

CREATIVITY AND COOPERATION



Jacob Lawrence, *Builders No. 2*, 1968
Gouache and tempera with graphite under-
drawing on paper. Reynolda House Museum
of American Art, Gift of Barbara B. Millhouse,
1984.2.13
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Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists Rights
Society (ARS), New York

EXPLORE REYNOLDA

WHAT YOU NEED

- Jacob Lawrence's *Builders No. 2* on this card or on your computer screen. To zoom in and learn more about the artwork, visit <https://www.reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/builders-no-2>.
- objects in your home or classroom
- a conversation partner (or more than one!)

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY

Start by looking together at Jacob Lawrence's painting *Builders No. 2* and consider the following questions:

- » What is happening in this painting?
- » What tools do you see?
- » What materials do you see?
- » Are the men working independently? Cooperatively?
- » What do you think the men will create?
- » What sounds might you hear if you were in this room?
- » What colors and shapes do you notice? Does the artist repeat shapes and colors?

For further conversation, consider:

- » Have you ever built something with someone else? How was that? How did it feel to “collaborate,” or, work together?
- » What tools do you use? Think about all sorts of tools from paintbrushes and crayons to a spoon for eating to a broom for sweeping. Do you have a favorite tool? How might tools be “extensions of hands and movement,” as Lawrence described?

COLLABORATIVE WRITING AND DRAWING GAMES

Picture-Word Game (3 or more players): Cut a piece of paper into two or three long strips (at least 2” wide). Hand each player a strip of paper and a pencil. Each player should write a sentence or phrase at the top of the paper. Pass all papers clockwise. Next, each player should make a small drawing under the sentence that illustrates the idea. Then, fold the sentence to the back of the paper to hide it. Pass the papers again clockwise. Everyone should see a drawing, but no words. Now, write a sentence or phrase describing the picture and fold the drawing to the back of the paper before again passing papers clockwise. Repeat this (drawing, then writing, drawing, then writing) until all papers are filled. Unfold and read (and prepare to laugh!).

Exquisite Corpse* (2 or more players): Hand every player a strip of paper and a pencil (or differently colored pens and markers). Every player should draw a head and neck in the top section of the paper. Part of the fun is the surprise, so focus on your own paper and try not to see what anyone else is drawing. Then, fold the paper so that just the bottom of the neck lines are showing on the rest of the paper. Trade or pass papers. Then, everyone draws a torso and arms in the next section of paper, using the neck lines as a starting point. Again fold your drawing back so that only the bottom edge of the waist is showing. Pass. Draw the legs and feet using the bottom of the waist as the starting point. Unfold and share your creations!

AGES

3 to adult

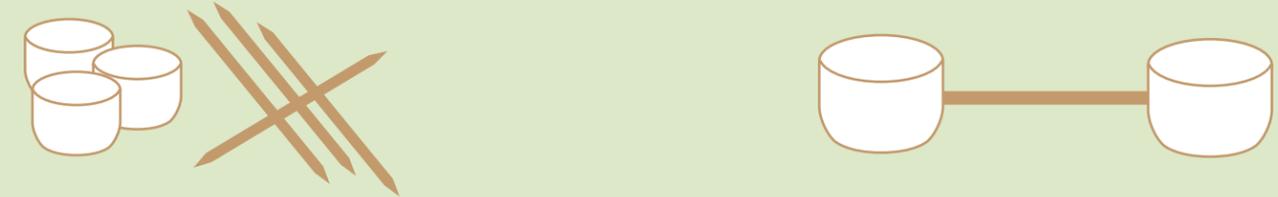
“When I was fifteen or sixteen, I was exposed to the workshop of these three brothers in Harlem, cabinetmakers. I got to know them and they got to know me. For me, tools became extensions of hands and movement.”

Jacob Lawrence in an interview with Michael Kimmelman,
New York Times, April 12, 1996

COLLABORATIVE BUILDING ACTIVITIES - for home or the classroom

Marshmallow and Toothpick Challenge (1 or more players): For this activity you'll need a bag of marshmallows (small ones will allow for more connections) and a bunch of toothpicks.

On your own or with a team, try to create the tallest structure you can without it toppling. Insert toothpicks into marshmallows to connect them.



Cup Pyramid (4-6 players)¹: For this activity, you will need 6 identical plastic or paper cups (e.g. 12 oz. solo cups), a rubber band, and 4-6 strings cut about 24 inches long. Tie the end of each string to the rubber band so that the distance between each string is equal along the rubber band. For example, with four strings, the strings will be at the 12, 3, 6, and 9 if the rubber band were a clock. Turn the cups upside down, so that the lip is on the table.

Each member of the team holds the end of one string. The team then has to create a pyramid of cups by only using the rubber band/string tool--no hands at all, even if a cup falls. After successfully making a pyramid, try stacking cups in pairs, so that the lower cup is bottom-side up and the upper cup is right-side up.



Cup Pyramid (2 players): For this version, instead of strings, take four pipe cleaners and fold them in half with the rubber band at the center. Each player will hold two of the pipe-cleaner “handles” and together the team’s task is to create a pyramid. For younger players, try simply stacking the cups using only the rubber band/pipe-cleaner tool (start with the lip side down and stack them this way).

Collaborative Building: Gather materials like wooden blocks, LEGO® bricks, a deck of playing cards, toilet paper tubes, etc. (If you are outside, gather sticks and/or rocks). Decide together what you want to build, then take turns creating your design or sculpture. Each player can add or move three pieces before it is the next person’s turn. (Modify that number as needed, based on materials available or patience of the players).

¹ Adapted from “Science Gal” blog, <http://sciencegal-sciencegal.blogspot.com/2012/09/setting-expectations-for-group-work.html>

* French artists and poets known as Surrealists played this game with everyone adding a word, seeing only the word before. The first time they played it, they created the phrase “The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine.” Thus, this silly title was born.