

Yes-And Ramp — Facilitator Run Sheet

Folder: yes-and-ramp · Category: creativity · 4–12 people · 15 min · offline + online · print props · tool pack

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15

MINUTES

4–12

PEOPLE

print props

SETTING

Yes-And Ramp — Facilitator Guide

A group builds one idea by going around and adding to it — each person must start from what the last person said (“yes, and...”) rather than replacing it (“yes, but”). One prompt idea goes up a ramp of accepts-only contributions until the group can’t recognise where it started. **Unlike a brainstorm that edits ideas down to the safest one, this ramp only builds up — the mechanic is a muscle: it trains building-on-others over editing-them, which is the difference between a session that stalls and one that compounds.**

Objectives

By the end of the activity, participants will have:

1. Built one ordinary idea up through a full round of “yes, and” turns — never deleting the last one.
2. Felt where the “that won’t work” reflex kicks in, and pushed past it on purpose.
3. Read back how far the seed travelled, and named where that reflex costs them in real reviews.

When to use this activity

- Your idea meetings collapse into “that won’t work” before anything gets built on.
- You want fifteen minutes of pure generative momentum to open a design or naming session.
- You have 4–12 people comfortable speaking in a round; it runs on a call too.

The one rule

Every turn begins by accepting the previous contribution — out loud, in the words “yes, and” — then adds one thing. No “but,” no repeating to steer, no editing someone’s idea into your better version. If you can’t build on it, build on it anyway.

Setup

Clock: 15 minutes total — seed 1, ramp 7, two loops 2, read back 4, bridge 1.

Space: a circle or a call; one board or shared doc that keeps the running ramp visible to everyone.

Materials per person:

Item	Source
Nothing but their voice	—
A pen (if writing the ramp down)	bring your own

Materials for the room: the seed card, the “yes, and — no but” rule card and blank build cards from [yes-and-ramp-prop-cards.pdf](#), and the A3 poster up on the wall.

Grouping: 4–12 people comfortable speaking in a round; one idea at a time.

Roles: each person accepts the last turn and adds one; you keep the running note, call the rounds, and do the light-touch “yes, AND” reset when someone slips a “but”.

How to run it

Time	Phase	Facilitator does	Participants do
0–1	Seed	Write a deliberately ordinary prompt on the board (“a coffee shop”).	Read the seed; get ready to build
1–8	Ramp	Go around; each person says “yes, and...” and adds one turn to the idea. Keep a running note so the ramp is visible.	Take turns: accept the last contribution, add one new thing
8–10	Two loops	Go around a second and third time so it climbs several stories.	Continue building; push the idea further
10–14	Read back	Read the whole ramp from the first line. Compare it to the seed — the distance is the point.	Listen; notice how far the seed travelled
14–15	Bridge	One line each: where your real “that won’t work” reflex cost you a ramp like this.	Share one real example of the reflex costing them

Why accepts-only

“Yes, but” feels like agreement and is really a deletion — it takes the last idea out. “Yes, and” keeps the floor moving up. The rule sounds playful and is strict; the discipline of building on a bad contribution anyway is exactly what people can’t do in a real review.

The card

Use the faces from [yes-and-ramp-prop-cards.pdf](#): a seed card, the “yes, and — no but” rule card, blank build cards and a read-back card. The rule card is the load-bearing one — it’s what stops a “but” from masquerading as agreement.

Failure modes

1. **Someone slips a “but.”** The ramp stalls and the room reverts to editing. Rescue: light-touch reset — “yes, AND — go again.” Don’t shame; the reflex is the lesson.
2. **A person edits instead of adds.** They rephrase the last idea into their better version. Rescue: remind — accept their words first, then your one addition.
3. **The ramp flatlines into jokes.** Every turn is funnier but nothing builds. Rescue: push for one more concrete turn; force it somewhere specific rather than funnier.
4. **The read-back gets skipped.** Time runs out and the group never hears the distance. Rescue: guard the 10–14 block; the read-back is the debrief — cut ramp turns before you cut the read-back.

