

## ICEBREAKERS

Games suitable for use as Icebreakers. These ought to

- relax people (shake them up)
- be quick and easy
- break the ice!

1. **Ask your Neighbour:** Formulate 15 suitably odd questions and write them on a sheet. Give everyone a copy of the sheet and a pen. Explain that you must find someone who can answer yes for each question and that each person can be used for a maximum of three 'yes' answers. The winner is the first person to get a yes for all 15 questions.

On the top of the sheet include something like:

*On the paper below is a list of 15 questions. Please ask these questions to other members of the group. They should answer either "Yes" or "No". If the answer is "Yes", then ask the person to write their first name by the side of the question. The purpose of the game is to collect 15 "Yes" answers with a name written beside them. When you have 15 "Yes" answers give the completed list to XXX. The first person to do this is the winner.*

*NOTE: you must not collect more than three "Yes" answers from the same person.*

2. **"I Have Never"** A variation on ask you neighbour. The whole group sits in a circle and everyone is given three or four matchsticks - these are your 'lives'. The first person tells the group something they have never done, anyone who has done that thing loses a life and must throw a matchstick into the centre. The game proceeds clockwise with each person saying something they have never done. When you lose all your matchsticks you are 'out' and do not participate any further. The last person 'in' is the winner.

You may need to explain that the subjects should be kept clean - it may be useful to exclude statements in which you had no choice or to do with travel, such as "I have never been a girl" or "I have never been European" or "I have never been to school in the UK" etc.

3 **Postcard Strips.** This ice-breaker got people talking and they didn't want to stop. Often, the students don't know how to start a conversation with someone they don't know. This gives them some openings.

Cut up some postcards (with different pictures on them) into 8 strips each (the length of the short side). On the back of each strip, write a topic word: eg. goal, studying, hobby, music, favorite, sport, vacation, family. Each person takes one strip from a postcard. He then has to find someone (starting with someone he doesn't know yet) introduce himself, and ask a question about the topic on his strip. The partner then asks about the topic on his or her strip. After both questions are answered, they exchange strips and go on to another person to repeat the process until "time" is called.

Part 2 of the game involves people looking at the front of their strips and trying to find the other people who will make up their postcard. The first group to assemble their strips in the correct order to make up the picture on the postcard can receive a prize. You can make this easier by having postcards with different kinds of borders or prominent colors to make recognizing the partners easier. You can also use postcards of famous UK landmarks, or famous places around the world to make it more interesting.

#### 4. Getting to know you Games

- Get in a circle. Leader calls out the name of another and takes their place. That person has to start moving as quickly as possible, and calls out another person's name and takes *their* place ...etc

You can get two of these running in the same circle.

(Good to get to know names of a new group - make sure that people try to name someone they know less well.)

- Get in a circle. Leader in middle. Says eg "Everyone with black hair swap places" and as they move the leader takes one place, leaving one person in the middle. They say, eg "Everyone who is not wearing socks swap places." Etc. (Fun without any special purpose.)

- Everyone milling around (dancing to music?) - music stops and leader says eg "get into threes". Anyone not in a group sits down and is out. Repeat with fives, fours, sevens etc until only two of three left.

(Good then to point out how divisive this can be and how we actually want to include people, not leave them out.)

- Everyone to get in a line:

- in order of height
- in order of birthday (maybe without talking)
- in order of number of countries visited
- in order of distance from birth place

(Good to learn a little about some people.)

#### 5. Town/Areas (This only works the students are living in different towns.)

At the beginning of a meeting as people are coming in, give each person a sheet of paper and pencil. Tell them you are having a contest to see who can come up with a list of the most places (city or town in host culture) that people currently live in. They must get the name of the town and also the name of the person or people that live in that town. So on the left will be a column of towns and on the right will be the people who live in those towns. This gets them talking to one another, exchanges names and even helps with geography. Get a big map and show where the towns are that people come up with. Be sure to give a "swell" prize to the winner.

You can also do this for the country that they come from, residence halls or even streets if everyone is in one town.

**6. Get Acquainted Game** Get in groups of threes each person in the three must interview one other in the three to the extent that they can provide a humorous introduction to that person at the end of the game. It's good to only allow 2,3 minutes per interview and then bring the group together again. Each person must get up and introduce their interviewee to the group in a humorous way.

**7 Getting to know each other with M&Ms:** have a bowl of M&Ms and a colour-coded list of subjects to talk about, eg brown - favourite film, green - family, red - where you come from. In turn, 1 person closes eyes and takes an M&M out of the bowl. You talk about the subject related to the colour of your M&M for about a minute then eat it - then the next person goes. Works well as a first night ice-breaker.

8. For more getting-to-know-you questions & ice-breaker activities, go to "Downloadable Resources" → "Language & TEFL Resources" → "90min Lesson Plans" → "Getting to know you".