

# Zero Sum?

*Instructions for Leader*

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## **Goals**

To discourage teams from automatically competing with one another

To determine team member roles

## **Process**

1. Before the activity, determine how many groups you will have. For each Triplets Puzzle and Team Instruction sheet (Attachment 3), complete two of the linking words (different ones for each team). When the activity begins, each team will already have a couple of the linking words completed.
2. Have participants return to small groups of four to six people. Select one person from each group to be the Observer and give these individuals a copy of Attachment 5, the Team Observer Sheet.
3. Hand out the Triplets Puzzle and Team Instructions sheet (one per team). Attachment 2 is for the facilitator to use in describing what a triplet puzzle is and giving the teams their instructions.
4. Teams have 5 minutes to work through the puzzle. If this is not enough time, use your best judgment in allowing more time.
5. At the end of the time limit, tell the teams to stop working. See who has completed the puzzle. Congratulate this team. If no one has finished it, congratulate the team with the most completed CORRECT answers. Teams might have many completed answers, but make sure they are correct.
6. Work through the discussion questions:
  - a. Ask the observers what type of team member roles they observed.
  - b. Have them describe how each either hindered or helped the team complete the puzzle.
  - c. Ask participants if they were aware of how they behaved when working in a group. Allow them to discuss the effects of this activity on work they will do in the future.
  - d. Ask if anyone considered working collaboratively with another team.
  - e. Ask what would have happened if teams had worked together?

# Zero Sum? Explanation Sheet

*Go over these instructions with teams before the activity.*

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A triplet is a set of three words that are linked by a common fourth word. For example:

**ELEPHANT – HOUSE – SNOW**

What word links these three words? The linking word should appear before or after each of the three words to form well-known compound words or phrases.

The correct answer for this triplet is WHITE, as in WHITE ELEPHANT, WHITE HOUSE, and SNOW WHITE.

Here are three more triplets. See if you can find the linking word for each of them. Remember that the linking word may appear either before or after each word in the triplet.

**BOARD – HOLE – JACK**

**DOUBLE – ROAD – STITCH**

**MAKER – TENNIS – STICK**

Correct Solutions:

BLACK (BLACK BOARD, BLACK HOLE, BLACK JACK)

CROSS (DOUBLE CROSS, CROSS ROAD, CROSS STITCH)

MATCH (MATCH MAKER, TENNIS MATCH, MATCH STICK)



# Answer Sheet

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|------------|--------------|
| 1. DEER    | 13. UNDER    |
| 2. OIL     | 14. TOUR     |
| 3. NEWS    | 15. ODD      |
| 4. TRAIN   | 16. MEDICINE |
| 5. CREAM   | 17. AGENT    |
| 6. OPINION | 18. TIME     |
| 7. MONEY   | 19. IRON     |
| 8. PAINT   | 20. CAMERA   |
| 9. ENTRY   | 21. ANIMAL   |
| 10. TRADE  | 22. LIP      |
| 11. ESCAPE | 23. LABOR    |
| 12. ACTIVE | 24. YELLOW   |

# Team Observer Sheet

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**Directions:**

Please sit where you can see and hear the team discussions. You are a silent observer—do not speak or in any way participate in the activity. Take notes. Write down quotes of what you hear that demonstrate a point.

1. **Task Role Behaviors** – What things helped or hindered the team in its efforts to get the job done?

2. **Maintenance Role Behaviors** – What things helped or hindered the team in its efforts to get the job done?

3. **Individual Role Behaviors** – What things helped or hindered the team in its efforts to get the job done?