



Problem-solving games

1. INTRODUCTION

With today's craze for electronic toys, you might be surprised at the effectiveness of these simple, almost old-fashioned games. They are really more like educational tasks than games, but introducing them as games, either competitive or cooperative, helps kids come to love them. The games enrich the learning process, enhance understanding, and reinforce concepts taught by you.

Problem-solving skills are necessary in all areas of life, and classroom problem solving activities can be a great way to get students prepped and ready to solve real problems in real life scenarios. Whether in school, work or in their social relationships, the ability to critically analyze a problem, map out all its elements and then prepare a workable solution is one of the most valuable skills one can acquire in life.

Educating our students about problem solving skills from an early age in school can be facilitated through classroom problem solving activities. Such endeavors encourage cognitive as well as social development, and can equip students with the tools they'll need to address and solve problems throughout the rest of their lives.

Problem solving activities provide a way to relate classroom learning to authentic hands-on real-world situations. Problem solving can help students to develop decision making skills, critical thinking, autonomy, communications, negotiations, team building, and personal responsibility for learning. It is critical that problems presented be relevant and meaningful to allow for ownership in motivating students to seek out potential solutions.

Often times when we think of problem solving we envision a negative stressful situation we are expected to attempt to resolve. Problem solving can also be considered in a positive way to address a challenge. Resolving challenges can be done with an individual or together in teams to accomplish a task. The challenges can include devising a plan and designing a solution; which may include a product or project to address a problem. Problem solving can

be used for improving research skills, increasing the knowledge base, developing divergent creative inventive thinking, developing convergent critical thinking, fostering innovative solutions, and presentation skills. Problem solving can provide an opportunity for practice making quality choices and decisions. Creative problem solving can be used as a tool for learning how to solve real world problems.

2. GENERAL PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS:

1. Identify the problem
2. Develop a plan to solve the problem
3. Analyze the data
4. Test possible solutions
5. Reflect on the findings
6. Conclusions

3. TEACH THE PROBLEMS

To solve any problem, students must go through a process to do so. The teacher can explore this process with students as a group. The first step is to fully understand the problem. To teach this, ask students to describe the problem in their own words. This ensures the student is able to comprehend and express the concern at hand. Then, they must describe and understand the barriers presented. At this point, it's a good idea to provide ways for the student to find a solution.

The following are five activities elementary teachers can use to teach problem-solving to students. Teaching students to identify the possible solutions requires approaching the problem in various ways.

No. 1 – Create a visual image

One option is to teach children to create a visual image of the situation. Many times, this is an effective problem-solving skill. They are able to close their eyes and create a mind picture of the problem. For younger students, it may be helpful to draw out the problem they see on a piece of paper.

Ask the child to then discuss possible solutions to the problem. This could be done by visualizing what would happen if one action is taken or if another action is taken. By creating these mental images, the student is fully engaged and can map out any potential complications to their proposed solution.

No. 2 – Use manipulatives

Another activity that is ideal for children is to use manipulatives. In a situation where the problem is space-related, for example the children can move their desks around in various ways to create a pattern or to better visualize the problem. It's also possible to use simple objects on a table, such as blocks, to create patterns or to set up a problem. This is an ideal way to teach problem-solving skills for math.

By doing this, it takes a problem, often a word problem that's hard for some students to visualize, and places it in front of the student in a new way. The child is then able to organize the situation into something he or she understands.

No. 3 – Make a guess

Guessing is a very effective problem-solving skill. For those children who are unlikely to actually take action but are likely to sit and ponder until the right answer hits them, guessing is a critical step in problem-solving. This approach involves trial and error.

Rather than approaching guessing as a solution to problems (you do not want children to think they can always guess), teach that it is a way to gather more data. If, for example, they do not know enough about the situation to make a full decision, by guessing, they can gather more facts from the outcome and use that to find the right answer.

No. 4 – Patterns

No matter if the problem relates to social situations or if it is something that has to do with science, patterns are present. By teaching children to look for patterns, they can see what is happening more fully.

For example, define what a pattern is. Then, have the child look for any type of pattern in the context. If the children are solving a mystery, for example, they can look for patterns in time, place or people to better gather facts.

No. 5 – Making a list

Another effective tool is list making. Teach children how to make a list of all of the ideas they come up with right away. Brainstorming is a fun activity in any subject. Then, the child is able to work through the list to determine which options are problems or not.

Classroom problem-solving activities like these engage a group or a single student. They teach not what the answer is, but how the student can find that answer.

4. EXAMPLES OF PROBLEM TYPES:

Information Search: Students use clues to locate resources

Research Two Opposing Positions: Half of the class researches one position and the other half another position, then debate or compare and contrast the issues.

Sequential Collaborative Creations: Each student adds on to the research, writing, illustrations, of the previous students in a collaborative manner.

Parallel Problem Solving: Each student solves a problem or task construction project independently. Once completed students then come together to compare the results.

Virtual Dialogue: Advanced reading with questions posted for group discussions.

Social Action Projects: Students work together to solve social issues.

Role Playing Example: Display a number of items and explain to students that they are archaeologists investigating a dig site. Ask them to describe the lives of the people who might have used the items; considering unusual uses from someone not knowing its intended use. Use the Internet to search for clues about the civilization that once lived there.

5. TEAM-BUILDING GAMES

5.1 TEAM-BUILDING GAMES THAT PROMOTE COLLABORATIVE CRITICAL THINKING

1. IF YOU BUILD IT...

This team-building game is flexible. Simply divide students into teams and give them equal amounts of a certain material, like pipe cleaners, blocks, or even dried spaghetti and marshmallows.

Then, give them something to construct. The challenge can be variable (think: Which team can build the tallest, structurally-sound castle? Which team can build a castle the fastest?).

You can recycle this activity throughout the year by adapting the challenge or materials to specific content areas.

Skills: Communication; problem-solving

2. SAVE THE EGG

This activity can get messy and may be suitable for older children who can follow safety guidelines when working with raw eggs. Teams must work together to find a way to “save” the egg (Humpty Dumpty for elementary school students?) — in this case an egg dropped from a specific height. That could involve finding the perfect soft landing, or creating a device that guides the egg safely to the ground. Let their creativity work here.

Skills: Problem-solving, creative collaboration

3. ZOOM

Zoom is a classic classroom cooperative game that never seems to go out of style. Simply form students into a circle and give each a unique picture of an object, animal or whatever

else suits your fancy. You begin a story that incorporates whatever happens to be on your assigned photo. The next student continues the story, incorporating their photo, and so on.

Skills: Communication; creative collaboration

4. MINEFIELD

Another classic team-building game. Arrange some sort of obstacle course and divide students into teams. Students take turns navigating the “mine field” while blindfolded, with only their teammates to guide them. You can also require students to only use certain words or clues to make it challenging or content-area specific.

Skills: Communication; trust

5. THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO

Fabricate a scenario in which students would need to work together and solve problems to succeed, like being stranded on a deserted island or getting lost at sea. Ask them to work together to concoct a solution that ensures everyone arrives safely. You might ask them to come up with a list of 10 must-have items that would help them most, or a creative passage to safety. Encourage them to vote — everyone must agree to the final solution.

