

ICEBREAKERS FOR CLUB MEETINGS

The icebreakers in this document are divided into three categories: General, Science-related, and Math-related. These icebreakers are meant to last from 10-15 minutes at the start of every club meeting as a great way to build group cohesiveness. Students can facilitate them too! Many more can be found at <http://www.ehow.com/ice-breaker/>.

Additional fun icebreakers are on the "Minute To Win It" site. The materials are common household items, and the games are quick <http://www.nbc.com/minute-to-win-it/how-to/>.

GENERAL

The Interview

- Pair each student with a student he hasn't met before. Give them about 15 minutes to conduct interviews with one another and record the results. Include a list of potential questions and interview topics such as favorite food and hobbies, family heritage and an exciting or meaningful life experience. After students gather information and have a chance to talk with one another, give them another 10 minutes to write up a report from the information. Have the kids read the written reports to the class as a way to introduce each student. Allow time for students to ask further questions of the newly introduced student before moving on to the next child's presentation.

Three Truths and One Lie

- Play a simple and fun guessing game with your students to increase awareness and share a little about each other. Pass out notecards to the students and have them write three true things and one lie about themselves on the cards. Fill out a card for yourself as well. Read your items out loud to the class in a random order and get them to guess which items are true and which is the lie. Have each student read his card to the class while others guess which item is the lie. Students will pay close attention to each other while looking for clues to decide which item is false. This game can also be combined with "The Interview" icebreaker.

Name Game

- This icebreaker is a fun way to make introductions and keep everyone engaged. Have the students sit in a circle and introduce themselves. The catch is that the students must say their name and something that they like that starts with the same letter. For instance, a student may say, "My name is Rachel and I like reading." The next person introduces himself and the person next to him. He would say, "My name is Blake and I like basketball. This is Rachel and she likes reading." Repeat the introductions until you have completed the circle.

Whip Around

- Have students arrange chairs in a circle. On a scale of 1-5, have students rate how they are doing. If they want to, they can elaborate as to why, or they can simply give the rating and move on to the next student.

Search for Someone

- This game is ideal for a group whose members don't know one another. At the beginning of your class or meeting, hand everyone a sheet of paper with three or four categories. Include things like favorite movie, favorite book, best dance song and favorite food. After everyone has listed their favorites, students mingle with others to find someone else with the same favorite. Students must find a different person for each category. This rule keeps friends from finishing the game without meeting anyone new.

Start the Year Bingo

- A nontraditional bingo game can help students break the ice on their first day of school. Students will have to interact with one another in order to play the game. Have each student draw a fairly large grid of five squares by five squares on a sheet of binder paper. The students should then write a phrase in each square, such as "has an older brother or sister," "likes pizza," or "has been to Europe." The object of the game is for each student to ask individual classmates what phrases, if any, applies to them. Those classmates should then sign the square that applies to them. The game concludes when all students have managed to have a row of squares signed, or one student has every square signed.

Who Am I?

- In the classroom, to encourage students to talk to each other, play a game of Who Am I? The teacher puts a name of a person, animal, etc on the back of each student. This can be done with a simple self-sticking name tag. The theme, such as Each student is only allowed to ask two yes or no questions of any other student. This encourages them to mingle and talk to everyone. From the answers, the student must deduce the name on his back. Play continues until everyone has figured out their name.

Venn Diagrams

- Randomly assign the students into groups of three. Have each group draw a basic Venn diagram of three overlapping circles. Each circle represents the interests of one of the students in the group. Each group must fill the diagram with things about themselves that are alike and different. Those things they all have in common go in the section where all three circles overlap. Where only two circles overlap students write things that only those two students have in common. Things about the individual students that are different and unique go in the parts of the diagram that do not overlap at all. Compare the various Venn diagrams from one group to the next. Consider making new groups and repeating the activity.

What Changed?

- In this observation game, everyone lines up in two lines facing each other. After everyone is paired up, they are given 30 seconds to study everything about the person in front of them. Then the students in one line turn around and close their eyes. Meanwhile, the students in the other line change something about themselves. Changes could include taking off their glasses, reversing their shoes or removing an earring or a barrette. Once everyone has changed something, the other kids turn around and try to guess what changed. Then, switch roles and play again.

Birthday Lineup

- Inform that group that they cannot talk from this point forward until you give them permission. Have the group get in a line in silence in order by birthday. Once they successfully complete this challenge, you can give the following line up tasks: line up by height, first name, etc.

