



# Telephone Pictionary

Groups try to pass a message along using phrases and pictures

## TIME

10-20 minutes



## TEAM STAGE

Storming, Norming

## MATERIALS

Paper, stapler, pens

## SUMMARY

This activity puts a spin on the well-known games of Telephone and Pictionary. It will help group members to understand other perspectives and ways of interpreting the world.

## SET UP

- Prepare paper booklets:
  - Take 8.5" x 11" pieces of paper and hold them using portrait orientation.
  - Fold the pieces of paper from top to bottom and cut them so that they are 8.5" x 5.5".
  - Stack several of these pieces of paper and fold them in half from left to right to make 4.25" x 5.5" booklets.
- **Facilitator Note:** Stack half as many pieces of paper as the number of participants, so that when the paper is folded to make the booklet there is one page for each participant. If using the large group variation, use an appropriate number of pieces of paper so that there is one page in the booklet for each member of the smaller group.
- Make one booklet for each participant. Staple the pieces of paper at the book spine to keep the pages together.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Ask everyone to sit in a circle.
- Give everyone a paper booklet and pen.
- Ask each person to write a short, familiar phrase or sentence on the cover of the booklet. For example, "I believe I can fly" or "Rock paper scissors". Give everyone one minute to write a phrase down.
- Then, tell everyone to pass their booklet to the person to their right.
- Each person will read the phrase on the cover of their new booklet, flip the cover page, and draw a picture of their interpretation on the **right side** of the booklet. Give everyone one minute to draw a picture of the phrase.
- **Facilitator Note:** It is important that each participant only draws or writes on the right side of the booklet. If the left side of the booklet is used, the previous drawing or phrase will still be visible even when the page is flipped, ruining the objective of the next participant having to interpret the drawing or phrase.
- Next, tell everyone to pass their booklet to the person to their right, with their picture open and visible.
- The next person will look only at the picture that the person to their left has drawn. Tell them to flip the page, and write a short phrase, on the **righthand page** of the booklet, that interprets the picture. Give everyone one minute to write a phrase down.



## INSTRUCTIONS *(continued)*

- Continue this pattern of drawing pictures and writing phrases until each person receives their own booklet back, or until the booklets run out of pages.
- Then, have each person go through their own booklets and see what everyone came up with. If you have time, have people showcase their books with the rest of the group.

## VARIATIONS

- For a similar activity, try the traditional game of [Telephone](#) to focus on effective listening and verbal communication, or try the [Drawing Game](#) to talk more about people's different perceptions.

 **Large Group:** To facilitate this activity for a large group, have participants get in small groups and sit in a circle with their group. Circulate the booklets around each small circle. As an alternative option, keep all participants in one circle but only go through a set number of rotations before returning books to their original owners.

 **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, ask for a volunteer to start by writing down a phrase on a piece of paper. This volunteer will call on the next participant to draw. Everyone else should close their eyes so that the phrase can be secretly shown to the next person to draw. Play will continue this way until the last person is called on to write or draw. [\[click here for video\]](#)

## DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
  - What were your expectations of this activity? Were they met?
  - How do you feel about how the original phrases got interpreted or changed?
- So What:
  - How can effective or ineffective communication impact the outcome of a group task?
  - What can we do when an outcome does not match our expectations?
- Now What:
  - How can you set and measure expectations as a group?
  - What can you do when different group members have different expectations?

 **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.