

Double Description Exercise

The following exercise illustrates the importance of carefully considering the reader's point of view, knowledge level, and probable assumptions. The exercise confirms that communication is a two-way street, and that senders must help their receivers decode those senders' messages.

Structure of the Exercise

Two-person teams designate a member A and member B. Member A analyzes a geometric drawing (labeled "Figure A") and writes a description of that figure, so that member B will be able to draw an exact replica of Figure A. Simultaneously, member B analyzes and describes a different drawing (labeled "Figure B"), so that member A will be able to draw an exact replica of Figure B. (Sample geometric figures appear on the following pages. Use "Page Layout" view.)

The results are evaluated by superimposing the drawn figures on top of the original geometric drawings and holding the two drawings up to the light. Each drawn figure is evaluated on the basis of:

- ◆ the shapes of the geometric drawing's components
- ◆ the sizes of each part of the drawing
- ◆ the juxtapositions of component elements
- ◆ the exact placement of the entire drawing on the page

Each participant's score in the exercise is the sum of the evaluations of the **two drawings**, Figure A and Figure B. In each half of the exercise, then, the receiver's interpretation is critical to the overall success of the communication. (See the scoring form, page 6.)

Following the description and drawing parts of the exercise, participants are debriefed in two stages. First, all participants are asked:

Did you:

1. first analyse the figure? then, consider the reader's point of view?
2. decide on your info? or strategy? then, make a brief outline?
3. start with an overall picture or general view? (or strategy?) and provide reference points?
4. develop the description (or instructions) in discrete sections?
5. provide the right amount of detail? provide the right transitions?
6. use the right vocabulary level?
7. finish with a confirming view?

Then, the two-person teams together discuss the sending/receiving process, for each of Figure A and Figure B, in turn.

Senders indicate:

1. the overall strategy the sender used to describe the figure
2. whether the sender modified the description to suit what he/she knows about the receiver
3. which parts of the description the sender found most difficult to describe

Receivers indicate:

1. whether the overall sending strategy made sense to the receiver
2. whether the receiver had enough information
3. which parts of the description the receiver found most difficult to understand

NOTE: figures with the complexity of those on the following pages require about 25 minutes to describe and about 15 minutes to decipher and draw.

Figure A. Team 1

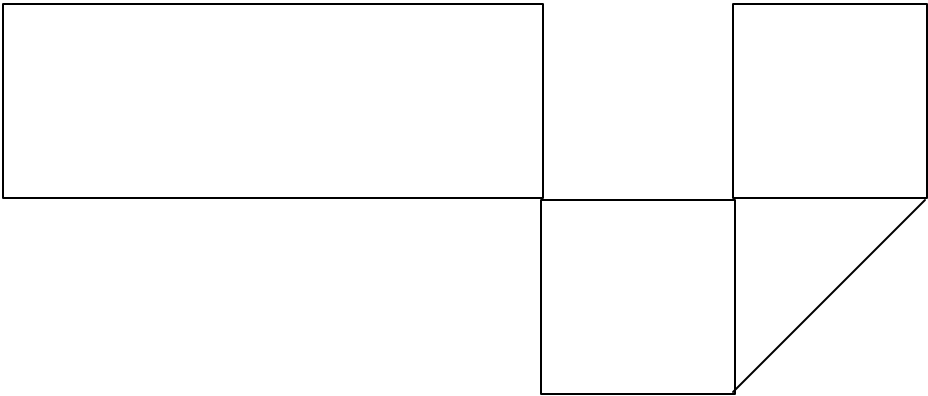
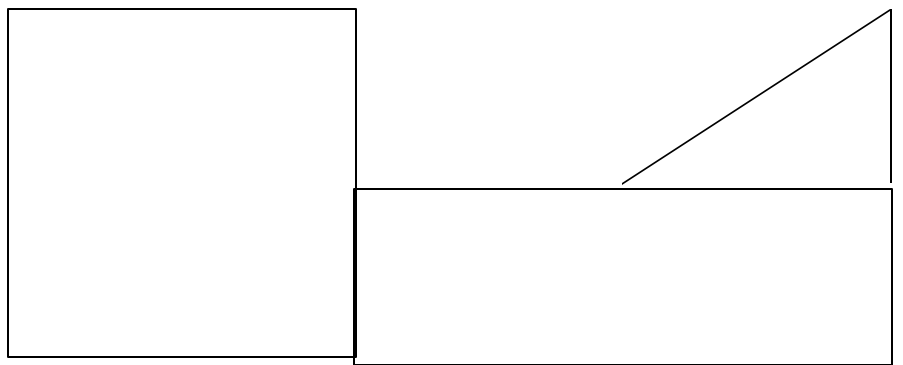


Figure B. Team 1



DESCRIPTION

**Team #
Name**

Figure

Partner's name

Team #
Name

Figure

DRAWING

Partner's name

DOUBLE DESCRIPTION EXERCISE

Team Members	Figure A	Figure B	Total
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			