



## Team Builders

# Totem pole

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- Individual
- Pairs
- Small group
- Whole group

**Uses:** To create group and team identity and a lasting representation of the working group.

**Resources:** Stiff card (A4); list of totem reproduced for participants; images of totem poles to display; pencils; colours; scissors; blu-tac; sellotape; access to www and/or dictionaries.

**Time:** 20-30 minutes.

### What to do:

1. Check that the participants understand what a totem pole is – show images and explain how certain groups of people carve totem poles for various reasons e.g. to honour a deceased elder who was important to the group; to show the names and rights a person had acquired over their life, or to tell a story.
2. Explain that the group is going to make a totem pole, to discover the team's strengths and qualities
3. Divide into small teams. Each person gets a piece of card and a list of totems. Each person designs a totem figure that best represents their strengths within the group. They can use one of the symbols given or make up their own.
4. When each person has finished, they cut it out and assemble their figure with the rest of the group, one on top of the other (like a totem pole).
5. Each person needs to explain their strength to the rest of the group.

### Make it different:

- Make the totems 3D.
- Design a group crest.

### Points to make:

- The totem is useful in that you can re-organise the poles as you re-organise the groups.

## Totems:

Alligator:	maternal, vengeful	Goose:	reliable; prudent; vigilant; parental; protective
Ant:	group-minded; patient; active; industrious	Hawk:	gives information; intuitive; victorious; visionary
Antelope:	active; agile; willing to sacrifice	Horse:	independent; enduring; mobile; powerful; free
Armadillo:	safety orientated, cautious	Lion:	family-orientated; strong; energetic; courageous; protective
Badger:	courageous; aggressive; healing and energising	Lizard:	good at conversation; visionary
Bat:	long-living	Llama:	good with others
Bear:	industrious; instinctive; healing; powerful; protective of the world; strong	Lynx:	trustworthy; protective; discreet; guiding
Beaver:	determined; strong-willed; constructive; protective	Moose:	headstrong; enduring; steadfast; wise
Bee:	organised; industrious; protective; wise; social; enthusiastic about life	Mouse:	observant; orderly; organised; detail-orientated
Buffalo:	spiritual; strong	Otter:	playful; friendly; dynamic; joyful; helpful; generous
Butterfly:	creative; transforming	Owl:	insightful; informative; wise; silent
Cat:	protective; independent; mysterious; magical	Ox:	self-sacrificing
Cheetah:	swift; focused; insightful	Peacock:	dignified; self-confident
Cow:	nurturing; maternal	Porcupine:	companionable; trustworthy
Coyote:	intelligent; stealthy; tricky; mischievous	Rabbit:	humble; balance; intuitive
Crane:	independent; just; enduring; intelligent; vigilant	Raccoon:	curious
Crow:	strong morals; changeable; creative; spiritual; energetic; just	Raven:	thinker; courageous; self-knowing; protective; magical
Deer:	intellectual; gentle; kind; caring; graceful; innocent	Salmon:	proud; intense; confident; wise; inspiring; rejuvenating
Dog:	noble; faithful; loyal; good at learning; protective; guiding	Sea horse:	confident; graceful
Dolphin:	kind; wise; happy; intelligent	Seal:	loving; imaginative; creative
Dragon:	wise; powerful; fiery	Shark:	enduring; adaptable
Dragonfly:	carefree; imaginative	Snake:	impulsive; shrewd; energetic; wise
Eagle:	intelligent; courageous; spiritual; daring	Squirrel:	organised
Elephant:	strong; powerful; wise	Stag:	ruling; beautiful; generous
Elk:	strong; agile; independent; pure; noble	Swan:	graceful; balanced; innocent; soulful
Falcon:	adventurous; passionate; leader	Tiger:	strong; powerful; energetic
Fish:	graceful	Turkey:	generous; life-giving
Fox:	cunning; agile; quick-witted; diplomatic	Turtle:	nurturing; shy; protective
Frog:	transforming; sensitive; beautiful; powerful	Weasel:	strong; energetic; ingenious
Gazelle:	strong	Whale:	wise; giving
		Wolf:	loyal; persevering; successful; intuitive; good at learning; spirited
		Woodpecker:	sensitive; protective; loyal