

# Imagine & Plan – Visualising

Taking the idea in my head and putting it into words and drawings so someone else can respond to it



**Download the full report:**

Bianchi, L. and Wiskow, J. (2023)  
Progressing to be an Engineer –  
The Approach. Royal Academy of  
Engineering.

**Informed by work from St Mary's College, Derry  
and Tonyrefail Community School**

# The Progressing to be an Engineer Cycle




# Overview

**Imagine & Plan – Visualising** – everything starts with a great idea. Ideas need to be explored, developed and communicated effectively. Visualising is a means of doing just this – by the use of words, sketches and/or 3D modelling. A good visualiser does not have to be a great artist. The key is enabling your audience to recognise what you’ve drawn.



ILOs	Key learning	Possible activities
<b>What do we want pupils to understand about Imagine &amp; Plan – Visualising?</b>	<p>Pupils should understand the purpose of visualising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ to explore and develop ideas</li> <li>■ to plan and revise</li> <li>■ to develop ideas collaboratively</li> <li>■ to communicate those ideas to others</li> </ul> <p>They should appreciate that there are different ways in which to visualise – not just by drawing. Often a combination of techniques should be used, depending on the complexity of the idea you wish to communicate.</p>	<p><b>Quick sketch:</b></p> <p>Challenge the pupils to sketch both simple and more complex objects. How recognisable are their efforts?</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>No such thing as ‘can’t draw’</u></li> <li>2. <u>Visualise this</u></li> </ol>
<b>How do we want them to apply their knowledge?</b>	<p>Pupils should be exposed to and given the opportunity to try out a range of different visualising techniques. They should be encouraged to combine words and drawings/ models to achieve the best effect.</p> <p>This EHoM can be practised in all areas of the curriculum where a visual representation is required.</p>	<p><b>Living underwater:</b></p> <p>What would a habitat for an aquanaut look like?</p> <p><b>Activity:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <u>Underwater habitat</u></li> </ol>





	From	To	Towards
	Suggested 5–7 years	Suggested 7–11 years	Suggested 11–14 years
<b>Pupils should be taught to:</b>	Communicate their ideas in words and simple sketches.	Use simple annotated sketches to turn ideas into words and drawings.	Use detailed annotated sketches to turn ideas into words and drawings to create a design specification.
<b>Success was demonstrated when pupils:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>talked about their ideas using drawings or diagrams to help them explain.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conveyed their ideas, parts of a product or system, in a visual way that could be interpreted or identified by others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>produced a logical and systematic series of sketches to explain an idea in a visual way.</li> </ul>



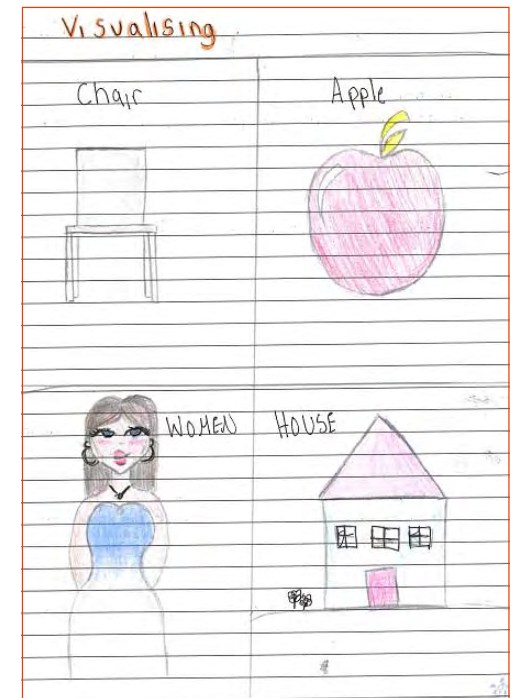
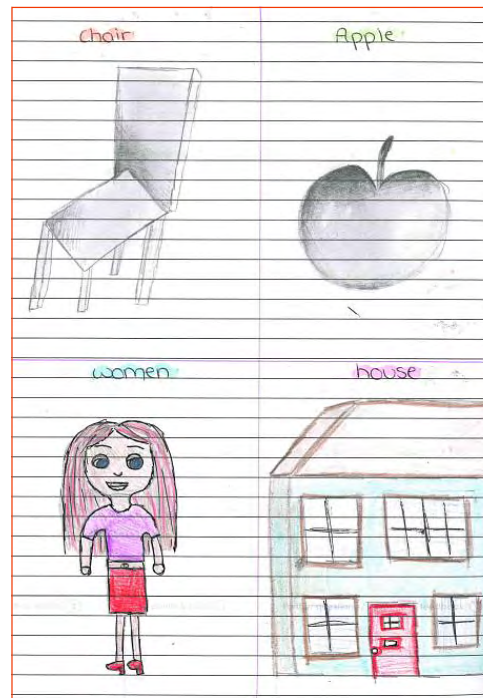
# Generic task

