

Top Secret

Concepts:

1. For a team to be successful, each member must fulfill a specific role.
2. Paying attention to details develops good observation skills.
3. To be a successful communicator, one must listen and share.
4. Patience and respect are needed when working in group situations.

Outline:

I. Preparation Before Activity (20 min.)

II. Introduction (10 min.)

- A. Greeting, Grabbing, and Purpose
- B. Names and Introductions
- C. Activity Description
- D. Behavior Guidelines
- E. Task Analysis/Learner Assessment

III. Your Mission (10 min.)

- A. The Mission Directive
- B. Agent's Duties

IV. The Spy Operation (1 hour)

V. The Machine

VI. Conclusion (10 min.)

VII. Optional Activities

- A. Telephone
- B. Story Writing

VIII. Appendix

- A. Equipment
- B. Glossary
- C. Activity and Safety Management
- D. References/Resources
- E. Data Sheets

Top Secret

I. Preparation Before Activity

As a chaperone, you will be facilitating the activity and overseeing the students as they work in groups to construct a “secret machine.” Read over the lesson plan and speak to your liaison if you have any questions. Your liaison will have the room set-up to accommodate the students and will have the agent role cards, laminated greeting paragraph, and mission directive sheets accessible for you to use. He or she will also delineate the separate areas where the students are restricted to once the activity begins and they are in their roles. The set-up will be similar, if not exactly, like the areas on the map. Prior to the activity think about how many teams you will need. Each team can have a maximum of five people if all of the roles are filled, for a maximum of four teams with five people per team. To ensure that all of the students have a role the Conductor position can be optional. For example, if there are 17 students participating in the activity, one team could have 5 roles and the other teams could have 4 roles (eliminating the Conductor).

II. Introduction

A. Greeting, Grabbing, and Purpose. Greet the students as they enter the classroom. Ask students to be seated on the floor. Once the group has assembled, read the following statement from the laminated greeting paragraph sheet:

Ladies and Gentlemen, my spies, positioned in laboratories at Tectron Products Co., Inc. have informed me of a recent invention. Scientists there have developed a new “machine” that could be the answer to all the world’s problems. Whoever sells the machine to households throughout the United States and the world will be rich, filthy rich. Unfortunately, plans have been kept under laser motion detectors and infrared sensors deep inside Tectron Products main office in Lanesboro for the past eleven months. No one has seen anything!! Ladies and Gentleman, I want that machine. Four weeks ago, I deployed several agents disguised as pool cleaners to Tectron Laboratories. The last radio transmission received from alpha-chlorine team was exactly 61 hours ago. Three hours ago GPS Satellite imaging placed them deep inside Disney World, Florida - Not Lanesboro!!! Their efforts to obtain the secret plans seem to have been thwarted. Because of this failure, I am now authorizing plan Blue 52, that is where you come in. You have been selected for this mission. Ladies and Gentleman, you have made the cut, you are the cream of the crop, the best of the best. Only your observation, teamwork, and communication skills can help you now. Remember, Tectron Products is already on the look out. Talk to none except your informers. Be careful, Oh and... Good Luck!

B. Names and Introductions. Introduce yourself as Professor 6171, the overseer of Delta raptor center one. Pass out name cards and have each person read their code name and agent description to the class. Explain that you will be overseeing their operations.

C. Activity Description. This activity involves work in secret spy-op teams to “acquire” plans for a secret machine and build it. The design and plans of this machine may only be transferred

verbally from one person to the next.

D. Behavior Guidelines. Discuss clearly and specifically which behaviors you expect from your students during the class. Explain the need for respect: for you, for each other, ideas, Eagle Bluff itself, and equipment. Remember, Tectron Products has surveillance equipment everywhere! You may only talk to 2 members of your “relay team” (the person before and after you). “Whisper” alarm systems are set to go off at any noise above .001% of a decibel. Also, competing spy companies may hear your information - talk quietly.

