



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY
VANCOUVER

Student Ambassador Icebreaker Anthology

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Introductory Icebreakers

No Materials Required



Likable Lucy

Likable Lucy is a name game with many variations. Participants pair an adjective with their first name and take turns repeating previous participant names and adjectives until the final participant recites the entire group's names to end the game.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10 – 20 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Instruct participants to think of an adjective that describes them. For example: Likable Lucy, Patient Patricia, or Strong Sam.
 - *Note: Facilitators can instruct participants to specifically chose alliterative adjectives that correspond with the first letter of the participant's preferred first name (ie Likable Lucy), or allow participants to choose any adjective they want (Friendly Lucy).*
- After everyone has selected an adjective, designate one person to start the game and determine whether play will continue to the left or right.
- Explain that each person in the circle will state their adjective followed by their preferred first name. The first person will say their adjective and their name. The second person in the circle will say the previous person's adjective and name before saying their own.
- The process will continue around the circle until the final person says everyone's adjectives and names, in order, before saying their own.
 - *Note: The facilitator may volunteer to be the final player to prevent participants from feeling pressured to perform at the end of the game. Placing the facilitator last is also a great way to build group trust in the facilitator after hearing each group member's name repeated correctly.*



Get to Know You Icebreakers

No Materials Required



Two Truths and a Lie

Two Truths and a Lie is a classic “get to know you” icebreaker. Participants tell the group two truths and one lie. The object of the game is to determine which statement is the false one.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10 – 20 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Instruct each participant to think of three statements about themselves that they are comfortable sharing, out loud, with the group. Two must be true statements, and one must be false.
- Explain to each participant that they will take turns introducing themselves and sharing their three statements in any order they choose.
- As each person takes their turn, the other participants will listen to the speaker with the goal of determining which statement is false after the speaker finishes sharing.
- After a brief group discussion, the facilitator will lead the participants (excluding the speaker) to vote on which statement they think is the lie.
- To end each round, the facilitator will ask the speaker to reveal which statement was the lie and repeat the process until each participant in the group has an opportunity to share.
 - *Note: This activity can be altered so instead of asking participants to share two truths and a lie the facilitator can ask students to share two facts and the answer to an open ended question like “What are you most excited for at WSU Vancouver?”.*

Concentration

Concentration is a game where participants are split into two lines and take turns changing small details about their appearances and seeing if the other participants notice.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Over 10 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Split participants into two equal groups and ask each group to stand in two parallel lines facing each other.
- Explain to participants that one side at a time will take turns changing small things about their physical appearance such as removing a jacket, switching jewelry, untying shoelaces, or changing their hair style. Any change is acceptable if the change is easily observable.
 - *Note: Facilitators should discourage changes that are not in sight of the opposite line. For example, if a participant starts with their shirt fully tucked in, an acceptable change would be to fully untuck the shirt while an unacceptable change would be only untucking the back of their shirt because this change cannot be observed from a stationary position, directly facing other participants.*
- To begin each round, the facilitator selects one line to be the observers and the opposite line to change a set number of things about their appearance (generally 3 to 5 changes).
- Instruct each side to turn around so both sides are facing away from each other. Give the participants up to 30 seconds to make the designated number of physical changes before asking the group to face each other again.
- Once the two lines are facing each other allow the observers up to 30 seconds to name as many changes as they can.
- After time has elapsed, or the observers have identified all the physical changes, have the lines reverse roles and repeat.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity after each team has taken 2 turns if participant interest appears to decline.

Highlight, Lowlight, Insight

This icebreaker is best used towards the end of an event, day of training, or series of icebreakers with the facilitator as a closing activity. Participants are asked to reflect on their experience and share a highlight, lowlight, and insight with the group.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Under 30

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Instruct participants to reflect on the previous icebreaker activities they have completed in the session, or the activities the group has participated in during a larger event.
- Each participant will take turns sharing one highlight (a positive experience), one lowlight (something the participant disliked), and an insight (something the participant learned) from their experience.
- After giving the participants a moment to think, the facilitator can instruct participants to share “popcorn style”, where the participants share without following an established order, or by taking turns moving around the circle to the left or right of the first participant who shares.
 - *Note: Sharing in a “popcorn style” allows quick thinking participants to share immediately while also providing time for other participants to process the question and think through what they want to share with the group.*
- When each participant has finished sharing, the facilitator will share any final thoughts with the group, convey important information as needed, and close the group’s time together.



