Bridge Builders

Mission: the thief locked the mascot behind a broken bridge, and nobody crosses alone. Build a bridge that holds, load-test it, crack the blueprint code on the whiteboard, whisper the password, open the box, free the mascot. Character trait today: **Social Awareness**.

1 · Span the Gap (5–16 min) — paper and tape, 5-minute clock, hold one cup for a 5-count

Gap Same width for every team (about one chair seat between the chair edges). Announce it so it is a fair race.

Build 30-second huddle where every builder says one idea, then a 5-minute timer called down out loud. Rolled paper tubes are the strongest trick, let them find it.

Test At the buzzer set one empty cup on the middle and count to 5 with the room. Holds = spans the gap. Reward the team that heard every idea over the fastest hands.

Diff TK–2: narrower gap, more tape, 7-minute clock, every kid tapes one piece. 3–8: wider gap, three stacked cups, head-to-head bracket, a student judge/timer, call your design out loud first.

2 · Load Test Champions (16–31 min) — most cups held wins, then one improve round

Reinforce 4 minutes to strengthen the Game 1 bridge or rebuild, paper and tape only.

Load Cups one at a time on the exact middle, count out loud, until the bridge gives way. Most cups wins. Write every team's number on the whiteboard.

Improve 3 minutes to copy the best trick in the room and beat your own number. Name the winning trick aloud so every team can borrow it.

Diff TK–2: no "most wins," count and cheer each cup. 3–8: strict material limit (10 sheets, one arm-length of tape), visible countdown, winner-stays-on, students load the cups and record every number on the board.

3 · Blueprint Code (31–45 min) — order the scrambled build steps, the letters spell the password

SPAN Four steps scrambled on the board. S = set the chairs a gap apart, P = place rolled paper beams across, A = add tape to lock both ends, N = nudge a cup on top to test. Build order S-P-A-N.

ARCH (simpler) A = angle two tubes to lean together, R = rest them meeting in the middle, C = crease and tape the top join, H = hold a cup at the peak. Build order A-R-C-H. First round or younger team.

Diff TK–2: ARCH set, coach reads and acts out each step, blank line per letter. 3–8: 6-letter BRIDGE (six scrambled steps), 3-minute race, wrong-guess penalty (30-sec freeze), scoreboard (3 pts fastest, 1 pt second). Older kids design a blueprint code for a rival team and referee it.

4 · Finale + Wristband (45–60 min)

Open Winning team announces the password to the room, coach turns the key, mascot lifts out, big cheer. Optional "thief's note" inside: "Your bridge held and your team out-built my trap. I surrender!"

Award the **Social Awareness** trait wristband to detectives who listened to teammates and combined ideas ("I used your idea", "I asked everyone first").

3–8 For older kids and the two middle schools, run the whole hour competitive: fixed teams, score every game on the whiteboard, visible timer each round, crown a champion here. Games bank adds **Detective Mafia** (2–3 Culprits + a Detective, 5–7 min rounds) — the one middle schoolers ask to replay.

Detective's Oath (say together, magnifiers up): I am a detective. / My brain is my best tool. / I don't guess, I reason. / I follow the clues to the truth.