Human Knot

- The human knot is a true test of teamwork and coordination. This game involves close physicality with one another, so it is best for groups already comfortable with each other. Have all the participants stand in a circle and stick an arm out in the middle of the circle. Instruct them to randomly grab another hand and hold it. Then ask them to stick out their other hand and grab another hand from the circle. The goal is for the group to untie the knot and form a circle, without ever letting go of each other's hands.

Web Answers

- Have all your students sit in the floor in a circle. Sit with the students and hold a ball of yarn in your hand. Tell the students your name and one interesting fact about yourself, such as your favorite hobby or your favorite actor. Hold a piece of the yarn and toss the ball of yarn to one of the students in the circle. He must reveal a favorite or interesting fact about himself and hold a piece of the yarn before tossing it to someone else. Keep going until everyone has a chance to reveal an interesting fact. To make sure everyone was paying attention, ask questions about each classmate. Point at a student and say, "What was his interesting fact?" The student who can answer the question correctly earns a small prize.

Common Three

- Divide the students into groups of three and have them discuss things they have in common, such as hair or eye color. They must also find unusual things they have in common like each person has a brother and a sister or each person's mother has red hair. Tell them they have 15 minutes to find as many common facts as they can. The team who comes up with the most items in common wins the game.

Animals

- Write four animal names on several pieces of paper, such as a pig, cow, dog and cat. Be sure you have at least three or four of the same animal. Fold the pieces of paper and mix them in a bowl. Each student draws one piece of paper (without letting anyone see what it is) out of the bowl. When you say, "Go," the students crawl around mimicking the sounds of the animal they drew. The students cannot talk but can make animal sounds as they try to find the other animals just like them. The first group to have all their animals together wins the game.

Banana Pass

- Have your students get into groups of five or six players and give each team a banana. Each team lies down on the floor in a single file line, head to toe. The second player's feet is at the first player's head. The first player in line puts the banana between his feet. He passes the banana, using only his feet, to the second player in line by lifting his legs off the ground and over his head toward the second player in line. Once the second player in line has the banana between his feet, he passes it to the third player. The first team to get the banana to the last player wins the game.

Big Bubble Name Posters

- Bubble name posters can be a creative way for students to tell their classmates more about themselves. It can also make a great wall display for the classroom. Give each student a large piece of paper and have them draw their names in big bubble writing so that it fills the whole page. Students should then fill each letter with information about themselves. Topics can include family, friends, pets or hobbies. They can even decorate their posters with small illustrations that say something about who they are. Encourage them to make it as colorful as possible. When they are complete, display all of the posters on the classroom wall so that students can find out a little more about their fellow classmates.

Build a Tower

- Divide your group into sets of two to four people. Give each set two newspaper sheets, one foot of tape, five paper clips, one foot of string and a pair of scissors. Give each group 15 minutes to build the tallest tower. Measure each tower to determine who built the tallest one. You can also have the groups describe their approach to building their tower and what they learned about working together.

Fruit Basket

- Ask the group to sit in a circular formation of chairs, with one person selected to stand in the middle. Give each person the name of a different fruit, either by picking them out of a hat or by allowing each person to select his own fruit. The person in the middle will call out two fruit names, and then those two people who've been designated those fruits will scramble to switch places while the person in the middle tries to steal one of the open spaces. The person without a seat must go stand in the middle of the circle and repeat the process; this person may also call "Fruit basket!" which requires everyone in the circle to change seats.

Aluminum Foil Sculptures

- Allot one minute for this game. Give each individual a small sheet of aluminum foil. Instruct the guests that when the clock starts, they will have one minute to create an aluminum sculpture. When the guests are finished, display the "art" on a table in the front and have the group vote on the winner. If your group is large, act as judge and choose the top three sculptures. Decide the winner by a show of hands.

Paper Plate Heads

- A great game to put names with faces, this ice breaker is especially suited for groups of 15 or less. Give each individual a paper plate and a marker. Allot one minute and instruct every individual to draw a self-portrait of her head onto the paper plate. Once the minute is up, collect the paper plates, collate into random order, and have everyone guess who is the focus of each self-portrait.

What's in Your Purse/Wallet

- Before the event, write out a list of items commonly found in purses, wallets and pockets. Stand in front of the group and ask for one of these items. For example, you would say, "I am looking for a ticket stub." The first person to hand you a ticket stub wins a point. Play the game until the list is finished, and give the first place award to the person with the most points. For a team-building variation, place individuals into small groups and appoint a runner in each group who will bring the requested item to the front.

That Rhymes

- Arrange the group into rows, either horizontally or vertically. Give each leader a piece of paper with an easily-rhymed word written on the top, such as bat or bee. Upon hearing the word go, the first person needs to come up with a word that rhymes with the top word. Once he finds a word, he passes the paper onto the next person, who needs to do the same. This continues to the end of the line. The first group to successfully complete the task wins.

