

Team Ready

A Coach and Student Guide to Creating Successful Teams



- Audience: Ages 10-19

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Team Ready Guide

Activities to promote healthy, creative and productive collaborations
in your project-learning teams

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Team Ready Guide

Introduction to the Activities

Intro

Team Ready:

A coach and student guide to creating successful teams

Teams that establish a solid foundation at the beginning of a project are more likely to be successful and to have a more satisfying, creative, and productive experience. To put this foundation in place, here are nine activities that your team can perform before starting a project:

1	Get to know your team
2	Share team experiences
3	Form team ground rules
4	Communicate vision and goals
5	Share individual strengths
6	Define team roles
7	Create a timeline
8	Establish a communication plan
9	Write a Team Agreement

The following activities will help your team get off to a great start and prevent problems over the course of the project.

Activities 1 through 8 ask each team member to respond to a set of questions and share their answers with the rest of the team. As a team, you'll make decisions and set ground rules on how to collaborate and work together on your project. In **Activity 9**, all team's responses and decisions will be recorded in a written Team Agreement that will help guide the team throughout the course of the project.

Activity

1

Get to Know Your Team

Please share the following about yourself:

Your name and where you live:

[Be sure not to share your address or any personal details in your answers, as per online safety guidelines]

What is it like where you live? (If we looked out of your window, what would we see?) _____

What do you like to do in your spare time? _____

What is something you've done that you're particularly proud of? _____

What's your favorite holiday or a tradition you follow each year? What makes this event your favorite? _____

If you could change one thing in the world to make it better, what would it be? _____

Share Team Experiences

Activity

2

Think back to a team experience you've had before. Perhaps it was a project you worked on with others or a team sport.

What did the other team members do to make the experience a good one?

What did you do that helped make the experience a good one? _____

Based on your positive team experiences, how would you like to be treated by the members of your new team? _____

How do you usually handle conflict? _____

Form Ground Rules

Activity

3

After reading your team members' responses to the previous questions, do you have any further questions of anyone? _____

What do you notice is similar in the responses you've read from everyone on the team?

What would you like your team members to commit to in order to be a productive, harmonious, and creative team? [These commitments will form the Ground Rules for Team Collaboration & Behavior]

Activity

4

Communicate Vision & Goals

Imagine that your project is a tremendous success, all goes well in the planning and doing of all the tasks, and the outcome is fantastic!

Write about what it would be like to be a member of this great project and how you would feel about the outcome. _____

What are the vision and goals you have for this project? What would you like to accomplish and learn? _____

What do you think might be the top problems or challenges for the team? Do you have any experience in managing challenges like these that you can share with the team now?

Share Individual Strengths

Activity

5

Describe your strengths:

Perhaps you've participated in a project like this before. If so, what do you feel you did particularly well? _____

If you haven't participated in a project like this before, what do you excel at in school or in an interest or hobby? _____

How well do you manage your time? Do you have any tips for others? _____

Now that you know more about your team members, do you foresee any issues that might come up as you work together on your project? _____

Activity

6

Define Team Roles

Is there a role that you've taken on a team that you feel was helpful to the team? If so, what was it? _____

Knowing that roles can be rotated over the course of a project, what role do you think you'd like to take on at this point? How about later in the process? _____

Team Roles

Role Assignment Styles:

There is no right or wrong way to assign roles and teams approach role assignments in different ways. It's best to consider the team members, your team goals, and what will work best for the whole group. Here are two examples:

Static Roles – Team members choose specific roles that they will fill for the duration of the project. These roles are usually assigned based on student interest and/or skills.

Rotational Roles – Some teams choose not to assign specific roles and instead allow team members to try different roles throughout the project. This approach is most common for students that have not experienced this type of project and with teams that work in a linear fashion. For example, a team working on a ThinkQuest project might complete the content together first and then "get their feet wet" as Web Designers as a group.

Below are examples of **Team Roles** that apply to *managing* any project:

Leader/Project Manager – Prepares an agenda for each team meeting. Keeps the meeting moving along. Keeps the team focused on the task at hand and makes sure all members have an opportunity to participate.

Time Manager – Makes sure the team stays on track and reminds team members when assignments are due.

Guide – Pays attention to patterns of communication and examines how conflict is being managed. Facilitates the team through issues and problems.

Recorder/Secretary – Takes notes whenever the team meets and keeps track of team data and resources.

Reviewer/Checker – Reviews newly completed tasks and gives feedback. Monitors the possibility of plagiarism and asks questions about content. Checks to see if the product has a sense of uniformity in its look and feel, instead of being products of many individuals.

Below are examples of **Team Roles** determined by the skill sets necessary to *create content* for a successful project:

Web Designer / Programmer – Establishes the look and feel of the website including typography, graphics, color, and layout. Uses web design software and/or HTML to make the site visually appealing. Organizes the site so that content is presented in a user friendly way. Builds the website's functionality using web-programming languages.

Graphics Specialist – Designs all graphic elements for the website. Edits and refines images and photographs using image-editing software such as Photoshop or Fireworks.

Interactive Media Programmer – Creates all interactive content for the site using programs such as Adobe Flash. A sample task is creating games or quizzes for the site.

Translator – Translates the entire site into another language. This task can be done as the content is completed or at the end of the project.

