

A Collection of Icebreakers to use on the First Day of Class

Dakin Burdick, 2016

Finding Things in Common

- **Who's Done That?**
Prior to the class meeting make a list of 20-25 experiences, skills or characteristics that a person might have. Each student must find people to sign their name on the line next to an experience or characteristic that applies to them.
Time: 10 minutes
- **Me Too**
Everyone in the group gets 10 small items (scraps of paper, pennies, candies, etc.) The first person says something he/she has done. Everyone who has done that thing as well, puts an item in the middle. Then the next person says something he/she has done, and the same thing continues until someone runs out of items. This works best in groups of 4-6.
Time: depends on size of group.
- **Common Ground**
This works best in groups of 4-6. Give students about 5 minutes to create a list of all the things they have in common with each other, avoiding the obvious, like "we are all taking this course." After the five minutes is up, each group shares their list with the rest of the class, perhaps saying the most interesting/unique ones.
<http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/common/pdfs/icebreakers.pdf>
Time: 15-20 minutes.
- **Human Bingo (aka. Human Scavenger Hunt)**
Everyone is given a paper with a series of questions or statements on it (i.e. knows their zodiac sign, has a car, has traveled abroad, etc.) in bingo format (squares). Participants then go around and find people who have done whatever the question or statement is and has them sign that box. You cannot have the same name on the paper more than once, and the first person to fill a "Bingo" wins.
<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/Humanscavengerhunt.htm>
Time: 15-20 minutes
- **Either Or**
Everyone stands in the middle of the room. The leader asks the group an "either or" question and everyone goes to a certain side of the room according to their answer. Keep asking questions so people have to change positions and move to different sides of the room. The questions should be relevant to the topic of the class.
<http://www.mwls.co.uk/icebreakers/icebreaker.php?id=eitheror>
Time: 10 minutes
Groups are created according to what each person's answer is to the questions asked.
- **Seating Plan**
Ask participants to arrange themselves alphabetically according to their first name or in order of their birthday month and date.
Time: 5 minutes
Groups are created alphabetically

Remembering Names

- Alliteration Introductions

A participant starts by making a gesture of some sort (i.e. snapping their fingers) and then alliterating his/her name (i.e. “Jumping Jess”). The person next to them has to then point to that person, repeat whatever gesture was done, repeat the alliterate name, and then say their own alliteration and do their own gesture. Each person must do this for every person before them. It ends with the last person having to repeat every person’s name and gesture.

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Adjective Name Game

The group stands in a circle and each member must think of an adjective that describes them and rhymes with their name. Each person must say their new name and repeat every name that is said before theirs.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/namegames/adjectivenamegame.htm>

Time: 10 minutes

- Line Name Game

Everyone stands in a line shoulder to shoulder. One person at either end of the line starts by saying their name, and doing some kind of motion down the line of people. The group responds by greeting that person. This continues until everyone has gone down the line. Then everyone divides into pairs with the person next to them and does the same thing with their partner, making sure to say both of their names while going down the line. This game can continue with the group sizes getting bigger and bigger.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/namegames/linenamegame.htm>

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Motion Name Game

Have everyone stand in a circle. The first person says their name and does some kind of motion. The group then repeats the name and the motion. This continues until everyone has said their name and the group has repeated everyone’s names and motions.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/namegames/motionnamegame.htm>

Time: 5-10 minutes

- Blanket Name Game

The group divides into two groups and sits on the floor facing each other. A blanket is held up in between the two groups and a member from each group is picked to go up to the blanket. The blanket is then dropped and the selected people must say the other’s name first to win. Whoever loses, goes to the other side.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/namegames/blanketnamegame.htm>

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Whomp ‘Em

Everyone sits in a circle with their legs out and pointing in. One person stands in the middle of the circle with the “Whomp ‘Em Sword” (Styrofoam tube, rolled up newspaper, etc.). Someone starts off by saying someone else’s name and the person in the middle must hit the legs of that person, before they say another individual’s name. If the person in the middle hits the person’s legs before they can say another person’s name, then that person moves to the middle.

