

# Reviewing

A selection of games to help the reviewing process



# Reviewing

## What is reviewing?

*'Even high quality experiences do not result in learning unless complemented by equally high quality reflection'.*

- D.P. Teschner and J. Walter, 'Beyond minimum competencies', in J. Miles and S. Priest (eds) Adventure Education (1990).

Many Scouts will recognise the experience of putting a lot of preparation into a particular activity. After the activity the only feedback tends to be 'it was good' or 'it was bad' or 'it was ok'. This can be disheartening for the Scout after all his/her efforts. This is why we need to review. Everybody can learn from their experiences if we review our experiences in a planned and co-ordinated fashion.

Reviewing is a process of learning from the experience, or enabling other to do so. Reviewing helps a person to get more from their interaction with others, life and recreation – especially if the person knows how to review an experience and can then match their learning to their dreams and ambitions.



Reviewing can involve:

1. Discussion
2. Structured reflection
3. Analysing events
4. Giving individuals space to express themselves
5. Identifying things which need to change
6. Establishing direction for the group or individual
7. Raising awareness of issues

There are many different ways of reviewing. The process does not have to be dull even though groups are often reluctant to participate. (see suggested games and devices below)

1. **Reviewing is not about analysing mistakes:**  
reviewing is focussed on making sense of confusing experiences and understanding why successes occurred, not analysing mistakes.
2. **Reviewing is not only all talk:**  
Talking is not the only way of reviewing (as we will see).
3. **Reviewing is not only about planning for the future:**  
Its main purpose is learning from experience not planning for the future, although this may sometimes occur.

## Why review

Here are just some of the reasons why reviewing is beneficial:

- To share experiences.
- To air feelings, problems and concerns.
- To promote learning and achieve objectives.
- To clarify meaning and purpose of activities and experiences.
- To show that people's experiences matter and provide them or reassure them of your support.
- To empower people, to encourage self-expression and to give the quieter members a chance to share their views.
- To understand why successes and failures occurred.

# How to review

## Planning a review

The review should look at the details of what actually happened but focus on successes. If someone feels they have failed it is important to acknowledge this and give the person more support and encouragement. The review should take a common-sense approach. For example, in the Patrol System, how the group worked together should be explored. Feelings, fears, strengths and weaknesses should be thought about. Aims and objectives need to be reviewed to see if they were met, if they need to be adapted or are they still realistic.

When planning a review session:

1. Be clear about the purpose of the review.
2. Decide when to review.
3. Decide where to review.
4. Decide how to review and what games or devices to use to enhance the session
5. Allocate an amount of time for a review and stick to it.
6. Be consistent about reviewing.

Think carefully about the location of the review. People need to be comfortable, they need to have a quiet location where they can be heard and can listen to others. In need not always be in an indoor location, under a tree on a sunny day, or around the campfire are all excellent locations. However, if people are uncomfortable, hungry or tired the review session will normally be difficult to manage and get results.

## Reviewing in Scouting

1. How did you get on? A short informal review.
2. More detailed review.
3. Recognition of progress.

Reviewing in Scouting is a simple 3-stage process. After each activity there is a short informal review. Basically the Scouter asks the young people what they thought of the activity. Once a month there is a more in-depth review to evaluate the month's activities and discover what has been learnt by the experience. Lastly, progress by the individual and Patrol is recognised. Lessons learnt are carried forward to new adventures and activities.

A number of games and devices can be used to highlight issues when reviewing as well as adding to the experience of reviewing itself.



In practice, discussions are on a Patrol basis with the Scouter facilitating the process. It is important that the Scouter or manager of the sessions pauses the discussion at different times to reflect and establish points raised and agree achievements on an individual and Patrol basis etc. Rather than have a full ranging discussion with no conclusions.

## Suggestions to make reviewing fun and rewarding

### 'How did you get on?'

Short informal review sessions which take place after each activity. To avoid unsatisfactory answers such as 'it was okay' or 'it was good' or 'it was bad', perhaps some leading questions should be asked by the Scouter. At the same time it should not delay the Scouter or young people for more than four or five minutes. It is meant to be a quick method of feedback for the Scouter and the Patrol and a chance for the Scouts to say what is on their mind. Bearing in mind the short review session should not take long, the leading questions should be of a simplistic nature designed to make the young person think about the activity but not in a very deep-thinking way.

Below are just some examples of leading questions that could be asked at this session. Again, the focus should be on the positive:

1. What did you learn doing this activity?
2. What did you achieve?
3. Did you learn something new?
4. What part of the activity did you do best?

