

Team Building

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Age group

7 – 11
4 years

Curriculum focus

Citizenship, Interpersonal, D&I

Learning objectives

Students will:

- ▣ explore the importance of roles in teams and organizations
- ▣ practice their problem-solving, team working and communication skills
- ▣ reflect on their performance and consider improvements for the future.



Time needed

65 mins

About this activity

- ▣ This activity helps students to explore the importance of teamwork and communication as they race in teams to construct a structure made of Lego pieces. Students first discuss the importance of teamwork and how specialist roles can make a contribution in large organisations like BP, including ensuring everyone is safe.
- ▣ In their teams, students take on roles. Each role is limited in what they can and cannot do, with role cards to guide them.
- ▣ Teams plan how they might combine their roles and communicate to complete the task, obeying a set of rules with time penalties if broken. Teams must copy a model of their completed structure, but only the Research Officer can view the model. They can only communicate what they learn using 'yes' or 'no', so the team must combine roles to ask the right questions and convert their answers into a plan for making the model.
- ▣ In a twist for all teams, one brick is incorrect. They must identify this brick and swap it for the correct one. In a further twist for older or more able students, the activity leader can summon all Planning Officers to a private meeting where they are briefed that they are industrial spies. They in fact work for another company and must work to delay and confuse their team.
- ▣ After a set time teams present their models, assess their team working and communication skills and share ideas for improving.
- ▣ If there is time the activity can be repeated and the roles changed over so that each student has a go at a different role and they can perfect their skills as a team.

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What you will need

- Complete Lego models in labelled bags (one per team) *
- Prepared bags of Lego pieces in labelled bags (one per team) *
- Prepared bag of substitute Lego pieces *
- Role Cards (one set per team)
- Student worksheets (one set per team)
- Presentation slideshow
- Stopwatch or watch
- Paper and pencils for each team
- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- Prizes (pencils, rubbers, sharpeners etc.) for activities that you decide to make into a competition

Timings and structure

65 mins

Activity	Time (mins)
Introduction and Q&A	5
Activity 1: Teamwork discussion	5
Activity 2: Roles, rules and penalties	5
Activity 3: Planning	5
Activity 4: Research and construction	30
Activity 5: Scoring, assessing and reflecting	10
Round up	5

Prior knowledge and preparation

For you:

Each team should have:

- a completed structure (such as a building or other simple shape), made of 12 Lego bricks, in a bag labelled with a team letter (note: these should be kept hidden from the teams)
- in another bag, labelled with the same letter, 11 'identical pair' bricks they will need to build their own identical copy, plus one incorrect piece.

You will need the organizer's bag, which contains the missing correct pieces plus assorted bricks that teams do not require.

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For the Teacher:

- Each team must build an identical copy of a small Lego model and will need its own table. The prototype models must be set up in a place where the teams cannot see them. This could be behind a screen or box for each model, or in a separate room or area. Each team has a Research Officer who is the only one who is allowed to look at their teams prototype model, so it doesn't matter if Research Officers see other teams' models.

Deliver the activities

Introduction and Q&A (10 mins)

Introduce yourself, the challenge and the topic of teamwork and communication.

1. Explain who you are and what you do for BP.
2. Explain that students will race to make a Lego model.
3. Introduce the twist: each student will be assigned a role to play. Each role has things they must do, and things they must not. This will limit what each person can do. Every time they or the team break any rules, the team will get a time penalty.

Activity 1: Teamwork discussion (5 mins)

Discuss how people with different roles in companies like BP must work as a team and communicate.

1. Students name some things that are important for teamwork (such as helping each other, respecting other peoples' ideas, making decisions etc.) and communication (such as listening, allowing each person to speak, checking etc.) Show slides 2 and 3.
2. Show slide 4. Discuss what might happen when a team works well and does these helpful things, or what might happen when teams don't work well together and communicate.
3. Using examples from your own work, discuss team working, roles and communication in BP.

Activity 2: Roles, rules and penalties (5 mins)

Explore the roles students will take and the rules they must follow.

1. Make sure each team is at its own table with a team letter.
2. Give Role Cards to each team.
3. Students agree roles and review what each role can and cannot do.
4. Give a Rules and Penalties sheet to each team and briefly run through it as a whole group.
5. Hand out the Team Assessment sheets (to Construction Managers) and Role Summary and Penalty Tables (to Compliance Officers) and warn them not to let the rest of the team see these sheets.
6. Warn teams that this is their last chance to ask questions about the task, roles or penalties. After this, they will be penalised if they do!

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Activity 3: Planning (5 mins)

Teams work out how they can work together, follow their rules and complete their challenge ahead of their competitors.

1. Teams discuss their roles and think about how they can work together, following the rules. Support with slides 5 and 6.
2. Remind students that they can't now ask you any questions.
3. Circulate between teams to make sure the Compliance Officer and Construction Manager understand the sheets they must fill in.
4. Ask the Compliance Officers to stand up and move to the next group so that each team will be watched over by someone who is independent!

Activity 4: Research and construction (10 mins)

Teams work together to research their model and build a copy.

1. In the hidden place, put each team's model on the corresponding name, number or letter for that team.
2. Hand each team's bag of bricks to their Stores Manager and start your stopwatch.
3. Exchange bricks from your organizer's bag when asked.
4. Check that Compliance Officers are recording any infringements of the rules.
5. Inspect models that students think are finished and if so, record their time.
6. If you are running out of time warn teams when they have five minutes and one minute left.

Optionally for older students: once started, hand out the Secret Instructions to each Planning Officer or privately brief them on their secret task.

Activity 5: Scoring, assessing and reflecting (10 mins)

Teams are assessed on their performance and find out what time penalty they have incurred.

1. Construction Managers fill in their Team Assessment form by circling one choice for each question. They must not involve the team.
2. Compliance Officers add up their time penalties, write the team's letter on the form and then bring it to you.
3. When all scores are in, complete the results table.
4. During this time, ask students to think about what each of them did best, and how they think they could improve. Show slide 7.
5. Ask teams to take their models to bits and put the bricks back in their bag.
6. Announce the winners and the teams with the least and greatest time penalties.
7. If appropriate, ask Planning Officers to share their 'spy' role with their team. Announce who seems to have been the most devious. Explain that while there may not always be a spy in your team, there will be others who may have different priorities to the rest of the team and therefore you may not all be working towards the same aim.
8. Discuss how Construction Managers assessed their teams. Ask individual students if they agree with their Construction Manager's assessment. Link this to students' reflections on their own performance and contribution to their team.
9. If there is time the activity can be repeated and the roles changed over so that each student has a go at a different role and they can perfect their skills as a team.

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Round up (5 mins)

1. Thank students again for taking part and if you wish, hand out prizes to the winning team, the team with the lowest time penalty and, if appropriate, the most devious Planning Officer.
2. Review what students have learned about working as a team and communicating: how can they practise these skills or use them at school?
3. Mention again how you and your colleagues use these skills to work as a team at BP and why this is important. Emphasise that when people come together as a team, it can take time to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. But by thinking about working as a team, you can overcome difficulties and make progress even on difficult tasks. This takes good leadership to help everyone be patient – and persistent.
4. Conclude by saying that you hope they have enjoyed learning about teamwork and communication. Perhaps they might use these skills in BP one day in the future!

