

B. Choose the best option for each statement or question.

1. A **tower** is normally _____.
 - a. tall and thin
 - b. short and round
2. A **designer** might work on a new _____.
 - a. text message
 - b. cell phone
3. An example of a **product** is _____.
 - a. a box of spaghetti
 - b. a trip to Italy
4. Which of these are you more likely to **plan**? _____.
 - a. A weekend activity
 - b. A yard of tape

GETTING MEANING FROM CONTEXT

A writer may explain certain words or phrases in a text using a definition or a synonym (a word or phrase with a similar meaning). These often follow words such as *that is . . .* or *in other words . . .* or are set apart with parentheses, dashes, or commas. Definitions may also be provided below the text, as footnotes.

Refer to the passage on pages 25–26 to answer the questions below.

1. What does *by itself* mean in paragraph 1? Write another way to say it.

2. What synonym is given for *collaborate* in the passage? _____

3. How could you define *prototype*? Scan the passage and note a definition.

CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Reflecting.** Think about a team you are part of. Are you usually the expert, organizer, or experimenter?
2. **Interpreting.** What do you think Wujec means when he says, “Every project has its own marshmallow”?

EXPLORE MORE

Learn more about Tom Wujec. Visit his TED speaker profile at TED.com.
Share what you learn with your class.

BUILD A TOWER, BUILD A TEAM

TOM WUJEC Designer, TED speaker

Through the Marshmallow Challenge, Tom Wujec has learned a lot about how people work together.

Some teams have problems because they jockey for power. In other words, team members spend too much time deciding who is in charge. Some teams sketch lots of different ideas, but then run out of time and don't finish their towers. And other teams assemble a tower that looks good—just before it collapses under the marshmallow's weight.

sketch: v. to draw quickly

assemble: v. to build

collapse: v. to fall down

In this lesson, you are going to watch segments of Wujec's TED Talk. Use the information above about his challenge to answer these questions.

1. What do people do when they are "jockeying for power"?

2. Why do some teams not finish their towers?

3. What happens to some teams' towers when they put the marshmallow on top?



Tom Wujec's **idea worth spreading** is that the Marshmallow Challenge can be a fun and playful way to teach lessons about teamwork and design.

PART 1

A CHALLENGING TASK

PREVIEWING

A. Read the excerpt from Wujec's talk. Complete the excerpt with the correct words or phrases (a–d).

- a. orienting c. assembling
b. talk about it d. planning, organizing

« So, normally, most people begin by _____₁ themselves to the task. They _____₂, they figure out what it's going to look like; they jockey for power. Then they spend some time _____₃, they sketch, and they lay out spaghetti. They spend the majority of their time _____₄ the sticks into ever-growing structures. »

B. Watch (▶) the first segment of the talk, and check your answers to Exercise A.

GETTING THE MAIN IDEA

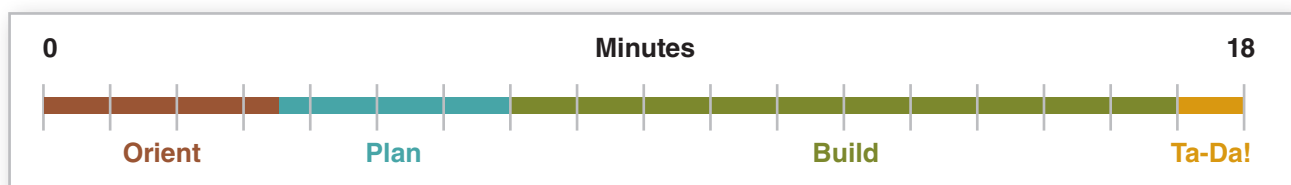
What is the most important idea in this segment of the TED Talk? Read the statements and choose the one that best describes the main idea.

- a. Teams usually don't make very stable structures.
b. Teams usually fight with each other.
c. Teams usually spend too much time planning and testing their structure.

UNDERSTANDING KEY DETAILS

Teams usually go through four steps when they do the Marshmallow Challenge. Study the diagram and match each step with a description.

- _____ a. Teams assemble their towers. _____ c. Teams sketch designs for the structure.
_____ b. Teams finish their towers. _____ d. Teams try to understand the task.



CRITICAL THINKING

Inferring. Why do you think some teams “jockey for power”?