Team Building Icebreakers

No Materials Needed



Find Your Pair

Find Your Pair encourages participants to mingle throughout an area to find the participant who is assigned the word that “pairs” with their own.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 20-30 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Explain to participants that each member of the group is going to be given a word that they will need to remember in order to successfully complete the game.
- Each person will have a word that directly corresponds with one other person's assigned word. An example pair could be salt/pepper, or Paris/France. Any creative combination will work if the connection is widely recognizable.
 - *Note: Avoid using combinations like peanut butter/jelly and peanut butter/chocolate at the same time to avoid participant confusion.*
- Words can be assigned to participants through whatever method the facilitator deems best. Participants could be asked to line up and approach the facilitator, one at a time, and have a word whispered to them from a pre-determined list or be shown a flashcard with a single word on it.
- After all participants have been assigned a pair word, instruct participants to mingle around the area.
- Individual participants will approach each other and say their assigned word to each other. If the words match, they will stand together until all participants have found their pair. If the participant words do not match, the participants will need to approach additional group members until they find their pair.
- When all the participants are standing in pairs, ask each pair to say their words out loud to check if each participant is paired correctly.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Tall Tales

This is a popular icebreaker with many possible ways of playing. Participants sit in a circle and take turns sharing part of a sentence followed by “and then...” to create a humorous, absurd story.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Under 25 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain that the group is going to create a “tall tale” together. Each participant will share one, short sentence followed by the phrase “And then...” which signals their turn is over.
 - *Note: Alternatively, participants can be instructed to say one word at a time instead of full sentences in large groups over 20. This version is known as “One Word At a Time Story”.*
- Before starting the story, establish if the game will continue to the left or right of the facilitator who will start the story.
- To begin the story, the facilitator should choose a main character, an action, and a setting for the group to expand on. For example: “One day, Bobby got up for school. And then...”.
- The group will take turns building onto the story until it reaches a conclusion.
 - *Note: If participant interest starts to lag, or a natural conclusion seems elusive, the facilitator can encourage participants to wrap up the story or say “Until finally...” on their next turn instead of “And then...” to force a conclusion.*
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Line Up By...

Line Up By... is one variation from the “No Talking but Move” family of icebreakers where participants are asked to form a line based on specific criteria, without talking.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None
Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants
Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Explain to participants that they will be asked to work together, as a team, to create a horizontal line without talking to each other.
- The facilitator will select a category which affects how the participants line up relative to each other. Common examples include line up by birthday (month and day, not birth year), line up alphabetically by first name, or line up by an assigned number from the facilitator.
 - *Note: Categories such as line up by age can be ineffective if the participants are extremely close in age (think a group of middle schoolers) and potentially embarrassing, or offensive, to groups with a broader age range.*
- Tell participants how they should line up (ie by birthday) and remind them only non-verbal communication is allowed.
- Allow participants to begin arranging themselves into a single horizontal line, reminding them not to speak if necessary.
- Once the group has formed a line, ask the participants if they are finished.
- If the participants signal they are confident in their order, the facilitator should ask each participant to reveal their response to the criteria starting at one end of the line (ie each person says their birth month and day if the facilitator instructed participants to line up by birthday).
- Regardless of if the participants correctly lined up or not, the facilitator should encourage their effort and ask the participants to reflect about what made them successful and what was challenging.
 - *Note: If the group made more than 3 errors in their line order the facilitator can give the group a chance to correct themselves. This is most effective if playing only one round or used in the first round only.*
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Animal Round Up