Skills: Communication, problem-solving

6. A SHRINKING VESSEL

This game requires a good deal of strategy in addition to team work. Its rules are deceptively simple: The entire group must find a way to occupy a space that shrinks over time, until they are packed creatively like sardines. You can form the boundary with a rope, a tarp or blanket being folded over or small traffic cones. (Skills: Problem-solving; teamwork)

7. GO FOR GOLD

This game is similar to the “If you build it” game: Teams have a common objective, but instead of each one having the same materials, they have access to a whole cache of materials. For instance, the goal might be to create a contraption with pipes, rubber tubing and pieces of cardboard that can carry a marble from point A to point B in a certain number of steps, using only gravity.

Creative collaboration; communication; problem-solving

8. IT’S A MYSTERY

Many children (and grown-ups) enjoy a good mystery, so why not design one that must be solved cooperatively? Give each student a numbered clue. In order to solve the mystery — say, the case of the missing mascot — children must work together to solve the clues in order. The “case” might require them to move from one area of the room to the next, uncovering more clues.

Skills: Problem-solving, communication

9. 4-WAY TUG-OF-WAR

That playground classic is still a hit — not to mention inexpensive and simple to execute. For a unique variation, set up a multi-directional game by tying ropes in such a way that three or four teams tug at once. Some teams might choose to work together to eliminate the other groups before going head-to-head.

Skills: Team work; sportsmanship

10. KEEP IT REAL

This open-ended concept is simple and serves as an excellent segue into problem-based learning. Challenge students to identify and cooperatively solve a real problem in their schools or communities. You may set the parameters, including a time limit, materials and physical boundaries.

Skills: Problem-solving; communication

11. MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

At A Glance

Classic problem-solving exercise for small teams.

Time 15 - 20 min

Props

Bag of spaghetti

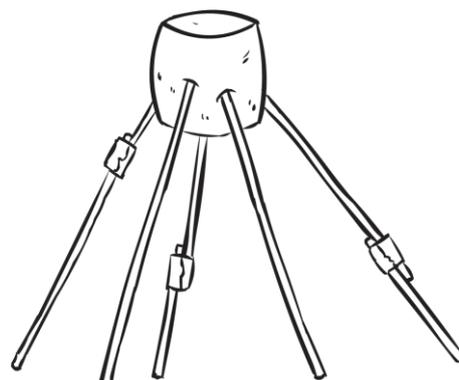
Roll of string / twine

Masking-tape

Marshmallows

Measuring tape

People Mini 1 – 7



Step-by-Step Instructions

1. In advance, prepare one kit containing the following items for each small group:
 - 20 sticks of spaghetti
 - 1 metre (3?) of string
 - 1 metre (3?) of masking tape
 - 1 x marshmallow
2. Gather your group and divide them into small teams of approx 4 to 8 people.
3. Distribute one kit to each small group.
4. Instruct the groups to use (only) the contents of the kits to build the tallest free-standing structure, and to place the marshmallow on top (highest peak of structure.)
5. Explain that every group has exactly 20 minutes to complete the task.
6. Groups are permitted to use as little or all of their resources and break the spaghetti, string and tape as they choose.
7. The team with the tallest (free-standing) structure supporting the highest marshmallow at the end of the time, wins.

Popular Variations

Limited Resources: Vary any one or more of the items in the kit, such as more or less spaghetti sticks, tape or string.

Marshmallows Plus: Supply ten or more marshmallows, allowing each group to use marshmallows to form part of their structure. Yet, as in the original challenge, a marshmallow must be positioned on top of the structure.

Video

<https://vimeo.com/199952243>

12. RIVER CROSSING

At A Glance

Classic team puzzle that focuses on critical-thinking.

Time 2 - 5 min

People Mini 1 – 7



Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Form small teams of 2 to 5 people.
2. Challenge each team to solve an imaginary puzzle:
3. Using a small rowboat, how can they transport a chicken, fox and a bag of corn to the other side of the river in as few moves as possible.
4. To govern fair-play, the solution must acknowledge three critical parameters:
 - The rowboat can only carry one person and one item at any point in time.
 - The fox and chicken cannot be left alone; and
 - The chicken and the bag of corn cannot be left alone.
5. Describe the step-by-step solution to get all three items safely to the other side of the river.
6. Allow ample time for discussion and trial-and-error.

Popular Variations

Jealous Partners River Crossing: Three married couples must cross a river using a boat which can hold two people (maximum,) subject to the constraint that no woman can be in the presence of another man unless her husband is also present.

Missionaries & Cannibals River Crossing: Three missionaries and three cannibals must cross a river, subject to the constraint that at any time when both missionaries and cannibals are standing on either bank, the cannibals on that bank may not outnumber the missionaries.

Bridge Crossing: Four people approach a narrow bridge crossing a river at night, but it can only hold two people at a time. They have one torch between them, and because it's dark, the torch must be used to cross the bridge safely. Each of the four people (A, B, C and D) travel at different speeds – 1, 2, 5 and 8 minutes respectively. When two people travel together, they must move at the slower person's pace. Can all four people cross the river in 15 minutes or less? Click [here](#) for solution.

13. PAPER HOLDING

At A Glance

Dynamic team-building exercise, ideal for small groups.

Time 5 - 10 min

Props

Sheets of paper

People Mini 1 – 7



Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Form into teams of three to five people.
2. By way of demonstration, ask two people from a team to volunteer and hold one sheet of paper between the palms of one of their hands.
3. Each team is challenged to assist two of their group members to hold as many pieces of paper off the ground by using only their bodies.
4. To guide fair play, announce that:
 - Only one sheet of paper can be affixed between any two body parts;
 - No adhesives can be used to hold paper to one's body;
 - Folding the paper is not permitted;
 - Each sheet of paper must be in contact with both team members; and
 - No two sheets of paper can be touching.
5. Distribute sheets of paper to each team, and announce "GO."
6. Allow up to 10 minutes and survey the results.

Popular Variations

Trio Challenge: As above, involving three people collaborating on the same task.

Partnership Challenge: As above, but in teams of only two people. This means, the pair need to work out how to distribute the sheets of paper and keep a hold of the paper they are already pressed against. Very difficult, but very fun.

Speed Round: Allow only two minutes to solve the problem.

Alternative Media: Use smaller pieces of paper, or fabric, indeed, any material.

Videos <https://vimeo.com/266259864>

14. SHOE TOWER

At A Glance

Quick problem-solving game for large & small groups.

Time 2 - 5 min

Props



Shoes

People Mini 1 – 7

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Form small teams of about 8 to 15 people.
2. Explain that each group is to build the tallest free-standing structure they can using only their shoes.
3. Everyone has exactly three minutes to achieve the task.
4. The tallest structure wins.

Popular Variations

Feet In Shoe: Using feet only (shoes included), each small group will work together to form an unbroken chain of feet (touching each other, often end to end) from the floor to a point as high off the floor as possible. A safety note – it won't be long before someone realises that to get the 'tower' really high, you have to start lifting people off the ground, so that they can elevate their feet to the top of the growing tower. When this occurs, instruct the group to physically support these elevated people.

Foot In Shoe: As above, each person can only use one of their feet / shoes to form a part of the tower (requires a much larger group).

Videos <https://vimeo.com/223606832>

15. BLINDFOLD GAMES

Equipment Required: Blindfolds, length of rope

Space Required: Small to large (depending on the challenge). Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 12 to 15 ideally, but can be done with up to 30 participants.

Key Keeper

In a good sized room or space, set out an area as a start/end point. Next lay a set of keys (or any object) about 5 metres in front of the area. The aim of the challenge is for a blindfolded key keeper to protect the keys and stop the rest of the group from retrieving them.