E. Task Analysis/Learner Assessment. What qualities make a good secret agent?

III. Your Mission

This activity is a spin off of the game telephone. Students are passing information about an object from one person to the next. The twist is that the student’s descriptions are used to recreate the object at the end of each relay team. In passing out the name cards, you have already divided the teams into groups of 5. Each student will have a specific job in the relay team and a specific place in the chain of passing information (see map). They may only talk to the person before and after them in their own team - no one else!! (Spy groups can be modified by removing one of the team members (the Conductor) to accommodate a smaller total group size.) As the instructor, remember, sneaks may only “see” the object for two minutes at a time. They will then memorize two characteristics of the object and pass the information down the relay. To increase the student’s interest level, role-play all the parts.

A. The Mission Directive. Ladies and Gentleman, you will be divided into spy-op teams of 5 people. This is to ensure the success of this mission and to preserve the future safety of the world. I do not want to repeat the same mistakes of alpha-chlorine team; therefore, each new spy-op group must work together as a team. Each of your personalities has been analyzed by Nava computer-base 3 in New Ulm, Minnesota. The computer then matched personalities that would “mesh” under the intense pressure of spy-op work in Lanesboro. This is my insurance policy. I want each team to succeed. I need a model of that machine!! Each member of your team will have a special station within Tectron Laboratories in conjunction with their specific skill as a spy-op agent. You may not leave this position. Also, for security reasons, each agent may only talk to the agent of their **same team** before and after him/her - and **no one else!!!** This is a race against the clock. All agents have very specific responsibilities so... listen carefully.

B. Agent Roles. Each team will contain one of each of the following: Sneak, Emancipator, Mother Goose, Conductor, and Helmsman. Read agent descriptions while familiarizing students with their position within Tectron laboratories (Discovery Center classrooms). See map for specific position locations.

1. **The Sneak:** This is the only agent that has obtained access to the vault that protects the secret “machine.” Remember, laser motion detectors and infrared sensors guard it; but luckily, alpha chlorine team shorted part of the security system before disappearing. Satellites have detected a complete shutdown of sensory equipment for two-minute intervals. This shut down takes place at random intervals throughout the day. Each team will send a Sneak agent into the vault. Their job is to memorize the design of the machine - 2 parts at a time. After two minutes, Sneak agents will then describe each of the machine components (parts)

and their placement to the next member in their spy-op command team, the Emancipator.

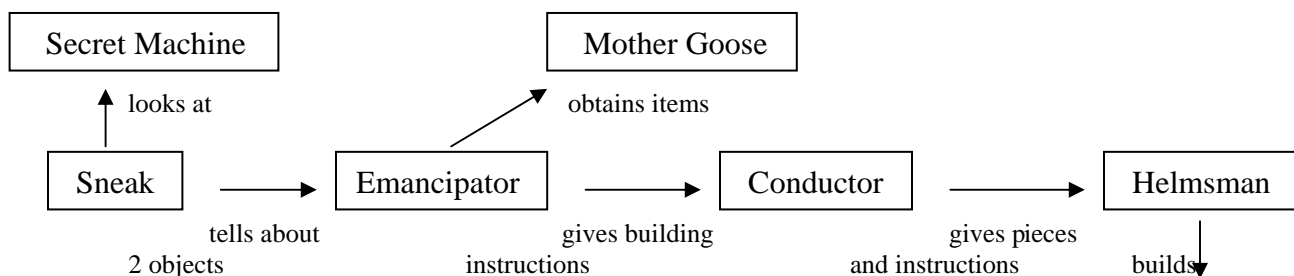
- The Emancipator:** This agent listens to the Sneak relay, quietly, the description and placement of both machine components. The Emancipator then goes to the “nest” to get the needed materials to build the machine from the Mother Goose of their particular spy-op team. After the Emancipator has received the 2 parts from Mother Goose, he/she will give the parts and a description of their placement and installment to the Conductor.
- Mother Goose:** This agent supervises the “nest.” They will listen to the Emancipator and provide them with whatever materials he/she describes. **The Mother Goose may not ask questions to clarify what the Emancipator wants, and must not allow him or her to see any of the “eggs” in the nest.** Each Mother Goose may have to exchange a product, but only if the Emancipator isn’t satisfied with the particular object and requests a different one.
- The Conductor:** This agent takes the two objects from the Emancipator, receives instructions on how to install the particular pieces in order to build the object. The Conductor then repeats those instructions to the Helmsman.
- The Helmsman:** This agent is the only person who can see the object being created. He or she receives the parts and building instructions from the Conductor. The Helmsman may ask clarifying questions. Once the Helmsman leaves the confines of Tectron laboratories he/she may not ask the Conductor questions about placements of each of the objects.