Animal Round Up is one variation from the “No Talking But Move” family of icebreakers where participants are asked to form a line based on specific criteria, without talking.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None
Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants
Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Explain to participants that they will be asked to work together, as a team, to create a horizontal line without talking to each other.
- Ask participants to silently think of their favorite animal.
- Instruct the participants that they need to line up from smallest to largest animal, but they can only communicate by making gestures that imitate their animal or by imitating the sound their animal makes.
- Allow participants to begin arranging themselves into a single horizontal line, reminding them not to use words if necessary.
- Once the group has formed a line, ask the participants if they are finished.
- If the participants are confident in their order, the facilitator should ask each participant to reveal their favorite animal starting with the end of the line that should have the small animals, moving towards the large animal end of the line.
 - *Note: Avoid allowing the group to argue over technicalities. For example, if multiple people choose dog as their favorite animal it may make sense to distinguish a Great Dane from a Chihuahua, but not a Labrador Retriever from a German Shepard because those breeds are extremely close in size.*
- Regardless of if the participants correctly lined up or not, the facilitator should encourage their effort and ask the participants to reflect about what made them successful and what was challenging.
 - *Note: If the group made more than 3 errors in their line order the facilitator can give the group a chance to correct themselves. This is most effective if playing only one round or used in the first round only.*
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Consensus

The goal of consensus is for each group of participants to make the same noise/gesture at the same time without consulting other groups.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Over 20 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Divide participants into 3 separate groups. The 3 groups do not need to be exactly even, however the groups should be as close to even as possible.
- Instruct each group to create a noise/gesture to identify themselves. This can be something simple like clapping to a rhythm, waving “jazz hands”, or making cat noises while holding their hands up to imitate paws.
- After each group has decided on their gesture, the facilitator should reconvene the groups and have each group take turns performing their gestures for the other groups.
- Explain to the 3 groups that after you (the facilitator) counts to three, all the groups must perform one of the previously established noise/gesture combinations.
- Give the groups 10 seconds to decide which noise/gesture they are going to make. After time is up, count to three and see which gestures are enacted.
- Repeat the discussion and display process until all three groups do the same noise/gesture at the same time achieving “Consensus”.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Strange Disease Diagnosis Game

Uh oh, the patient is acting strange! First introduced by Layne Bauer (2016), The Strange Disease Diagnosis is Game (also known as the Mysterious Illness Game, Psychiatrist Game, or Diagnosis Game) involves improvisation, guesswork, and silliness.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Select a volunteer to be the doctor from the group and explain that the other participants will be patients.
- To play the Strange Disease Diagnosis Game the facilitator will ask the designated doctor to leave the immediate area so the patients can discuss what disease, illness, or syndrome they collectively are afflicted with. For example, if the group is affected by “Chicken-itis” they may think they are chickens and randomly make chicken noises after the doctor is invited back to the circle.
 - *Note: Participants can be afflicted by any number of strange diseases including ones that make the group believe they are a well-known celebrity or fictional character, diseases that make the group think they are secret agents, or any number of humorous afflictions. Encourage the group to stick to one key symptom, or behavior so the doctor has a stronger chance of correctly guessing what is ailing the group.*
- After deciding what is ailing the group, invite the doctor back to the circle and instruct the doctor that the group has suddenly fallen ill with a mysterious disease. The doctor may ask questions in addition to making observations about the group’s behavior to form educated guesses about the disease.
- Once the doctor has correctly guessed the name of the disease, or close enough that the doctor clearly understands what is happening, the group can reveal exactly what is afflicting them and restart the game with a new doctor.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Crazy Handshake Pairs