## Initial learning activity – eliciting and developing understanding

### No such thing as ‘can’t draw’ – getting started

The pupils were asked to sketch some basic objects – chair, woman, apple and house – and then share their efforts with their elbow partner. This was followed by the sketching of some more complex examples where further thought was potentially needed. The emphasis was on rough, quick drawings.

“Students had a lot of positive reactions to this activity.”



“Students had a lot of positive reactions to this activity.”

We spent time after students had completed their sketches to swap work with a peer and then to give their peer verbal feedback.

This reinforced the message that everyone can sketch and be successful in this task.”





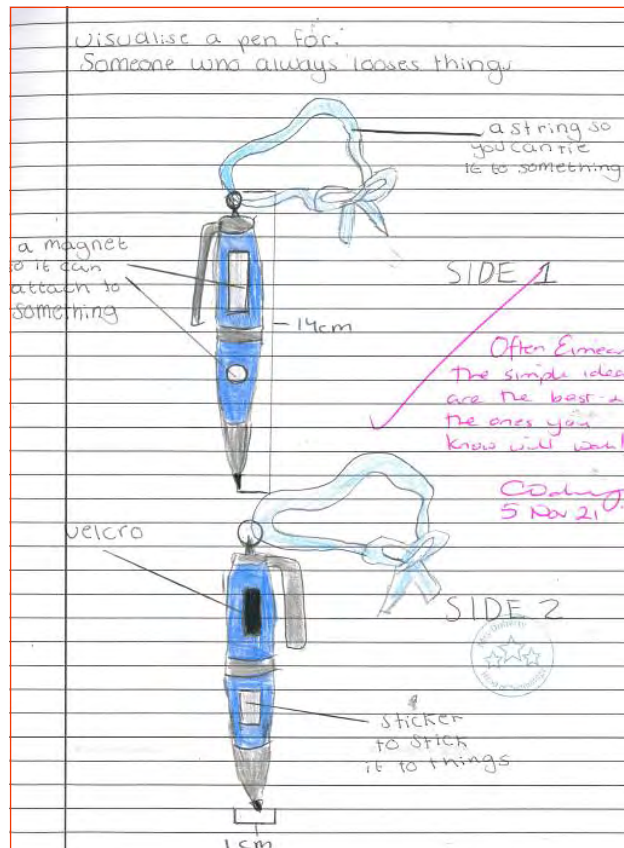
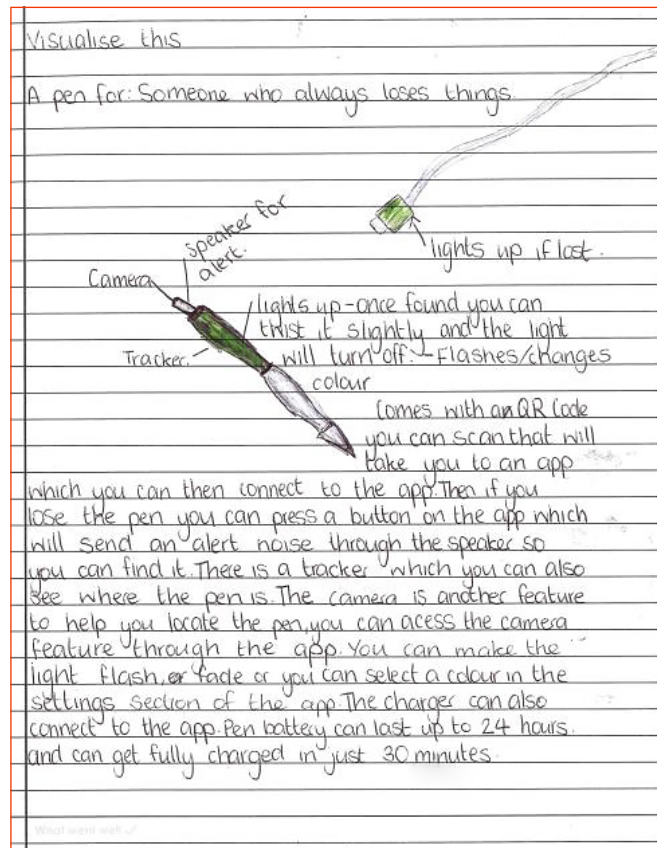
# Generic task

## Initial learning activity – eliciting and developing understanding

### Visualise this – applying what you know

The pupils were then asked to use their visualising skills to sketch a pen for a variety of users: someone who always loses things; a two-fingered person (pinkie & index); a child who finds it hard to concentrate in class.

