



**Aim:** discuss issues that might arise during a group work assignment & how to tackle them.

**Technique:** group exercises & discussion.

**Resources**

**Room facilities**

Computer with projection  
Whiteboard  
Whiteboard marker pens

**Take with you**

Tower of Babel cards (cut up and ready to hand out).

**Online**

[More study tips](#)  
[Great links about different types of learners](#)  
[Tips on google searches](#)

**Exercise instructions**

Instructions to be cut out for individual team members in 'Tower of Babel' exercise (do not allow them to show each other these!)

If there are less than 8 team members per group, just choose a few.

The tower must have four or more layers.	The tower must be made of two colours only.	The tower must contain at least 10 blocks.	The tower cannot be made of more than 30 blocks.
The fourth layer must be a different colour to the first layer.	The tower cannot have more than six layers.	Each layer must be made of the same colour.	The second layer must be a different colour to the first layer.



Timings (minutes)	Activity
0 – 5	<p>Start by asking everyone what they find most difficult about assignments that involve group work and try and tailor the session to their needs. (The two activity ideas below may take longer than suggested here and so it may be worth picking one that they would benefit from most or even spreading this session plan across two sessions.)</p>
5 – 35	<p>'Tower of Babel' group work exercise (adapted from a University of Leeds Staff Centre training exercise):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide the students into two groups</li> <li>• Tell everyone that their task is to build a Lego tower in accordance with the instructions that each team member will be given individually (provided on the previous page)</li> <li>• Explain that they have 10 minutes to plan what they will do. They will then receive their individual instructions and they cannot tell each other what they are. They then have 15 minutes to build the tower without communicating with each other verbally or in writing. But they still have to try and implement the instructions they received!</li> <li>• Discuss what worked well and why. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The aim of this is to encourage students to think about how important good communication skills are and how to work as team. The task requires them to complete their individual role while working towards a common team goal which is a skill that is useful during you studies as well as something employers will want you to talk about in interviews.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>(This activity uses Lego but you could use any materials really; straws, plastic cups etc. could also work. Bear in mind that the instructions below are designed for use with Lego blocks but you can adapt them to suit the materials you have handy).</p>
35 – 45	<p>Belbin/ personality roles:</p> <p>It's useful to think about what type of person you are and how your behavioural traits influence how you work as part of team. Meredith Belbin came up with an interesting theory stating that a good team is one made up of <a href="#">eight key roles</a>. You can discuss with the group which one they are and get them to think about what their strengths and weaknesses would be. You could try and tie this in with an employability/ interview practice for anyone that might be applying for internships and see if they can think of ways to evidence their role traits.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are lots of different theories surrounding personality types/ strengths out there. This <a href="#">website</a> features quite a few and you could have a look at any that you think would be useful.</li></ul>
45 - 50	<p>Wrap-up session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mention that the Academic Skills website has some <a href="#">useful information</a> to get you started and help you plan group work.</li></ul>