



# Task at Hand

Use different communication strategies to accomplish the specific tasks as a team

## TIME

20-30 minutes



## TEAM STAGE

Storming, Norming, Performing

## MATERIALS

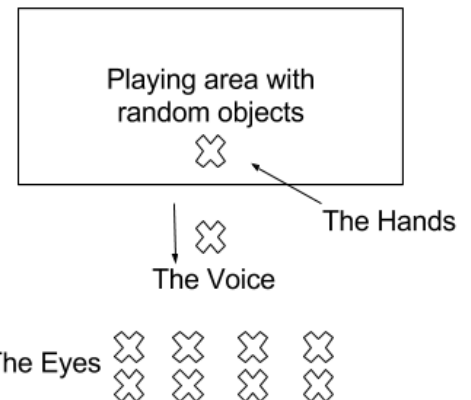
Blindfold, a bunch of random objects (balls, toys, rope, office supplies, etc.)

## SUMMARY

In this activity, groups must coordinate different communication strategies in order to accomplish specific tasks together. It will challenge groups to think about the different ways that people communicate, how to improve communication between members, and how to deal with interference.

## SET UP

- Establish an open playing space with no obstacles
- Spread out the random objects you have around this space.
- Determine a series of 4-5 tasks that you would like the group to complete. These will depend on the supplies and materials that you have. For example, *put all the green yarn balls into the bucket, put all the pens writing end down in the cup, or put the rope in a circle and then stand in it.*



## INSTRUCTIONS

- Ask for one volunteer to be The Hands and one volunteer to be The Voice. The Hands will need to be comfortable being blindfolded. Everyone else in the group will be The Eyes.
- Take The Hands and The Voice away from the rest of the participants and the playing area to give them their instructions:
  - HANDS
    - You will be blindfolded and placed in an open playing area. You may not remove your blindfold during the activity.
    - You will receive instructions from The Voice. Do what The Voice tells you to do.
  - VOICE
    - You cannot move from your spot and you cannot turn around.
    - You can talk.
    - You will receive instructions from The Eyes and must communicate those instructions to The Hands.
- Return to the rest of the group and give The Eyes their instructions for the activity:
  - EYES
    - You cannot talk or use any kind of written communication or props.
    - You cannot move from your spot.
    - You are responsible for helping to achieve the goal of the activity. The goal is for The Hands to complete a series of tasks (make sure to explain each task).
    - You must communicate the tasks to The Voice, who will then communicate to The Hands.





## INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*

- After giving The Eyes their instructions, tell them that they may no longer speak, strategize, or ask questions.
- Blindfold The Hands and place them in the playing area as indicated in the diagram.
- Place The Voice in between The Hands and The Eyes, facing The Eyes, as indicated in the diagram.
- Place The Eyes in front of The Voice as indicated in the diagram.
- Let everybody know how much time they have to complete their tasks (10-15 minutes), and then tell them to begin.
  - **Facilitator Note:** During play, keep an eye on The Hands, since they will be blindfolded. If they are about to bump into anything or leave the playing area, intervene and redirect them so they remain safe.

## VARIATIONS

- If the group is getting really frustrated, pause the activity and give The Eyes time together to process and strategize before resuming.

 **Large Group:** To facilitate this activity for a large group, have more than one person serve as The Voice and The Hands. Or, have multiple small “teams” that include each of the three roles try to complete different tasks in the same playing area at the same time. This will add a level of difficulty because of different people all giving instructions at once.

 **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, create a Google Jamboard document where the tasks can be accomplished. Come up with tasks such as, “write everyone’s name on a sticky note”, “add a picture of a tractor”, and “draw a skyscraper”. In addition to The Hands, The Voice, and The Eyes, there will need to be a volunteer to be The Messenger. Put each role in a different breakout room to give them their instructions.

- Give The Hands the link to the Jamboard, and tell them that their instructions will be broadcasted to them throughout the activity while they remain in a breakout room.
- Do not give The Voice or The Messenger the link to the Jamboard. Tell them that their job is to interpret the messages from The Eyes and send them to The Hands. The Voice will be the only one able to speak and will need to tell The Messenger specific messages to send. The Messenger will then type those messages and send them to whoever is the host of the meeting. The meeting host will then broadcast these messages to The Hands in the breakout room.
- Give The Eyes the link to the Jamboard and explain the tasks that need to be accomplished by The Hands. Tell them that they cannot use any verbal or written communication when communicating the tasks to The Voice. They also may not contribute to the Jamboard in any way.
- Bring everyone back into the main meeting room except for The Hands. Let the group know how much time they have for the activity, and then begin. When the time is up, bring The Hands back into the main meeting room and debrief the experience with everyone.

[\[click here for video\]](#)



## DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
  - What was challenging about this activity for each of the roles?
  - What strategies were successful in allowing the different roles to work together?
- So What:
  - Why is it important to understand the experiences of the people we work with?
  - How can we communicate effectively with people who might have different information than us?
- Now What:
  - How can you make sure that communication in this group is effective?
  - What can you do to make sure everyone in this group is always on the same page?

■ **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.