Select a person to act as the key keeper, they will then sit in the middle of the area on the floor, close to the keys. Everyone else will try and take the keys from the keeper. Participants can only move when they are instructed to by the facilitator (you can do this by pointing at them). Once the person has set off they can then make a play for the keys. If the key keeper points at them at any point, they then have to return back to the start point. Start off with just one person at a time, before building up to several players attempting to retrieve the keys at once.

Once the keys have been retrieved, you can either swap with the person who took the keys or they can select someone in the group of choice to act the next keeper.

Blind Shadow

Organise your group into a circle. Explain that one person will be selected to be the shadow of the group. The shadow's aim is to walk around the circle, behind the blindfolded group and try and get them out of the game.

They do this by standing behind another person for 3 seconds – once the 3 seconds is up, the instructor will tap the person on the shoulder and they must then kneel down as they are now out of the game.

To prevent the shadow from catching them out, if someone believes the shadow is standing behind them, they can raise their hand. They will be told if they catch the shadow out. They can only do this a maximum of 3 times, any more and they will be out of the game (prevents constant hand raising).

Once a group member catches the shadow, they then become the shadow and you restart the game.

Blind Animals

This works extremely well with groups of 10 or more. Divide the group into smaller sub-teams and give each team an animal type. Now ask every one to find their own space. Get them to put their blindfolds on. Give some simple commands such as: 5 steps backwards, 4 to your left, 6 to your right etc to mix them up more. On your signal, participants then have to make the sound of their animal and find other people of the same type. Eventually everyone should end up with their own sub-team.

Instead of using sub-teams, you can also do this in pairs or smaller groups of 3.

This can also be used at the start of a workshop when organising participants into teams. Give everyone a piece of paper with an animal written on it and begin the exercise.

Suggested animal types: Elephants, monkeys, cows, chicken, lions, dogs, cats etc

Blindfold Cat and Mouse

Organise the group into a large circle. The aim of the game is for the cat to catch the mouse. Sounds easy, but both will be blindfolded and they can move just one space at a time.

Select 2 people, one to act as a cat the other as a mouse. Invite them into circle and get them to put blindfolds on. You can then move both the cat and mouse to the edge of the circle to create a good distance between them.

They will then take it in turns to move, with the cat going first, followed by the mouse. Remind them they can only move 1 step at a time. When they move they have to say either 'cat' or 'mouse' depending on the role they are playing.

On your command they can then begin the game. Once the mouse has been caught or the game has gone on long enough. Stop the game and switch the cat and mouse with others in the group and follow the same process.

Blind Rope Line

Ensure you have enough space for this challenge. You will need a rope or something to mark a straight line on the floor. To begin with, start with just a couple of metres to get participants use to the game, and eventually lead up to around 10m.

The aim of the challenge is for team members to take it in turns to walk the line whilst blindfolded, trying to stay as close to the line as possible. The goal is to walk the full length of the rope without putting a foot wrong or straying too far from the line. Waiting team member will act as support either side to ensure they don't fall or trip over.

Questions to ask in the review:

How did you feel being blindfolded?

How critical was listening during the challenge? How did you feel not being able to verbally communicate?

Did you come up with a strategy before starting the game? If yes, how did you come up with the idea?

How important was the support of others?

Blindfold Tent Build

Blindfolded and under pressure, the group have to work together in a race against the clock to put up a tent. Blindfold tent build is a great challenge for developing communication and leadership skills.

Equipment Required: Basic 2 man tent

Space Required: Medium. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 4 to 6 ideally. For larger groups split them into teams and use more tents. If you don't have the tents available then do a time trial with teams competing against each other.

Total Time: 40 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 10 minutes to practice and discuss
- 20 minutes to complete the challenge
- 5 minutes to review

Brief/Challenge Instructions

1. Explain to the group that they will need to work together and build the tent as a team, however they will be blindfolded.
2. Allow the team time to familiarise themselves with the tent and let them practice putting it up a couple of times.
3. Give blindfolds to everyone in the group.
4. Give them five to ten minutes to practice and come up with a plan.
5. Begin the challenge. Allow 15-20 minutes to complete the challenge.

Suggested Learning Targets

- Problem Solving
- Cooperation
- Time management
- Leadership
- Communication

Useful Tips

If you need to make the challenge easier, blindfold only half of the group. The other half have to direct them during the challenge.

Alternatively, if you need to make it more challenging for the group, tell them that they cannot use words to communicate – only sounds (ensure you tell them this during the initial discussion phase).

Questions to ask in the review:

How important was planning? How did you decide who would do what?

Did anyone lead the challenge? What role did you all play within the team?

How about managing time? Did you have a time-keeper or did you just go with the flow?

Did you get frustrated at any point? If yes, why and how did you deal with that?

What was this challenge about? Why did we do it?

What did you learn from the task? How can you apply that in the future with (work, school, life, sports etc)?

Name one person that impressed during the challenge? What did they do that made a difference?

Perfect Square Team Building Activity

In this activity, the team has to form a perfect square using rope while blindfolded.

Resources:

- Rope (at least 5m, longer if there are more participants) — the ends should be tied together
- Blindfolds

Space Required: Medium. Outdoors or indoors. Ensure that there are no obstacles in the designated area.

Group Size: 4 – 8 participants

Total Time: 20 – 25 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and setup
- 5 – 10 minutes for the activity
- 10 minutes to review and debrief

Running the Activity

- Explain the activity: In this activity, team members have to form a perfect square while blindfolded.
- Get everyone to stand in a circle while holding the rope. Once the circle is formed, they can lay the rope on the floor. Each participant then puts on their blindfold, and

have them take 5 steps backwards. The task is to work together to form a square while blindfolded.

- Once the team is blindfolded, they can begin the activity.
- The activity ends when the team thinks that they have formed a square. Participants then take off their blindfolds and see the final result.
- If you have time, you can run the activity a second time and give the team the chance to do better.

Variations

- To make it more challenging, you can set a time limit or have some participants remain silent during the activity.
- If the team completes the square easily, you can also instruct them to make different shapes to challenge them.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Leadership
- Communication
- Cooperation

Review

Suggested questions to ask:

- What problems did you encounter during the challenge?
- Did you identify a leader? How was leadership demonstrated during the challenge?
- How well did you communicate during the challenge?
- (If the activity was done in two rounds) What did the team improve on in the second round?
- What did you learn from the challenge?

Robots Blindfold Challenge

The objective of this blindfold activity is for smaller sub-teams to work together and communicate effectively to retrieve a bomb before the other teams. This fun challenge focusses on communication and cooperation.

Equipment Required: Rope to mark start line, blindfold for each team and a 'bomb' e.g. a mini football.