Crazy Handshake Pairs encourages participants to rapidly form bonds by pairing them together to create unique handshakes.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Divide participants into groups of two and ask the pairs to space themselves evenly throughout the area. Participants should have room to move their arms around without hitting another participant.
- Explain to participants that they will have approximately two minutes to create and practice a crazy handshake with their partner. The handshake can be complex or simple but instruct participants that their handshake needs to have at least three unique moves (ie left hand high-five, right hand high-five, both hands high-five).
- Give participants time to create their crazy handshakes. After two minutes elapse, or all the groups seem finished creating their handshake, the facilitator will call the group back together and ask if any pairs want to share their handshake with the group.
 - *Note: Pairs should not be forced to share their handshake with the entire group if they do not want to. There should not be an expectation that every group shares their handshake for the sake of time in larger groups.*
- After several groups have shared the facilitator will instruct participants to find a new pair partner. Encourage participants to find someone they do not already know.
- Instruct participants to create a new, unique handshake with their new partner. After two minutes elapse, or all the groups seem finished creating their handshake, the facilitator will again call the group back together and ask if any pairs want to share their handshake with the group.
- Instead of asking participants to immediately find a new partner, the facilitator will instruct participants to find their first pair partner and complete their first handshake together.
- The facilitator can alternate between participants completing their first pair handshake and second pair handshake with the appropriate partners two or three times before asking participants to find a third unique handshake partner.
- Repeat the handshake creation process, but sharing is optional in this round. Instead the facilitator can jump straight to asking participants to find their previous partners to complete the handshakes they created.
- After the third round the facilitator should praise the group for creating fun, unique handshakes and transition to a new activity.

Blind Count Off (25)

Participants try to count to the highest number they can as a group without repeating a number or saying the same number as another participant. This game is known as Blind Count Off or 25.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Under 25 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that they will be asked to work together, as a team, to count to the highest number possible without repeating a number or saying a number at the same time another participant. Only one person can say a number at a time since multiple people saying the same number, or repeating a number, will cause the group to start over.
- Tell participants that their first goal is to reach 25 but once the group reaches this goal the target number can increase, or they can attempt to reach 25 quicker.
- The facilitator may provide time for questions but should not allow the group to discuss or make plans before starting the activity. Similarly, participants should not make gestures or point during the activity.
- To start, the facilitator will say “1” out loud and wait for a second participant to say “2”. The counting will continue until the group reaches 25, or the group is forced to restart.
 - *Note: There are several additional rules that can be added to make the game harder.*
 - *If the group is standing in a circle the facilitator can instruct participants to turn so their backs are toward the inside of the circle and the participants cannot make eye contact with each other during the game. If the group is seated the facilitator can instruct participants to close their eyes to reach the same effect. Be aware that some participants may have a difficult time standing for extended periods with their eyes closed so this scenario should only occur when participants are seated.*
 - *In smaller groups (15 participants or less) the facilitator can impose a rule where each participant must say a number before they can speak again to encourage everyone to participate.*

Black Magic

Black Magic is a riddle/puzzle game where participants need to determine how the participant who leaves the area knows which item the group has selected without being present during the selection process.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Under 20 participants

Difficulty: 4

Instructions

- Black Magic requires two facilitators, one “Guesser” and one “Designator”. The facilitators may switch roles throughout the game or stick to one role as they wish. If participants figure out the secret “Black Magic” then they can become a “Guesser” as well.
- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- The facilitators should explain that they know a special black magic trick where the Guesser knows which item the Designator has chosen without seeing what the group decides.
- To begin the game, ask the Guesser to leave the immediate area or close their eyes while facing away from the group.
- The Designator should silently point to an object in the room, this can be an item they have chosen or an object that the group collectively decides on. After all the participants acknowledge they understand what the item is the Guesser can be called back to the circle.
- The Designator will ask the Guesser a series of yes or no questions phrased as: “Is it...”. The Guesser will reply “No” to each question until the Designator asks: “Is it (any black object)”.
- Asking about a black object cues the Guesser that whatever question is asked next is the correct item so the Guesser should always say “Yes” to the question following a question with a black colored item.
- Participants need to figure out that the facilitator’s “magic” is cued by the Designator asking the Guesser about a black colored item (hence the name Black Magic).
 - *Note: Participants may become frustrated if they do not immediately figure out how the black magic works. Facilitators can help participants by emphasizing when they ask about the black item or by changing how many questions come before asking about a black item.*

Human Knot

Starting in a circle, participants connect hands with two other people in the group to form the human knot. As a team they must then try to unravel the "human knot" by untangling themselves without breaking the chain of hands.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 8-12 participants (minimum 4 participants to play)

Difficulty: 5

Instructions

WARNING

There is a high risk of one or multiple participants becoming injured or strained during this activity. Some groups may be unwilling, or uncomfortable engaging with an activity like Human Knot which requires participants to be in close proximity for extended periods of time. Be mindful of your participants and have a back-up icebreaker prepared. Allow the group to select from a series of icebreakers that includes human knot to accommodate everyone.

