

Toothpick Activity:

Participants should each take at least 14 toothpicks.

Ask for a volunteer.

Show the volunteer the diagram of how the toothpicks should be assembled without anyone else seeing it.

Tell the volunteer that they will provide instructions to the participants on how to assemble the toothpicks into a specific pattern.

Tell the participants: “_____ is going to tell you how to lay out your toothpicks to create the pattern. The rules are:

- No questions can be asked of the volunteer, me, or the other participants.
- Only verbal instructions will be given – no motions.
- The instructions the volunteer gives cannot be repeated.
- You only have 3 minutes to assemble the pattern.
- Go!

(After 3 minutes stop all instructions and have the participants compare their patterns to their neighbors. Are there similarities? Are there differences? Why are there differences when the instructions were the same?)