Space Required: Medium to Large. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 6 to 12 but can be done with larger groups (rotating roles)

Total Time: 30 minutes

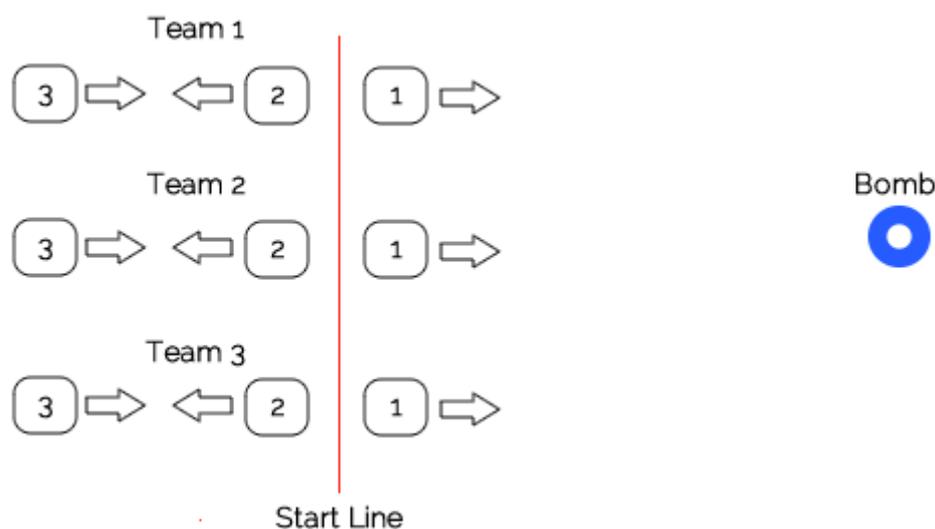
- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 20 minutes for team activity (rotate team roles)
- 5 minutes to review and debrief

Instructions

Split the group into smaller sub-teams of 3-5 people. There are three key roles in each team. The first participant is the 'Robot'. They stand blindfolded in front of the start line, facing out into the game area. Position participant two on the other side of the starting line facing away from the activity area. They are the 'Communicator'. Participant three stands facing the activity area and observes the Robot. This participant must not talk – they

may use any other communication method to indicate direction to participant two. Participant two must then verbalise these signals and guide the robot to retrieve the bomb.

If there are more than 3 in a team, either rotate them between roles or assign extra observers and communicators. The objective of the challenge is for robots to retrieve the 'bomb' from the activity area before the other teams.



1. Robot – blindfolded, facing bomb, only participant permitted in the activity area.
2. Communicator – faces away from activity area, must NEVER observe the robot.
3. Observer – faces activity area, cannot talk at all

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem Solving
- Communication (verbal, non-verbal and listening)
- Cooperation
- Trust

Useful Tips

If you're working with smaller teams then just have one team instead of several competing against each other. Allocate three minutes to complete the challenge for each round then rotate so everyone has the opportunity to be a robot.

Think about your positioning when observing the activity – ensure you have full view of all robots for safety and stop any of them if they step out of the activity area.

Questions to ask during the review:

- Did you come up with a strategy before starting the challenge?
- Did you adapt your game plan?

How did you feel being blindfolded? Did you always trust your communicators?
How difficult was it to communicate your signals without having to speak?
How difficult was it to understand those signals and translate them for the robot?
Did you get frustrated at any point?
Looking back is there anything you would do differently?

16. FLY IN THE GLASS

It is a quick initiative exercise using lateral thinking. Before you begin, use the sticks to create the shape of a wine glass with a fly placed in it (see below). Introduce the challenge and explain that they must recreate the wine glass without the fly in it. To complete the challenge, they are only allowed to move just two sticks. The remaining sticks and the fly must not move.

Resources required: Each team needs four sticks of equal length (use can also use matchsticks if space is limited) and one fly-like object e.g. a cone or a bean bag

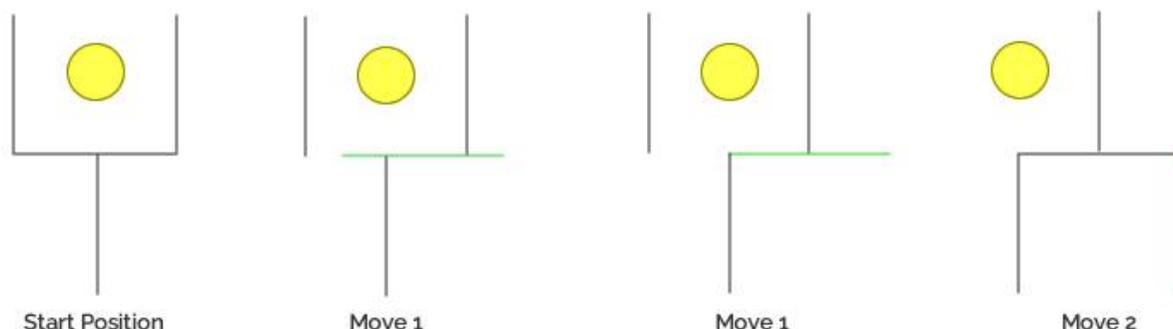
Space Required: Small. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 5 to 12 at max. For larger groups split into smaller teams.

Total Time: 10 minutes

- 2 minutes to brief and set up
- 5 minutes to complete fly in the glass challenge
- 3 minutes to review and debrief

Problem Solution



Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem Solving
- Cooperation
- Communication
- Leadership

Useful Tips

This challenge requires teams to working together to find a solution. This is a great opportunity to introduce the [problem solving model](#) to the team.

If a team member is dominating the discussion and talking over others, silence the individual for 2 minutes to allow an opportunity for others to speak – remember to use this as a review point at the end of the challenge. Try to balance the exercise so everyone is actively involved and engaged.

When working with large teams, split them into smaller sub-teams. You can then setup this challenge as a race. Working in smaller teams also allow for more inclusion and better group discussion.

Questions to use for review:

How well did you feel you worked as a team?

Did you feel you planned well? How did you come up with your strategy for the task?

How important was it to discuss and share ideas?

When your plan wasn't working, how did you respond?

Why is it important to review your approach? Did you adapt at any point?

Was everyone included in the activity?

17. HUMAN KNOT

Starting in a circle, participants connect hands with two others people in the group to form the human knot. As a team they must then try to unravel the “human knot” by untying themselves without breaking the chain of hands.

Equipment Required: None

Space Required: Small. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 8 to 12 ideally. You must have at least 4 participants to play.

Total Time: 20-30 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 10-20 minutes to achieve outcome
- 5 minutes to review and debrief

Human Knot Team Building Instructions

1. Get the group to form a circle.
2. Tell them to put their right hand up in the air, and then grab the hand of someone across the circle from them.
3. Then repeat this with the left hand, ensuring they grab a different persons hand.
4. Check to make sure that everyone is holding the hands of two different people and they are not holding hands with someone either side of them.
5. That they must now try to untangle themselves to form a circle without breaking the chain of hands. Allocate a specific time to complete this challenge (generally ten to twenty minutes)
6. Get participants to take their time in order to limit injuries. Ask the group not to tug or pull on each other and spot participants as they pass over other participants. Monitor throughout the challenge and stop them if you need to.
7. If the chain of hands is broken at any point, they must then start over again.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Leadership
- Cooperation
- Time management

18. MAGIC CANE/HELIUM STICK

Teams are given a magic cane (also known as helium stick) which they must lower to the ground, using just their index fingers. All participants must remain in contact with it at all times – what seems like a simple task, can become incredibly frustrating and funny for all involved.

Equipment Required: 1 thin, light-weight, bamboo cane (can be purchased from a garden store) or tent pole

Space Required: Minimal. Delivered either indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 8 to 12 but can be done with 6 to 14

Total Time: 20 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 10-15 minutes to achieve outcome
- 5 minutes to review and debrief



Helium Stick Team Challenge Instructions

- Split the group into two and line them up in two rows facing each other.
- Introduce the cane to the group.
- Ask participants to hold their arms out in front of them and point their index fingers.
- Lay the cane down on their fingers. Get the group to adjust their finger heights until the cane is horizontal and everyone's index fingers are in contact with the stick.
- Explain that the challenge is to lower the cane to the ground.
- The rule: Everybody's index fingers must remain in contact with the cane at all times. Pinching or grabbing is not permitted – it must rest on top of fingers only.
- Reiterate to the group that if anyone's finger is caught not touching the cane, the challenge will be restarted.