Variations

- **Remote:** the same ramp in a shared doc, each person adding a line per round; read the whole doc back at the end.
- **Naming / feature ramp:** seed it with a real naming or feature prompt from your work instead of a joke one — the momentum carries into the session.
- **Written round-robin:** each person writes “yes, and...” before the next reads it, so quieter voices land too.
- **Shortened (8 min):** one loop of five turns plus a quick read-back — enough to reset the room’s register.

Facilitation notes

- The strongest moment is the read-back, hearing how far one ordinary seed travelled in ten turns.
- Keep your own additions concrete, not clever — you set the register.

Put it on the wall

Print `yes-and-ramp-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) to put the run of show, the “yes, and — no but” rule and the read-back prompt on one wall while you facilitate.

Props in this folder

- `yes-and-ramp-prop-cards.pdf` — poker-spec print sheet (63.5 × 88.9 mm, bleed and cut guides): seed card, “yes, and — no but” rule card, blank build cards, a read-back card, branded backs
- `yes-and-ramp-run-sheet.pdf` — the print edition: this run sheet + the debrief, bound as one A4 document with bookmarks (`-Letter.pdf` is US Letter)
- `yes-and-ramp-activity-poster.pdf` — the whole ramp on one A3 wall sheet
- `yes-and-ramp-guide.md` · `-debrief.md` · `-start-here.md` — the facilitator guide, the debrief, the one-page start here
- `yes-and-ramp-license.md` — what you may do
- `SKILL.md` · `yes-and-ramp.zip` — the machine-readable manifest, and the whole folder in one download

Agent version

Every file in this folder has a stable public URL — an AI agent can fetch the cards, the debrief and this run sheet with three curl commands (see `SKILL.md`). The paper version needs nothing but a circle of people and one board to keep the ramp on.

Yes-And Ramp — Debrief

The ramp isn't the idea you end on — it's the habit of never being the person who stopped it.

Use with `yes-and-ramp-guide.md` . The bridge at minute 14 is the compressed version; this sheet is the full one.

How to run this debrief

- Read the ramp **from the seed line, out loud** — the distance it travelled is the finding, not the last turn.
- Name the near-misses: every time the group almost said “but”, what did building anyway buy them?
- Land on one parked idea the group will actually pick up and build on this week.

Read the ramp back

1. **Where it started.** The plain seed on the board. Say it out loud so the distance is felt.
2. **The turns that built.** Which “yes, and” unlocked the biggest jump? That contribution accepted something thin and made it thick.

3. **The near-misses.** Every time the group almost said “but” — what did building anyway buy them that deleting would have cost?

The six debrief questions

1. The distance.

“When did the idea stop sounding like the seed, and did that feel like loss or like gain?”

→ Targets: the moment the ramp became its own thing — and whether the room mourns the seed or celebrates the climb.

2. The surprise turn.

“Which ‘yes, and’ surprised you most — one you’d never have said — and what did it add?”

→ Targets: the contribution that only existed because someone accepted instead of edited.

3. The reflex.

“Where in a real review do you reach for ‘that won’t work’ first, and what would ‘yes, and’ have kept alive?”

→ Targets: transfer — naming the real meeting where the reflex costs them.

4. The abandoned idea.

“What is one idea you abandoned that only ever needed someone building on it?”

→ Targets: the retroactive regret — what got killed too early in a past session.

5. The near-miss.

“Where did you almost say ‘but’ and catch yourself — what did building anyway buy the ramp?”

→ Targets: the felt cost of the reflex versus the felt gain of the accept.

6. The next ramp.

“What’s the next real prompt that deserves this same accepts-only treatment — and when will you run it?”

→ Targets: transfer — scheduling the habit instead of ending the exercise.

Failure modes of the debrief

Failure mode	Why it happens	The rescue
It reads as a comedy game	The ramp got funny	Bridge to the review reflex: “where does your ‘yes, but’ cost you the next turn?”
People credit the last idea	The top of the ramp looks authored	Re-read from the seed — it belongs to no one, which is the finding.
Nothing carries back	Debrief stays at “fun”	Close on one parked idea to bring back and build on this week.