



The Maze: A Fun Teamwork Challenge

The Maze is an engaging team-building game that encourages silent communication and cooperation. Players navigate a large maze, one by one, to discover a hidden path chosen by the game master. The actual maze is made up of 25 one-foot squares (forming a 5-foot square) for younger students or 36 one-foot squares (forming a 6-foot square) for older students. A parallel strategy for the game master is to encourage students to become aware of their internal experiences while playing the game. What emotions arose? Did they use the Heart-Focused Breathing Technique to quell upset emotions? For the game master, what social dynamics between students were observed?

Learning Objectives

- Students will develop teamwork and communication skills through non-verbal cues.
- Students will practice self-awareness by identifying and managing emotions during the game.

AGES

7-18

TIME

20 minutes or longer (not including setup) depending on difficulty and number of students participating

PLAYERS

4 or more students and 1 adult/teen game master

LOCATION

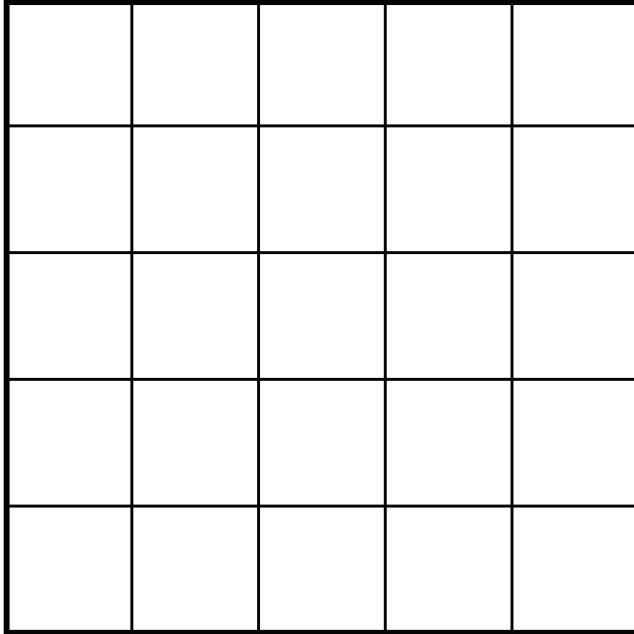
Indoors (a large space) or outdoors (on grass or paved surface)

MATERIALS

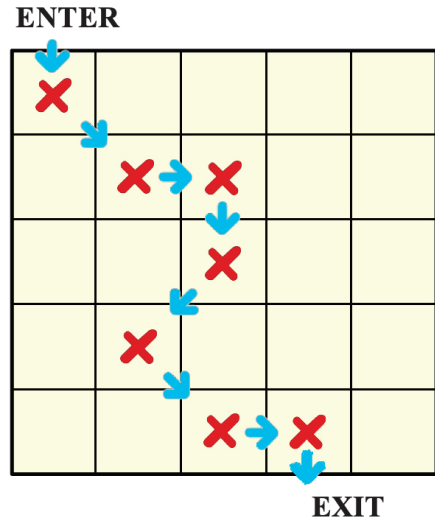
- Masking tape is the most commonly used material to create a maze. Some use a tarp with the tape on top for repeated use.

- For indoor use—100' roll of masking tape
- For pavement—White chalk or the option of using white spray paint to make permanent lines
- For use on grass surfaces—100' coil of rope, hammer, 4 metal or wooden stakes, a knife to cut the rope, and 50 twist ties (commonly used to tie plastic trash bags together). This option is the most difficult to make but can be used over and over again
- Copies of maze diagrams (for game master) to write down a secret pathway through a maze
- Tape measure—To measure length of the masking tape
- Optional: Bell or noisemaker for incorrect squares