Link to [Magic Cane Video Tutorial](#)

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Communication
- Cooperation

19. ROAD RACE TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY

In this activity, the team has to build a road for a toy car using only the provided materials.

Resources:

- 1 paper towel tube
- 1 paper cup
- 1 small toy car
- 1 sheet of paper
- 5 index cards
- 5 rubber bands
- 15 paper clips
- 20cm of masking tape
- 10 plastic straws

Space Required: Large. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 4 to 8 ideally. With bigger groups, you can split them into smaller teams and prepare one set of resources for each team.

Total Time: 40 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and setup
- 15 minutes for construction and testing
- 10 minutes for the final race
- 10 minutes to review and debrief

Running the Activity

- Explain the activity: The team has to build a road for a toy car using only the provided materials. The toy car must be able to move without any contact or pushing; you can only touch the car when putting it at the start point of the road. Construction time is 5 minutes, followed by 2 minutes of test time. Then you are given another 3 minutes to make any necessary changes before the real road race begins. The team has 3 tries and the longest distance traveled out of the 3 attempts will be their final score.
- Scoring system (if there is more than one team participating): the team whose toy car travels the longest distance from their start point wins the activity.
- Once they are ready, the trainer can start the clock for the team to begin the activity,

Rules

- Only the provided materials can be used during the challenge.
- Participants are not allowed to directly touch or move the toy car after it has been placed on the start point.
- Construction time is 5 minutes, followed by 2 minutes of test time. Then you are given another 3 minutes to make any necessary changes before the real road race begins.
- The longest distance out of 3 race attempts will be the team's final score.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem solving
- Planning
- Creative thinking
- Time management

Review

Suggested questions to ask:

- What did you do well?

- How did you come up with the design of the road? Did everyone agree with the design?
- If you had to do something differently next time, what would you do?
- How did you manage your time effectively?
- Did you identify a leader?
- What leadership skills were demonstrated during the challenge?

20. BRIDGE BUILD

Using the materials provided, two teams must work together to build a bridge, with each sub-team constructing half the bridge each. During the challenge, teams cannot see each other and must rely on their communication skills to build an identical design. This is an excellent activity for developing communication skills, problem solving and creative thinking.

Equipment Required: You can use anything for building the bridges. Here are a few suggestions: newspapers, lego, toy bricks, straws, paper, cardboard etc.

Other essential resources: Tape, paper, pens, tape measure and tarpaulin or sheet.

Space Required: Small. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 8 to 16 ideally. Enough people for at least two sub-teams of four or more. If you have a large group, then you can get more than one team working on a build – just ensure you have enough equipment including tarpaulins!

Total Time: 50 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 10 minutes group discussion and designs
- 30 minutes to complete build
- 5 minutes to review

Bridge Build Team Building Instructions

1. Before to the start of the activity, setup the room or area with a divide so teams cannot see what the other team is doing, use either a tarpaulin or sheets.
2. Explain to the group, that they will be split into two sub-teams and must work together to create a complete bridge with each team building half a bridge each. At the end of the time you need to put your bridges together to create your build. However, you will be separated during the challenge and can only communicate verbally to ensure that each build meets the design specification. You have just 30 minutes to complete the challenge.
3. Split the group into smaller sub-teams (aim for 4-8) and separate them to either side of the tarpaulin.
4. Provide each team with a bag of materials. Ensure that each bag contains exactly the same items. Also provide each team with paper, pens and a tape measure.
5. Give the team ten minutes to generate ideas and come up with a plan for the design. Remind teams to discuss ideas and communicate with their partner team on the other side of the tarpaulin to ensure a similar design.

6. Each team then gets 30 minutes to construct their half of the design. It is essential that each sub-team communicates effectively during the construction phase, failure to do so will result in failure of the challenge.
7. Once the time is up, remove your divide separating the two teams and see how close each build was to each other.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem Solving
- Active listening
- Team communication
- Creative thinking
- Cooperation and teamwork

Useful Tips

This is an excellent exercise to use as a lead in to a project workshop or team meeting. It gets teams communicating effectively and listening to each other. In addition, this team challenge also develops problem solving skills and creative thinking.

Another skill that can be developed during the task is leadership. You can let this happen naturally within a team or you pick a team leader before the start of the challenge. This gives lower level employees an opportunity to get out of their comfort zones, build rapport with others and develop new skills.

Questions to ask when reviewing:

- What did you find most difficult about his challenge? How did you overcome that?
- What did you do well? How did you decide on that method?
- Who was responsible for communicating the design between the teams? If you had more than one person, did you find this difficult?
- Did you select a leader? Why was leadership important during the task?
- How did you work out the key responsibilities for the challenge? Did you delegate based on strengths and weaknesses?
- Did you miscommunicate at any point during the challenge? How did you get back on track?
- What surprised you most about the activity? What can you take away?

21. HOLD UP PAPERS

This team building activity challenges participants to be creative in solving a simple problem: how many sheets of paper can two people hold up? The catch: the papers should be held up (somehow, creatively!) between their bodies.

Resources: Sheets of paper — to be environmentally-friendly, please use recycled/used sheets of paper!

Space Required: Medium. Ideally indoors.

Group Size: Minimum 12 participants — ideally the group should be an odd number as they will be divided into smaller teams of 3.

Total Time: 30 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and setup
- 15 minutes for the activity
- 10 minutes to review and debrief

Running the Activity

- Explain the activity: In this activity, the group will be divided into smaller teams of 3. In each trio, one person will be assigned as the leader for that round. He/She will instruct the other 2 members of the team on how to hold up as many pieces of paper as possible between their bodies. The 3 team members are able to communicate with each other during the round, although the leader is not able to physically help them complete the task.
- Each round is 3 minutes long. After the end of the round, the team will log how many pieces of papers were successfully held up.
- Then, the other 2 team members will take turns to be leader for rounds 2 and 3.
- The activity ends when all 3 members of the team have taken a turn as leader.

Rules

- The sheets of paper cannot be folded.
- You cannot use any other resources to hold up the paper (e.g. adhesives, items of clothing)
- Each sheet of paper must be in contact with both team members at the end of the round in order to count towards the score.
- The leader can only instruct the team members and cannot physically help position or place the sheets of paper.

Activity Notes

This activity allows participants to experience the same task both as a leader and as a team player. It highlights the importance of communication skills, and how both leading and following are essential for success.

Due to the close physical nature of this activity, it may be better suited for participants who already know each other or as an activity that is conducted later in the programme once the group has become comfortable with each other.

To increase difficulty, you can use smaller pieces of paper or even fabric.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Leadership
- Cooperation
- Communication
- Creativity

Review

Suggested questions to ask:

- How well did your team communicate?
- What were the differences between being in a leadership role versus being in the team? Which role did you enjoy more?
- What challenges did you encounter as a leader and as a team player?
- What was the process of giving feedback as a team member like? Did you feel as though the leader took your feedback on board?
- What did you learn from the activity?

22. JIGSAW PUZZLE PIECES

Teams must work together to complete a puzzle as quickly as possible. Initially the teams will be divided and given separate bags of puzzle pieces. They will think that they are competing

against each other and then come to realise that they have no way of completing the puzzle unless they work with the other sub-teams as they hold the missing pieces of the puzzle.

