

# Icebreakers

Icebreakers are activities that are designed to make students feel more relaxed and get to know each other, especially during the first day or couple day of class. Often on the first day of class, students feel shy or nervous and often don't feel comfortable speaking. Breaking the ice early and making students feel good about their situation can set the tone for an entire course. Feel free to email Vicky at [vicky@intercambioweb.org](mailto:vicky@intercambioweb.org) if you have any other Icebreaker activity ideas.

Here are some Icebreaker activities to try with your students. All of these activities can be used for upper level students. However, many of these activities are too difficult for our lower level students. Each activity indicates what level the activity should be used for.

## **A. Peek a hoo: *All levels***

Peek-A-Who: Break the class into two teams. Have them stand on two different sides, while you and a helper hold up a sheet in the middle. Both teams choose a representative to stand up facing the sheet, as everyone else crouches down out of view. At the count of three, you and the helper lower the sheet, and the two people standing have to remember each other's name. The loser goes to the other team. Repeat with two more representatives. Team members keep changing, and the game ends when everyone is on one side (or when the fun dies down!).

## **B. The Memory Game: *All levels***

1. Write on the board the following:
  - a. Name
  - b. Hometown
  - c. Occupation
  - d. Marital status
  - e. Hobbies
2. Have everyone write their name on a name tag
3. Put everyone in two lines facing each other. Every person should be facing another.
4. Tell everyone to ask his or her partner questions. They must formulate questions from the topics on the board. It would good to model this part with a student to make sure they understand what to do.
5. Give them some time to ask and answer the questions
6. Once you tell them to stop, tell them to exchange their nametag with the person that they had just interviewed and tell them that they must now be that person.
7. Tell them to now switch partners and answer the questions with their new identity.
8. Continue to do this until all students have met each other.
9. When the game is over, have each student introduce the person whose nametag they are wearing.

### **C: Three Slips of Paper: *Intermediate or Advanced Levels***

1. Give each student three slips of paper. Tell them to write down on each slip of paper three interesting things about themselves or their family, one of those things being a lie. Example: I play in a rock and roll band (it is recommended that you tell them something interesting about yourself).
2. Have them crumple up their slips of paper and put them in a basket or bag.
3. When all slips have been collected, have student pick 3. If they pick their own, they should put them back into the basket.
4. Then have students stand up, walk around and ask each other questions based on what is written down on the slips of paper. For example, if the slip of paper says, "I used to play the guitar?," that person has to walk around asking the other students if one of them used to play the guitar. When the person finds the student they write down the name of the person on that slip of paper. Once everyone has found out who the people are and have written down their names they can sit down.
5. Choose a student and have them introduce themselves (you should have this already written on the board):
  - My name is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I'm from \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Ask students what they can tell you about the student who just introduced him/herself or who has the slip of paper telling something about the student that just introduced him/herself. Write the three pieces of information on the board.
7. Ask the students what they think is not true. Then encourage the students to explain, in more detail, about the other two pieces of information that they wrote down. Choose the following student.

### **D: The Guessing Game:**

1. Make a list of things about yourself that are either true or false. Have the class guess at which things are true or false. You can make a survey on the board if you'd like. For a larger class, you can either limit the list to three items, or you can put students into smaller groups. Follow the model.
2. What is true about Rodrigo?
  1. He was born in Mexico, but lived all of his life in the US.
  2. He used to be a rock star in Mexico.
  3. His father did all the cooking in the family when he was younger.