

Community Building Activities

Adapted from: <http://icebreakerideas.com/quick-icebreakers/>

For the First Month of School:

Creative Name Tags

Give students 5 minutes to make their own nametags. They can list hobbies, draw pictures, or write a self-profile. Be sure to ask for nicknames or “what do they call you at home”.

Famous People/Cities

1. As students arrive, fasten a small index card on each student’s back with the name of a famous city or person.
2. Students walk around the room asking questions. Their classmates can only give them a “yes” or “no” answer.
3. Once enough students have guessed correctly, or the time is up, ask students to talk about which kinds of clues helped them figure out the name of the person or city.

Name Backwards Introduction

Ask the each student to introduce themselves with their name backward. Part or all of the backward names could be used as nicknames throughout the rest of the year.

Name Aerobics

The students all stand in a circle facing each other. One student starts by introducing himself/herself and doing an action for each syllable of his/her name. The entire group repeats the name and motions. Continue until everyone has introduced themselves.

Paper Airplane (first day or week of school)

1. Each student makes a paper airplane and writes their name and two questions to ask someone else about themselves.
2. On cue, everyone throws their airplane around the room, picks up others’ airplanes, and keeps throwing them for a minute or two.

3. When the teacher says, “stop”, everyone must have one paper airplane.
4. Students find the owner of the airplane they have and answer the questions on the airplane.
5. Each student then introduces the owner of the airplane that they have to the group.

Name Game (first day or week of school)

1. Everyone sits in a circle.
2. One student starts by using an academic vocabulary word (this is a good time to introduce the concept) starting with the same letter as their first name, followed by their first name, for example Seismic Silvia, Material Mario.
3. The next person repeats the word and first name of the first person, and then adds their own.
4. Continue around the circle, with the last person having to repeat all the names in order and adding their own.
5. Help students who are struggling to find words and discuss the meaning of each word as it comes up.

Who Am I

Ask each student to describe themselves on paper (in words or pictures) without talking. Then they are to pin their paper on their chest, walk around, and look at each other. Pictures are collected and shuffled and students try to figure out which classmate is being described on their paper. When they think they know, they have a conversation with that classmate to confirm and ask more questions about them.

Who Is It?

Students write down something about themselves they think no one knows. The teacher reads the slips of paper and others guess which classmate it is.

Anytime in the Year to Reconnect Students and Engage them in Academic Discourse

Grounding Activity

Ask students to complete a sentence stem like: "If I could sit on an airplane next to a famous person, I would want it to be...". Students quickly share their responses to get everyone grounded and back in the room together after time apart. You can choose prompts that connect with the content that you are learning for increased opportunity for academic language development.

Pairing Activity

This quick icebreaker works to form pairs or teams. Distribute academic vocabulary words from your unit to each participant and make sure they do not reveal it to others. Have two or more duplicates depending on whether you are pairing or creating teams. Students write (or draw) a description of their word and find others with the same word. At least two people should have each word.

Something New

Ask each student to share one thing that they learned about another student in the class during the previous activity, week, or quarter. Have the rest of the class try and guess the person described.

My Slogan

Many companies have slogans or jingles which reflect their values. Have each student write (or borrow) a slogan to describe his or her core values and share that with the group. Keep this slogan on or at desks and ask students to revisit from time to time to see what, if anything has changed. Allow updates, as needed.

Common Ground

In small groups, ask students to find six things they have in common. Ask each group to assign a recorder and a reporter and have them share these with the large group.