Who Said That

- This game requires work on the part of the host, but it is worth the initial effort. Gather up a collection of 10 famous quotes keeping to a specific category--for example, presidents, co-workers or poets. Give each person a piece of paper and ask the group to number the paper from one through 10. Then read the quotes and allow each individual to guess who the quote is attributed to. The winner is the person or persons who guess the most right.

Hum That Tune

- Even if you're working with a musically-challenged group, "Hum That Tune" is an entertaining icebreaker game that will leave everyone laughing. Write down several popular songs or lullabies and put them into a hat. Have a volunteer draw one of the songs and hum it for the group. Let the rest of the group guess what song it is. Continue going around in a circle until everyone has hummed a song. You can distribute prizes to the person who has guessed the most number of songs correctly. Another variation on this game would be to use movies and have participants quote movie lines.

SCIENCE-RELATED

Share a Science Fact

- Students share a cool science fact that they know about (read or seen in the news). Students can bring in the newspaper article, magazine, or book where they found it from or they can just share their fact.

Science Match

- Create pairs of cards related to scientific facts. For example, write a science term on one card and its definition on another card, or write a cause on one card and its corresponding scientific effect on another. Each participant receives one card. Make sure that both parts of each pair are handed out. If there is an uneven number of participants, give yourself a card and join in on the icebreaker. The participants mingle and compare each other's cards, looking for their partners. Once the partners are found, each pair shares the information on their cards.

Science Scavenger Hunt

- Create a list of clues that describe several different scientific objects within the room. Divide the participants into small groups for the scavenger hunt. This icebreaker allows the groups to learn about teamwork, get to know each other and learn more about scientific items. Give the groups a set amount of time to complete the scavenger hunt. At the end of the time period, gather the participants as a group and compare the answers. This also gives the group a chance to discuss the concept of teamwork and how it relates to the class.

Summer Science Experience

- This science icebreaker is ideal in a classroom situation at the beginning of the school year. Ask the kids to think about an example of science they experienced over the summer. This might include a weather encounter, an experiment, cooking or a nature experience. Have the kids write a short paragraph about how the event relates to science. Let the kids share their summer science experiences as a fun way to learn more about each other.

Science Jigsaw Puzzles

- Locate photographs or images of scientific objects, a natural landscape, minerals, animals, astronomical objects, important mathematical formula (like $E=mc^2$); almost anything can be used, so choose objects that might be important or interesting to the group. Glue the photographs to heavy cardboard then cut them into jigsaw puzzle shapes with a utility or craft knife. Have your group split into smaller groups that work together to solve the puzzle. As an added challenge, have the group identify the image after they have completed the puzzle.

Build a Tower

- Divide your group into sets of two to four people. Give each set two newspaper sheets, one foot of tape, five paper clips, one foot of string and a pair of scissors. Give each group 15 minutes to build the tallest tower. Measure each tower to determine who built the tallest one. You can also have the groups describe their approach to building their tower and what they learned about working together.

Middle and High School students can present a science experiment to the rest of the club

- Ideas for experiments can be found at:
<http://www.exploratorium.edu/snacks/index.html>
http://www.exploratorium.edu/explore/everyday_science/

MATH-RELATED

Getting-to-Know-You Venn Diagram

- A Venn diagram is a set of two or more circles that partially overlap. For a getting-to-know-you Venn diagram, divide the groups into sets of two to four people. Have them spend a few minutes learning about each other. Then have each group draw a Venn diagram consisting of one circle for each person in the group; have the circles all overlap. The group should list several traits they all share in this overlapping area. Next each person should record some traits unique to him in the non-overlapping part of one circle.

Memory

- A basic game of memory can instill the most team spirit, and get students back into memorization when it comes to numbers. Separate the class into groups of three or four, giving each group a piece of paper. Using flash cards, display three numbers, one at a time, to the class, and then put them face-down in a pile. Pause while each group works together to write down the numbers that were displayed. Make things more difficult as you progress, by proceeding to show the class four numbers, then five, all the way up to 15. Keep each group of numbers in order in a separate pile. Collect all papers when the game is complete, to determine which group got the most correct answers, or go over the answers as a class.

Geometric Art

- Mixing art and geometry is a fun way for students to identify shapes in everyday life, and combine creativity. Separate students into groups of two or three. Give each group a poster board, a glue stick and a pile of cut-out geometric shapes. Have them create an artistic image by pasting the shapes onto the poster board. You can have them create solely realistic images, or allow abstract creations as well. Upon completion groups can present their creations to the class, explaining any meaning or imagery that they may represent.