

## A Guide to Icebreakers

Icebreakers are a good way to help relax or ease people into a group meeting or learning situation, for example in a PAL session. They are a good way to learn each other's names and personal information. Creating a warm and friendly personal learning environment is important as the attendees are more likely to participate and learn more.



A well-chosen icebreaker game can relax the mood, but a poorly chosen icebreaker can have the opposite effect, making people feel nervous and uncomfortable. Before choosing an icebreaker do some research about your audience: their age, familiarity with one another and the purpose of the session.

This hand out has been designed to give you some ideas of icebreakers that you can use in your PAL sessions. Please note that some will not be relevant all of the time or at all for your group. If you have any good ideas for icebreaker and want to share them with other PAL Leaders, please email them to [PeerSupport@bath.ac.uk](mailto:PeerSupport@bath.ac.uk).

Sometimes it's better to relate an ice breaker to the topics in your session – this helps engage the students in the session quickly while also helping attendees relax into the session. Can you adapt any of these activities to fit with a topic from your course?

### Unique Things

Each person has to introduce themselves and state one thing about them/something they've done which they think is unique, if someone else has done it then they have to think of something else.

### Counting

The group stands in a circle and the leader tells them that between them they have to count to 10. One person randomly says **1** and then it is up to another random person to say **2** and so on. If two people try and say the same number at the same time then the counting starts again from the beginning.

## Line Up



Leaders will give the instruction or the group to line up in a particular way (i.e. in order by shoe size, by house number, by number of bones broken etc) and they should get into that line as quickly as possible. The twist is that they must do it in **silence**.

## Introduction Tennis

The group stands in a circle and everyone introduces themselves by name, what discipline they are from and their favourite band/type of music. A tennis ball is then thrown from person to person. The person throwing the ball must shout the person's name they are throwing it to.



## Tell Us About Yourself

Pass around a bag of sweets. Tell the participants to take as many as they want. Once all the participants have some, tell them that for each sweet they took they have to say one thing about themselves.

## Marooned

Each small group is asked to imagine that they are marooned on an island and collaboratively decide what five items they would have brought with them if they had known there was a chance they were stranded. Note that they are only allowed five items per team, not per person.

This icebreaker will give the participants the opportunity to discuss and argue their point, hence gaining insight into the other's values and problem solving styles. It also promotes teamwork.

## Human Bingo

Each person is given a bingo card with statements such as 'can play an



instrument' or 'has green eyes'. Each bingo card doesn't have to be completely unique, there should be a number of different cards around the room.

The players have to find someone who matched that statement and get them to sign their name in the corresponding box. Players cannot sign more than one

box on a card.

## Grab the Finger

Participants stand in a circle and put out their left hand with their palm up and their right index finger pointing down and touching their neighbour's palm. The leader decides a word that the participants have to listen for. When the leader says this word, participants have to do two things – try to catch the person's finger with their left hand and also try to lift their own finger before getting caught. If a person's finger is caught then they are out of the game and the circle gets smaller.

## 2 Truths and a Lie

In pairs, participants have to say three facts to each other. 2 of these facts should be true and the other should be false. The listener has to guess which of the facts were false.

## Birthday Party

Tell everyone in the group that it's their birthday and you threw a party for them! Different people from all over have come to celebrate and they all know you, but they don't know each other! As the birthday host, you need to introduce as many people as you can to each other.

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For more ideas for icebreaker games and activities please check out the following websites:

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

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