Resources: 1 x large jigsaw puzzle and small bags to hold the pieces

Time: 30-45 minutes

Space Required: Small. Indoors or Outdoors

Group Size: 8-16 people

Jigsaw Puzzle Pieces Setup

- Divide up the puzzle and place an equal amount of pieces into each team bag
- Split the team into 2 smaller sub-teams (or more depending on the size of your group) and hand each team a bag.

Jigsaw Puzzle Pieces Team Activity Instructions

- Provide each sub-team with a bag of jigsaw puzzle pieces. Instruct them to assemble the puzzle as quickly as possible. Try to ensure that each teams puzzle pieces appear to be an entire puzzle.

Introducing the exercise:

“The aim of the exercise is for each team to assemble the jigsaw puzzle as quickly as possible using the pieces provided. All teams have the same puzzle. You will receive no additional instructions”

- Teams will assume that they competing against one another, however there is only one puzzle and the pieces have shared out between the two teams. The key point of the exercise is for the team to identify the problem and resolve it by discussing it between them and working together.
- Provide enough time for the teams to work on the puzzles. Generally, they shouldn't need any more than 30 minutes to complete, although this will change depending on the complexity of the puzzle and group size.

Tips and Guidance

Try and stay clear from giving them the solution to the problem. If they ask you, reiterate the introduction to the task as before and let them work it for themselves.

You can start the exercise with either the teams working in the same room or different rooms. If sub-teams are working in the same room, they will discover the problem and solution quite quickly and work together to assemble the puzzle. If you decide to start them in different rooms, it will take them a little longer to realise and work out how to resolve the problem.

Try to use a jigsaw puzzle with enough pieces to keep all team members actively engaged during the exercise. You should run the activity in a suitably sized space, big enough so that all team members can view the puzzle and work together.

Larger teams that have more than five people will be challenged in how they organise the task, leadership and teamwork (ensuring everyone has a role within the team).

This type of exercise demonstrates that all team members (or teams) make up the whole, and often no individual or team can do it alone. Sometimes the missing piece of the puzzle is often held by others.

Suggested Learning Outcomes:

- Strategy

- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Communication skills
- Leadership

Reviewing Questions:

- What was your first plan of attack when presented with the challenge?
- What problems did you encounter during the exercise and how do you overcome these?
- Once you identified the problem, how did you respond?
- Why was cooperation essential for this team activity?
- Did you nominate a leader to begin?
- Did you communicate well and was everyone involved?
- What makes a good team?
- Looking back on the exercise, what things would you say you did well as a team?
- What is one thing you can take away from the activity? How can you apply what you learned?

23. NINE CONE PATH

Nine cones are laid out in a square grid. The objective is to lay the rope over so that the rope passes over the middle of every cone in the grid. The rope may only bend through an angle of no more than ninety degrees three times at most.

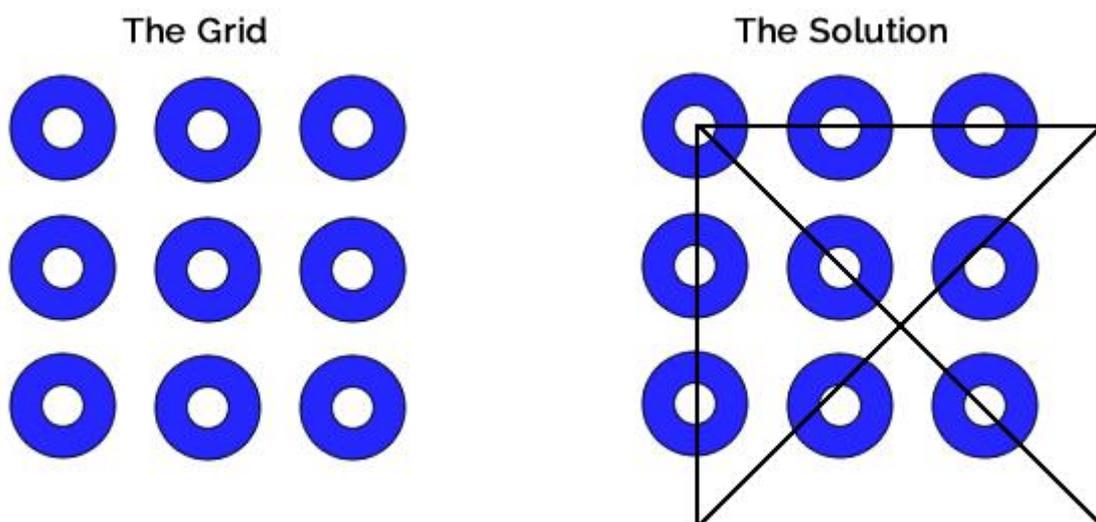
Resources Required: Each team needs nine cones and one long length of rope.

Space Required: Small. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 8 to 12 ideally, but can be done with anything from 5 to a maximum 15 participants.

Total Time: 15-20 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 5-10 minutes to achieve outcome
- 5 minutes to review and debrief



Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Resilience
- Lateral thinking

Useful Tips

This is all about teams working together to come up with a solution. If any team member is dominating or not listening then make them participate in silence for 1, 2 or 3 minutes. This will allow others in the team to take the lead.

If you have a larger group, you can split them into smaller sub-teams and get them competing against each other to see who can solve the problem the quickest. This task can be done in small groups as a race or as a whole group with more focus on inclusion and discussion.

Suggested questions when reviewing:

How much planning did you do before attempting the challenge?

Why was planning essential for this challenge?

How did you decide on the strategy you used?

What happened when things didn't go to plan?

How well do you feel you worked as a team?

Did everyone have some involvement in the challenge?

What did you learn from the challenge?

24. SNEAK A PEAK

This [problem solving activity](#) requires little more than a couple of sets of children's building blocks or duplicate lego. The aim of the challenge is for each group to try and build an exact copy of a pre-built sculpture – the catch is only one person in each group can look at the model at a time and for only ten seconds. They then return back to their team and describe what they see.

Equipment Required: Enough Children's building blocks or duplicate lego for each group

Space Required: Small. Indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: Minimum of 4

Total Time: 25 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 15 minutes to achieve outcome
- 5 minutes to review

Sneak a Peak Team Building Activity Instructions

- Before the challenge begins you will need to build a small sculpture with some of the building blocks and hide it from the group.
- Next up, divide the participants into small teams of four (or similar). Each team should be given enough building material so that they can duplicate the structure you've already created.

- Place the sculpture in an area that is an equal distance from all the groups. One member from each team can come up at the same time to look at the sculpture for ten seconds and try to memorize it before returning to their team.
- After they return to their teams, they have twenty-five seconds to instruct their teams about how to build an exact replica of your sculpture. After one minute of trying to recreate the sculpture, another member from each team can come up for a “sneak a peek” before returning to their team and trying to recreate the sculpture.
- The challenge should be continued in this pattern until one of the team’s successfully duplicates the original sculpture.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Memory
- Strategy

Suggested questions to ask in the review:

Did you have a strategy before attempting the challenge?

How did you decide who would go first?

Did anyone in your group struggle to memorise the sculpture and how did you help them?

How well did you communicate as a team? How could you improve?

Was everyone involved in the build?

What skills can you take away from the challenge and how can you apply these to (insert subject) in the future?