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing.
- Instruct participants to raise their right hands in the air and reach across the circle to grab a different person's right hand. Make sure no one grabs the hand of a participant who is standing directly next to them.
- Repeat the process by instructing the participants to raise their left hand and find left hand to grab. Participants should not be holding the hands of group members who are to their immediate left or right. Additionally, ensure that each participant is holding the hands of two different participants or the knot will not be solvable.
- Instruct participants to work together to slowly untangle the knot without breaking hands. Emphasize that group members should take their time, move slowly, and communicate with each other to prevent injury and raise their chance of success.
- The facilitator should monitor the activity to ensure group members are not tugging or pulling each other around and watch participants as they pass over/under each other to avoid tripping or accidental blows.
- If the chain of hands is broken, the group becomes stuck, or a participant is stuck in a painful position the facilitator should stop the activity and decide whether to restart or move on if participants are frustrated.



Energizers/Fun Icebreakers

No Materials Required



Look Up, Look Down

Look Up, Look Down is a quick game that can quickly change a group's energy levels based on how quickly participants are asked to look up and look down.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing in a tight circle, almost shoulder to shoulder.
- Explain that when you (the facilitator) says “look down” everyone must look at the ground and when you say “look up” everyone must look up and stare directly at the face of another participant.
- If two participants make eye contact with each other, they must step out of the circle.
- Continue the activity until only two or three participants are left in the circle who should be considered the winners.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Human Rock Paper Scissors

Human Rock Paper Scissors is a re-imagined version of Rock Paper Scissors which encourages participants to move around and become comfortable together.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None
Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants
Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Divide participants into groups of two and ask the pairs to space themselves evenly throughout the area. Participants should have room to move their arms around without hitting another participant.
- Inform participants that the person across from them will be their opponent in an exciting game of Human Rock Paper Scissors. As the name implies, participants can select Rock, Paper, or Scissors in each round, however, participants must also perform the action that accompanies each option.
 - If Rock is chosen, participants must duck down and hug their knees with their arms forming a “rock”. For Paper, participants need to hold their arms out to the side forming a “T” pose. When Scissors are chosen, participants will hold their arms out in front of their bodies at 45-degree angles imitating scissors.
- Explain to the group that after a count of 3, each participant must perform the associated action with their choice of either Rock, Paper, or Scissors. The rules are the same as normal Rock, Paper Scissors: Paper beats Rock, Rock beats Scissors, and Scissors beat Paper.
 - *Note: This activity can either be played tournament style, where participants are eliminated based on results, or without elimination tactics by simply asking participants to find a new partner in each successive round that they have not previously interacted with.*
- The facilitator should ask the group if they are ready, and count to three. (Counting down from three to one is considered interchangeable with counting from one to three.)
- Participants will perform their actions and determine if the round has a winner or if there is a tie. If elimination is being used, participants who tie should not be eliminated.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds, play until a winner emerges, or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Stomp, Clap, Jazz Hands

First introduced to the ambassador team by staff member Brian Van Gundy (2019), Stomp, Clap, Jazz Hands is a quick way to get participants moving and bring out lots of laughter.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Divide participants into groups of two and ask the pairs to space themselves evenly throughout the area. Participants should have room to move their arms around without hitting another participant.
- Instruct participants to practice the three game moves by imitating each game move after you (the facilitator) demonstrate the move for the whole group. Start by stomping one foot on the ground, followed by a single clap, before concluding with Jazz Hands.
- Ask each pair to face each other and designate an individual to go first.
- Explain that the first person in each pair will start the game by stomping their foot. The other person in each pair will then clap in response. The first person will respond to the clap by waving jazz hands. (This is the round of the activity.) To continue the game the second person will start with Stomp, the first person will Clap, and the second person will wave Jazz Hands.
- Instruct participants to continue cycling through the game moves until everyone seems comfortable with the movements (approximately 2 minutes).
- Call the pairs back together and instruct them that in this second round the stomp will be replaced with an empty beat. Instead of Stomp, Clap, Jazz Hands, the rhythm will be Beat, Clap, Jazz Hands.
- Instruct the pairs to repeat this cycle for a second 2-minute interval.
- For the third round call the pairs together and instruct that instead of the stomp, the clap will be replaced by an empty beat (ie Stomp, Beat, Jazz Hands)
- Conduct a third 2-minute play round.
- For the fourth and final round, replace both the stomp and clap with empty beats (ie Beat, Beat, Jazz Hands). Conduct a final 2-minute play interval.
- After completing the final round of play congratulate the group for making it to the end and transition to a new activity.

