

# The Perfect City



The Perfect City quest teaches children to detect and overcome manipulative behaviours by questioning information and intentions and fact-checking. It introduces concepts of misinformation, influencing and manipulation and assists children in discerning between them, noting their positive and negative effects. In parallel, children learn about civil engineering, geometry, circular economy and sustainability (food, transport, materials, energy).

**Printable resources attached:** Powerful words List, Persuasive Phrases

**Additional material needed:** Paper and pencils

**Total duration:** 50-60 min

## Territory 4 - The Fantastic Factory



### Learning objectives



Acquiring the skills to discuss and question moral choices



Understanding how the language works



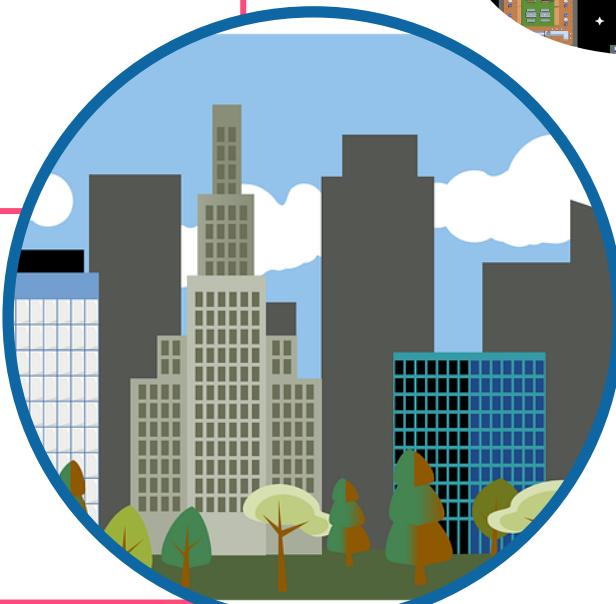
Working on the expression, identification, putting into words and discussion of emotions and feelings



Understanding and expressing myself orally



Acquiring a sense of the rules of living together



### Linked SDGs



### Game modalities

10 - 12 years old

At home

In the classroom

Adult support

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## Pedagogical interest and topics targeted

**Introducing leadership skills: seeing both sides of persuasion and influencing:** Within the Perfect City quest children will understand that influencing and persuading are both leadership skills which can increase productivity in a team. The ability to influence others' actions and opinions is a valuable asset. Should the children feel content with the results of their activity and feel motivated, it might mean the adults influenced them positively. Yet, children might not feel quite happy about the influence they received during the game which in fact, is the main idea behind the game. This way they will feel and understand the effects of manipulation - or when someone has malicious or selfish intentions behind their efforts to influence others.

**Manipulation and disinformation:** When persuasion becomes distorted, it turns into manipulation. Manipulation is at the heart of this game. It will push the limits of letting children feel deceived and exploited.

However, the difference between persuasion and manipulation could sometimes be vague and mostly depends on the judgement, and the feelings of the opposite side. In any case, it is important to teach children that some (groups of) people might have hidden motives and try to push their own agendas. It is useful to be able to detect when persuasion turns into manipulation (peer pressure, relationship violence, sexual molestation) and how to handle it. Equipping children with critical thinking skills can help them to detect manipulation/disinformation (both online and offline).

**Logical thinking to solve problems:** The activities or games that promote critical thinking could help children act independently and make their own decisions based on individual reflection. By fostering curiosity, children will be taught to ask different questions (where information comes from, is it important or why is it important etc.) and find solutions, developing their analytical and logical skills.

Enhancing children's knowledge about misinformation and their critical thinking can reduce the imbalance of power, promote equal opportunities, increase inclusion and reduce social inequalities.

**Basic concepts of city building:** When interpreting the perfect city and by implementing an adult's hidden agenda, children could discover some interdependencies in the city infrastructure - food, clothes, transport provision and consumption, resources management, civil engineering, machine / digitally managed systems, etc.

**Open discussion on the topic: What was the most obvious problem during the game and what have they done/could be done to solve it?** Did you feel pressure and fall into a trap or it was ok to be led by an adult? How did you decide what path to take? What was the interaction like? Would you act/produce something different without an adult's intervention or do you believe it is still the perfect city? How could you stop manipulation?





## Game rules

### Game narrative:

Participants are divided into small groups and each group is joined by an adult. If the activity is performed in the class of one teacher, the teacher could take the role in each group having different agendas for the different groups.

Teams have the task to build "the perfect city", by drawing it on paper. The adult in each group has a hidden agenda to manipulate the results to reach their own specific goal. At the end of the game, the groups show their city to the other groups and explain why their city is the perfect city.

### Game rules:

- Adults are not allowed to share their own agendas openly.
- Adults use different techniques to manipulate the group toward designing the city they want.
- Adults can ask questions and raise some issues/concerns or offer biased consultations to reach their aims.
- In the end, the groups will be informed that they have been manipulated by adults in each group.

### Role of the teacher and game organisation:

- Explains the game
- Observes, advises, mitigates
- Carries out discussion afterwards





## Game rounds

### Round 1

Participants are divided into small groups (3-6 people), and each group is joined by an adult (or the teacher visits each group).

