



# “YES, AND ...” WARM-UP

A warm-up which introduces a new mindset of additive creativity and cooperation, as well as demonstrating the design principles of divergent and convergent phases.

<b>Duration</b>	The first time, about 4 minutes; after that, about 2 minutes
<b>Physical requirements</b>	Space for everyone to stand in pairs
<b>Energy level</b>	Medium to high
<b>Researchers/Facilitators</b>	1
<b>Participants</b>	From 2 to 2,000 people
<b>Expected output</b>	Awake participants, fun, and a useful lesson in convergent and divergent behavior

This game makes clear that divergent and convergent phases are both useful, but that some people feel more comfortable in one or the other and that they should best be separated.

Participants will keep referring to this warm-up during (and even after) the project. Do it before important group work sessions, especially sequential ideation methods like 10 plus 10. For more impact, let the participants do some group work before the warm-up, then some afterwards – and compare the difference.

## Step-by-step guide

- 1 Organize the group into pairs who stand face to face. If someone is left without a partner, make one “triangle” group of 3.
- 2 Ask the pairs to plan something together (you might suggest a holiday, a party, a meal ...). Explain they will do this as a “ping-pong” task of speaking in turn.

**3** Tell them that:

- One person in the pair will start by making a suggestion, like “We should go to Mexico.”
- Then the second person will respond to the suggestion, reacting to it with a sentence beginning “Yes, but ...” (and continuing logically from that).
- Then the first person will respond, reacting to the response with a sentence beginning “Yes, but ...” (and continuing logically from that).
- Then the second person will respond ... And so on.

**4** Give them a clear “GO!” signal.

**5** Let the teams run for about 45 seconds. Then ask them, “How far did you get?”

**6** Ask them to repeat the task, but this time replacing “Yes, but ...” with “Yes, and ...” ►



**A** The “Yes, but ...”/“Yes, and ...” game.

- 7 Give them a clear “GO!” signal.
- 8 Again, let the teams run for about 45 seconds. Then ask them, “How far did you get?”
- 9 Compare the results of the two rounds. Compare the energy of the two rounds. See “Method notes” for more on debriefing.

### Method notes

- Many teams will say that the “Yes, but ...” round felt familiar; some will say it is typical meeting culture. Most teams will notice much more energy in the “Yes, and ...” round. They will certainly have come further with their planning, and many will have enjoyed themselves more. This does not mean that “Yes, and ...” is better than “Yes, but ...”
- “Yes, and ...” can produce ideas which are impractical, unaffordable,

even illegal. The proposals built using “Yes, and ...” might collapse soon, but at least they provide a starting point to work from.

- “Yes, but ...” on its own is painful. We don’t get far, but it’s still useful to be connected to reality. And some people feel more comfortable in this realistic mode.
- The trick in design projects is to have clear phases of “Yes, and ...” followed by “Yes, but ...” You might like to point out that “Yes, and ...” represents divergent thinking and “Yes, but ...” represents convergent thinking. Both are useful, but we must be aware which mode we are in. Mixing them is painful for the group.
- An excellent intermediate strategy is “Yes, what I like about your idea is ... so we could ...” ◀