prompt asks people to identify routine thinking and unquestioned mindsets under conditions of change. It helps us to realise that our current habits of mind are not perfect, or set, and that we are constantly in a process of metamorphosis. To reflect on that as a group is challenging as it requires openness, trust and a willingness to set aside our need to be the expert.

Contributed by Martyn Richards. First tried at the FLxDeep consortium's regular meeting held on the 18th of September 2020.





**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

What futures did you think would be here by now?

#intermediate

#digital setting #physical setting

#icebreaker #teambuilding

#systems thinking #time perspective

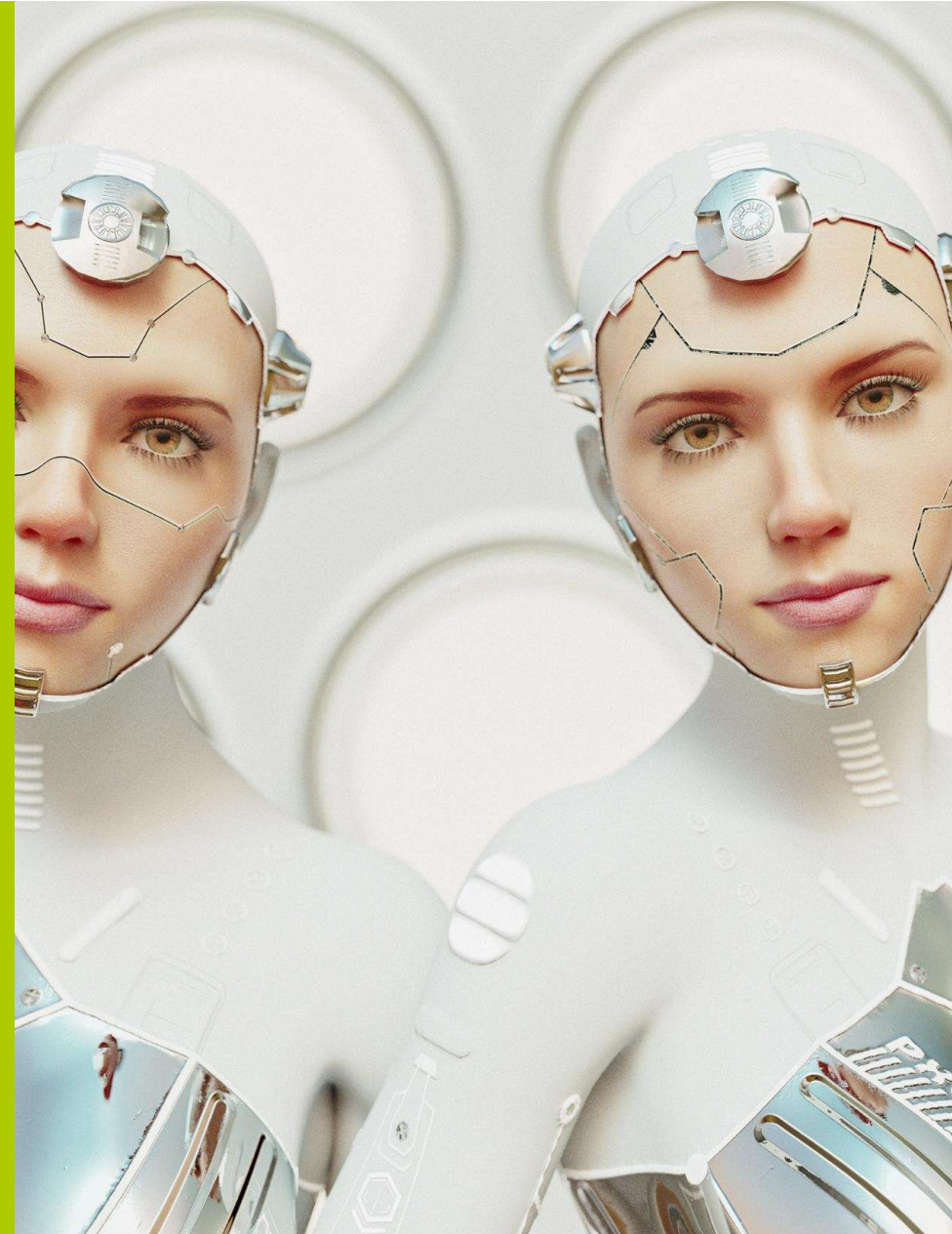


**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Example Responses



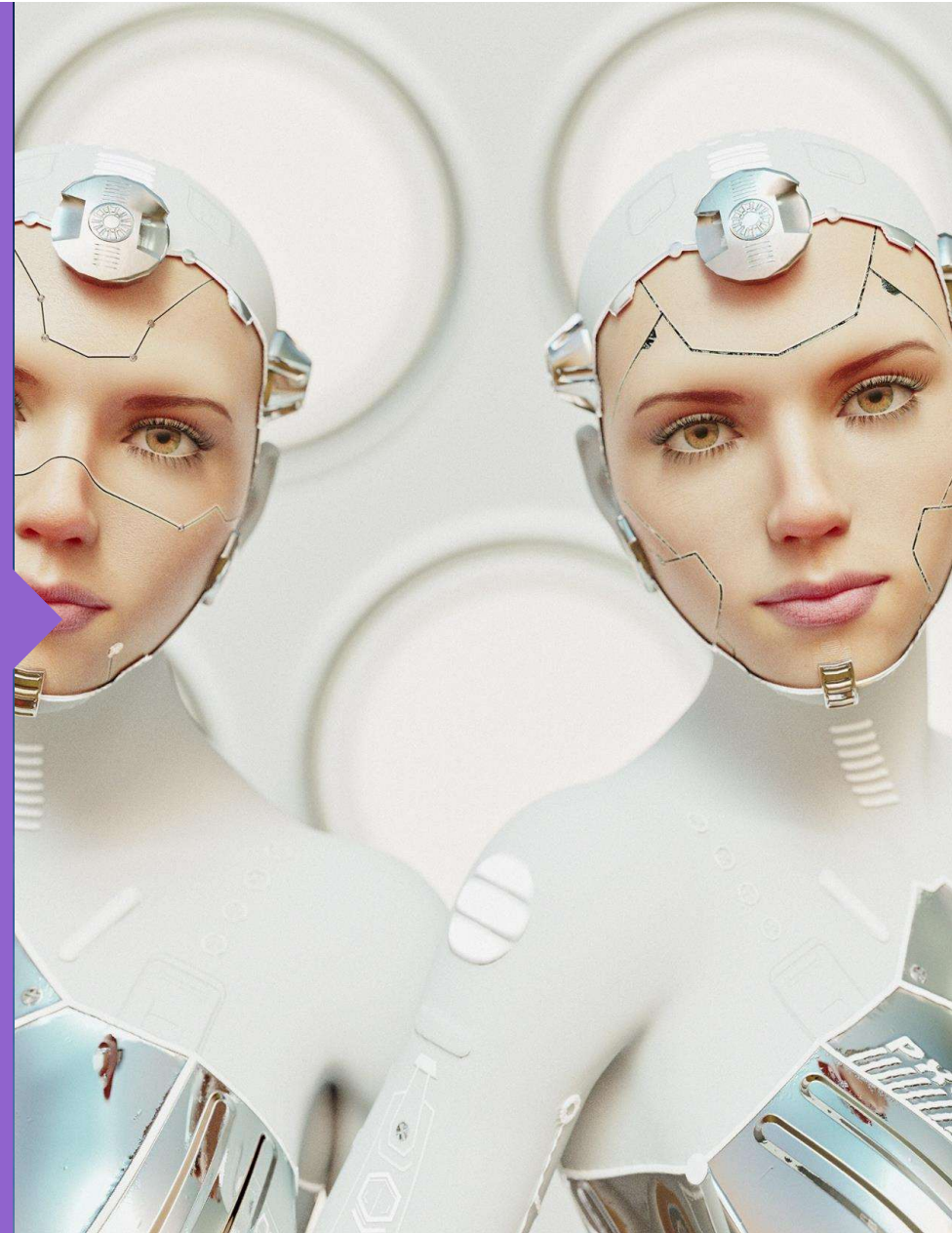
- A medical lab on a chip.
- That Poland would have replaced the złoty with the euro, after 10 years.
- That my son would be a professional football player.
- That I would be living in a village in the middle of nowhere, but unfortunately still in a city.
- I thought manufacturing 4.0 would have been happening in small companies already.
- I thought we would have stronger value chains—sugar not being phased out.
- 10 years ago I attended a singularity U event—it might have to do with how it was framed—but I had that expectation, but it is not really happening.



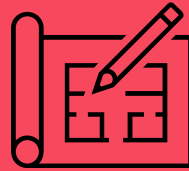
How to use this prompt



- This is a light one, everyone can contribute. For a reflection, you are going back in time to think what you were expecting and how things turned out.
- It helps verify past assumptions about futures.
- Reminding yourself, where you wanted to be, gives you more motivation that you could start changing something.
- It places emphasis on what didn't come to be.
- More about inflections of the younger self with a more mature one.