# Controlling the speaker

*A common problem with group discussions is that they are not group discussions at all.*

They are discussions happening in a group setting but in which not all of the group are participating. They become more like a panel discussion in front of an audience. A few people dominate, and when quieter people are eventually asked to contribute there may be not much left to say. Here are some activities to help with this problem:

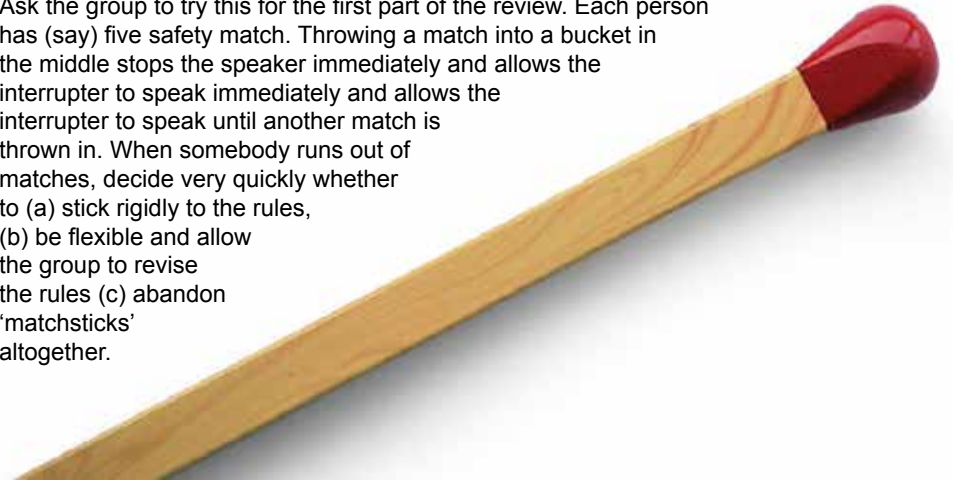
## The Conch

During the island meetings in William Golding's 'Lord of the Flies', only the holder of the conch shell is allowed to speak. The 'conch' (any item, but 'precious' it must be passed to the next speaker not thrown) can be used to control group discussions. To ensure equal opportunities for participation, the rule is that the conch is always passed to the left, and is quickly passed on if the holder has nothing say. Every few minutes (or after every round), there is random swapping of seats, so that the sequence of speakers is changed



## Matchsticks

Ask the group to try this for the first part of the review. Each person has (say) five safety match. Throwing a match into a bucket in the middle stops the speaker immediately and allows the interrupter to speak immediately and allows the interrupter to speak until another match is thrown in. When somebody runs out of matches, decide very quickly whether to (a) stick rigidly to the rules, (b) be flexible and allow the group to revise the rules (c) abandon 'matchsticks' altogether.



## Biscuits

Very similar to matchsticks, but a more entertaining way to even up participation in a group. Each time someone contributes to the discussion they take a biscuit and must eat it all before they take part again.



# Using Ropes

*Old climbing ropes, washing lines or brightly colored nylon line make excellent reviewing aids.*

*For some of the methods described below you can draw lines with pen and paper. But in most situations where you have enough space (indoors or outdoors) you and your learners will soon discover that ropes were made for reviewing!*



# Horseshoe

Recommended use: for exposing and discussing different views

This reviewing method is a variation of a technique that goes under many names including: 'spectrum', 'line-up', 'positions', 'diagonals' and 'silent statements'. The main difference is that these other methods use straight lines, whereas the 'horseshoe' is a curved line. In this method, you simply define the two ends of the spectrum and ask everyone to stand at a point on the line that represents their point of view. The benefit of the horseshoe shape is that everyone is more likely to be in eye contact with each other - which makes facilitating whole group discussion much easier.

For example: One end represents "We were a pretty good team during that exercise", the other end represents "We were a hopeless team during that exercise". Everyone chooses their point on the line and then talks to one or two neighbours to check whether they need to adjust their own position on the line. Once everyone is in position, encourage questions from participants to each other. Everyone should have a chance to explain their position, after which everyone should have a chance to move to show whether or not their views on the issue have changed.

Variation: This is a useful tool for discussing any issues that can be represented on a spectrum - so it can be used for exploring moral issues or values as well as for reviewing group exercises.



# Sketch Map

Recommended use: for reliving a journey and discovering issues that deserve more detailed review

After any event that has involved a journey, ask participants to illustrate their journey with the help of a rope (or ropes) to trace the route taken. Add labels with words (e.g. tie-on luggage labels) or symbolic objects to mark out different parts of the journey. This is best set up as a creative project in an area (indoors or outdoors) where suitable symbolic objects can readily be found. Much informal reviewing takes place during the making of the map. Once the map is complete it can be used as a means of re-telling the story and/or identifying key moments on the journey for more detailed review.