Time: 10-15 minutes

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/namegames/whompem.htm>

- Catch the Balloon

Everyone stands in a circle. The leader throws a balloon into the air and calls out someone's name. Whoever's name is called must catch the balloon before it hits the ground. If they do, then they toss the balloon up and call out another person's name.

Time: 5-10 minutes

- Balloon Bop

Everyone stands in a circle. The leader throws a balloon into the air and calls out someone's name and a body part. The person whose name is called has to keep the balloon in the air with whatever body part is called out with their name. This process repeats itself until everyone has gotten their name called.

<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/gamesballoons.html>

Time: 5-10 minutes

- Chaos

This game requires 3-4 small, soft objects (small stuffed animals, bean bags, etc). Everyone stands in a circle and says their name one time. The first person tosses an object to someone saying, "Hi, Name of Person" and then the person who catches it must say, "Thanks, Name of Tosser." Each time the ball is caught and thrown, the person's name must be said. Start with one thrown object and build up to 3-4 objects going around at the same time if you can.

Time: 5-10 minutes

- Name and Number

Everyone puts their name on one side of an index card and a number on the other (numbers must be assigned so they don't repeat). Everyone walks around with their index card (name side up) taped to their shirt and introduces themselves to as many people as possible. After a few minutes everyone turns their cards over so the number side is showing. Everyone gets a numbered piece of paper and tries to write in the most names next to the corresponding number.

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Name Grid

Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4. Each person in the group draws a grid and writes their first names in the grid. Each team gets three minutes to write down as many words they can think of, only using the letters in their names. The letters must adjoin each other in the grid, but do not have to be in a straight line. At the end, each team adds up their points. 3 or 4 letter words= 1 point. 5 letter words=2 points. 6 letter words=3 points.

http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf

Time 5-7 minutes

- Human Knot

Divide the group into smaller groups of 7-16. Each group stands in a circle shoulder to shoulder and puts their hands in the middle. Each member grasps someone else's hand, introducing themselves to each other. Then everyone puts their other hand in the middle grasping another person's hand and introducing themselves to that person. The object is for each group to untangle themselves into a circle again, while holding hands. Every time they speak to one another, they must use that person's name.

<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/HumanKnot.html>

Time: 10-15 minutes

Sharing Something about Themselves/Answering Questions

- Beach Ball Questions

Get a big, inflatable beach ball and a permanent fine or medium point marker. Write a long list of random questions like, “If you were to talk in your sleep, what would you say?” or “What is your favorite movie line?” on the ball, prior to the class meeting. Throw the ball around in a large group and the person who catches it must say their name and answer the question touching their left thumb.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/beachball.htm>

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Important Item

Everyone brings something special or something they would not leave home without to the meeting. Then go around and have everyone share what their object is and explain why it is special.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/Importantitem.htm>

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Lollipop

Pass out dum-dum lollipops to everyone and divide the class into groups. For every letter that appears in the flavor, they have to say something about themselves.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/lollipop.htm>

Time: 10-20 minutes

- Toilet Paper/M&M Game

Split everyone into groups. Tell participants they are going on a three day camping trip and must take as much toilet paper or as many M&M's (whichever applies) that they think they will need. For every square of toilet paper each person has, they must share something about themselves with the group.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/toiletpapergame.htm>

Time: 15-25 minutes

- Self Introduction Exercise

Each person fills out the following paragraph and then shares it with the group.

Hello, my name is _____. I am _____ years old and I am majoring in _____. My hometown is _____ and I really _____ it there because _____. I always dreamed that someday I would _____, and that dream has _____ true. I feel _____ about it now! Some things I like to do include _____. There are many things I am good at and one of them is _____. I did a really interesting thing once and that was _____. My family consists of _____. If I could change one thing about myself it would be _____. Still, I am really glad to be here right now because _____. I would really like to get together with anyone who be interested in _____. The one thing I want to be remembered for is _____. As far as future plans are concerned, I hope to be _____ someday.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/selfintroductionexercise.htm>

Time: 15-20 minutes

- Sentence Stems

The leader reads sentences to the group and everyone must complete them on a piece of paper or as a group, according to them. Sentences are things like, “My favorite pastime is...” or “My fondest childhood memory is...”