Assessment: For a team to be successful, each member must fulfill a specific role.

- Ask students to give examples of roles they play in real-life teams or groups.
- Ask each student to choose a new agent role that best suits his or her personality.
- Have the group predict the success of their operation if one agent did not fulfill their role.

IV. The Spy Operation

After the introduction, read the Mission Directive printed on the laminated sheet. Then, arrange the students so that each group of spies (Sneaks, Emancipators, Mother Geese, Conductors, and Helmsman) are at their specified locations (see map). Once everyone is situated, allow the Sneaks to get their first look at the machine. The Sneaks will then pass information about the description and placement of **TWO OBJECTS** to the Emancipator and so on... After this information has been passed, allow the Sneaks a second look and have them pass information about the description and placement of **TWO DIFFERENT OBJECTS** to the Emancipator and so on... until the machine is completed. The diagram below shows the chain of command and the role of each member of the team.



Monitor the pacing of the whole group. Make sure groups are not exchanging information. Remind them that this is not a competition between teams, but a challenge for each team to work together to do the best they can.

The activity can be confusing at first, so don't be afraid to stop and clarify questions or make additional suggestions/rules.

Assessment: Paying attention to details develops good observation skills

Assessment: To be a successful communicator, one must listen and share.

- Take a minute to observe each student during the activity. Are they participating fully? Are they sharing ideas and listening to others?
- Listen to the communication between the Conductors and Helmsmen. Do the helmsmen listen carefully to the Conductors' instructions? Do they ask any clarifying questions?

V. The Machine

Once all the parts of the machine have been described and passed down the line, bring out the original and compare it to each team's. Have each group summarize the building of their machine. Use assessment questions to better evaluate and debrief students.

Assessment: Patience and respect are needed when working in group situations.

- Carefully observe group interactions during the activity. Are teams or individuals becoming frustrated? If so, ask them why and see if a solution can be found.
- Ask groups to explain some of the advantages and disadvantages of working with a group.

VI. Conclusion

Effective communication is crucial to the success of group and interpersonal interaction. Sports, friendships, schoolwork, and family relationships all require effective communication. Good communication comes naturally to some, but for most of us it is a skill that must be practiced and worked on to improve.

By role-playing as agents in a spy operation, students will discover the importance of developing their communication and observation skills while working closely with others toward a common goal. Listening is equal in importance to sharing when working with others. Teamwork can be challenging and sometimes frustrating. However, students that learn to work well in group

situations are developing skills that will provide a lifetime of benefit throughout their years of schooling, careers, and personal relationships.

Like communication and teamwork skills, learning to be observant provides many benefits. The world is today is filled with more images and information than ever before. Being a good observer means choosing those things that are important and remembering them in detail. With practice, anyone can improve their powers of observation. Any task or activity can be enriched and done with greater efficiency if one can learn to focus on what is truly important.

VII. Optional Activities

A. Telephone. One possibility is to play a game of telephone, passing a sentence through all the students. If your group is particularly observant, have them enter the room where the machine is kept only one time. After that, the Sneaks must create the machine from memory. Another possibility is to limit the number of times that the Sneaks can see the machine. You may also want to limit clarification questions that an agent asks when receiving directions. (Especially by Mother Goose).

B. Story Writing. Write a short story describing your involvement in a spy operation.

VIII. Appendix

A. Equipment

- Secret Machine (completely assembled)
- 4 kits of unassembled machines
- 20 code name tags
- 1 laminated greeting paragraph
- 1 laminated mission directive
- One roll of masking tape
- Spy music
- Lesson plan

B. Glossary

Agent: A person acting or doing business for another

Communication: Exchange of opinions or information

Emancipate: Liberate, to set free.