## Goldfish Bowl

Recommended use: for focusing attention on the reviewing process itself

Make a rope circle on the ground. Divide the group in two. One half sits inside the circle and may talk. One half sits outside the circle and may only observe and listen. People in the inner circle review the previous exercise.

After a few minutes the half groups change places and the new inner group continue with the review or comment on the review process they have just been observing.

Variation: Anyone in the inner circle can leave at any time, but the discussion does not continue until they have been replaced by someone from the outer circle.



Variation: Everyone starts in the inner circle and sits out when they have nothing they want to say. Anyone can move back into the inner circle at any time they want to speak. The review finishes when no-one is sitting inside the circle.



## Activity Map

Recommended use: to find out what makes people tick (or not)

This is an active and game-like way of sharing likes and dislikes and getting to know each other's values. At the beginning of a planning session it can also be a useful way of finding out participants' experiences of (and attitudes towards) activities or processes that you are expecting to use in your project.

Use two long ropes. Mark the ends of one rope 'Past' and 'Future'. Mark the ends of the other rope 'Happy' and 'Sad'. This creates a quadrant in which the zones represent:

- Past/Sad: Activities I'll never do again
- Past/Happy: Activities I like doing
- Future/Sad: Activities I'll never try
- Future/Happy: Activities I'd like to try

Call out the name of an activity and ask everyone to go to the zone where that activity would belong on their own personal map. Keep calling out activities, pausing now and again for comments and questions. To make it more of a game (and more risky) let participants call out names of activities. Define 'activities' as narrowly or broadly as you like.

## Talking Knots

Recommended use: a temporary gimmick for encouraging more equal participation in reviews.

VERSION 1: This is a variation on 'rounds' or 'go-rounds' or 'conch' or 'talking stick'. It is a way of controlling participation when people are talking over each other. It is also a way of encouraging participation when it is low or uneven.

Tie a knot in a rope to make a rope circle. Everyone holds on to the rope while standing or sitting in a circle. The circle should be a suitable size for group discussion. There is just one knot in the rope. The person with the knot in front of them may speak. When that person has finished speaking they start moving the rope in a clockwise direction. The knot keeps moving round until someone with the knot in front of them wants to talk. That person calls 'stop' and holds the rope either side of the knot. Make it clear whether you, as facilitator, follow the same rule.

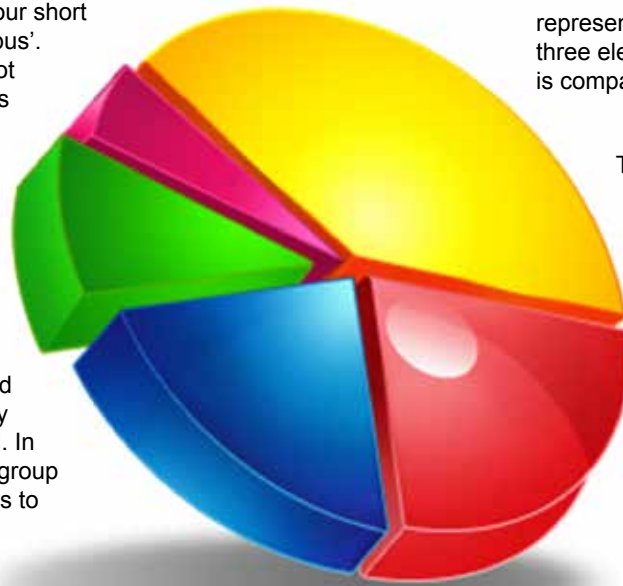


## Octopus Pie (Adjustable Pie Chart)

Recommended use: for increasing awareness of how time was spent

To create an adjustable pie chart with four 'slices', tie four short ropes together at one end to make a four-legged 'octopus'. Spread out the ropes in the form of a cross with the knot in the middle. You now have a pie chart with four pieces of pie. Place a label (or symbol) in each sector. The group task is to adjust the ropes (like the hands of a clock) until they are satisfied that the relative sizes of each sector represents how time was spent.

This method can be applied to any models in which it is important for participants to increase their awareness of the balance between the different elements of the model. For example, the Action Centred Leadership model is about the balance that leaders pay to three elements: the task, the team and the individual. In this case, you need just three ropes tied together. The group can give feedback to their leader by arranging the ropes to



represent the balance of attention they saw the leader giving to each of these three elements. The leader draws a pie chart before this process begins. This is compared to the group version.

To make it easy to adjust the ropes hold the knot in place by driving a peg through it (if outdoors on soft ground) or by tying it to a heavy weight.

Make a sketch of the final chart, so that you can compare results if repeating this method following a later activity.

The 'adjustable pie chart' is best suited to the first stage of the active reviewing cycle - establishing facts. But it may be useful wherever there is a juggling/balancing act between three or more priorities.