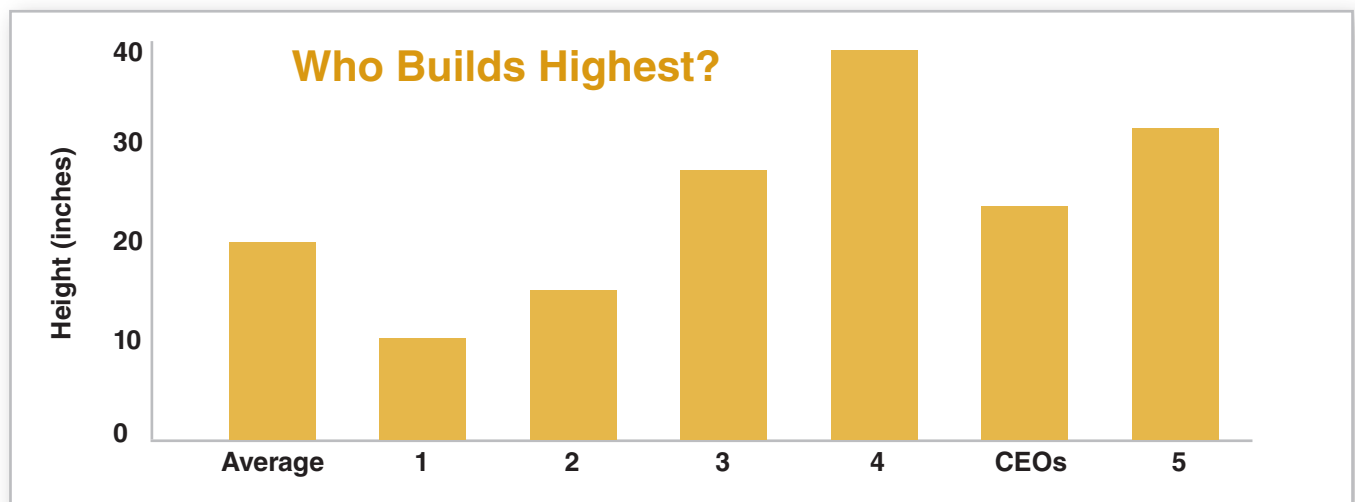
PART 2

COLLABORATION IS KEY

PREVIEWING

In his TED Talk, Wujec reveals who builds the tallest towers. How do you think the people below do in the challenge? Work with a partner to match each group with a bar in the chart. Then check your answers as you watch (▶) the second segment of the talk.

- _____ a. Lawyers
- _____ b. Architects and engineers
- _____ c. CEOs and executive admins
- _____ d. Business school students
- _____ e. Kindergartners



CEO: *n.* Chief Executive Officer; the person in charge of a business or organization

Executive Admin: *n.* a person who assists a CEO with administrative tasks

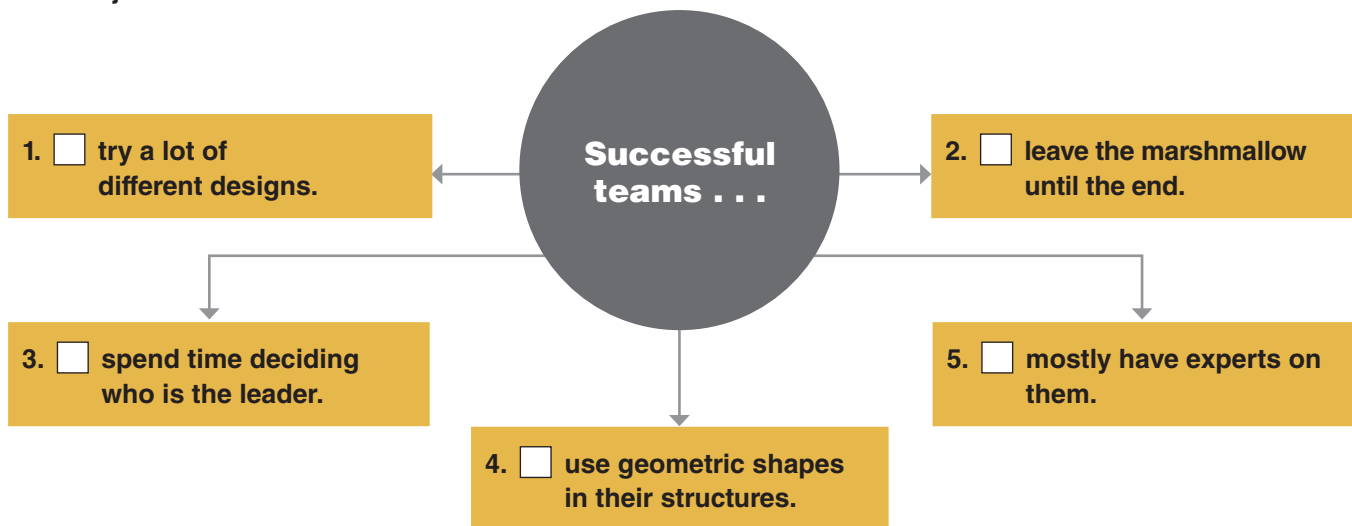
GETTING THE MAIN IDEA

Use information from Wujec's talk to answer each question.

1. According to Wujec, why do kindergarten students do well in the activity?
 - a. They understand about strong structures.
 - b. They don't fight with each other.
 - c. They start with the marshmallow.
2. According to Wujec, it is better to build _____.
 - a. very few prototypes.
 - b. many prototypes.
 - c. one good prototype.

SUMMARIZING

What do successful teams do when they build their towers? Check (✓) the best ideas from Wujec's talk.



CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Reflecting.** How well do you think you and your classmates would do with the Marshmallow Challenge? Give reasons for your answer.

2. **Applying.** What kind of structure do you think would work best in the Marshmallow Challenge? Work in groups and design the best structure on paper. If possible, try building it.

EXPLORE MORE

Watch more of Tom Wujec's TED Talk at TED.com. What happens when Wujec adds a financial reward for the winning group? Why? Share what you learn with your class.

Project

A. Work in a small team. You are going to design, perform, and share a team-building task.

- Choose at least four everyday objects, such as the items below, to use in your task.
- Brainstorm ideas for a task using those objects.
- Choose one task idea, and decide the goal (for example, to build a bridge between two desks) and a time limit.
- Try the task as a team. Keep a note of your result.
- Demonstrate your task to other teams in your class, and have them try the task.
- Observe how the other teams perform the task and how their performance compares with your own team's.

B. Discuss these questions with your class.

1. What was easy about the exercise? What was difficult?
2. Were there any problems in your group? How did you solve them?
3. Which of the other teams was most successful in your task? Why do you think they were successful?
4. What did you learn about working in a team?



EXPLORE MORE

What else can we learn from a task using a marshmallow? Check out Joachim de Posada's TED Talk "Don't eat the marshmallow!" at TED.com. Discuss what you learn with your class.