

# Mind Reading 101

This is an old classic that is based on simple algebra. This works great for a classroom but is also effective one on one.

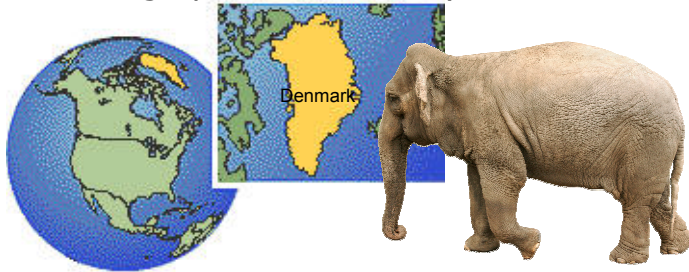
**Effect:** You predict something that a spectator will think of.

**Secret:** It's math!

**Process:** Tell the class that a crowd can be driven to think about the same thing; very few people will escape the mental picture shared by many others.

Read the following to your class, giving them time to make the necessary calculations:

1. Class members are asked to think about a small number (one or two digits) and are then instructed to perform the following operations *silently*.
2. Double the number.
3. Add 8 to the result.
4. Divide the result by 2.
5. Subtract the original number.
6. Convert this into a letter of the alphabet. (1=A, 2=B, 3=C, etc.)
7. Think of the name of a country which starts with this letter.
8. Think of an animal whose name starts with the country's *second* letter.
9. Think of the *color* of that animal...
10. Announce to the classroom that their collective thinking must have gone wrong, since "**there are no grey elephants in Denmark.**"



Though not everyone will think of grey elephants in Denmark, most will. Of course, everyone who does the math right will end up with the number 4 and the letter D.

There are other possible countries/animals/color combinations (Djibouti, Jaguars, orange and black, for example), but MOST people go with Denmark, elephant and grey.

**Math Application:** Algebra! Show how algebra can be used to explain how this works.  $(2*X + 8) / 2 = (2*X / 2) + (8/2) = X + 4$ . Subtract the original number you chose.  $X + 4 - X = 4$ . The answer will always be 4.

For more ideas on how to use simple magic tricks to introduce math concepts or add some fun to your lesson, go to [www.math-a-magic.com/downloads.htm](http://www.math-a-magic.com/downloads.htm) or call 770-640-6509 (toll free 1-866-490-7323).