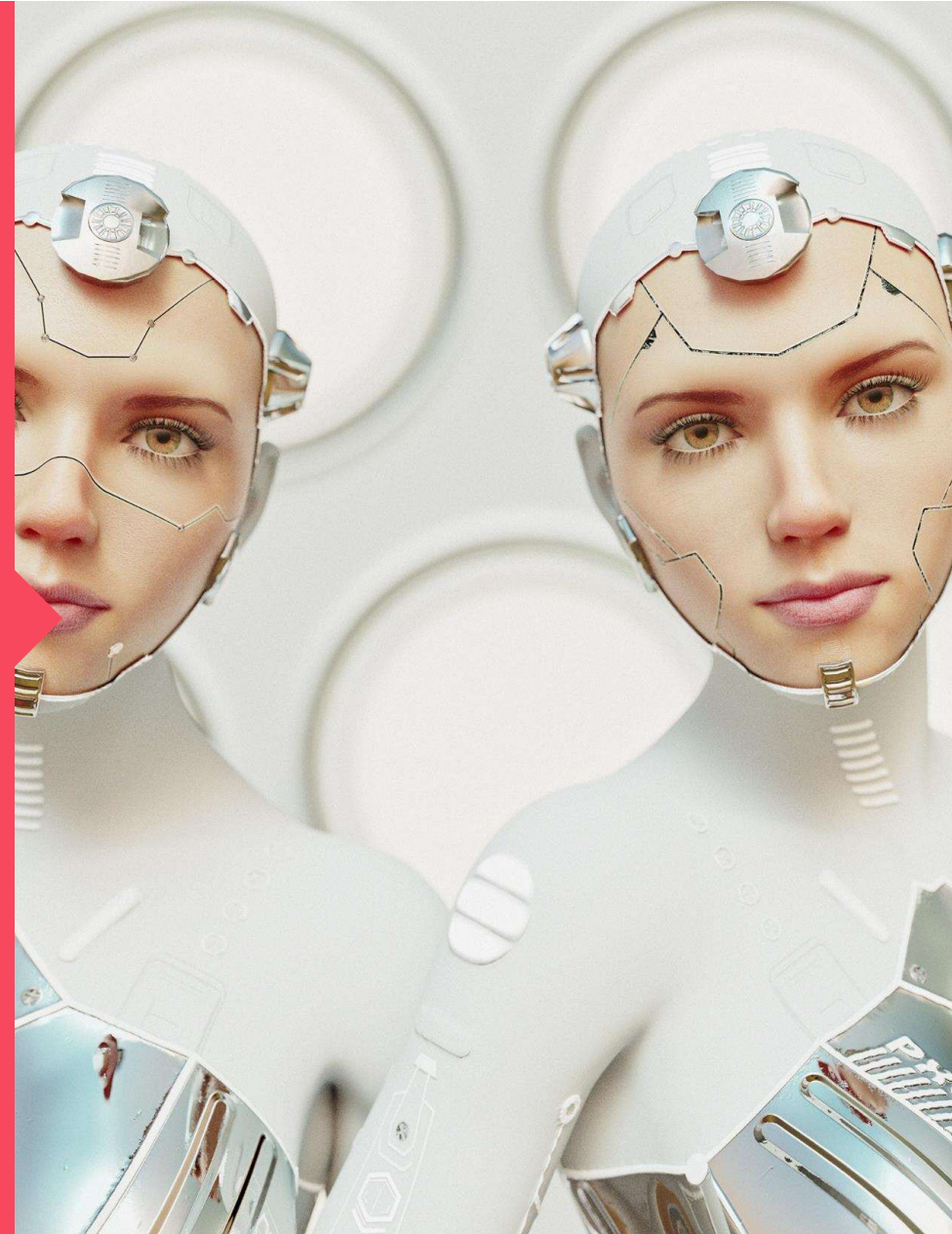


Design intent of this prompt



The world is rich in imagined futures. As we live our lives, we develop a variety of expectations that arise from these futures—which can be from our own ideas or from others or wider society. This exercise helps a group notice the variety of expectations they have had for the future, reflect upon what has changed or hasn't, while implicitly and safely share some of their hopes and fears. It was first used in Balcom Raleigh's Question Launch workshops piloted between 2013 and 2015 which aimed to help participants identify desirable collective conditions the individual would want to nurture in the present.

Contributed by Nicolas Balcom Raleigh. First tried at the FLxDeep consortium's regular meeting held on the 17th of July 2020.





**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

Imagine that you wake up thirty years from now, you come across a baby deer, what one yes or no question would you ask them?

