# Straw Tower Building[[1]](#footnote-1)

Purpose:

This activity can be used for many different purposes. The most obvious is to illustrate teamwork, planning, and cooperation. You can set this up for all to participate in small groups or as a demonstration to the class. It works best as a competition between several groups to see who can finish first and with the highest tower. This is a great activity to help teams bond or to illustrate team process.

Time requirement:

This depends on how many straws you use, consider using 60 straws per group. Give the students 10-15 minutes to build and 20 minutes total.

Materials needed:

You will need 60 straws for each group of students and a roll of masking tape for each group.

Procedure:

Divide your students into equal groups. Each group should choose a team leader that will guide the process and represent their project. Give each group a set of 60 straws and a roll of masking tape. When you give the signal, each group must try to build a freestanding structure out of straws and tape. Listen to how they share ideas and watch for both frustration and enthusiasm and how it is communicated. At the end of the activity have the group debrief what the experience was like, both the challenges and the successes.

Variations:

You can make the criteria for the building to be the most creative tower, the tallest tower, or the tower built in the fastest period (first one finished); another variation would be to add a rule that prohibits verbal communication.

Function in class:

This activity is great to demonstrate teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, etc. It can be used as a springboard activity to begin class or as an illustration to connect class content at the end of class. It can also be used as an icebreaker at the beginning of the semester to introduce students to each other.

1. Source: Deb Dunbar (Professional Development) & Jeff Short (The Business School) available at: http://www.humber.ca/centreforteachingandlearning/instructional-strategies/teaching-methods/classroom-strategies-designing-instruction/activities-and-games/straw-tower-building.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)