Zip Zap Zop

Zip Zap Zop is about focus and energy. Participants pass an imaginary ball of energy across a circle by making eye contact and taking turns saying Zip, Zap, or Zop.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Instruct participants to practice saying “Zip”, “Zap”, and “Zop” as a group.
 - *Note: This is best accomplished by the facilitator saying each word followed by the group repeating the word, and later having the entire group say all three words together multiple times in a row so each participant becomes familiar saying Zip, Zap, Zop.*
- Explain that the group will pass an invisible ball of energy across the circle using the three words the group just practiced saying.
- To pass the energy participants will first bring both hands to the center of their chest like they are praying. From this position participants will keep one hand close to their chest while fully extending their other arm out directly in front of themselves, pointing their entire hand towards another participant in the circle.
- Participants should make eye contact with the person they are gesturing towards and say “Zip”.
- The person who was pointed to then repeats the gesture but directs it towards a third participant saying “Zap”.
- The third participant redirects the gesture to a fourth participant saying “Zop”.
- The pattern is continued throughout the circle as participants take turns cycling through saying Zip, Zap, and Zop. Play continues until a participant says the wrong word, takes too long to respond, points between two participants instead of directly at a single participant, or otherwise fumbles their response.
- When a mistake occurs, the activity should be quickly restarted. The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds, play until a winner emerges (if they wish to employ elimination), or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Pterodactyl

Pterodactyl often brings out lots of laughter as participants attempt to say “pterodactyl” without showing their teeth or laughing.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None
Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants
Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that each person will take turns saying “pterodactyl” to the participant on their left or right depending on which direction play is traveling.
- Instruct participants that on their turn they must turn to the participant to their left and say “pterodactyl” without showing their teeth. If a participant shows their teeth for any reason over the course of the activity they must step out of the circle.
- Play will continue to the left unless a participant raises their arms to imitate pterodactyl wings and squawks at the previous participant which reverses the order.
 - *Note: Encourage the group that making a more flamboyant squawk increases the chance of someone showing their teeth leading to laughter and an elimination.*
- Participants may reverse the order of play at any time, or squawk at each other multiple times to make each other break.
- Depending on how skilled the participants are, if there are less than five participants left with no clear winner emerging after several minutes of play the facilitator can declare a tie.
- If the round moves quickly the facilitator can allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Elbow Tag

In Elbow Tag, a variation of playground tag, two participants are declared the runner and chaser while the rest are placed in pairs that are linked by touching elbows.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Divide participants into groups of two and ask the pairs to space themselves evenly throughout the area. Participants should have room to move their arms around without hitting another participant.
 - *Note: If there is an odd number of participants one group of three is fine.*
- Ask one of the pairs to volunteer to start as the Chaser and Runner. This pair should be spaced apart from each other to give the Runner a fair chance of not being immediately tagged
- Instruct the other participants link arms loosely at the elbow with the participant they are paired with.
- Explain that while participants are linked in a group of two, they are safe from the Chaser and can't be tagged. For the Runner to avoid being tagged they must link arms with a group of two causing the other participant in the pair (who the Runner did not link with) to split off from the group and become the new runner.
 - *Note: In a group of three the person opposite of the participant who links arms with the Runner must split off from the trio to become the new Runner.*
- If the Runner is tagged before they can successfully link arms with a group of two, they become the Chaser and must try to tag the previous Chaser before they link arms with a group of two.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Ninja

Ninja allows participants an opportunity to move around an area using one fluid movement per turn to strategically eliminate opponents. Facilitators should note that Ninja can escalate quickly, so this icebreaker is recommended for use during summer training only.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Under 25 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

WARNING

There is a high risk of one or multiple participants becoming injured or strained during this activity. Ninja can escalate quickly, so this icebreaker is only recommended for use during Ambassador Summer Training. If a participant is injured by an overly aggressive swipe at any time, play should stop immediately.