#intermediate

#digital setting #physical setting

#icebreaker #workshop

#openness to alternatives #time perspective



Example Responses



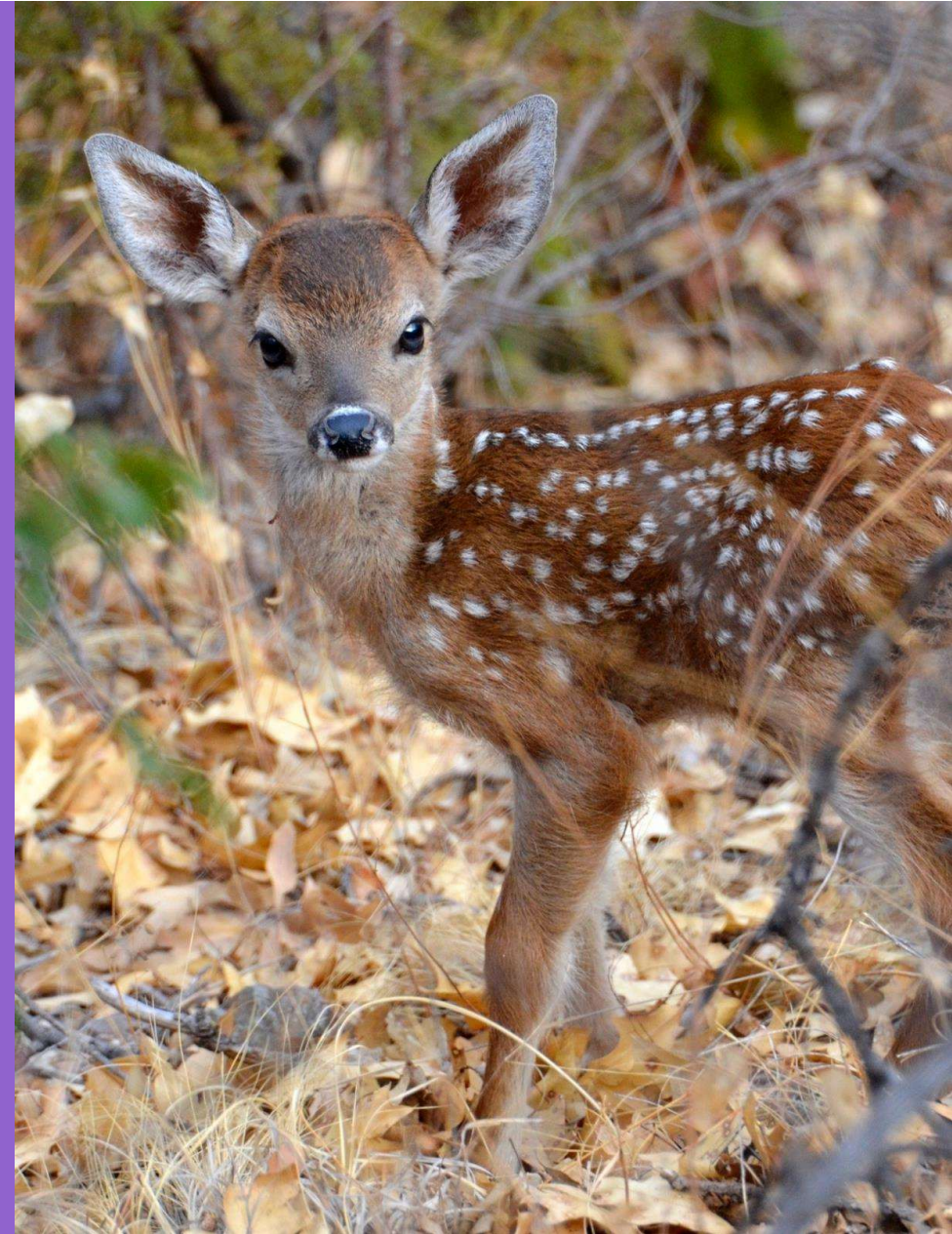
- Can I borrow your smartphone?
- Are you going to take me someplace today, my guide?
- Are you happy with your life?
- Have you forgiven humankind?
- Do you think your offspring will have a better life than yours?
- Do you live in my building complex?
- Did the FLxDeep project support your survival/have a positive impact on you?
- Do you have enough food for your herd?



