

Classroom Ice Breakers

Ice breakers are the best way to help your students get to know each other, to break the ice on the awkward first day of school. If your students are adults, it's even more important to choose an ice breaker that won't backfire on you. Most adults don't want to play silly games.

Choose one of the following 10 games and get down to business faster. Remember that ice breakers are also a great way to energize your classroom when the doldrums set in, or to introduce a new topic. Be creative!



1. Two Truths and a Lie

This can be truly hilarious in any group, whether the participants are team members or strangers. You just never know what your fellow students have experienced! See if you can identify the lies!

Group Size: Ideal for 10-15. Divide larger groups.

Use for: Introductions at a meeting, in the classroom, around the pool, anywhere

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes

Materials Needed: None

Instructions: Tell the group that each person will introduce him- or herself by stating two truths about their life and one lie. The rest of the participants will guess which statement is the lie.

Example: Hi, I'm Mary. My hair was almost to my waist in high school, I talked to Cher in an airport coffee shop, and I speak four languages.

2. People Bingo

People Bingo is one of the most popular ice breakers because it's so easy to customize for your particular group and situation, and everyone knows how to play it. Make your own bingo cards with our lists of characteristics, or use an online card maker.

People Bingo is consistently our most popular ice breaker game for adults, used by teachers in the classroom, managers in the conference room, and by event planners at seminars. And then they take it home and use it at parties and other gatherings. The game is that flexible, fun, and effective.

Make Bingo Cards: <https://www.bingocardcreator.com/>

3. Marooned

This icebreaker is a great introduction when people don't know each other, and it fosters team building in groups that already work together. I have always found people's answers to be very revealing about who they are as a person. Who would you want with you on a deserted island?

If you were marooned on a deserted island, who would you want with you?

This ice breaker is a great game to play when people don't know each other, and it fosters team building in groups that already work together. I have always found people's choices to be very revealing about who they are.

Ideal Size: Up to 30. Divide larger groups.

Use for: Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting, and as a team building exercise.

Time Needed: 30 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed: none.

Instructions: Give people a minute or two to think about this question: If you were marooned on a deserted island, which three people would you want with you? They can be dead, alive, or imaginary. Ask participants to introduce themselves and share their choices with the group. Start with yourself so they have an example.

Example: Hi, my name is Deb. If I were marooned on a deserted island, I would want Tim with me because he's smart, strong, and fun, and I love him. He would know how to make a shelter and find food, and we'd have wonderful conversations.

4. If You Had a Magic Wand

If you had a magic wand, what would you choose to change? Pass a magic wand around your classroom, or any other cool magical item, and generate some energy!

If you had a magic wand and could change anything, what would you change? This is an ice breaker that opens minds, considers possibilities, and energizes your group when discussion is dead. It's perfect for a classroom full of adults, a corporate meeting or seminar, or any group of adults gathered to learn.

Ideal Size: Up to 20. Divide larger groups.

Use For: Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting, or to energize a group when discussion has become dry.

This ice breaker game is also excellent for use as a warm up exercise before starting a new topic. If you don't yet use ice breakers as lesson plan warm ups, this article is for you: [10 Warm Ups for Lesson Plans](#)

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed: A flip chart or white board, and markers if you want to record the results, but this will depend on your topic and reason for playing. It isn't necessary. A fun wand of some kind to pass around would add to the fun. You can usually find one at a hobby shop or toy store. Look for Harry Potter or fairy princess merchandise.

5. Table Topics

I picked up my first box of Table Topics™ on a whim while shopping in one of those funky little shops you see in the artsy parts of any city. A four-inch clear acrylic cube holds 135 cards, each with a provocative question that is sure to inspire lively, and meaningful, conversation. I discovered these little cards make a great game for the classroom or meeting room, around the table or on the patio.

Use them at any gathering of adults when you want stimulating conversation.

- Which piece of land would you wish to have preserved forever?
- What's your favorite quotation?
- What song evokes the strongest memories for you?

Group Size: Ideal for up to 10. Divide larger groups.

Use for: Introductions at a meeting, in the classroom, around the pool, at a party, anytime you want to inspire conversation.

Time Needed: Depends on the number of people and the time you allow for conversation after each introduction and answer.

Materials Needed: Cube of Table Topics™ and a clock or watch.

Cost: \$25

Instructions: Select a person to begin, and ask him or her to pick a card from the Table Topics™ cube.

6. The Power of Story

Adults bring to your class or meeting room an abundance of life experience and wisdom. Tapping into their stories can deepen the significance of whatever you've gathered to discuss. Let the power of story enhance your teaching of adults.