### A pen for someone who always loses things



“Students responded to the task in very different ways.”

“Students responded to the task in very different ways.

The first student went down the electronic solution route and a number of others produced designs which included electronics, apps, trackers etc.

The second solution was much more simple and it is interesting to see what this student was thinking.”

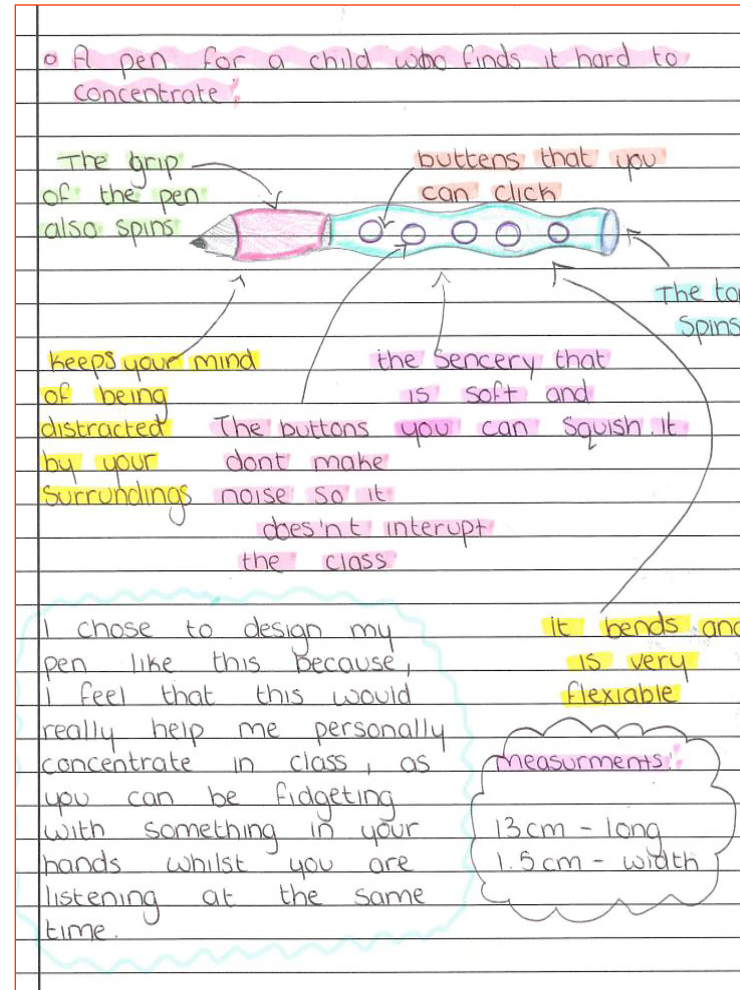
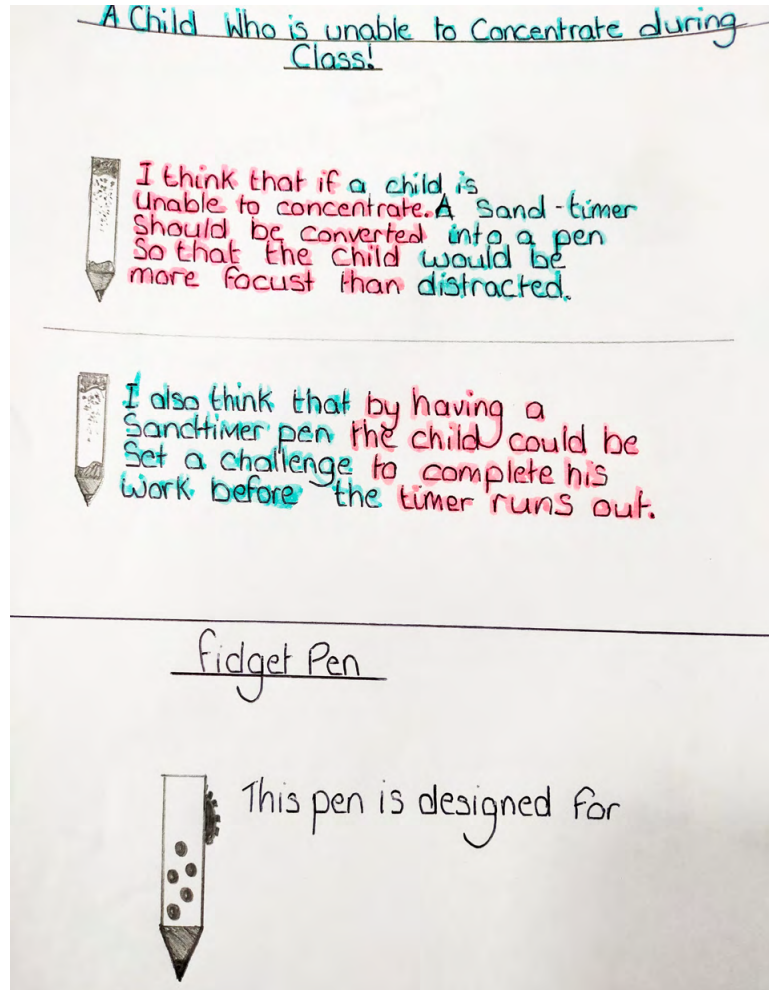


