

6 Favorite Icebreakers

1. Cocktail Party

- Use this icebreaker with larger groups.
- Ask learners to circulate and get acquainted with another learner.
- After one minute, announce “CHANGE” and ask everyone to find a new person.
- Continue changing every minute until there have been opportunities for people to meet most of the others in the group. Expect that people won’t meet everyone else, but they should meet most of them.

2. Common Ground

- Works best for small groups or for each small group sitting together as a team (e.g. 4 to 6 learners).
- Give the groups a specific time (e.g. 5 minutes) to write a list of everything they all have in common. Tell them to avoid the obvious (e.g. “we’re all taking this workshop”).
- When time is up, ask each group how many items they have listed.
- For fun, ask them to announce some of the most interesting items.

3. Dreams/Nightmares

- Each learner states a “dream” about something positive they hope will happen in this course.
- Each learner states a “nightmare” about something negative they hope will not happen on this course.
- List the dreams and nightmares on a flipchart so all groups can read them.

4. Five Guests

- Each learner shares with his/her group his/her answer to the following question: “If you could have any 5 people, living or dead, as guests in your home for an evening, who would they be and what would you talk about?”
- After hearing from everyone, the group selects their “all-star” team of 5 guests from all the names listed. Tell each group to write the 5 names on their flipchart so the other groups can read them.

5. Group Resumé

- Small groups write their collective resumé on a flipchart.
- Ask them to list: degrees, diplomas, and courses attended; previous jobs held; years in the training field; courses they have taught; major skill areas; hobbies.

6. Me Too

- Works best for small groups or for each small group sitting together as a team (e.g. 4 to 6 learners).
- Everyone in the group gets 10 pennies/toothpicks/scraps of paper, etc.
- The first learner states something he/she has done (e.g. water skiing).
- Everyone else who has done the same thing admits it and puts one penny in the middle of the table.
- Then, the second person states something (e.g. I have eaten frogs’ legs).
- Everyone who has done it puts another penny in the center.
- Continue until someone has run out of pennies.

