

# THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

The Blind Men all had different ideas about the Elephant because they each touched a different part of the Elephant. One thought it was like a rope because he held the tail. One thought that it was like a tree because he felt the leg. One thought it was like a snake because the Elephant tickled him with his trunk. Of course, the parts of the Elephant are like all those other things, but they don't add up to a good description of the whole Elephant! Could your team do better if they could only feel part of something?

**Challenge:** Determine the identity of an object using only the sense of touch.

**Time:** Part One: You will have one minute to plan a strategy for deciding on the identity of an object during Part Two.

Part Two: There will be no talking by team members during this part.

Each team member will put on a blindfold and hold one hand behind his or her back. An appraiser will take the object out of the bag and start the time as it is handed to the first team member. Using one hand each, the team will have one minute to pass the object from team member to team member. At the end of the time, the object will be returned to the appraiser.

Part Three: You will have one minute to discuss the identity of the object.

At the end of that time, a team member will tell the appraisers the team's answer. Then you may remove the blindfolds.

**Materials:** a blindfold for each team member  
an unusual, bulky object concealed in a paper bag

**Scoring:** up to 25 points for the design of the strategy to determine the object's identity  
up to 20 points for cooperation while passing the object  
up to 40 points for teamwork in deciding the answer  
up to 15 points for the accuracy of the identification of the object