

Fifty Sample Icebreakers

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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: 10-15minutes

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/nametagma.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/nametagma.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

Making Groups

Human Taco

Put different ingredients of a taco on each person's back. Everyone mingles and must ask yes or no questions to find out which ingredient is on their back. After a certain amount of time, they must try to guess what ingredient is on their back and then find other people with different ingredients to make a "human taco" together.

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

Time: 20-30 minutes

Groups are created according to what ingredient is on their index cards.

Mumble Jumble

Before the group meeting, the leader must cut up different images into puzzle pieces and put them in a bag. Each participant takes a puzzle piece. After the leader says “Go,” everyone must try to find other people with pieces that go with their picture. Once they find every piece the group puts them together to create the image. The first group to do this wins.

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

Time: 10-15 minutes

Groups are created according to which puzzle piece they have.

Comic Strip Chaos

This requires a large bin of comic strips cut up into individual frames. Each person picks a frame out of the bin. Everyone must find the other people who have frames from the same comic strip. Sitting down with their new groups, they must arrange their frames into chronological order so the comic strip makes sense.

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

Time: 25-30 minutes

Groups are created according to which comic frame each person has.

Guessing Games

Name That Person

Divide the group into two teams. Each person gets an index card where they write down five little known facts about themselves. The cards are collected from each team.

Drawing one card from each team at a time, the leader reads the clues aloud for the teams to guess who the person is in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Who Am I?

Everyone gets the name of a famous person taped to their back. Participants then go around the room and must ask others ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions, trying to figure out what the name on their back is. If the person gets a “yes” answer, they can continue to ask that person questions until they get a “no.” Then they must move on and ask other people. Once they figure out who they are, they take off the piece of paper and tape it to the front with their real name on it, helping others figure out who they are. The game ends when everyone has figured out what famous person they are.

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

Time: 25-30 minutes

Shoe Game

Everyone stands in a circle, removes one or both of their shoes, and puts them in the middle. The first person picks a pair of shoes and says something about the owner of the shoes. The owner of the shoes then steps forward, introduces themselves and responds to the comment. Then that person picks a pair of shoes, and this continues until everyone has their shoes back.

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

Time: 20-25 minutes

Two Truths and a Lie

Each person introduces themselves and says two true statements about themselves and one lie. Everyone else must guess which of the statements are the true ones and which is the lie. This can be done in groups or all together.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Catch Me if You Can

Players are paired up and form 2 lines (facing in) with partners facing each other. Participants have about 30 seconds to take in as much and observe as much as they can about their partner. After 30 seconds, the 2 lines face outward so their backs are facing their partners. One or both lines then changes something discrete about their appearance (taking out an earring, remove a belt, etc.). Their partner then must try to guess what about them is different.

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

Time: 10-15 minutes

Introductions

Make a Date

Everyone gets a paper plate and draws a clock on it, with lines next to each number. Then everyone walks around and finds a “date” for each hour, writing people’s names on the lines on the clock. No one can make a date with more than one person per hour. Then allow 1-3 minutes for each date and give them different discussion topics.

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

Time: 35-40

Circulate

The group splits into 2 groups of the same size and gets into two concentric circles, with the outer circle facing in and the inner circle facing outwards. The outer circle moves one person counterclockwise every 30 seconds, introducing themselves to each person they end up in front of. This continues until everyone has been introduced to each other.

<http://www.mwls.co.uk/icebreakers/icebreaker.php?id=circ>

Time: 5-7 minutes

Non-verbal Introductions

Everyone divides into pairs. Each member must communicate as much about themselves as they can without speaking to their partner. This can involve drawing pictures, hand gestures, etc. The leader can announce topics and when to change turns. At the end, allow the partners to verbally introduce themselves to each other.

<http://www.mwls.co.uk/icebreakers/icebreaker.php?id=eitheror>

Time: 20-25 minutes

Pat on the Back

Everyone draws an outline of their hand on a piece of paper and tapes it to their back.

Everyone mingles and then writes something positive on each other's backs.

Time: 10-15 minutes