

The King's Game

FACTSHEET

A short, powerful, interactive team activity that explores strategy, risk, trust and cooperation!

 **1 hour + debrief** (for each game - 2 versions included)

 **4-24** (four teams of 1-6 per team)

 **For staff at any level**

 **No computer program**

 **495** (hard & digital copy) or **445** (digital copy) ex VAT



Learning objectives

- information is power
- trust is difficult to sustain
- competition can damage everyone
- cooperation can be a better alternative
- fear changes behaviour

About the activity

The King's Game is short and powerful. It is for four teams. Teams represent the prisoners of an evil king who has forced them to play this game. The rules are simple but the team with the lowest score will lose their heads - so there's a lot to play for!

Each team has a set of coloured counters: 2 red, 2 blue, 1 green and 1 yellow. There are six rounds and in each round a team places ONE of their counters on a Game Board. When all four counters are down, teams score the outcome using a Payoff Chart that lists all possible configurations. For example, if four red counters are played each team scores 50 points. But if there are three reds and one other colour, the score is -20 for each team that played red and +40 for the outlier. Everyone can see what has been played and knows what counters are left in each team so there is complete transparency. What is the best strategy each round? Obviously playing a blue when three reds are down gains that team an advantage, but it has removed trust. In future rounds this may damage the round winner this time. Of course, the fourth player has an advantage - they can see what the other teams have played. To counter this a different team starts each round.

The game is played twice. The first time there is no communication. Teams familiarise themselves with the play, the rules and the scoring. In the second run, teams can communicate. What difference does this make? Are agreements made and kept? And if not, what does that mean for future relations?

Have teams learned enough from the first play to outwit the King and escape their doom? Cooperation is key - but difficult to achieve!

This game also comes with a variant called **Business First!** - play is the same but this time players represent competing companies and the counters have meaning (one colour increases prices; another increases marketing spend etc). This variant is optional but together the games show the difference between individual and business behaviour and the psychology behind both.

Pack contents

- Trainer's Notes
- Trainer's PowerPoint
- Game Board
- Team Briefs
- Score Sheet
- Payoff Chart
- Handout
- Business First! option (PDFs)
- Sets of Counters x4 (each set: 2xRed, 2xBlue, 1xGreen, 1xYellow)

This activity is supplied as a hard copy pack and the digital files are supplied via the Northgate Trainerhub (or you can purchase the digital files only and source the counters yourself).

Five-year licence

This Northgate training activity comes with a five-year licence for repeat use with up to 24 participants. To use with larger groups or for multiple site licences please contact Northgate for a quote.

Ideally suited to

Starting off a training session. It explores how people tick, how they communicate (or don't), how competitive they are and how willing to renege on others when it suits their own objective.

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Customer reviews

” We've got tonnes of Northgate's activities to support our training. Each activity comes with a complete set of instructions and resources for the (many) subjects. We certainly can't create anything like that and people *enjoy* them very much. Northgate activities help us a lot to *bring the theory to life*.

Bruce Au, Senior People Development Manager, A.S. Watson Group

” Northgate activities are great because they deliver effective learning outcomes and they are easy to facilitate. But above all, they are *engaging and fun!*

John Croper, Co-Founder, Pyramid Learning

” Northgate activities are *fantastic!* They're really supporting our talent programmes that we're running.

Holly Drew, Learning & Development Partner, Haven



Trainer's role (full guidance supplied in Trainer's Notes)

- Briefly introduce the activity by explaining the mechanics of the game, including walking through the Payoff Chart and scoring outcomes, with the whole group so they understand the different options, then divide the group into four teams.
- Issue each team with a Team Brief, Payoff Chart and Score Sheet.
- Allow teams 15 minutes to become familiar with all the materials and to discuss and practise some scoring. They can also discuss potential strategies.
- Announce the start of the game - round 1.
- Team 1 puts down their counter, followed by Team 2 and so on. When all four counters are down the outcome is scored. Check team scores!
- Teams now have a few minutes to reflect on the previous, and plan for the next round. Continue for six rounds, rotating the team that leads.
- After round 6 list scores and ask teams to prepare for a second play. This time they can communicate before playing their counters.
- At the end lead a debrief of the whole session and bring out the learning points.

Northgate says...

In *The King's Game* the objective is to avoid the lowest score at all costs, so competition is usually inevitable. Or is it? If all scores are equal, there is no lowest score and no heads lost! But this is not easy to coordinate and the urge to defect and save oneself at the expense of others can be overwhelming. But what of team cohesion?

Ordering is easy!

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Delivery

Digital files are accessed via our online Trainerhub and the hard copy pack is sent via courier:

£15 UK (next working day)

£29 Europe (1-3 working days)

£39 International (1-5 working days)

Our guarantee

If you are not 100% happy we offer a 30-day no-quibble returns service on unused goods.



Northgate customers

