



# Virtual Icebreakers

## What are virtual icebreakers?

An Icebreaker is a quick and fun game or activity intended to relax the participating members and get conversation flowing. They can be used at the beginning of an online meeting, workshop or team building activity--It's a way of "breaking the ice".

## Why use icebreakers



Icebreakers play a fundamental role in helping people get to know each other. They are useful for a variety of reasons:

- 1.They break down barriers that naturally exist in the workplace and within people in general, by giving people something to talk about and warming up the environment in an encouraging way .
- 2.They help get everyone involved to ensure that all participants join in.
- 3.They help us get to know each other better, and over time, they can add a layer of fun that helps the team bond in a very unique way. Suddenly "Bob from engineering" is "Bob from engineering whose favorite food is pizza, whose favorite smell is the rain and who wants to build a canoe."

## Using icebreakers as a way to get to know someone

Getting to know someone can be awkward at first AND intimidating when you're meeting a lot of new faces. Icebreaker questions allow people to introduce themselves to the other participants. This is an effective method of engaging all members from the get-go. It helps to "lighten the mood" so that everyone feels at ease and comfortable speaking up.

# Using icebreakers when participants know each other

It's still a good idea to use icebreakers, even when team members know each other. It can help build trust and camaraderie on remote teams, and give us more insight into our co-workers' personalities.



## Things to consider before choosing an icebreaker activity

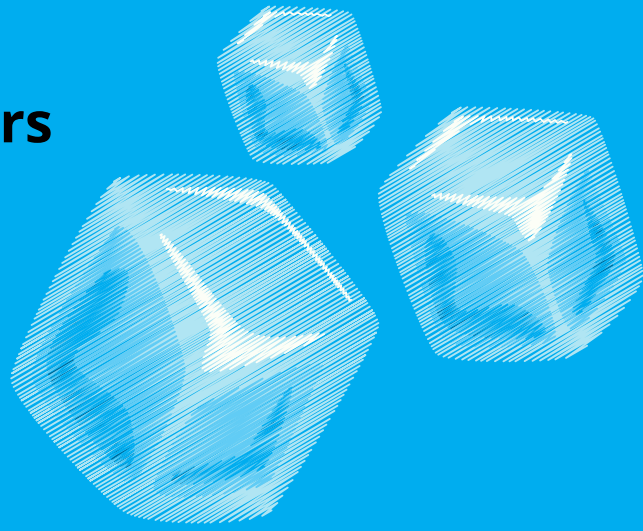
- What is the goal of this icebreaker? Is it intended to relax people before a team meeting or team building activity? Are you meeting for the first time? What type of meeting is it?
- Although virtual icebreakers can be a lot of fun, they're not appropriate for every meeting. It's important that you identify your audience first. Who's attending the meeting? How many participants will there be? Are there cultural differences? How well do people know each other? Etc...
- Plan in advance and adapt accordingly. How much time do you want to spend on this activity? How do you want to begin? What type of activity do you want to use?
- Icebreakers don't always go exactly as planned. Sometimes going with the flow and leaving things open helps to create memorable and positive experiences.

## How to start your icebreaker activity

- Introduce the activity to the group and explain why you're using it.
- Set a timeframe of how long you want the activity to last. Who will be in charge of monitoring the time? Will you set an alarm?
- Decide who will go first. Will you go by name in alphabetical order or will people volunteer?
- Have a halftime "bell", that way if you're running behind schedule, you can speed things along so that everyone will have the opportunity to participate.

# Types of icebreakers

- Check in protocol
- Personality tests
- Questions
- Games



## Check-in protocol

The [Jim and Michele McCarthy](#) check-in protocol allows the participants of a meeting to say how he or she is feeling, e.g. "I feel one or more of mad, sad, glad, or afraid." Or my traffic light is red, yellow, or green". Anything that indicates how someone might be feeling.

## Personality tests

There are a variety of personal tests that give us insight into how each personality operates.

- [Myers & Briggs](#) uses four psychological preferences to analyze personality.
- [How to Fascinate](#) shows what strengths you would use to market yourself.
- [WorkStyle](#) is an online tool that measures employees' personality and then generates profiles for each employee, and the team as a whole.

## Icebreaker questions

Not all meetings have the same purpose, nor the same people. In order to make sure the activity has successful results, it's a good idea to break your icebreaker questions into different categories to suit each particular situation, e.g. Icebreakers for getting to know each other; icebreakers for team meetings, etc...

# Icebreakers for getting to know your teammates



1. What was a favorite moment of [insert any time frame]?
2. What was your first job?
3. What's your favorite food? Drink?
4. What's your biggest guilty pleasure?
5. Where's your favorite place to go on vacation?
6. What's your favorite smell?
7. If you were an ice cream what flavor would you be?
8. Do you have any pets?
9. What's your favorite sport to watch/play?
10. Did you have any imaginary friends when you were young?
11. What's your favorite color?
12. What's your biggest pet peeve?
13. What's your favorite season and why?
14. If there was a movie made about your life, who would play you?
15. What do your surroundings look like?
16. What's your favorite movie?
17. Do you have a favorite music group, era or album?
18. When I dance I look like \_\_\_\_. [fill in the blank]
19. Share a favorite memory that includes food.
20. What's the story of your name?
21. Take a picture from your window and have people guess where you are.
22. What's the weather like where you are?
23. Show something that's on your desk and tell a story about it.
24. What Olympic sport would you play?
25. What kind of coffee drinker are you? (latte, black, flavored, etc)
26. What's the best dessert you've ever had? Why?

