



Card Triangles

Groups must try to create as many complete and correct cards as possible

TIME

20-30 minutes



TEAM STAGE

Storming, Norming

MATERIALS

Full deck of cards, scissors, envelopes

SUMMARY

This activity encourages group collaboration and problem solving by challenging them to create as many complete and correct playing cards as possible from a cut up, mixed up, and divided deck. They will demonstrate their abilities to think outside of the box and challenge competitive dynamics.

SET UP

- Prepare a Card Triangles set. Cut up a deck of cards across both diagonals so that each card is in four triangular pieces. Mix up all the pieces and divide them between six envelopes.
- Split the group into six smaller groups (use more or less groups depending on the total group size).
 - **Facilitator Note:** Be VERY careful not to refer to these groups as “teams”.
- Give each group an envelope. Instruct them not to touch the envelope or look at the contents until you tell them to do so.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell participants that their task is to make as many complete and correct cards as possible. Complete means that all four pieces must be used, and correct means that all four pieces must belong to the same card. For example, *participants cannot make a card out of two pieces from the king of hearts and two pieces from the king of spades, they must make a card out of all four pieces of the king of hearts.*
- Give them a time limit of seven to ten minutes to complete the task and then let them open their envelopes.
 - **Facilitator Note:** A common question is “Can we work together?”. If asked this question, simply repeat the instructions. There is no “right” way for the group to complete this activity but they will likely not be able to make any complete cards with their own envelopes alone. When they begin to realize that they do not have all the pieces to some cards, they will usually try to trade or steal from other groups.
- If the group is not making much progress putting together complete cards, stop the time about halfway through and lead a mini-debrief about what is working and what isn’t working, then resume the activity.

VARIATIONS

- Have multiple rounds and allow groups to strategize in between rounds. During strategy sessions, no one is allowed to touch the cards or talk to other groups. If desired, change up what type of communication is allowed each round. For example, have a round where no one can talk or where you can only talk when you are in a certain area.
- This activity can be done with a puzzle instead of card triangle pieces. We recommend a puzzle that’s about 50 pieces.



VARIATIONS *(continued)*

-  **High Risk:** To facilitate a higher risk version of this activity, include a group that has a special instruction. Options for special instructions could be: this group is only allowed to help a limited number of other groups, they are not allowed to help anyone at all, their goal is to discreetly sabotage the process, they are only allowed to help if asked.
-  **Large Group:** To facilitate this activity for a large group, split participants into more than six groups and use multiple decks of cards, such as one red deck and one blue deck, so that there are more card triangle pieces.
 -  **Facilitator Note:** Be cognizant of how many cards are added as too many and be overwhelming for a group to complete and causes participants to give up.
-  **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, use a Google Slides document with a slide for each group of participants. Create the playing pieces by using a photo editing application to cut images of cards in half diagonally to make triangles, or use the [premade Leadership Inspirations pieces](#). Divide the playing pieces among the different slides. Use breakout rooms to allow groups to strategize if desired, then keep all participants in the main meeting room for each round so that they have the ability to communicate with all participants.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
 - How did your group approach this challenge?
 - What strategies were the most helpful in making complete cards?
 - So What:
 - What can this activity teach us about collaboration?
 - How can a sense of competition help a group? How can it hurt a group?
 - Now What:
 - How can you think out of the box to solve challenges as a group?
 - What best practices for collaboration can you agree to use as a group?
-  **Facilitator Note:** These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group's experience and add or change questions as needed.