25. LIFT A BEACH BALL

In this team building activity, the team has to build a 1 meter tall structure that will hold up a beach ball for at least 10 seconds, using only the materials provided.

Resources: 20 sheets of newspaper, 1 roll of masking tape, 1 beach ball

Space Required: Small to medium. Ideally indoors.

Group Size: 6 – 10 is ideal. If you have a bigger group, you may want to split them into smaller teams of 4 – 6 people to make it more competitive.

Total Time: 30 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and setup
- 15 minutes for the activity (planning & construction)
- 10 minutes to review and debrief

Set Up:

- Inflate the beach ball
- Prepare one set of resources for each small team, if necessary

Running the Activity

- Explain the activity: Using only the materials provided, the team has to build a structure that will hold up the inflated beach ball at least 1 meter off the floor for at

least 10 seconds. They will receive 5 minutes of planning time, followed by 8 minutes to construct and test their structure.

- Once they are ready, start the timer for 5 minutes of planning time. Thereafter, the teams 8 minutes of construction time. Any testing of the structure must be done within the construction time.
- At the end of the activity, the team has to place the beach ball on the structure. The trainer(s) will measure the height of the structure and time how long the beach ball stays on the structure.

Rules

- Only the provided materials can be used during the challenge.
- The beach ball cannot be changed in any way.
- The team is given 5 minutes of planning time, followed by 8 minutes of construction time. Any testing of the structure must be done within the construction time.
- The structure must hold the beach ball at least 1 meter off the floor.
- The beach ball must stay on the structure for at least 10 seconds.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem solving
- Communication
- Planning
- Time management

Activity Guidance and Notes

This activity encourages teams to come up with a creative solution to hold up the beach ball. It can be done in small groups as a race or as a whole group with more focus on inclusion and discussion. If you have a larger group, you can split them into smaller teams and get them competing against each other to see who can solve the problem the quickest or whose beach ball can stay on the structure for the longest.

Review

Suggested questions to ask:

- How much planning did you do before attempting the challenge?
- What worked? What didn't work or hindered your progress?
- Did you identify a leader? If yes, how did having a leader help?
- What were the individual roles people played? Was everyone comfortable with their role?
- How well did you communicate during the challenge?
- What did you learn from the challenge?

26. INCOMING TIDE SURVIVAL

The team are stranded on a sand bank, they have just 30 minutes before the tide comes in. In order to survive they have to build structure that holds the entire team off the ground.

Equipment Required:

- 3 x 2.4m poles
- 3 x 1.5m poles
- 4 x 3m ropes

- 13 x climbing helmets

Space Required: Medium. Outdoors only.

Group Size: 8 to 16.

Total Time: 45 minutes

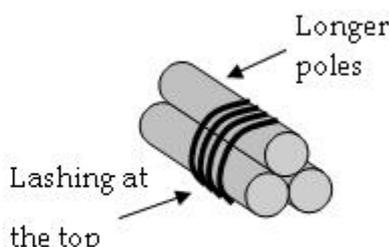
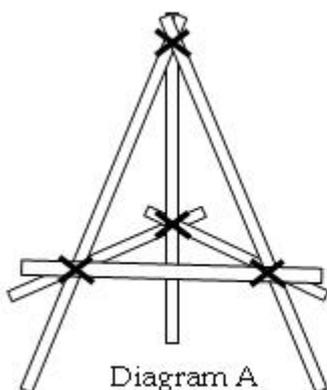
- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 30 minutes to achieve outcome
- 10 minutes to review

Incoming Tide Team Challenge Instructions

- The team are stranded on a sand bank and the tide is coming in fast
- The water will only rise to about 30cm deep but it is full of hungry piranhas so the whole team must get out of the water
- A structure must be built to hold the whole team out of the water

Rules

- Only use the equipment provided
- No throwing or dropping of logs
- No-one can be more than 50cm off the ground
- The facilitator must inspect the structure before anyone can climb onto it
- Within the task time limits the structure must be dismantled and left tidily for the next team



The key is to plan before they handle the equipment, and then to articulate their thoughts to other team members because they will not have paper. If the team lay the 3 longer poles next to and on top of each other (as illustrated in diagram B), they can then tie a knot at the top. Once the 3 logs are lifted into position and the legs opened, the knot will naturally become a lot tighter. They can then lash the shorter poles into position. Before they climb onto the structure, please thoroughly check it for stability.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Time management
- Teamwork

Useful Tips

See if they can come up with another structure – remember to check that the structure is safe before they climb on it.

27. TOXIC WASTE

Equipped with just 2 ropes, the group must work out how to transport a bucket of 'Toxic Waste' and return it back to the safe zone without tipping over the contents. This fun team building challenge can also be known as 'Bomb Removal'. This is an excellent team challenge for highlighting the importance of teamwork, problem solving and leadership.

Equipment Required:

- 1 x toxic waste bucket (1 large bucket)
- 1 x rope for the radiation zone
- 2 x ropes of the same length to use to transport the waste bucket
- 1 x raised platform (can use a stool seat to place the waste bucket)
- 6 x tennis balls or you can use water (to represent toxic waste)
- Blindfolds (optional)

Space Required: Medium. Indoors or outdoors (outdoor allows for water to be used as 'toxic waste' rather than tennis balls).

Group Size: 8-12 (Can be used with as little as 6 team members)

Total Time: 35-55 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and setup
- 5 minutes for group discussion and planning
- 15-30 minutes for task completion
- 10 minutes for reviewing and challenge debrief

Toxic Waste Setup

- Create the toxic waste radiation zone by using the rope to create a circle of around 8-10ft in diameter on the ground. The bigger the radiation zone, the more challenging the activity becomes.
- Place your platform in the middle of the circle you have created.
- Fill the bucket with water or tennis balls and place on top of the platform in the centre of the radiation zone.
- Put the 2 ropes on the outside of the radiation zone, ready to use.

Toxic Waste Team Building Challenge Instructions

- Explain that the challenge is for the group to work out how to transport the toxic waste bucket in the radiation zone to the safe zone using only the equipment provided. The team have just 20 minutes to complete the challenge, if they are unsuccessful, the waste will blow up and destroy the world.
- Anyone who enters into the radiation zone will suffer a fatal injury and possibly death. Therefore, the group should aim to remove the toxic waste and do so without injury to any group members.
- The rope circle represents the radiation zone. Emphasise that everyone must maintain a safe distance from the toxic waste wherever it goes, and stay out of the radiation zone.

- Allow the team 5 minutes to discuss and plan for the challenge. During this period, no one is allowed to attempt to retrieve the toxic waste.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Communication
- Decision Making
- Planning
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Teamwork

Reviewing

- How would you rate your team out of 10 for completion of the challenge?
- How did you respond to the challenge?
- How did you generate ideas for completing the task? Who's idea did you choose?
- Did you have a leader? How important was leadership?
- Was everyone involved?
- What did you learn about yourself as a team member?
- What lessons did you learn from the challenge? How is this relevant and when would it be used in future situations?

Useful Tips

There is more than one way to complete this challenge, the best solution involves getting the 2 ropes, with 2 people standing across from each other (opposite sides of the circle), they keep overlapping the ropes to tighten the slack in the middle and eventually lift the toxic waste from the radiation zone.

If someone enters the radiation zone, then initiate a penalty for the rest of the challenge, such as loss of limbs (hand behind back) or sense (blindfold the participant or they cannot speak). If you want to be super strict, then you can say they have died and must sit out the challenge.

