

## Icebreakers

Why use icebreakers?

- Create a positive group atmosphere
- Help people to relax
- Break down social barriers
- Energize & motivate
- Help people to "think outside the box"
- Help people to get to know one another

<http://wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html>

- Group juggle - Requires balls or other items that can be passed easily.
  - Arrange participants in a circle, including yourself.
  - Explain that you are going to throw a ball to someone - pick someone out & ask their name, then say
  - "Freddy!"
  - Freddy then picks someone and says "X!"
  - It can be made more challenging by speeding it up, or by introducing more balls/crazy objects.
- Categories – nothing required.
  - Ask everyone to stand up and then to walk around; explain that you will announce a category and that participants should then quickly organise themselves into smaller groups, based on the category to which they belong.
  - Once everyone is organised into their groups, ask each group to identify itself.
  - (Optional) Make a brief comment or ask each group a question.
  - Keep things moving by asking participants to walk around before announcing the next category.
  - Categories can also be used as a fun, simple way to organise people into smaller groups for other activities.
  - **List of categories**
    - Fold your arms across your chest. Is your right or left arm on top?
    - Which side of the bed (left or right) do you get out of in the morning?
    - How many siblings do you have?
    - What colour are your eyes?
    - What's your favourite colour
- 2 truths and a lie – nothing required
  - Students are given 5-10 minutes to think of 2 facts and make up 1 thing about themselves.
  - Students then find another student and tell each other their 3 'facts'. The student that they are talking to has to guess which is the lie – they can keep guessing until they get it right. Encourage students to introduce themselves before they start guessing.
  - The pair then swaps roles, so that both students have guessed each others' lie.
  - Both students in the pair then move on to find someone else and repeat with them.
  - This game can run for a while depending on number of participants, usually it needs to be cut short.

<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/icebreak.html>

- **Marooned**
  - You are marooned on an island. What five (you can use a different number, such as seven, depending upon the size of each team) items would you have brought with you if you knew there was a chance that you might be stranded. Note that they are only allowed five items per team, not per person. You can have them write their items on a flip chart and discuss and defend their choices with the whole group. This activity helps them to learn about other's values and problem solving styles and promotes teamwork.
- Human Bingo
  - Make a list/table with a different attribute in each square. Students go around the room to find someone with that attribute/who has done that thing until they have found someone for each. This can be changed to involve course content, e.g. have a question related to the past week's lecture in each square and get students to find someone who can answer that question – at the end you could go around and find out who can answer each question. Or if used at the start of the course, it can be useful to gauge the prior knowledge of your class.

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/>

<http://www.excellerate.co.nz/freeicebreakers.html>

[http://adulted.about.com/od/icebreakers/Ice\\_Breakers.htm](http://adulted.about.com/od/icebreakers/Ice_Breakers.htm)

[http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_76.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_76.htm)

<http://www.businessstrainingworks.com/Train-the-Trainer/Icebreakers-Free.html>

[http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40\\_icebreakers\\_for\\_small\\_groups.pdf](http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf)

[http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/wp/exp\\_lead\\_grid.htm](http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/wp/exp_lead_grid.htm)

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

[http://www.articles911.com/Training/Games\\_Icebreakers\\_Activities/](http://www.articles911.com/Training/Games_Icebreakers_Activities/)

- Hidden hands - A comic strip from a newspaper (duplicated so each work group has a copy); one envelope for each subgroup.
  - **Preparation**  
Photocopy enough copies of the comic strip to provide one for each work group. Cut each strip into separate panels and place the panels in an envelope.
  - **Process**
  - 1. Instruct the participants to form work groups of three to four members each. Distribute one envelope containing a set of comic strip panels to each team.
  - 2. Direct the members of each team to open the envelope, place the panels of the comic strip face down without examining them, and shuffle them around the table.
  - 3. While the panels are on the table face down, hidden from view, members of each team take turns drawing a panel (without showing it to others), going around until all panels have been chosen. Team members are allowed to describe their own panes as fully as possible, but they are not allowed to look at the panels of the other participants or to show their panels to others.
  - 4. When the team members have agreed on which panel is first in the cartoon, (based on the participants' descriptions of the panels), they place it face down on the table. After they have placed all the panels face down in the order they have determined, they then turn them over to see if they have sequenced the comic in the proper order.
  - **Discussion**  
Lead a discussion on the communication process used to describe the panels and the means by which group decisions were made. Explore ways in which members of the group could have improved the team's performance

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