

## GAME 2: TOWER POWER

This problem-solving game lets kids use their knowledge in a fun and creative way as they construct a free-standing tower or the tiniest cube possible (see Variation 1, page 2). This activity also depends on everyone working together. It's deceptively simple and lots of fun.

### Ages

6 and up

### Materials Required

- construction paper
- low-tack masking tape
- measuring tape
- scissors (optional)



Watch the "Tower Power" **Think Party** video clip on the [www.talkplaythink.com](http://www.talkplaythink.com) homepage. NOTE: Watch the clip alone, as a solution is shown in the clip. Don't share solutions with your kids ahead of time. Let them figure it out!

### How to Play

1. Divide the children into two or more teams and distribute 40 - 60 sheets of paper, a roll of masking tape, and scissors (at your discretion) to each team. Four members on a team is ideal.
2. Explain that each team will create the highest free-standing structure possible in 15 - 20 minutes. Teams can use any

shape, any quantity of paper or masking tape they wish, and they can bend or tear the paper in any way. The only rule is that the tower must be unsupported, and higher than the other tower, in order to win.

3. Explain that you will call out a mid-point warning and a 1-minute warning.
4. At the end of the activity, you will evaluate each tower. The team with the tallest tower will be declared the winner.

### Tips

- This activity demands intelligent teamwork. Remind everyone that fighting over what to do will waste precious minutes.
- Hand out more paper as needed.
- Walk around and offer help if anyone is getting stuck. Remind everyone to consider size, shape, stability, balance, and adhesion as they build. They also need to remain flexible: some ideas that seem fine in theory need adaptation in 3-D. Here are some good prompts:
  - ☺ How do you think you'd get the most height fast?
  - ☺ What doesn't fall over?
  - ☺ How could you stop it from sinking in the middle?
  - ☺ How can each team member help? (Hint: One person can be in charge of tape.)

### Scoring

The team with the highest freestanding tower wins. If the towers look close, get out the tape

measure and measure them!

### **Variation 1**

For Round 2, ask the kids to create the smallest cube possible in the shortest time possible. Whoever finishes first must shout “Cube!”

### **Materials Required**

- construction paper
- masking tape
- scissors
- tweezers

Scissors are required for this activity, so make sure your group knows how to use them safely. The kids will probably ask why you distributed tweezers. Simply smile and look mysterious. Once the teams have surveyed their supplies, remind them that they can use any quantity of paper or tape. The only rule is that the finished object must be a cube with 6 faces and 8 corners.

### **Variation 1 Tips**

This variation is a bit devious. A tiny cube can be made by omitting the paper entirely and cutting the smallest possible pieces of masking tape. Since a tiny piece of tape will stand up when joined to the edge of a piece of tape laid adhesive-side up, you can put a tape-only version together in under a minute—especially if you have a partner with tweezers to help you steady the pieces.

Take another walk-about and offer help if anyone is getting stuck. Ask

some open-ended questions without offering direction: “Wow, that’s small. I wonder what you could do to make it even smaller!”

### **Debriefing**

At the end of the process, help your crew remove the tape from any pieces of construction paper that are salvageable and store them for future use. Mangled sheets can be cut up for other projects or recycled. While you’re doing that, shoot the breeze! Encourage the kids to talk about how they built their towers and what they might do differently next time. The great thing about this game is that you can play it again and again, and it’s not about winning or losing. My daughter (cool with being on the LOSING team in the video) has already been dreaming up ideas for her next birthday party!

### **Talk to Us!**

There are many different solutions to Tower Power. In fact, when we first filmed this game in action at my daughter’s birthday party in 2007, I never expected to see the winning solution unfold. At [www.talkplaythink.com](http://www.talkplaythink.com) we’d love to hear about your experiences with this delightful game. Please contact us at our website to send us your stories, pictures, or videos.