

Verbal Problem – The Envelope

1. You will have one minute to think and 4 minutes to respond. You may ask questions during your thinking time, however, time will continue. No other talking is allowed.
2. You will receive 1 point for each common response. Highly creative or humorous responses will receive 3 points. This will be the subjective opinion of the judges.
3. Each of you has 7 cards. You will take turns in order. After you give a response, you will place one of your cards in the container.
4. Speak loudly and clearly. Once time begins, it will not be stopped, even if the judge asks you to repeat your response, or to clarify it, or to give a more appropriate response.
5. You may not skip your turn, repeat or pass. If one member of the team is stuck, the whole team is stuck.
6. You will be finished when response time ends or you have used all of your cards.
7. Your problem is to **name as many things as you can that can be found on an envelope**. For example you could say, “an address”. (Repeat number 7, “Your problem is...”).

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Judging Instructions:

1. Read problem through, emphasizing part in #3, *“after you give a response, place a card in the container.”*
2. For primary teams and inexperienced teams, read the entire problem through twice, otherwise just read #7 twice.
3. Show them the container in the center of the table.
4. Count down when there are 10 seconds left for thinking time.

Things to coach them on:

1. Make sure they are putting their cards in the container **AFTER EACH** response.
2. For primary teams and inexperienced teams make sure they understand that creative answers score better, ie. what is there but not obvious: a corner, the edge, a cut line, a fold. Hopefully they can take it even further. If you give the envelope life (a story behind it) you can get creative answers: a love sick tear, a smeared lipstick kiss, a return to sender stamp, sticky finger prints by daddy’s oversea address, the sweaty palms of a mailman being chased by dogs. Some might go in another direction and think of other uses for an envelope and things that would be on it. A dog’s backside after he’s done his business in mommy’s office, mom’s grocery list, etc.
3. For experienced and older teams, consider the **747 RULE**;

7 cards + 4 minutes to respond = avg 7 seconds per response (5 players)

Practicing in this mode, gets the teams into a regular rhythm so they know instinctively how long they have so they don’t rush with common responses. After awhile, they can then judge how to speed up or slow down if given less/more cards/response time to max score.

4. Encourage creative answers by awarding the **“special head band”** to whoever gives a creative answer as the rounds proceed; player only retains it until the next creative answer is given and then it gets passed...

5. Try to keep track of score with tally marks. Time permitting, share with the team your favorite responses (I usually write *them down during the round to remember*) OR ask the team to name their favorites.