

Using the Tangram Help/Hurt Task In Lab

The Tangram Help/Hurt Task is a laboratory-based measure to simultaneously assess helping and hurting behaviors. Recently, Saleem, Anderson, and Barlett (2015) provided evidence for the validity of the Tangram Help/Hurt Task. In addition, several recent papers have used the Tangram Help/Hurt Task to assess interpersonal and intergroup helping and hurting behaviors. References for these papers are provided below:

Tangram Help/Hurt Task Validation:

- Saleem, M., Anderson, C. A., & Barlett, C. P. (in press). [Assessing helping and hurting behaviors through the Tangram help/hurt task](#). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41 (10), 1345-1362.

Example articles using the Tangram Help/Hurt Task:

- Saleem, M., Prot, S., Cikara, M., Lam, B. C. P., Anderson, C. A., & Jelic, M. (in press). [Cutting Gordian knots: Reducing prejudice through attachment security](#). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.
- Barlett, C. P., & Anderson, C. A. (2011). [Re-Appraising the situation and its impact on aggressive behavior](#). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37, 1564-1573.
- Saleem, M., Anderson, C. A. & Gentile, D. A. (2012). [Effects of prosocial, neutral, and violent video games on children's helpful and hurtful behaviors](#). *Aggressive Behavior*, 38,281-287.
- Gentile, D. A., Anderson, C. A., Yukawa, S., Ihori, N., Saleem, M., Ming, L. K., Shibuya, A., Liau, A. K., Khoo, A., Bushman, B. J., Huesmann, L. R., & Sakamoto, A. (2009). [The Effects of Prosocial Video Games on Prosocial Behaviors: International Evidence from Correlational, Experimental, and Longitudinal Studies](#). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 35, 752-763.

List of materials

- 1) Protocol for using the Tangram Help/Hurt Task In Lab
- 2) Tangram Practice Packet
- 3) Tangram Packet
- 4) Plastic tangram puzzle set (7 pieces in a set): You can buy these online from various sites.
 - <http://www.toysrus.com/product/index.jsp?productId=33857056&cp=&parentPage=search>
 - <http://www.amazon.com/Learning-Advantage-CTU7712-Tangrams-Piece/dp/B001UFWJLW>
- 5) Gift card (from Walmart, Target, etc) for cover story
- 6) Tangram Assignment Table

Sample Protocol for Lab Study Using the Tangram Help/Hurt Task

BEFORE PARTICIPANT COMES IN LAB

1. Take out the Tangram practice packet and Tangram pieces
2. Take out the gift card and have it sitting on the table.
3. Enter participant ID on Tangram assignment table

AFTER PARTICIPANT COMES IN LAB

4. When the participant comes into the lab, say **“I am going to talk softly as the other participant is already here. Please be sure to turn off any electronic devices you may have including your cell phone.”** Wait for them to turn off their electronic devices.
5. Give them an informed consent and have them read and sign it.
 - a. Place the signed consent form in the “signed consent forms” folder.
6. Once they agree to participate, say:
“This experiment involves you and another participant who is located in the cubicle next to you. The purpose of this experiment is to understand the relationship between people’s personalities and their performance on cognitive tasks with another participant.”
7. Ask the participant, **“Are you familiar with tangrams?”**
8. Show them the practice tangram packet and guide them through the first couple pages. Say:
“Tangrams are seven different pieces that you have to use to make the outlined shape. You will be given seven tangram pieces and will be asked to form the outlined shapes in your packet. Some shapes may only require one or two pieces, whereas, others might use all seven.”
9. Show the participant how to solve the first tangram and then let them practice 2-3 tangrams until they are comfortable. Ideally, participants should practice solving an easy, medium, and hard tangram during this time.
10. Explain the Tangram assignment task. Say:
“You will be asked to assign 11 tangram puzzles to the other participant to solve in 10 minutes. The other participant will be eligible to win a \$25 gift certificate (point to the gift certificate) if they complete 10 tangrams in 10 minutes. If they fail to solve the tangrams you assigned to them within the time limit, they will not be able to win the gift certificate. However, please remember that the other participant will not see you or know who you are, so feel free to assign them a range of tangrams.

After you assign tangrams for the other participant to solve, you will be given the tangrams they have assigned for you to complete. You also have 10 minutes. You, however, are not eligible to win a gift certificate. Part of this experiment is to see if awareness of a potential prize interferes with your performance.

The packet you receive will look exactly like this practice packet but with the shapes the other participant has picked for you.”

11. Once the participant understands how to solve the tangrams and the partner task, ask them to step into the cubicle.
12. The survey should take about 20 minutes. At the end of the survey, the screen will prompt them with the following statement: “You are now reading to begin the tangram task with the other participant. Please call the experimenter to begin this task”.
13. When the participant opens the door and is ready for the tangrams, hand them a clipboard with the tangram assignment table and a pen. **Read the instructions on top of the tangram assignment sheet verbatim.** Close the door and wait for them to get done.
14. When they have completed the tangram assignment task, collect the clipboard and say, “**While I give these to the other participant and collect the ones they assigned for you, please answer these questions. Once you are done, open the door and I will bring you your assigned puzzles.**” At this point, participants will answer the remaining questions of the survey including the manipulation check questions assessing their motivations for assigning the tangrams they did.
15. Make sure you take out a tangram packet with a cover sheet and place tangram pieces on top of it. This is to convince participants that they actually will complete tangrams assigned to them.
16. When the participant presses the call button, ask them to come out and have a seat.
17. Say “**OK before you complete the tangrams assigned to you, I would like to ask you a few questions about the experiment so far.**”
18. Go down the list of debriefing questions and type their response.
19. Say
 - a. “**At this time you are done with the experiment. We appreciate and thank you for your time.**”
20. Complete the debriefing survey
 - a. Rate them on their suspicion level
21. Log off the computer and shut the lights if no one else is scheduled.