If the team fails and spills the content of the waste, tell them they have failed in their task and everyone is dead. Ask them to discuss the challenge, what worked, what didn't? Refill the bucket and begin the challenge again.

You can add a red herring object to challenge, this will throw the group off as they think they have to use it to complete the challenge. This adds extra value to the team building challenge, and you can use this as a discussion point during the reviewing and de-briefing stage.

To vary the difficulty of the Toxic Waste, you can:

- Adjust the time allowance
- Add an extra safety zone which they need to transport the bucket to using markers. You can even add obstacles between the radiation and safety zone.
- Include a red herring objects (or even a few) in available equipment

Activity Variation

A quick variation of this challenge, is object retrieval. The group are tasked with retrieving an object (piece of paper, water bottle etc) from the middle of the circle without any equipment. In order to achieve this, they will need to work together as a team.

28. WATER CARRY

The aim of this challenge is for the team to try and retrieve 10 cups full of water from around the room and place on a tray without spilling any of it. During the task, each person is only allowed to use, just one hand and one leg to complete the task.

Equipment Required: 10 paper cups (filled with water 3/4), tray

Space Required: Medium. Can be delivered either indoors or outdoors.

Group Size: 6 to 12 ideally (for larger groups, split into smaller sub-teams)

Total Time: 20 minutes

- 5 minutes to brief and set up
- 10 minutes to achieve outcome
- 5 minutes to review

Water Carry Team Challenge Instructions

1. Before you start the activity, fill ten paper cups with water. Place five cups on the ground at one end of the room at the other five on the opposite side of the room. Aim for having these at a minimum 20ft apart if possible.
2. Provide a tray for the group and explain that their challenge is to retrieve all 10 cups of water and place them on the tray without spilling any water.
3. The group are only allowed to retrieve, just one cup at a time. They cannot return to the same side of the room, twice in a row and must alternate between sides.
4. Each person in the team can only use just one hand and one foot for the duration of the challenge. Once the group have retrieved all 10 cups of water, they must then return back to the middle of the room and place the tray on the floor.
5. If they spill any water, they must start over again.

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Goal Setting
- Leadership
- Problem Solving
- Communication skills

Useful Tips

Most of the time, groups will try to hop with the tray and the contents which results in water spillage. The best way of completing this task is for the group to form a chain and pass the tray down the line and then reverse the chain to the opposite and repeat until they have retrieved all 10 cups.

Add a time limit to the challenge to make it harder for the group and put pressure on them to complete the task. Allow enough time before they start the challenge to plan.

Suggested questions to ask during the review:

- How did you feel when working as part of a team?
- Is there anything you would do differently next time?

- What did you find most difficult? Why did you find it difficult and how can you prevent it from happening again?
- Did anyone lead the task and why was important to nominate a leader?
- How did you plan for the task? Did everyone share their ideas?

29. BUILD A BIG STRUCTURE

Teams are tasked with building a structure using the resources provided in just ten minutes. The structure must be big enough so a team member can completely pass under it in less than one minute. Creative thinking, cooperation and time management are essential in this challenge.

Time: 20 minutes

- 2 minutes for task Introduction
- 10 minutes to build the structure
- 3 minute to test (based on 3 groups)
- 5 minutes to reviewing and debrief

Space required: Small. Either Indoors or Outdoors

Resources:

- 3 cereal or shoe boxes
- 3 cardboard tubes (12 inches [30cm] or less)
- 1 sheet of sticky labels
- 5 corks
- 5 pieces of A4 paper
- 5 straws
- 5 paper clips
- 1 egg carton

Gather the resources and provide a large area for the team to work in. Read the list of resources and challenge instructions.

Build a Big Structure Instructions

You have 10 minutes to build a structure that one team member can pass under. You will be notified when you have just one minute remaining in the task. At the end of the allotted construction time, you will need to choose one person to pass under the structure. The entire body of the chosen team member must pass completely under the structure in less than one minute. The travelling team member cannot touch any part of the structure. If the structure is touched, you may try again as long as you have enough time remaining.

Teams will be scored out of 10 on their creativity, communication and cooperation as judged by the facilitator (for a total score out of 30). 20 bonus points are awarded if a team completes the challenge successfully and their team member passes under their structure.

Suggested Learning Objectives:

- Creative thinking
- Cooperation
- Problem Solving
- Time management

Questions for Review:

- How did you come up with your structure design? Did everyone have an opportunity to provide input?
- How important was time on this task? How did you manage this?
- Did anything not go according to plan? How did you overcome this?
- Did everyone within the team have a responsibility?
- How well did you work together? Is there anything you could have done differently to make it easier?
- What was the most difficult part of the task? Did you get frustrated at any point?
- Did you have enough resources to build? How could you have made it easier?
- Reflecting back on the building task, is there anything you would do differently next time?

31. VIDEO SCAVENGER HUNT

Working in smaller teams, each team must record all the items listed on the scavenger hunt list within a set time period. The team are given a video camera and just ten minutes of video time to complete the challenge. Great for a fun team development day. I have used this challenge for a team away day in London – which everyone enjoyed and was a great success.

Equipment Required: One digital camera per team (with video recording function), SD cards, batteries, Scavenger hunt lists (see example list that follows), Laptop and Projector for review playback.

Space Required: Depending on age and size of groups.

Group Size: 4-8 in each group

Total Time: 2-3 hours (depending on the purpose of the challenge)

- 20 minutes to brief and set up
- 60-120 minutes to achieve outcome
- 30 minutes to playback and review

Video Scavenger Hunt Team Challenge Instructions

1. Prior to the activity, create a challenge list of things for the teams to complete, and assign a point value for each task (see sample ideas below).
2. Divide the group into teams of four to eight and give each team a camera, list, and a time to return.
 - Corporate Groups: You may have cars and drivers for each team or/
 - Younger Groups: You may come up with a list of things that can be done in the surrounding area.
3. Each team are only allocated just five minutes to record their video and must try to get as many different things in this five minutes as possible. (or each team only gets to film five thirty-second scenes and tries to fit as many things as possible in each scene).
4. After the time limit the group must return (deduct points for each minute they are late) and hand over the camera. Allow time to watch each groups video montage, and tally points as you watch the videos.

Example Scavenger Hunt List

- A man with a beard shaking hands with someone on your team – 50 points
- The whole team singing a song at a bus stop – 100 points
- Someone on your team getting a drink out of a drinking fountain while someone else is riding piggyback on his/her back – 30 points
- Someone washing the window of a car of someone they don't know (ask first!) – 50 points
- Someone on your team kicking a Football against a wall that the whole team is standing against – 100 points
- Photo taken with a famous person – 300 points
- Someone shaking hands with a policeman – 200 points
- The whole team in a boat – 150 points

- The whole team singing a song while in a restaurant – 100 points (50 extra points for each person not on your team that is singing the song as well)
- Someone on your team walking the dog of someone they don't know – 200 points

Suggested Learning Outcomes

- Problem solving
- Leadership
- Strategy
- Cooperation

Suggested questions to ask in the review:

- Did someone in your group emerge as a leader? Was this helpful?
- Did your group waste a lot of time trying to decide what to do next?
- How did the team decide where to go and what to do?
- Did you split the team at any point?

6. RESOURCES ONLINE:

- 1.) <http://webquest.org/>
- 2.) www.playmeo.com (<https://vimeo.com/playmeo>)
- 3.) <http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/team-building-activities/>



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