

# UNIT 2 Developing Life Skills Activity

## Teamwork Skills

**Directions:** Have you ever heard the saying, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts?” A strong team, working together, can often do more than the same people working individually. You are part of a team when you play in a band or orchestra, act in a play, work on a group project, or play a team sport. Most jobs require strong teamwork skills. Read the situation below. Then read how the team uses teamwork skills to work effectively. Answer the questions on separate paper.

### The Window Display Team

Andre, Betsy, Conrad, and Denise work together at a store. They have been asked to design and set up a seasonal display in the store window. Andre is very active and outgoing. Betsy is highly organized and holds strong opinions. People sometimes find her pushy. Conrad is quiet and shy. Denise constantly worries about what other people think of her.

1. **Put results ahead of personalities.** In spite of their different characteristics, the four agree that the important thing is to put up the best window display they can. *What problems might arise if they did not agree to put results ahead of personalities?*
2. **Take initiative.** At first the four have no ideas. They sit and look at each other. Finally Denise says, “I have a suggestion.” Although she is afraid the others might think her idea is dumb, by speaking up she starts everyone thinking. Andre and Betsy begin to offer ideas. Each idea stimulates more ideas. *What problems might arise if no one is willing to take initiative?*
3. **Encourage participation.** Andre notices that Conrad is sitting quietly while the other three suggest ideas. Andre says, “Conrad, what do you think?” Conrad shyly makes a suggestion. The others like his suggestion. It becomes the basic idea for their store window display. *What problems might arise if neither Andre nor anyone else encouraged Conrad’s participation?*
4. **Be flexible.** Betsy disagrees with the other three about the best way to start the project. After the group discusses the advantages and disadvantages of each, Betsy agrees to do as the other three think best. *What problems might arise if Betsy was not willing to be flexible?*
5. **Assign roles.** Betsy suggests making a chart showing who will do what. That way they will all know their assignments and avoid duplicating efforts. *What problems might arise if the group did not assign roles?*
6. **Appreciate and make use of differences.** They decide to “play to their strengths.” Knowing that Denise is good at math, they agree that she will make a budget for the project and track expenditures. Drawing on Andre’s outgoing style, they agree that he will talk to the manager and departments about getting items the group needs. They put Betsy in charge of tracking progress to make sure everything is getting done. Conrad is artistic, with a good eye for design.

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**Teamwork Skills (Continued)**

After the group agrees on the general plan for the display, they ask Conrad to make specific plans so the display will look as good as possible. *What problems might arise if the group did not appreciate and make use of differences?*

- 7. **Lead and follow.** Once they assign roles, each group member is a leader in his or her own role and follows the leadership of others. Denise takes the lead in tracking assignments but follows Conrad’s lead in helping to arrange the display. *What problems might arise if all group members were not willing both to lead and to follow?*
- 8. **Share the credit.** After the display is done, the store manager tells Andre, “You did a very good job on this display.” Andre replies, “Betsy, Conrad, and Denise did as much as I did. It was a team effort.” *What problems might arise if Andre did not share the credit for the successful display?*

**Building Skills for Tomorrow**

Review the teamwork skills described above. Divide a blank sheet of paper into two columns. At the top of the left column, write “Strengths.” List the teamwork skills in which you are strong. At the top of the right column, write “Needs Improvement.” In that column, list teamwork skills you could work to improve.

Choose one skill from the “Needs Improvement” column. Think of specific ways you could strengthen that skill during this school year. Describe how you will carry out one of your ideas.

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