They have to build "the perfect city", by drawing it on paper. But what children don't know, is that the adult in each group plans and will try to manipulate them into building the city the adult wants. Each adult has a different, very specific aim for the city e.g.: a city great for dogs, a city with lots of skyscrapers, a city with no cars, etc. If the team's ideas coincide with the hidden agenda of the adult, they need to change it ad hoc. To avoid this occasion, it is advisable to have a complicated agenda in mind, for example, to create "a city with skyscrapers where no public transport exists, and it is designed just for cars driving on the roads (no flying cars)". The adults will use the leading questions and persuasive language to make the children follow their agenda. Some examples of the possible questions and phrases are provided in the "Game Materials" section.

After 20 Minutes, the groups show their city to the other groups and explain, why their city is the perfect city.

Once all the groups complete this task, the teacher carries out an open discussion with the involvement of all participants about their findings and discusses the possible ways to address the challenges faced during the game. Secret agendas of adults are then disclosed to children. Their reaction is traced. The teacher encourages and mediates sharing of feelings about this deception. Misinformation is discussed and questioning information is introduced for further reflection. Other examples of misinformation may be given.

### Round 2

Since after the first round of the game, its rules will be obvious to everyone, the second round will take a different format. The teacher divides the children into groups of 4-5 and distributes different roles (for example, an architect, a dog owner, a taxi driver, a transport manager etc.) using cards or slips of paper to every kid within the group. The cards should be kept secretive. No one should know who is who. One of them will receive the role of a saboteur. Each role will also have a different mission to achieve in outlining a perfect city. These could be the missions stated in Round 1. The participants (citizens), other than the saboteur, win if they manage to complete their missions during the game, and the saboteur wins if he/she manages to manipulate their peers without their knowledge to achieve his goal.



# Going further



## Topic 1 - Seeing both sides of Persuasion and Influencing

Persuasion is a key part of influencing which is a great leadership skill. Yet, leaders can influence others both positively and negatively. To approach these concepts, you can use the following resources:

- Using Voice to Persuade: Persuasive Writing Prompts for Grades 4-6: <https://teacherblog.evan-moor.com/2019/04/16/using-voice-to-persuade-persuasive-writing-prompts-for-grades-4-6>
- The Power of Influence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0SXuGe8Er0>
- -The Game of Persuasion: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/game-persuasion>
- -How influence works: <https://www.theelementsofpower.com/index.cfm/how-influence-works/>



## Topic 2 - Manipulation and disinformation

- There are a lot of mindful arts and channels of manipulation and it changes as time goes by. To approach this issue, you can consult the following resources:
- Psychological Manipulation: <https://getalifegetalifecoach.wordpress.com/2015/08/03/psychological-manipulation/amp>
- Digital misinformation/disinformation and children: <https://www.unicef.org/globalinsight/stories/digital-misinformation-disinformation-and-children>
- Dealing with Peer Pressure: <https://www.sps186.org/downloads/basic/468515/Dealing%20with%20Peer%20Pressure.pdf>
- Critical thinking for teachers and students: <https://www.innovativeteachingideas.com/blog/critical-thinking-for-teachers-and-students>



## Topic 3 - Logical thinking to solve problems

Logical thinking is an essential problem-solving skill that can teach children analyse the situations and find rational solutions. See **The Peace Magic Grid, The Plastic Continent** challenge from the Unplugged game or consult the following resources:

- How to Teach Critical Thinking Skills to Young Children: <https://heidisongs.blogspot.com/2019/07/how-to-teach-critical-thinking-skills.html>
- Stimulate Curiosity through Questioning: <https://theowlteacher.com/stimulate-curiosity-through-questioning/>
- 81 Fresh & Fun Critical-Thinking Activities: <http://videa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/81-Fun-critical-Thinking-activities.pdf>



# Going further



## Topic 4 - City Building

Children can learn the basics of **urban planning** and understand how everything is interrelated. See the *Pop-up City of the Future, Farm in the City* Unplugged games or consult the following resources:

- Create A City: An Urban Planning Exercise: <https://geoalliance.asu.edu/createcity>
- Let's Build a City: Crash Course Kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnnUid8Hof0>



## Additional resources

- Are You Influencing People Or Manipulating Them?: <https://www.inc.com/james-sudakow/are-you-influencing-people-or-manipulating-them-3-important-questions-to-check-yourself.html>
- 5 Questions to Help You Stop Being Manipulated: <https://stephsterner.com/5-questions-help-being-manipulated>





To carry out this quest, the following basic materials are needed: white papers and colorful pencils. Yet, should the teacher to develop further creativity in children other painting material could be ensured: acrylic paint (for more impressive illustration), textile, wooden or/ and any other application materials, glue, stapler, etc. (for a more 3D and realistic representation - see as well materials for the Pop-Up City quest).

## Powerful Words

unquestionable	incredible
tremendous	gorgeous
outrageous	abundant
dazzling	gigantic
splendid	comfortable
magnificent	marvelous
petite	generous
ample	tantalizing
fascinating	exuberant
eccentric	memorable
glorious	spectacular
amazing	superb
phenomenal	vivid
lively	quaint
tempting	stunning
dazzling	first class
brilliant	exceptional
tranquil	breathtaking
appealing	quintessential
worthwhile	





## Persuasive Sentence Starters

I must say that...

It is quite obvious that...

Others agree that...

Without a doubt...

People all over the world understand that...

In my personal opinion...

I am absolutely certain that...

In truth,

I feel extremely confident that...

It is imperative that...

It is vitally important that...

Clearly,



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### Expressions for Persuading

- Would it be possible for you to ...?
- Won't you ..., please?
- Why don't you ...?
- Please!
- Not even for me/for my sake?
- Just this once!
- You're not going to let me down, are you?
- How I can persuade you to ...?
- Could you/Couldn't you be persuaded ...?