



## ACTIVITY: 'ODYSSEUS & CYCLOPS'

**TIME:** 15+ minutes  
**SIZE:** Large groups  
**SPACE:** Large empty room/gym hall  
**RESOURCES:** Blindfolds

**The aim** is for students to enjoy working together as a team.

**The result** should be an appreciation that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and that groups are strengthened when individual talents are identified and exercised to their best potential.

1. Divide the group into two teams of roughly equal size. One team will be Cyclops and will wear blindfolds; the other team are sailors in the service of Odysseus.
2. Either have the sailors elect their Odysseus, or you nominate an Odysseus.
3. Rules: All of the sailors, including Odysseus, start at one end of the room and must make it safely to the 'exit' at the other end (goal posts, two witches hats, etc.) without being touched by one of the blind Cyclops. If touched by a Cyclops' hands, sailors must let out a bloodcurdling scream and retire from the round. All the Cyclops must start at the 'entrance' through which the sailors must pass to exit. Odysseus MUST make it out of the cave alive or all sailors are doomed. However, Odysseus is also blind, and his skin and clothes are poisonous to humans and so he cannot be touched or guided by hand. Members of either side can communicate however they wish – verbally, hand gestures, whistles, etc.
4. Give the teams two minutes to develop strategies, then start!



## DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- What did you think about your group before the activity started? What did you think about your own role in the group? How did that make you feel (e.g. anxious, excited, scared)? What did you do as a result (e.g. try hard, not try at all)?
- What did the sailors think about their Odysseus? How did they feel about him/her?
- What did Odysseus think about his/her place in the group, as both leader and burden? What did he/she do as a result?
- What did the Cyclops think about being blind? What skills did they have to draw on? What did knowing that everyone else on your team was blind, too, make you think and feel?
- What strategies did each side use to achieve their goal?
- How could you have worked differently as a group to be more effective? Would choosing people with different skill sets to do different things have helped?
- In what ways are this activity like situations in real life?