

## **Game Theory for Elementary School**

BRAVE games, including JAMs, are a Game Theory application called “repeated games” that explore the role trust plays in conflict and cooperation.

With JAMs, students use skilled reading to layer viewpoints, detect bias, diagnose and transform working dilemmas. Groups of 4 can use these 30-minute activities as prequels or sequels to BRAVE board game learning, or as stand-alone fun.

Each booklet in this series presents a unique schema designed to support students as they play through its correlating JAM.

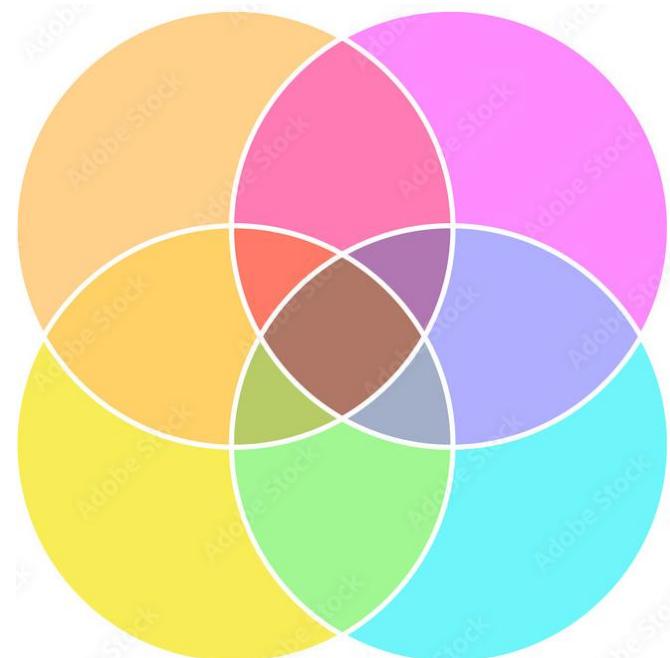
**Explore one schema, or try them all:**

Game Theory  
context  
perspective  
change  
conflict  
rights  
cooperation  
connection  
trust  
creativity

Taken together, students build tools needed to navigate any social studies class with discerning minds.



# **Cooperation**



## **For parents & teachers: Welcome!**

BRAVE games, including JAMs, are consistent with Science of Reading instructional guidelines. Tightly-scoped, this inquiry-led method puts knowledge in the foreground to cut across a range of K4-5 standards, meeting all learners where they are to get everyone in the game!

### **We take learning seriously. And for fun.**

JAMs break from typical programming insofar as they're consistent with cognitive science. First, human connection sparks intrinsic motivation, incentivizing skilled reading. The beauty of this method is that players *want* to grapple with embedded vocabulary, engage in healthy discussion, and solve group problems. It's fun. This means students embrace the thrill of collaborating, reasoning with facts, sequencing, and testing truths.

Writing extensions provide explicit instructions to support students as they process, integrate, and store new knowledge. This last step is key because, according to Cognitive Load Theory, it effectively clears one's working memory, laying a foundation of knowledge to excel in equivalent classes at higher grades.

Messy? R&D revealed students thrive with this inquiry-led approach because it's intriguing. At that rate, they're positioned to soar beyond our wildest dreams.

## **VOCABULARY**



**active listening** observing a speaker's verbal and non-verbal messages, asking open-ended questions, limiting interruptions, reserving judgment, paraphrasing and/or reflecting to foster mutual understanding

**adaptable** able to adjust readily to different conditions

**analyze** examining every angle of problem(s); considering dis/advantages of every course of action

**authority** the power to determine, adjudicate, or settle issues or disputes

**coerce** to compel by force, intimidation

**collaborate** to work together; to cooperate with an enemy nation, especially with an occupying force

**cooperate** to work or act together or jointly for a common purpose or benefit

**deliberate** carefully weighed or considered

**diplomacy** managing negotiations skillfully so that there is little or no ill will from any side; tact

**negotiate** to deal or bargain with other(s), if preparing a treaty or contract or in preliminaries to a business deal

**tact** a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense; skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situation

## 4. SUMMARY

Cooperation, or getting along with others, is an art! Whether in your home, at school, at work, or in your larger community, learning how to work together toward a common purpose demands a unique skill set.

*But it's not easy.*

First, connection depends on a highly nuanced skills blend based on at least five or more senses. For example, active listening is a verbal and non-verbal dance between speaker and listener, including speaking in a way that others can hear what you're saying. Meanwhile, the listener is tasked with listening in a way that increases their understanding. This proves they're trustworthy. In other words, connection is a two-way street that requires everyone work to keep the lines of communication open.