Helmsman: One who guides a ship.

Observation: The gathering of information by noting facts or occurrences.

Sneak: One who acts in a furtive or shifty manner.

C. Activity and Safety Management. Monitor the progress of each group. Stop activity and clarify directions if necessary. Amend rules to suit the specific age and ability level of your group.

D. References/Resources

Kristen Alexander's Top Secret lesson plan

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Pocket Books. New York. 1974.

E. Data Sheets

1. Code name descriptions
2. Map of room set up and agent placement

1. Code Name Descriptions.

Code Name: MOOSE

No one is really sure where my code name moose came from, but it may have something to do with the fact that I once wrestled a moose in northern Canada, and won! I am very strong and as a small child would often carry 50 lb. rocks around the house for fun. Once, while working a job in Peru, I was almost caught while munching on my favorite food, lima beans. I promise to resist the cravings this time.

Position: SNEAK

Code Name: THE CLAW

My name is The Claw, but you can call me Claw for short, - I'll even answer to just plain "C." Part of my name is actually an acronym (each letter of my name stands for a word). This is what it means: T=totally, H=hip, E=emancipator. The rest is just something to make me look tough. When I'm not spying, you can usually find me listening to Barry Manilow records.

Position: Emancipator

Code Name: W.N.

The initials of my name stand for Willie Nelson, my favorite country singer. My trademark is my rattle snake skin cowboy boots. I like them so much I wear them all the time - even when I sleep at night. I like to sing, too, but all my friends say I sound like a rooster with laryngitis. Let me sing a few notes and you can tell me what you think.

Position: Mother Goose

Code Name: SKIPPER

When I signed up for this job, I thought it was only going to be a three-hour tour. I can sail any kind of boat (as long as it floats). I have to admit I am a little rusty, though, because I just spent almost 10 years on a deserted island.

Position: Conductor

Code Name: SOLAR

I was born wearin' shades and have been one cool cat ever since. Rumor has it that no one can stand a gaze from my shifty beady eyes. You'll never know. But the one thing that is for sure... the more things are heatin' up, the better I like it.

Position: Helmsman

Code Name: FRANKIE

You wanna know where-a-my name-a-comes from...You ask-a-my Italian brothers: Vinnie, Tony, Rocko, and Gino. My years with the mafia, you know, have taught me the rules of the game. And if I may be "frank", I'm the best there is and that's a fact. If you don't believe me ask my friends down at the spaghetti parlor.

Position: Sneak

Code Name: BOB

My name comes from my extensive training with the navy seals. It was there that I once spent 24 soggy hours floating in the ocean, with my arms and legs tied and wearing a red and white hat to mimic a buoy and sneak up on the enemy.

Position: Emancipator

Code Name: SCOOTER

My name comes from my favorite mode of transportation, a scooter. But it's no ordinary scooter. It's modified with an AM radio and 8-track tape player. I hold the record for the fastest trans-Lanesboro crossing - finishing in only 1.34562 hours. The only draw back of my super machine is the squeaky wheel that sometimes falls off.

Position: Mother Goose

Code Name: SPIDER

I was labeled 'Spider' right after the accident. I was scaling Mt. Everest when it happened - my equipment failed and left me hanging for dear life by just two fingers. In a heroic effort to save myself, I lost both of those fingers leaving me with only eight and like I always say, "eight is one better than seven."

Position: Conductor

Code Name: GONZO

Things aren't always what they seem. For example, you would think that with a code name like Gonzo I am crazy, like surfin' and snowboardin', and often jump off mountains, buildings, and planes. But actually, I like milk and cookies, reading poetry, knitting, and doing crossword puzzles. You'd be surprised how often those skills come in handy.