Create a Team Timeline

Activity

7

Are there any times during the life of this project when you cannot work on the material (holidays, exam times, etc.)? Please list them: _____

List the tasks that you would most like to be responsible for and when you think you can have them completed: _____

[After reviewing responses from all team members, the Time Manager can create a timeline (see next page for examples) and each team member can suggest changes or additions until the team has reached an agreement.]

Will you commit to completing the tasks assigned to you by the dates set on the Team Timeline? _____

Team Timelines

For the Time Manager in the team:

Assemble a timeline that shows how time resources will be allocated. Begin at the end – that is, decide on what date the final project will be completed. Some project coaches suggest that the project be completed at least six weeks prior to the due to allow time for last minute improvements and fixing problems. Next, think of the tasks that need to be completed, estimate how long each one will take, and determine the order in which the tasks need to be finished.

Take into account the dates that team members have listed as times when they are not available to work on the project. Avoid assigning a due date for a member who is not available. Instead, make the due date before their scheduled time off.

The best timelines are determined together by the whole team. Ask team members to commit to completing all their assigned tasks as listed on the Team Timeline.

[Note: See Team Help for more information on Timelines.]

Timeline Sample

The timeline below is based on a ThinkQuest project (www.thinkquest.org)

Task	Start	End
ThinkQuest Opens	08/15/07	
Explore TQ	08/15/07	08/25/07
What is ThinkQuest?	08/15/07	08/17/07
Explore TQ Library	08/17/07	08/23/07
Review the Evaluation Rubric	08/23/07	08/24/07
Team Goals for TQ Experience	08/24/07	08/25/07
How to: Research and Writing	08/27/07	09/07/07
What is Plagiarism?	08/27/07	08/28/07
Fair Use and Copywrite Lesson	08/28/07	08/29/07
Obtaining Permissions for Images and Text	08/29/07	08/30/07
Determining Validity of Sources	08/30/07	09/04/07
Writing for the Web	09/04/07	09/07/07
Web Site Topic Selection	09/07/07	09/12/07
Brainstorm Ideas	09/07/07	09/08/07
Vote on Topic	09/10/07	09/11/07
Define Site Goals and Vision	09/11/07	09/12/07
Team Building	09/13/07	09/22/07
Creating a Team Agreement	09/13/07	09/15/07
Determine Team Roles	09/17/07	09/19/07
How to Deal with Conflict	09/19/07	09/21/07
Create Project Timeline	09/21/07	09/22/07
Project Planning	09/24/07	09/28/07
Define Tasks and Milestones of the Project	09/24/07	09/26/07
Breakdown of Work	09/26/07	09/28/07
Create Site Map	09/28/07	10/02/07
Brainstorm Subtopics	09/28/07	09/29/07
Create a Site Map on Paper	10/01/07	10/02/07
Content Development (Research and Writing)	10/02/07	12/14/07
Introduction	10/02/07	10/09/07
Subtopic 1	10/09/07	10/15/07
Subtopic 2	10/15/07	10/19/07
Subtopic 3	10/22/07	10/26/07
Subtopic 4	10/29/07	11/02/07
About Our Site	11/05/07	11/09/07
About Us	11/12/07	11/16/07
Citations	11/16/07	11/20/07
Revisions	11/20/07	12/01/07
Final Draft	12/03/07	12/14/07

Task	Start	End
Site Design and Build	01/02/08	02/21/08
Choose colors, fonts, look and feel	01/02/08	01/04/08
Paper Mockups of Site	01/04/08	01/09/08
Vote on Design	01/09/08	01/10/08
1st Mockup Done	01/10/08	01/16/08
Feedback	01/16/08	01/17/08
Revisions	01/17/08	01/23/08
2nd Mockup Done	01/23/08	01/29/08
Feedback	01/29/08	01/30/08
Revision	01/30/08	02/05/08
Mockup on Computer	02/05/08	02/09/08
Create Main Page	02/11/08	02/15/08
Create Sub Pages (Template)	02/15/08	02/21/08
Add Content to Pages	02/21/08	02/26/08
First Upload of Site to TQ	02/26/08	02/27/08
Feedback	02/27/08	02/29/08
Revisions	02/29/08	03/06/08
Second Upload of Site to TQ	03/06/08	03/07/08
Testing	03/07/08	03/11/08
Feedback	03/11/08	03/13/08
Final Revisions	03/13/08	03/19/08
Final Upload of Site to TQ	03/19/08	03/20/08
Final Site Profile	03/20/08	03/21/08
End of ThinkQuest		04/02/08

Establish a Communication Plan

Activity

8

List which methods you are familiar with and prefer to use when communicating online:

How often are you willing to commit to communicating online each week? _____

List the specific times each week when you will not be available: _____

If one of your team members lives in another time zone, are you willing to communicate online very late in the evening or very early in the morning to accommodate them? _____

Activity

9

Write a Team Agreement

Now that you've responded to all of the questions in Team Ready and have shared responses with your team, you are ready to record your responses in a Team Agreement that everyone will sign and commit to following over the course of the project:

Team Agreements

We, the _____ Team, do solemnly agree to respect and follow the team agreements and decisions outlined below. If at any time we need to change or modify these agreements, we must have the entire team agree to the changes before proceeding.

1) Ground Rules for Team Collaboration and Behavior: _____

2) Common Vision & Goals: _____
