

The Wall

5. Count the Fs

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup: little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: 2-12

Group Size: 2 or more

Time: 5 minutes

Introduction: When facing life's challenges, sometimes we need to take a second look to see things in perspective. This activity shows that by closely examining our situation, we can often reframe our view of the world.

Materials:

- Copies of a paper with a paragraph of text in which the letter "F" appears multiple times – one per person (Example can be found at www.whytry.org/activities.)
- Whiteboard and markers

Activity:

Hand each student a copy of the paragraph and instruct the group to keep the papers face down until you say "Go." When you say "Go," they have 15 seconds to turn their papers over and count the number of times the letter "F" appears in the paragraph. When 15 seconds are up, the students must turn their papers face down once again. Have the students close their eyes. Tell the students, "Raise your hand if you counted one 'F.'" When these students have raised their hands, have them put their hand down, then ask, "How many of you counted two?" Continue until you reach the largest number. Write these results on the board. Note: There are eight "Fs" in the paragraph found online.

Processing the Experience:

- Everybody was given the same paragraph. Why were there so many different responses when you were asked how many "Fs" you counted?
- Why did some of you not see all of the "Fs"?
- Not seeing all the "Fs" is like having a limited view. Does seeing the "big picture" help? Why?
- How does our perspective affect our ability to solve problems?