Position: Helmsman

Code Name: GLACIER

20 degrees below zero means nothing to the Glacier. Five feet of snow is kid stuff. To me, a warm Spring vacation means going to the North Pole and swimming with the polar bears. I like the cold so much in fact that I put ice cubes in my pockets to cool off. My favorite food... popsicles.

Position: Sneak

Code Name: OLD TIMER

I've been in this business longer than any other young wipper-snappers around. I may not look it, but I'm actually 273 years old. The only reason I look so young is that I take a bath in maple syrup every morning. It's healthy for the skin. The only problem is that the syrup gets stuck in my ears and I can't hear as well as I used to. When I was younger, I had to walk to school (even though there was no such thing as school) 10 miles uphill - to get home it was 12 miles uphill.

Position: Emancipator

Code Name: WHITE OUT

The Earthlings gave me this name after the 1973 alien abduction. They say there was a flash of bright white light and I was gone. It was seven years before I found my way back home. I don't remember much but Ma and Pa said I was different so I left and joined a government agency to investigate extraterrestrial life. In my head, I still sometimes see the white lights.

Position: Mother Goose

Code Name: SPARROW

I specialize in high angle operations. I have considerable climbing experience and have climbed the highest peaks in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Once while trekking in Rhode Island, I learned to whistle just like a song sparrow. People have been calling me sparrow ever since.

Position: Conductor

Code Name: MOUSE

My uncanny ability to impersonate any voice and thus disguise myself has led to my nickname. My most successful impersonation is the squeaky little voice of Elmer Fudd. I spend hour after grueling hour watching cartoons and hiding from my pet cat, Sylvester.

Position: Helmsman

Code Name: FRUIT CAKE

One look in the trunk of my '68 Chevy and you'll know how I got my name. Great Aunty Matilda sends me a fruitcake every Christmas. The extra weight helps on the slippery roads. They're also a great secret storage place for spy equipment, but I'm not supposed to talk about that.

Position: Sneak

Code Name: IGUANA

No one is safe from the Iguana. I am everywhere and nowhere. I can walk North, South, East, and West at the same time. When I am out in the daytime, it is night. When I am out in the night time, it is day. The Iguana knows everything, and everything knows the Iguana. You have probably met the Iguana before, but can't remember.

Position: Emancipator

Code Name: KANGAROO

No, I don't jump particularly well. I always wear clothes with lots of pockets that are full of all the things I might need during a spy operation. If you need a pocketknife, duct tape, string, matches, screwdriver, camera, magnifying glass, ear rings, make up kit, tooth brush, box of cereal, loaf of bread, extra socks, clean underwear, a chicken, or light bulb just ask.