Ideal Size: Up to 20. Divide larger groups.

Use for: Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting where the topic would be enriched by the sharing of personal stories. This exercise gives everyone a chance to share their story, and helps you manage storytelling later.

Time Needed: Depends on the number of people and the time you allow for personal stories.

Materials Needed: Nothing, but you must communicate with participants beforehand. They will need to bring a personal item related to your topic.

Instructions: Send your students an email or letter prior to their arrival at your class or meeting and ask them to bring a personal item that is somehow related to the topic you will be discussing.

When it's time for students to introduce themselves, explain that you want to recognize and honor the life experiences and wisdom they bring to your classroom. Ask them to give their name, present the item they brought, and, in a minute or two, tell the group the story behind that item.

- Why did they choose it?
- What special memory does it elicit for them?

7. Expectations

Expectations are powerful, especially when you're teaching adults. Understanding your students' expectations of the course you're teaching is key to your success. Make sure you know what your students expect with this expectations ice breaker game for adults.

Ideal Size: Up to 20. Divide larger groups.

Use for: Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting, to understand what every participant is expecting to learn from the class or gathering.

Time Needed: 15-20 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed: A flip chart or white board, and markers.

Instructions: Write Expectations at the top of a flip chart or white board.

When it's time for students to introduce themselves, explain that expectations are powerful, and that understanding them is key to the success of any class. Tell the group that you would like them to:

- Introduce themselves
- Share their expectations of the class
- Add a wild prediction of the best possible outcome should their expectations be met. Ask them to be as specific as possible, and encourage silliness or fun if you want.

8. 2-Minute Mixer

You may have heard of 8-minute dating, where 100 people meet for an evening full of 8-minute dates. They talk to one person for 8 minutes and then move on to the next. Eight minutes is a long time in the classroom, so we'll call this ice breaker a 2-minute mixer. A 2-Minute Mixer is also a great way to prep for a test. Ready? Go!

Ideal Size: This is a great mixer for large groups, especially if you don't require that everyone talks to everyone.

Use For: Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting, especially when you have space enough to move around.

Time Needed: 30 minutes or more, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed: A clock or watch (digital on phone or iPad is an option) and a whistle or some other noise maker. You can also provide canned questions if you want, but it's not necessary. Adults don't have any trouble making conversation on their own.

Instructions: Ask people to get up, pair up, and chat for 2 minutes with each other about whatever interests them. You'll be the timer. When 2 minutes are up, you'll blow your whistle or make some other sound loud enough for everyone to hear.

9. Where in the World?

Technology and transportation in the modern world have given us the opportunity to learn so much more, often first hand, about the rest of the world. If you haven't had the privilege of global traveling, you may have experienced the thrill of conversing with foreigner's online or working side-by-side with them in your industry. The world becomes a smaller place the more we get to know each other.

When you have a gathering of people from various countries, this icebreaker is a breeze, but it's also fun when participants are all from the same place and know each other well. Everyone is capable of dreams that cross borders.

To make this ice breaker kinetic, require that one of the three clues be a physical motion (think Pictionary™). For example, skiing, golfing, painting, fishing, etc.

Ideal Size: Up to 30. Divide larger groups.

Use For: Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting, especially when you have an international group of participants or an international topic to discuss.

Time Needed: 30 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed: A globe or world map would be a nice prop, but nothing is necessary.

Instructions: Give people a minute or two to think of three clues that describe, but don't give away, either the country they are from (if different from the one you're in) or their favorite foreign place they have visited or dream of visiting.

10. If You Could Take a Different Path

Almost everyone has wished at some point that they had taken a different path in life. We get started in one direction, and before long, there's no turning back. Sometimes this isn't that big of a deal, but what a tragedy it is when a life so full of promise gets off track and derails. It can seem like there's no way to change direction. Wouldn't it be wonderful if simply stating the desire for a new path could inspire it to action? Can't hurt to try. Find out if your students are in your classroom to find a new direction. Wouldn't it be wonderful if simply stating the desire for a new path could inspire it to action?

Can't hurt to try. Use this easy ice breaker game to find out if your students are in your classroom to find a new direction.

Ideal Size: Up to 30. Divide larger groups.

Use For: Introductions in the classroom or at a meeting.

Time Needed: 30-40 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Materials Needed: None.

Instructions: Ask each participant to share their name, a little about the path they chose to take in life, and which path they would choose today if they could do it all over, knowing what they know today. Ask them to add how the different path is related to why they are sitting in your classroom or attending your seminar.