

FUTURE

QUEST



# Catalonian Human Towers

# INTRODUCTION

## In this activity you will:

- Find out about the extraordinary Catalan tradition of building Human Towers
- Explore why this dangerous tradition matters so much to the people of Catalan
- Create your own cultural/sporting tradition

## Who this activity is for?

- This activity is mainly aimed at students in years 9 and 10, but can also be used by year 11 students.

## You will need:

- Internet access that enables you to watch video content
- Pen and paper to note down your thoughts and ideas during the activities
- It will also be useful to have a pencil, some coloured pens/pencils and some large paper, but you can still complete the activity without.

# What's it all about?

- Human towers, known as Castells, are a cultural tradition from Catalonia in the North-East of Spain.
- Here, they speak Catalan, not Spanish. Many people from this region would prefer to be separated from Spain (a bit like some people in Scotland wishing to be separated from England).
- Catalonians are passionate about Castells, and as you'll see, willing to take big risks to take part.





THINK

Look at the images of Human Towers on the next few pages and answer these questions.

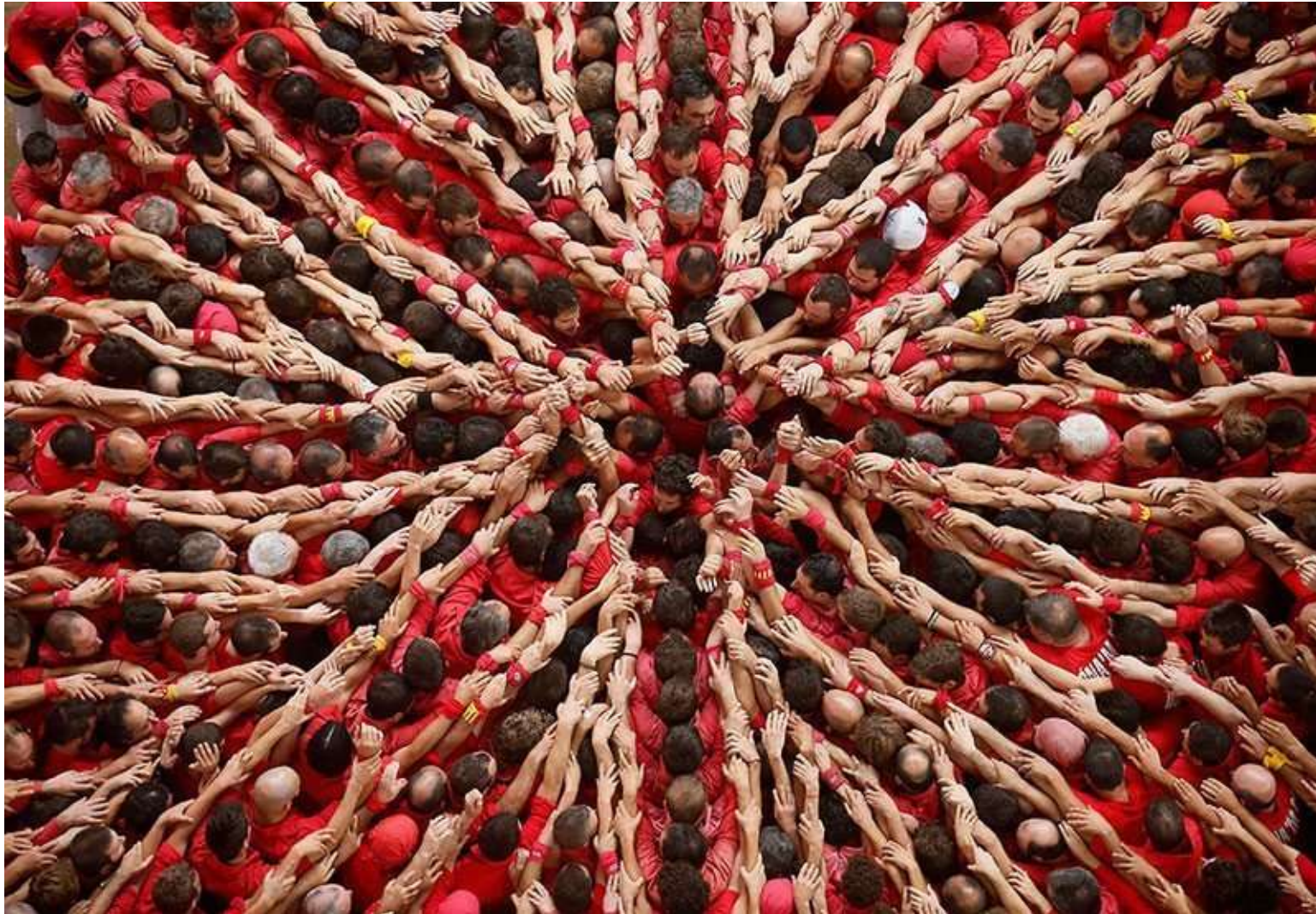
1. What are human towers?
2. How many people might be involved?
3. Why are people wearing different colours?
4. What is the youngest age you can take part?



































WATCH



Now watch [Behold the Human Towers of Catalonia](#) and compare your answers.



Watch the video a second time and complete the gaps with the missing information.

- Castells are a Catalan tradition of over \_\_\_\_ years.
- Today there are over \_\_\_\_ teams spread throughout Catalonia.
- These are very big structures and they require \_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_ people.
- They can reach heights of \_\_\_\_ metres.
- The most important thing is the \_\_\_\_ of the people involved.
- Occasionally castles will \_\_\_\_
- It's quite common for people to break an \_\_\_\_ or a \_\_\_\_
- You have to keep going because you have the collective \_\_\_\_ to not let your team down.



# Watch - answers

- Castells are a Catalanian tradition of over 200 years
- Today there are over 80 teams spread throughout Catalonia
- These are very big structures and they require 300 or 400 people
- They can reach heights of 15 metres
- The most important thing is the safety of the people involved
- Occasionally castles will collapse
- It's quite common for people to break an arm or a leg
- You have to keep going because you have the collective responsibility to not let your team down





DIG DEEPER



- Would you like to be part of a Human Tower? Why/why not?
- Where would you like to be positioned in the tower? Why?
- What mental and physical attributes are important when building a human tower? For example, courage and strength.
- What motivates people to take part in what can be a dangerous activity?



Compare your answers to the suggestions on the next page.

# Dig deeper – suggested answers

## Mental attributes

- Courage
- Dedication
- Concentration
- Determination
- Trust
- Loyalty
- Will power
- Effort
- Resilience

## Physical attributes

- Strength
- Balance
- Flexibility
- Co-ordination
- Stamina

## What motivates people to take part?

- Sense of achievement
- Pride
- Fun
- Friendship
- Being part of a team
- Common purpose
- Sense of belonging
- Sense of identity – being Catalan



- The presenter says, “It’s impossible to explain. You have to feel it. If you feel it, you understand it”.
  - Do your answers to the last two questions help explain what he means?
  - Can you put this feeling into words?
- Can you think of any traditions from your own culture that create a similar sense of pride and belonging as the Catalonian Human Towers?



Did you know that learning  
about culture and traditions is  
part of studying a language at  
university?





GET CREATIVE

# Invent a cultural/sporting tradition that you would like to take part in.

Think about these questions when designing your tradition:

- What would participants be required to do?
- How many people would take part?
- How would people communicate?
- What would people wear?
- Would there be designated roles/responsibilities?
- What mental and physical attributes would people need?
- Would it be a competition or just for fun?
- How would you encourage people to take part in your tradition?

Draw a picture or write a description of your tradition.





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