

Lego Challenge

Overview

There are many versions of the Lego Challenge available online. This version is based on the one published at [Get Me Coding](#). The briefing notes and reflection materials have been enhanced to develop further learning around effective team working.

The Lego Challenge is often used to strengthen an individual's ability to work in a team by fostering skills like communication, collaboration, and teamwork. However, if the person running the session takes a facilitative approach then the challenge can also be used to take a deeper look at individual behaviours, and help participants discover what it is about their specific behaviours that helps and hinders effective team working.

Time	Level	Participants per team	Materials required per team	Materials required for the facilitator	Space per team
Intro: 10 min Task: 20 min Review: 30 min Total: 60 min	Intro	3 +	30 pieces of Lego A diagram of the target model	PowerPoint Briefing A timer	Each team needs a small work-table

Discussion topics

- + Effective communication
- + Isolating and communicating the key aspects of a task
- + Working quickly under time pressure
- + Appreciating and utilising individual differences

Preparation

Set each table so that they contain all the materials needed for each team. Place the target model diagrams face down.

Allocate teams: it's usually a good idea if the teams are arranged so they are composed of individuals with a range of interpersonal styles. This typically leads to a richer team dynamic, and more insightful review.

Briefing

Use the PowerPoint deck to brief the teams.

Top tips:

- + Just read the brief out, don't elaborate.
- + It's tempting to end the briefing by saying 'any questions'. Instead keep the energy high and start the activity immediately.
- + Use competition wisely. Setting teams in competition with each other can motivate, but it can also move the focus from the most important part of the task, which is the team process to the task
- + Be careful not to sub-consciously manipulate team behaviour. It's usually most useful to review natural, emergent behaviour. Examples of introductions that might manipulate behaviour include: 'don't forget to involve everyone' or 'we're going to do a task where planning is important'

During the Task

Less is more. Ensure participants follow the rules but:

- + Avoid answering questions about the nature of the task. Repeating the brief is often the best approach. Working through any ambiguity is a useful exercise for the groups
- + If participants are struggling with the task these questions can help groups improve their team process:
 - How are you communicating?
 - What do the builders need to know?
 - What is your objective?
 - What is your plan?
 - How could the team improve its performance?

After the Task

If you are using the Lego Challenge to build an understanding of effective team skills, then you can help participants make the transition between thinking about the task (building the model) and thinking about the individual and team processes.

- + Evaluate the models. A quick discussion about the closest models may give participants 'closure' on the task and help them focus on the processes
- + Move participants away from their models, either onto different desks or into a different room. Again this helps move focus away from the building stage
- + Give participants a review sheet to complete individually
- + Get participants to discuss the answers to the review sheets in their teams. It may be appropriate to get teams to flipchart their key learning points
- + Pull out the key messages from each group