# Generic task

Initial learning activity - eliciting and developing understanding

A pen for a child who find it hard to concentrate in class

"Students who chose this task related very well to it."



"Students who chose this task related very well to it."

They had experience of family members or friends who they believed had this issue and would benefit from a similar product.

The solutions offered were more creative than those that adults would have come up with!"

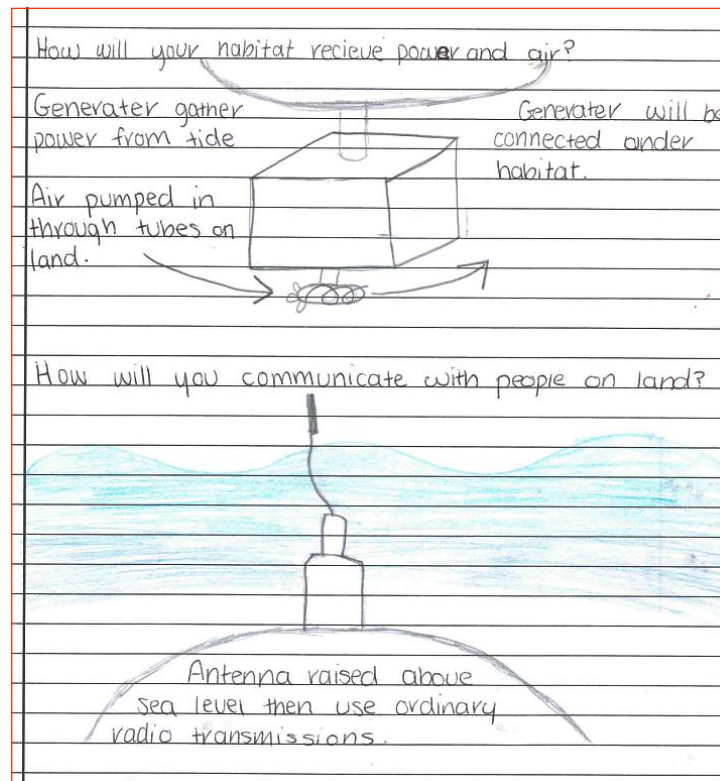
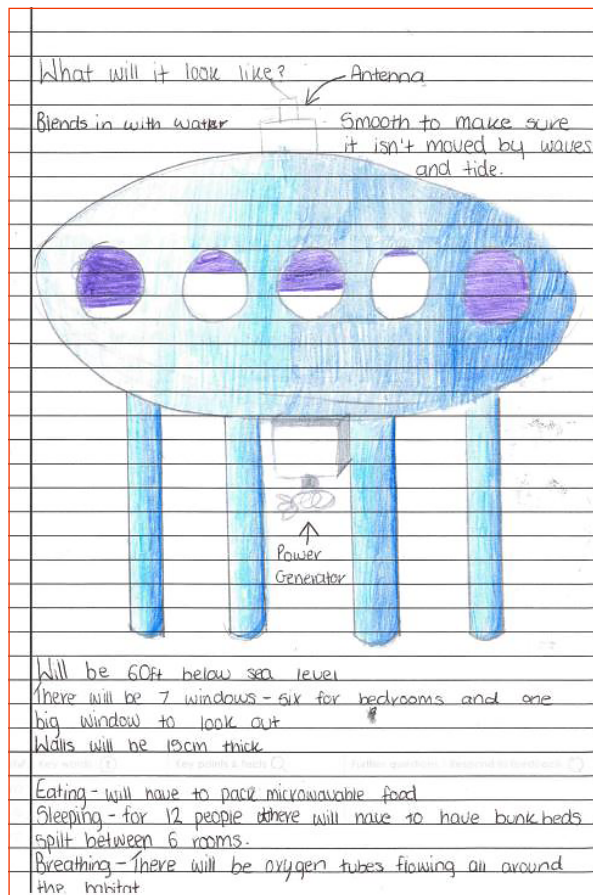


