

Attention Arrows

Divided attention, inhibition and speed — five minutes a day

WHAT IT TRAINS

- Sustained and divided attention
- Inhibition — stopping the automatic answer
- Processing speed
- Visual scanning across a line

Every arrow carries two pieces of information at once — which way it points and what color it is. Handling both, quickly, and sometimes overriding the obvious answer, is exactly the work the brain does when reading. Start at level one and only move up when a level feels easy.

HOW TO DO IT

1 Say the direction

Left to right, row by row, say which way each arrow points. Out loud. Do not skip and do not go back.

2 Say the color

Same sheet, same order, but now say the color instead of the direction. Ignore where it points.

3 Say both

Color first, then direction. "Blue up. Green left." This is noticeably harder than either one alone.

4 Add the red rule

Say the direction — but when an arrow is red, say the opposite direction instead. This is the inhibition level and it is where most of the value is.

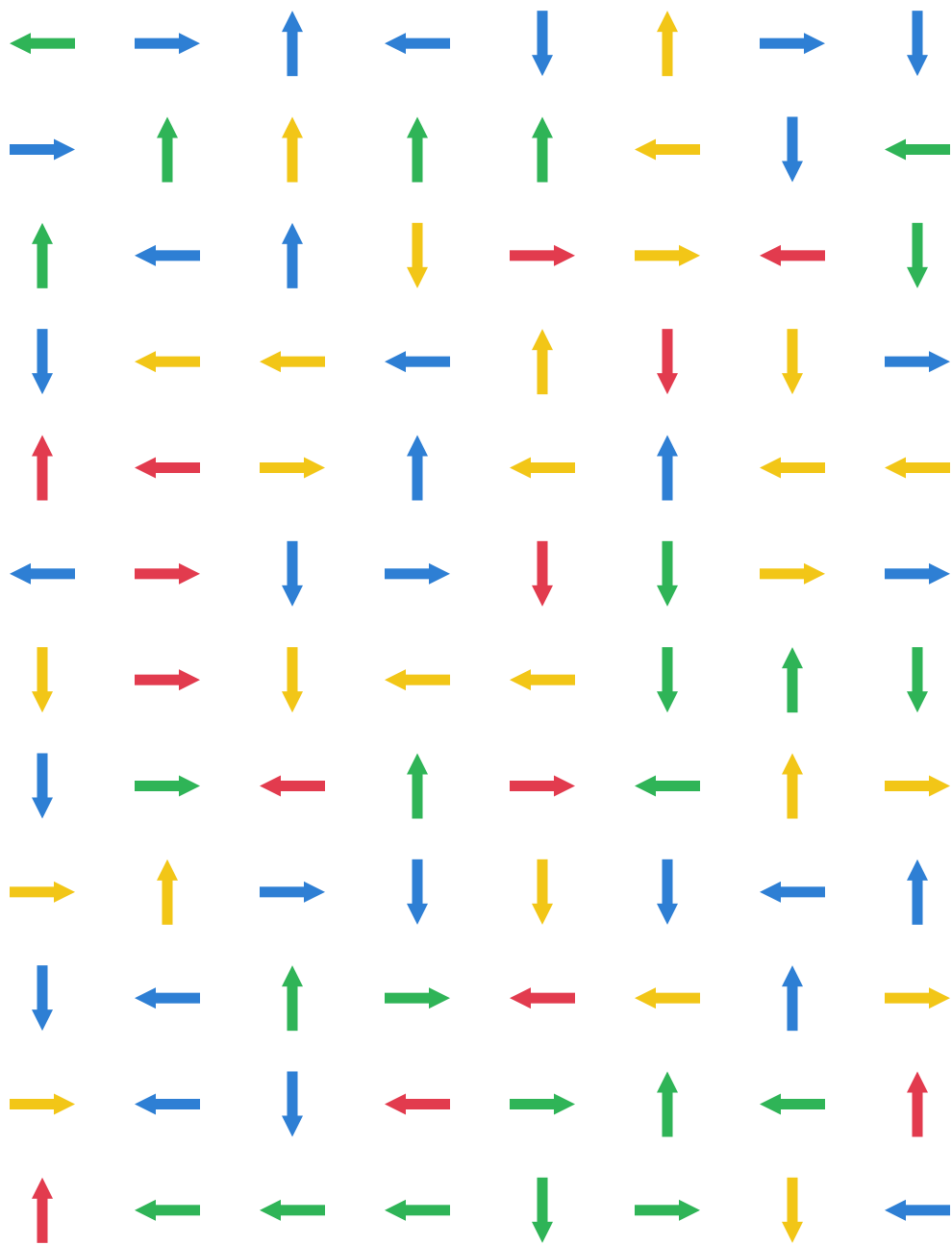
5 Beat your own time

Pick one level, time it, and try to beat it tomorrow. Compete against yesterday, never against another child.

RULES THAT MATTER MORE THAN THE EXERCISE

- Sit with them. This does not work handed over and left alone.
- Five to ten minutes, most days. Short and daily beats long and occasional.
- Aim for a level they get right about four times in five and have to work for.
- When it gets hard, say so out loud: "that is the part where it is working."
- Stop while they still want more.

Print several copies. The arrows are randomly arranged, so working down the same sheet repeatedly is fine — what is being practiced is the handling, not the memorizing.



Say the direction. Then the color. Then both. Then with the red rule.