All systems running, a team is positioned to "see" other viewpoints that contribute to the whole story. Whether or not a viewpoint is your truth or not, the benefit of establishing context and appreciating perspective means everyone is equipped to cooperate when it comes to problem solving. If so, we're more likely to imagine and create meaningful and sustainable solutions. But *that* relies on an entirely different skill, including creativity...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Nobody Goes Alone 
2. Did You Just Say What I Think I Heard  
You Say? 
3. I Think We Can Make This Work 
4. Summary 

## VOCABULARY

diplomacy:  
proper use of power &  
authority for the sake of  
prosperity & freedom

*What are you waiting for?! Dig in!*

## 1. NOBODY GOES ALONE

Humans are designed to thrive in community, but this depends on healthy communication, or skills based on personal and group awareness. To regulate awareness, we rely on our five senses—touch, taste, smell, sound, and sight. Except often we rely on a combination of senses to establish fuller understanding.

When I was young my mom planted many kinds of flowers and shrubs around our yard. She even built a rock waterfall into the shady hill beside our porch. As a child, I loved playing in our yard; it was magical.

Much later I realized how much effort it took my mom to maintain our yard. When I said *thank you*, my mom smiled and said, "I did that so that if I wasn't home to tell you I love you, you'd still know." In other words, she wanted me to feel her love even when we're apart. Ah, a sixth sense: love.

Regarding sound, **active listening** occurs when a listener uses eye contact to pick up subtle cues such as facial expressions and body language. These movements add meaning and depth to the speaker's words and delivery. Plus, eye contact builds trust, encouraging deeper levels of

verbal and non-verbal communication. Meanwhile, an active listener refrains from interrupting and aims to ask clarifying questions when it's their turn to speak.

### I THINK WE CAN MAKE THIS WORK GUIDING QUESTIONS CLASS DISCUSSION

1. RE-TELL List tactics that a diplomat exercises to help others feel safe and thereby positioning everyone to communicate and cooperate. Do you have to be a diplomat to conduct diplomacy?
2. REVIEW How does diplomacy, versus coercion, help us remain flexible, and therefore better positioned to achieve our goals.
3. REASON Consider this idiom: *If your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.* What does this mean?

### 3.I THINK WE CAN MAKE THIS WORK



Diplomats are people who represent their country while visiting another country, however; being diplomatic isn't reserved for diplomats. **Diplomacy** refers to a set of skills that range from active listening to analyzing and negotiating—in good times and hard times.

To start, a good diplomat demonstrates **tact**, they know how to "read a room." They know exactly what to say or do to put everyone at ease. If so, diplomats know how to connect with people, how to keep the lines of communication open and exchange ideas needed to **collaborate**, work toward shared goals to solve dilemmas. If not, one or both sides might try to **coerce**, use compelling force (violence) or intimidation to achieve their goal. The problem with this scenario is that it reduces both sides' capacity to remain **adaptable**, the ability to adjust to different and changing conditions. In other words, cooperation demands flexibility. Because if you can bend, you won't break.

After diplomats **analyze**, or examine every angle of every viewpoint, they're poised to find common ground. If so,

they're prepared to move to the next stage, **negotiating** solutions or making bargains that transform problems into solutions. In that way, a dilemma becomes a bridge.

### NOBODY GOES ALONE

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS CLASS DISCUSSION

1. RE-TELL List the five senses. Do you have a favorite one? Can you think of positive memory that links your sense of smell to sight? What about smelling, seeing and tasting...cookies? Can you think of a positive memory that links sound to sight?
2. REVIEW What does the expression, "If you can bend, you won't break," mean to you?
3. REASON Do you ever pretend to listen? How do you do it? Why do you do it? Can you infer what you gain from fake listening? Can you infer what lose when you fake listen?

This sounds easy, but in truth cooperating is difficult whether you're in a stressful situation or not, simply because everyone has their own perspective, their own way of seeing and doing things, and different expectations and goals.

## 2. DID YOU JUST SAY WHAT I THINK I HEARD YOU SAY?

The goal of active listening is to support connections, to make sure we're all on the same page, so to speak. If so, we're more likely to share our hopes, establish common goals and work together to achieve something greater than if we were working alone.



When a speaker and listener(s) establish a connection, they begin investing in each other's **authority**, the belief that the person and their thoughts are valuable. If so, this invites them to **deliberate**, weigh words and ideas presented through their interaction. *The result?* A learning partnership through which everyone shares information to build context and understanding.

At that rate, it's feasible for them to **collaborate**, work together to accomplish any task! Whether a group of people are frenemies and the issue they're trying to settle is painful or awkward, or they're friends and their working on a wonderful project and need to keep the lines of communication open so everyone can **cooperate**.

## DID YOU JUST SAY WHAT I THINK I HEARD YOU SAY? GUIDING QUESTIONS CLASS DISCUSSION

1. **RE-TELL** Explain how connection leads to cooperation.
2. **REVIEW** List strategies for doing your part to foster cooperation. Imagine the benefits of cooperation (think of JAM 4 and change, or JAM 5 and conflict)
3. **REASON** Discomfort and disappointment happen all the time, so nobody should feel ashamed by it. What advice can you give yourself when you feel like you're about to stop communicating even though you know that ultimately it would make your situation better?