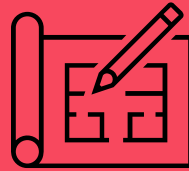
How to use this prompt



- We have used it as a warmup, and to help people become explicit with language, it gives lots of information and it is enjoyable. It can tell you a lot about the group dynamic if you use more questions.
- Engaging, participants often try to outsmart each other making it a lively activity.
- Interesting to see what people come up with pre/post Futures Literacy Lab.
- What does the baby deer do for this? This is hybridization—the forced combination of incongruent elements to stimulate an emotional reaction and creative response.
- It opens us up to more futures. We did not question why we could talk to the animal, maybe that future is not as nonsensical as the first impression.

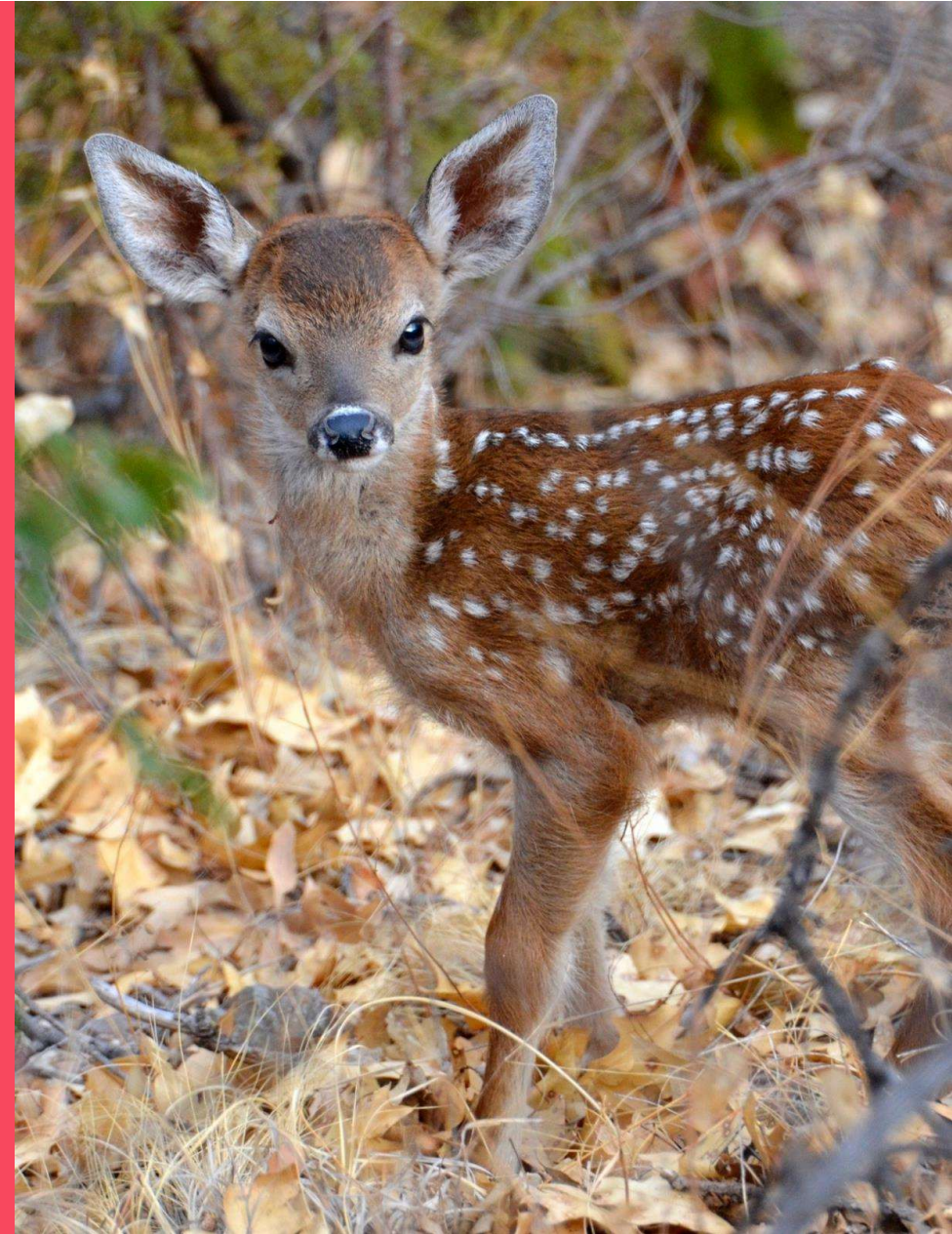


Design intent of this prompt



This is inspired by the Rip Van Winkle technique which was developed by RAND corporation in the 1950s and the environmental writing of Lovelace. It can be used to uncover assumptions as quickly as possible.

Contributed by Kacper Nosarzewski. First tried at the FLxDeep consortium's regular meeting held on the 26th of June 2020.





**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**