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing in a loose circle.
- Instruct participants that they will emulate ninjas by making one fluid motion during their turn. This can be one step forward, a hop backwards, or a direct swipe at another participant's hand below the wrist. Once a participant completes a movement they must freeze until it is their turn again.
- Emphasize that participants must always keep their hands in front of their body. Participants are not allowed to hide their hands by crossing their arms or otherwise holding their hands out of reach from the group.
 - *Note: The first time a participant purposely hides their hands the facilitator should gently redirect them. If the participant continues to play against the spirit of the game the facilitator can ask them to remove one hand from play. A similar warning can be issued if one participant refuses to engage the group and decides to only move away from the immediate play area.*
- Participants are eliminated if both of their hands are hit by another participant below the wrist. When a participant's hand is hit, the participant must remove the arm from play by placing it behind their backs (hence the need to keep hands in play in front of the body).

- *Note: A hit above the wrist on the forearm or any other body part does not count. Headshots always cause the participant who hit someone's head to remove one arm from play unless the targeted participant purposely uses their head to avoid being hit.*
- Participants may defend themselves from an incoming swipe at their hands by moving the targeted hand, and only the targeted hand, away in one fluid motion.
- Eliminated participants should form a larger circle around the participants who are still competing to help contain the game within a larger area.
- The last ninja standing wins.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

The Categories Game

The Categories Game (also known as Categories) is a rhythm game where participants list all the nouns they can think of in a pre-determined category.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None
Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants
Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity, participants should be sitting on the floor, or seated in chairs.
- Instruct the group to practice a simple rhythm: ask participants to first “slap” their knee/thigh, clap their hands, then snap their fingers. This sequence creates the game’s iconic “slap, clap, snap” rhythm.
 - *Note: The facilitator should help the group practice the rhythm together until participants seem comfortable following along. Emphasize the importance of keeping the rhythm steady avoid the pace artificially increasing, making the activity harder. One way to prevent the pace from increasing is to emphasize a beat after the snap and before the next slap.*
- Explain to the participants that the group will pick a category. This could be Pokémon, comic book characters, superheroes, movies, celebrities, food, etc. This should be announced to the group before starting each round.
- To begin the round, each participant will follow the facilitator in creating the “slap, clap, snap” rhythm. After 3-5 cycles of the rhythm the facilitator will use the pause in-between snap and the next clap to say “Category (slap, clap, snap) Pokémon (slap, clap, snap)”.
- After the facilitator announces the category the rhythm will continue. At the next beat the facilitator should say a noun that goes with the category. In the example above, the instructor could say any Pokémon’s name.
- After another cycle of the rhythm the participant to the direct right of the facilitator will take their turn and say a different noun. Play will continue around the circle until a participant misses the beat, hesitates repeats a word, or otherwise fumbles their turn leading to an elimination.

- **Example Round:**

Facilitator: (slap, clap, snap) Category (slap, clap, snap) Pokémon (slap, clap, snap) Squirtle

Participant 1: (slap, clap, snap) Charmander

Participant 2: (slap, clap, snap) Bulbasaur

- After a mistake is made play should resume quickly, but participants should be given an opportunity to change the category- particularly if the previous round exhausted many possible words.