# Embedded task

## Exploring the EHoM in context

### Living underwater

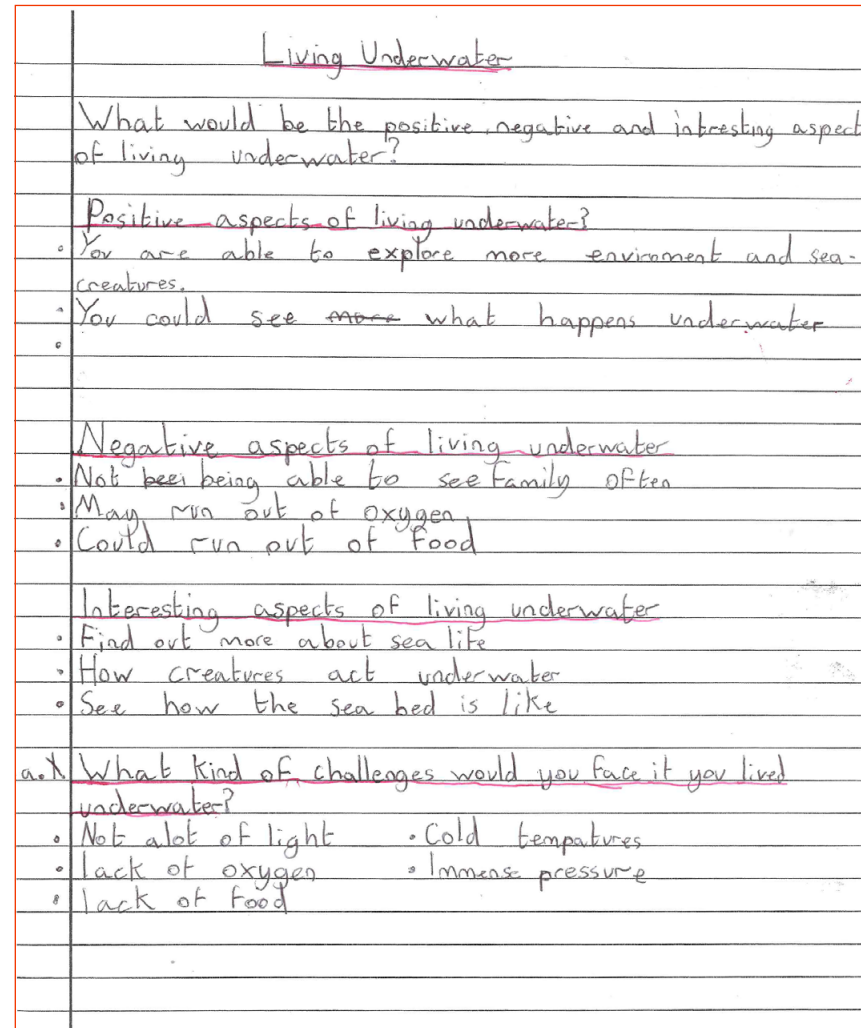
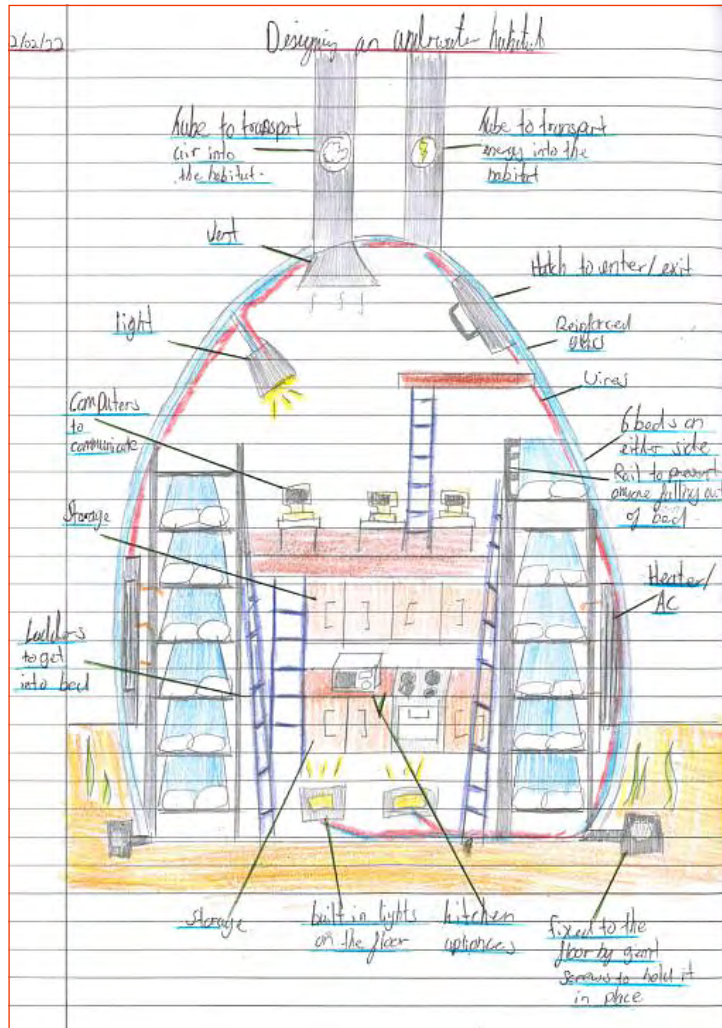
Designing an underwater habitat: Pupils were introduced to the term 'aquanaut' – a diver who lives in an underwater habitat for longer than 24 hour periods. They were asked to think about the challenges that someone living underwater would face, and offer potential solutions. They were then tasked with visualising an underwater habitat which communicated their ideas effectively.





