

Human Tic-Tac-Toe

Teams try to win a game of Tic-Tac-Toe.

TIME
10-20 minutes

MATERIALS
Polyspots/tape/chalk/etc.

TEAM STAGE
Forming, Norming, Storming,
Performing

Learning & Development Outcomes

Participants will work together to accomplish a task in an ambiguous environment. The activity will require flexibility and a willingness to both lead and be led by others in order to adapt to changing needs.

Outcomes are focused on developing *21st Century Skills* and the *National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Career Competencies*, including, but not limited to:

- Working effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities.
- Using interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence and guide others toward a goal.
- Motivating and inspiring others by encouraging them and by building mutual trust.
- Being accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables.

Preparation & Logistics



Set Up

- Create a 3x3 grid on the ground using polyspots, tape, chalk, or any other materials that are readily available.

Safety

- Participants will be moving across the space quickly. Remind them to be careful not to run into other participants or step on anyone's toes.

Additional Considerations

- Set aside additional time for a debrief.
- [\[Click here to watch it live!\]](#)

Instructions

Summary

Participants will test their wits against their fellow group members to see who will win a game of Tic-Tac-Toe.

This activity is appropriate for all ages. Facilitators should check if participants know how to play Tic-Tac-Toe before beginning.

Step 1: Set up teams

- Divide the group into two teams. Designate one team "X" and the other team "O".
- Have each team number the members of their team. Everyone will need to remember their team and number.

Step 2: Explain the task

- Identify a boundary. All participants must start outside the boundary each time the game resets.
- The objective is for each team to be the first to get a Tic-Tac-Toe (horizontal, vertical or diagonal) on the grid.
- During the game, the X Team will hold their hands over their head in the shape of an X and the O Team will hold their hands over the head in the shape of an O.

Step 3: Call out numbers

- Call out three numbers. The members of each team who have those numbers must race to the grid to make a three-in-a-row Tic-Tac-Toe.
- Team members can continue to move to different spaces to try to make a Tic-Tac-Toe.
- When one team successfully gets their Tic-Tac-Toe, the round is over and that team is awarded a point.
- Have teams reset, and then repeat Step 3 with three new numbers

How to end the activity

- The activity is over once every number has been called at least once, or when one team wins a predetermined number of points.



What if I have an odd number?

"If there is an odd number of participants, give one person two numbers. They will play when either of their numbers are called. Make a note of which numbers are shared, and be sure not to call both of them in the same round."



Be sure to keep track of what numbers are called so that all participants get an equal opportunity to participate.

Debrief Questions



These questions are a starting point to guide your debrief. Pick the ones that best match your group's experience and add or change questions as needed!

What

- What strategies did you use to accomplish the goal?
- How did you react if someone was already at the space you wanted to take?

So What

- Why is it important to be flexible and adaptable?
- What is the benefit of quickly pivoting from one plan to another?

Now What

- When might a quick pivot or change be necessary in this group?
- How can you ensure that your group remains flexible and adaptable?

Adjustments for...

Large Group (25+)

- Create a larger 4x4 or 5x5 grid and call out 4 or 5 numbers at a time instead of 3.

Small Group (1-9)

- Instead of making an "X" team and an "O" team have all participants participate on the same team. When their number is called, have them choose either "X" or "O".

Risk Level

- To lower the risk level, don't award points for winning a round. Simply play multiple rounds and let each game stand alone.

Group has prior experience

- Instead of publicly dividing up teams and assigning numbers, write down a team and a number on scraps of paper. Then, give a paper to each participant. Facilitate the activity as usual, but participants will not know who is on which team or who has which number until each round begins.

Online

- Create a grid and a playing piece for each participant using shapes on a shared document. Have each participant select their playing piece and keep their fingers on their arrow keys. When their number is called they must use only the arrow keys to move their playing piece onto the grid and into position.



Each adjustment is its own unique idea for how to facilitate this activity for different groups and situations! Choose any or all that work!