Position: Mother Goose

Code Name: GARGOYLE

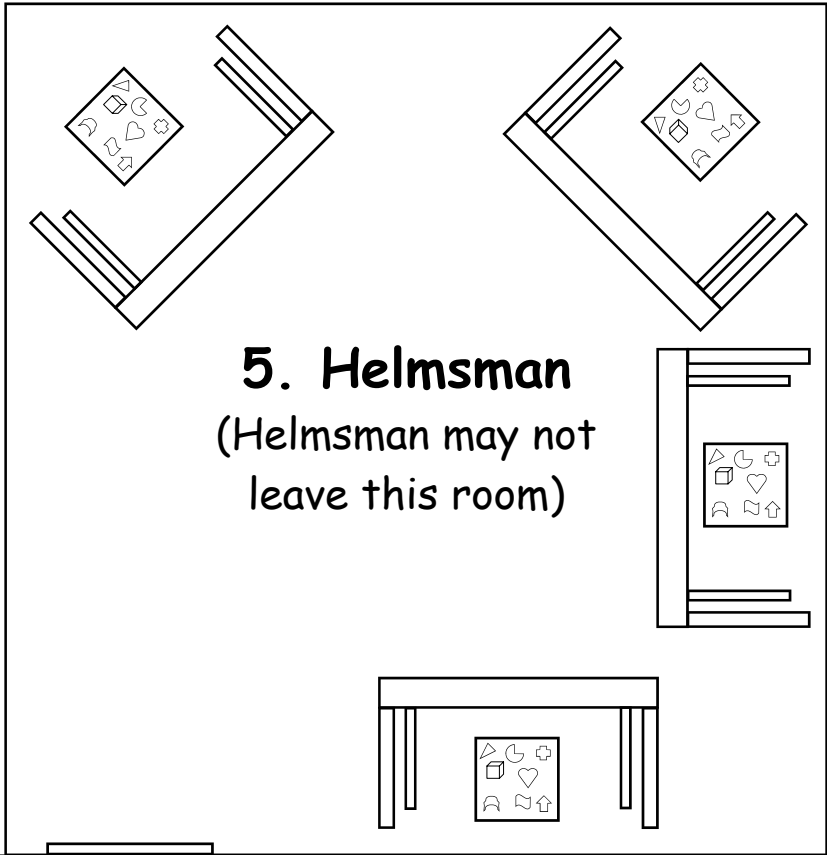
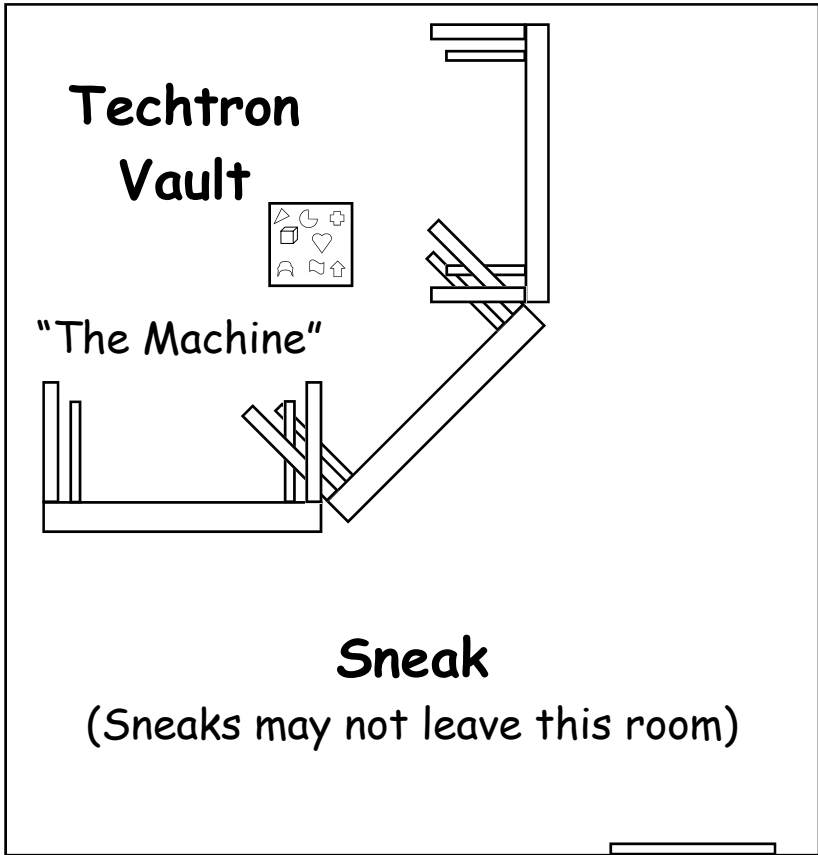
No one ever accused a gargoyle of being attractive, but I am. Not only am I striking to look at but I also serve as a lookout for most remote spy operations. My name comes from the fact that I can blend in with stone buildings and skyscrapers. My camouflage is so good in fact that I was pooped on 36 times by roosting pigeons.

Position: Conductor

Code Name: GREENBEAN

I am not skinny and I don't make funny noises. I once captured a proto-type lawn mower by disguising myself as a tomato plant. I actually like vegetables, the more fresh the better. Bring on the cauliflower, spinach, broccoli, brussel sprouts, and lima beans. Don't ever accuse me of not getting my daily supply of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Position: Helmsman



3. Mother Goose
(must remain seated)



2. Emancipator
(Emancipator may not cross this line) →

4. Conductor
(Conductors may not leave this area or enter room)