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/sentencestems.htm>

Time: 10-15 minutes

- **Masks**
Each person draws/cuts out a life-sized shape of a face. On one side of the face, they draw things that describe how they think other people see them and the other side will represent how they see themselves. After everyone shares and explains their masks to the class.
http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf
Time: 35-45 minutes
- **String Game**
Everyone gets a piece of precut string from the leader. Holding the string between the thumb and forefinger, every time it wraps around their fingers, the person must share something about themselves.
<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/stringgame.htm>
Time: 20-25 minutes
- **Name Tag Mania**
Everyone writes their name on a piece of paper and draws three objects that represent who they are. Participants then share their name and what objects they drew.
<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/namegames/nametagmania.htm>
Time: 30-40 minutes
- **If**
Write 20 “If” questions on index cards and put them in the middle of the circle. The first person introduces him or herself, reads the card aloud, and gives their answer to the question. They then put the card at the bottom of the pile and this continues until everyone has answered a question. See the list of possible Questions at the end of this section.
Time: 15-20 minutes
- **Name Six...**
Everyone sits in a circle with the coordinator in the middle. The leader says someone’s name and asks them to name six things about themselves. Subjects to ask about can be places visited, jobs or roles they’ve had, things they’re good at, things they’re bad at, etc.
<http://www.mwls.co.uk/icebreakers/icebreaker.php?id=namesix>
Time: 25-30 minutes
- **Paper Airplane Game**
Everyone makes a paper airplane and writes their name, something they like and dislike, or two things about themselves. After everyone has written something, they throw their airplanes. Once everyone has someone else’s airplane they find, and introduce that person to the group.
<http://www.training-games.com/pdf/40FreeIceBreakers.pdf>
Time: 20-25 minutes
- **A to Z Freeze Game**
Ask everyone to recite the alphabet in unison. Let them continue, until a random point where the leader says “stop.” Everyone must name something they are looking forward to about the year or the course that begins with whatever letter the class stopped on. Different questions should be asked for each letter.
Time: 20-25 minutes
- **Favorite Animal Game**
Have everyone think of their favorite animal and write three adjectives describing that animal above their name on an index card. Do not write the name of the animal on the card. Then ask the group to mingle or have everyone explain how those three adjectives describe their own personality.
Time: 20-30 minutes
- **The Talent Show**

Everyone picks a special talent or gift they have and can display for the group. Each person introduces themselves, explains, and performs their talent or gift.

- Favorite T-Shirt Game

Everyone brings their favorite T-shirt to the meeting and then explains to the group how that shirt resembles their personality.

Time: 15-20 minutes

- Three Questions Game

Everyone writes down 3 questions they would like to ask others in the group. Then while mingling for a few minutes, everyone asks three different people, one of their questions. After the group has congregated at the end, each person introduces themselves and the group must say three things they now know about that person. <http://www.training-games.com/pdf/40FreeIceBreakers.pdf>

Time: 25-30 minutes

- Where Are You?

Pick a year or date, and each person must say what they were doing on that date or during that year.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/icebreakers/whereareyou.htm>

Time: 10-12 minutes

- “I Have Never” (10 Fingers)

Each person starts off with a piece of candy. Going around in a circle, everyone says something they have never done (“I have never...”). Everyone who has done whatever that person has not, gives them their piece of candy.

Time: 10-15 minutes

- Name Tag Mania

Everyone writes their name on a piece of paper and draws three objects that represent who they are. Participants then share their name and what objects they drew.

<http://www.residentassistant.com/games/namegames/nametagmania.htm>

Time: 15-20 minutes

- Marooned

Split the class into groups of five. What five items would you bring with you if you knew there was a chance you might be stranded? Each group gets five items. They can write down their items and defend their choices to the class. This allows people to see what others’ values are and help promote teamwork and problem solving abilities.

Time: 25-30 minutes