# Embedded task

## Exploring the EHoM in context



"Pupils enjoyed taking part in the activity and the discussion went very well, with students asking questions and offering their own information confidently. Many solutions were offered orally to the challenges faced by living under water. Questions asked regarding the future and if we might need to live underwater or if we might holiday underwater were thought provoking."



# Teachers' ideas to extend and support thinking

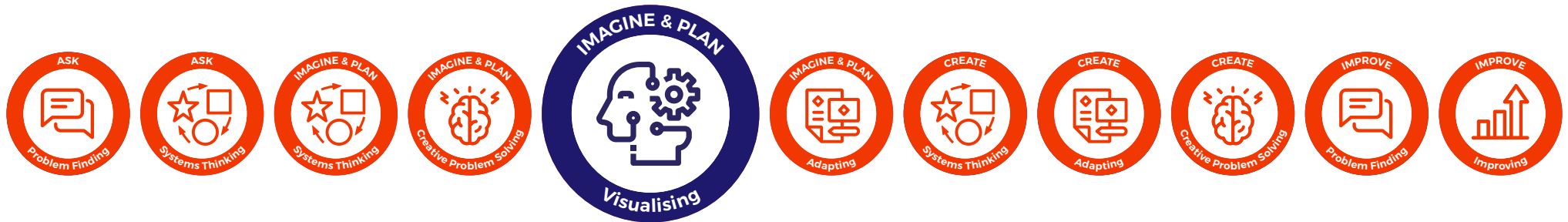
## Extending

A useful video to watch to stimulate discussion:  
What if we lived in underwater cities:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=k1elwY5ZBxU>

## Further support

**Pupils may struggle** as they will probably have little if any knowledge of aquanauts or living underwater. As this is outside their own experience it may be daunting to some. Initial discussion and access to examples are therefore key to generate ideas to help with designs.





---

# Imagine & Plan – Visualising

Taking the idea in my head and putting it into words and drawings so someone else can respond to it

---

**FROM** – communicating ideas in words and simple sketches.

**TO** – using simple annotated sketches to turn ideas into words and drawings.

**TOWARDS** – using detailed annotated sketches to turn ideas into words and drawings to create a design specification.