## Icebreakers that get people laughing



1. Be honest. How often do you work from bed?
2. What's the last movie that made you cry?
3. You accidentally kill someone...who do you call to help you bury the body?
4. Is cereal soup? Why or why not.
5. What is your biggest unwritten rule for friendship that your friends don't know?
6. What accent would your dog have if he/she could speak?
7. What inanimate object do you talk to and why?
8. How often do you regret making the plans you made during your five minutes of extrovertism?
9. Is there a difference between a spotted dot and a dotted spot?
10. You've got your movie ready and your hot pizza has just arrived when your best friend calls you crying and asks if you can come over. What do you say?
11. Thin fries or steak fries?
12. Ketchup or Mayonnaise?
13. What is the worst excuse you've ever used when calling in sick?
14. If you were transported 400 years into the past with no clothes or anything else, how would you prove that you were from the future?
15. If you were wrongfully put into an insane asylum, how would you convince them that you're actually sane and not just pretending?
16. What item at the supermarket makes you feel embarrassed every time you have to buy it?
17. What would your theme song be if music played every time you walked outside?
18. You find a purse with an elderly woman's driver's license, a couple of credit cards, a small amount of cash and the winning multi million dollar lottery ticket.
19. What do you do?
20. What's the weirdest thing a guest has done at your house?
21. What was your worst hairstyle ever?
22. If you could exchange one body part, what would it be?

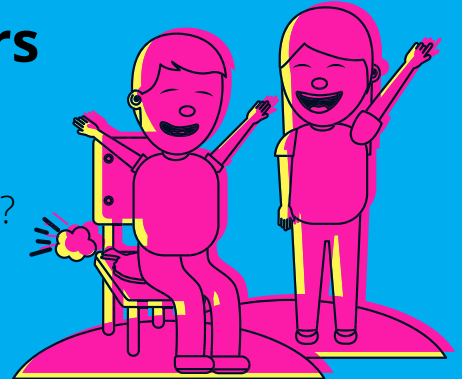
# 'Would you rather' Icebreakers

1. Would you rather eat pizza or burgers every day of the week?
2. Would you rather be stranded in the Antarctic or a tropical island
3. Would you rather be known for helping to establish world peace or resolving climate change?
4. Would you rather be a famous sports star or an astrophysicist?
5. Would you rather be the best speller or mathematician in the world?
6. Would you rather have perfect looks or Bill Gates' mind?
7. Would you rather go to Jupiter or Mars?
8. Would you rather travel the world for the rest of your life and have just enough money to get by, or be rich and never have time to travel
9. Would you rather have the power to become invisible or fly?
10. Would you rather travel to the bottom of the sea or to the moon?

## Slightly inappropriate icebreakers

(When you know the participants)

1. Hot tinder date or popcorn, chocolate and a movie?
2. Brad Pitt or Hugh Jackman?
3. Charlize Theron or Angelina Jolie?
4. Boxers, briefs or commando?
5. A joint or a bottle of wine?
6. If you could erase one past experience, what would it be?
7. What's the grossest thing that's come out of your body?
8. What's the best cure for a hangover?!
9. If a penguin walked through the door right now wearing a sombrero, what would he say?
10. How would you kill someone?



# Icebreakers for serious meetings



1. Why are you here?
2. What expertise are you bringing to the table?
3. What do you expect to get out of this event/training/workshop?
4. In a single word, what do you want to know/learn?
5. What's your level of understanding of the topic?
6. How do you prepare when it's time to do your best focus work?
7. What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?
8. What has been the best team experience for you and why?
9. Is there anything on your mind that you'd like to talk about?
10. What can the group do that will help you stay engaged.
11. What are your ideal working ours and why?
12. Who was one of your heroes growing up?
13. In what ways do you consider yourself fortunate?
14. What personal project are you working on right now?

## Community favorites

(Thank you to all the Collaboration Superpowers subscribers for sharing your ideas with me!)

1. What actor/actress would you want to play you in a movie and why?
2. Tell us about one fun and/or crazy thing you've done in your life.
3. Share a favorite quote and tell us why it's your favorite.
4. Take a pic of their feet and share it with the group.
5. What's the one thing that is never missing in your fridge?
6. What would you do for a million dollars?
7. Let's take all 20 seconds of silence: close your eyes and imagine the best outcome this meeting can bring you.
8. Let's make a list of all the languages spoken by the people in this meeting.
9. Each site, state where you are, and ask the other sites if they know what's your capital, who is your president, what currency is used here.
10. If you had to describe your mood at this moment in terms of the weather, how would you explain it?

11. What was your favorite toy as a child?
12. Share one thing that no one knows about you?
13. If every time you entered this virtual meeting room a specific personal jingle played, what would it be?
14. What have you always wanted to do but haven't done yet?
15. TGIF. This is a fun game that gets you talking to famous people around the world.
  - Choose a theme (like Rockstars, Drinks, Sport legends, Winter game, etc...
  - Then all participants must change their names before logging in to the conference call so their colleagues see a different name on the screen.
  - Spend the first five minutes of the meeting explaining who you are and team members have to guess based off your information



## Icebreaker games

These days you can create, modify or replicate any sort of game online, even board games with the help of apps like [GameStructure](#).

### **Two truths, one lie**

Each member tells the group three things about themselves--two are true and one is a lie. Participants have to guess which one is the lie.

### **Personal Maps**

This is a simple mind-mapping technique to help you get to know your remote or co-located team members.

### **Who's story is it anyway?**

This is a fun game where all participants write down something strange or funny that happened to them. They can then send it to the meeting facilitator who reads the story and the other participants have to guess whose story it is. More icebreaker resources



## Guess the emoji board

This fun and engaging game where everyone gets a turn to guess their colleagues' most used emoji will have everyone laughing and warmed up in no time.



## More icebreaker resources

[Virtual Icebreakers](#)

[Connection and Energy Activities](#)

[Dr. Clue](#)

[Icebreaker Range](#)

[Parabol](#)