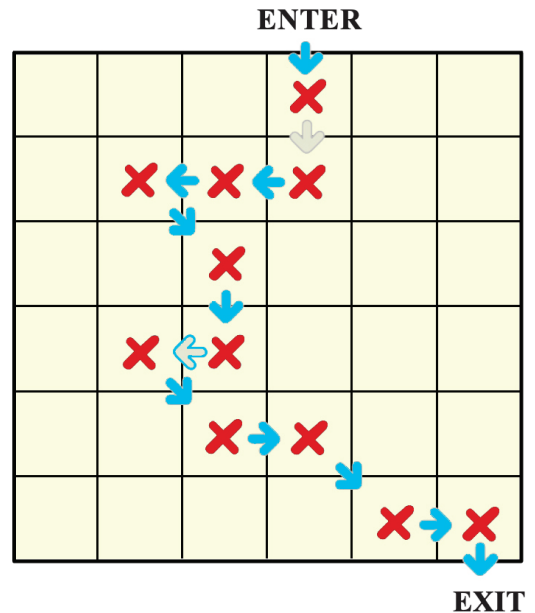
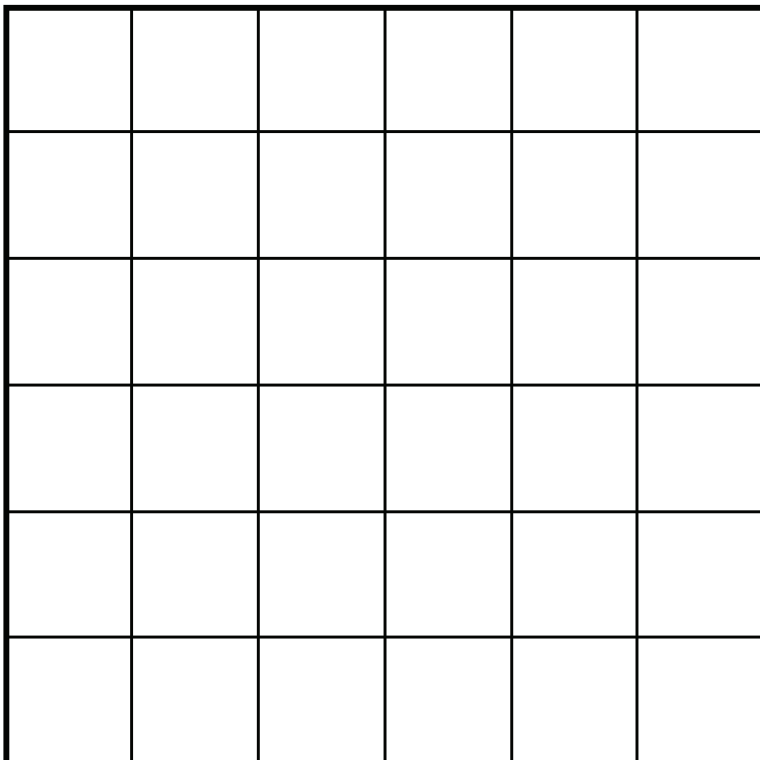
Maze Diagram for Gamemaster to Create Secret Maze Patterns



Two Examples of Maze Patterns that the Gamemaster Can Model or Improve



A Sample Pattern Using 5 Rows & Columns



A More Challenging Pattern Using 6 Rows & Columns

Instructions

1. Create the Maze:

- a. Use masking tape, chalk, or rope to create a 5-foot x 5-foot grid of 1-foot squares. Measure, cut and place down on the floor masking tape lengths measuring 5 feet long with a total of 12 strips, crisscrossing to create 1-foot squares.
- b. Consider a 6-foot x 6-foot grid for older players (12+). Measure, cut and place down on the floor masking tape lengths measuring 6 feet long with a total of 14 strips.
- c. See the “Maze Diagrams” for reference.

2. Prepare the Game:

- a. The game master creates a hidden path through the maze, marking it on a separate piece of paper. Adjust difficulty based on player age and number of players.
- b. Decide on a starting and ending point for the hidden path.
- c. Clarify instructions to students in advance.

Game play

1. Explain the Game:

- a. Briefly explain the goal: navigate the hidden path silently, using teamwork and non-verbal communication. Suggest that players monitor their internal emotional states when playing the game. Introduce Heart-Focused Breathing as a self-regulation tool to use if emotions run too high.
- b. Players take turns entering the maze one by one.
- c. Talking is not allowed, but non-verbal communication (pointing, gesturing) is encouraged.
- d. Stepping on an incorrect square results in the player returning to the end of the line. The game master will either say “yes” or “no,” depending on if the stepped-on square is correct. A yes answer allows a player to continue to play on to next correct square.
- e. The game restarts if any player talks.
- f. The goal is for all players to get through the maze.
- g. When one player successfully exits the maze, up to 3 players can enter at once to speed up completion of the game.
- h. Mention that there will be a brief discussion afterward for players to share their experiences.

2. Start the Game:

- a. Announce the start of the silent game. The game master will be at the finish line of the maze while students are lined up around the enter line.

3. Navigate the Maze:

- a. Players take turns entering the maze and attempting to navigate the path.
- b. The game master provides a simple “yes” or “no” response to indicate if a square is on the correct path. (If using a bell: one ring for Yes and 2 rings for No.) A yes answer allows a player to continue to play on to next correct square.

c. Players who complete the maze can silently guide others.

4. Debrief:

a. After completing the maze, discuss the experience as a group:

- Challenges faced, range of emotions experienced
- Use of Heart-Focused Breathing
- Group dynamics (leadership, participation)
- Effectiveness of non-verbal communication
- Ideas for future non-verbal communication strategies

Heart-Focused Breathing™ Technique

The Heart-Focused Breathing Technique is a simple-to-use, energy-saving, self-regulation strategy designed to reduce the intensity of a stress reaction and to establish a calm, but alert state. It helps you to take a “time-out” where you can step back and neutralize depleting emotions.

Combining the simple act of focusing on the heart area with a slightly deeper level of breathing helps draw energy away from distressed thoughts and feelings by interrupting your body’s mechanical stress response.

We can gain benefit from conscious breathing if we use it to help us shift into and sustain a more balanced state, understanding that breathing is only the start of what we call the coherence-building process.

Step

Focus your attention in the area of the heart. Imagine your breath is flowing in and out of your heart or chest area, breathing a little slower and deeper than usual. Find an easy rhythm that’s comfortable.

Heart-Focused Breathing Applications

- Neutralize emotional reactions in the moment
- Reduce the impact of stress
- Plug energy drains

Once you are familiar with practicing the step above, try the **Quick Step**:

- Heart-focused breathing