Big Booty

First introduced by Mitchell Carey (2018), Big Booty is a rhythm game where participants speak and move in rhythm or become eliminated.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: Under 15 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing.
- Explain that each participant in the circle will be given a number. The Facilitator will start as “Big Booty” while the participant to their immediate left is “Little Booty”. Every participant to the left of the Little Booty is given a number starting with one and is referred to as “number X”. There should be an empty space to the right of Big Booty representing the end of the circle.
- To play Big Booty participants will establish a “pat, clap, pat, clap, pat, clap” rhythm by patting their thighs and clapping their hands to the beat. It is important for the facilitator to keep the group consistent, so the rhythm doesn’t artificially speed up making the activity harder.
- Explain that at the beginning of each round the group will chant “Big Booty, Big Booty, Big Booty, Big Booty” in time with the beat. Participants will pass an invisible, metaphorical ball by saying their title followed by another participant’s title.
- Big Booty will always start by saying “Big Booty number X” within a single pat/clap immediately after the opening chant. This passes the ball to participant Number X who will reply “Number X Number Y (or Big or Little Booty)” which passes it again.
- Play will continue until a participant makes a mistake such as falling out of rhythm, missing their turn, picking their own number, or passing the ball back to the previous participant. Any mistake will lead to elimination.
- When a mistake is made, the offending participant may be eliminated (if playing in a larger group) or sent to the end of the circle (if playing in a small group). Participants to the left of the mistaken participant move one number closer to Big Booty. If Big Booty messes up, the Little Booty becomes Big Booty and Number 1 becomes Little Booty.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time, play until a winner emerges, or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

King Elephant

Participants vie to become the King Elephant by accurately passing animal inspired hand signs across the circle.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain that each participant should think an animal and a creative hand sign that represents that animal. For example, a participant can wiggle their finger their index finger to represent a worm or bend their arms to flap them like a chicken.
 - *Note: Have each participant take a turn showing the group their animal sign. Ideally, no two participants will have the same animal (or specific sign) to prevent confusion.*
- At the head of the circle is the King Elephant who holds their arm in front of their face imitating an elephant's trunk. There should be an empty space held between the King Elephant and the participant to their immediate left representing the end of the circle.
- Instruct the King Elephant to begin the round by making the elephant sign followed by another participant's sign "passing" it.
- Participants will take turns passing signs around the circle until someone makes a mistake. That participant will move to the back of the circle advancing each player to their left forward one spot towards the King Elephant.
- If the King Elephant makes a mistake they move to the back of the line and adopt the sign that the new King Elephant had.
- Remembering who uses which sign is part of the fun and confusion. The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time, play until a winner emerges, or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Captain's Coming

First added by Katya Farinsky (2020), Captains Coming (sometimes referred to as Captain's Calling) is like Simon Says, but with a nautical theme and more challenges for participants to complete.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None
Ideal Group Size: Over 10 participants
Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask participants to space themselves evenly throughout the area. Participants should have room to move their arms around without hitting another participant.
- Explain to participants they are now on a ship where the captain will be back at any second to make sure everything is in “ship-shape” condition before sailing. During the activity all participants must “swab the deck” ie pretend to mop the floor until the Caller says a different command.
- There are many rules that participants need to be mindful of during the activity. Making a mistake will lead to elimination.
- At any time, the facilitator, known as the Caller, can say “To the Ship!” sending players to the right side of the area or “To the Shore!” sending players to the left.
 - *Note: For the first few times the facilitator should point to the right direction for the ship or shore calls, but eventually point to the wrong direction to trick participants.*
- Additionally, the Caller can say “Captain’s Coming” forcing players to stand at attention until the Caller says, “At Ease, Swab the Deck” so participants resume mopping. Any participant who moves before “At Ease” is called is eliminated.
- The Caller may also call several formations forcing participants to cooperate with each other to avoid elimination. Participants should be given approximately 8 seconds to find a group, but when time is up formations without the correct number of participants will be eliminated.
 - **Sailor Overboard**- one participant drops to one knee while a second stands behind them with one arm on the first participant’s shoulder. Both scan the area for the lost sailor.
 - **Crow’s Nest**- two participants link arms around a third participant who stands in the middle scanning the area for dry land.
 - **Rowboat**- three participants form a straight, vertical line and pretend to paddle a canoe.
 - **Octopus**- four participants stand back to back and hold their arms out in front of them imitating an octopus.

- **Lifeboat**- five participants form a circle by holding hands
- **Optional:** Jail Break can be used once per round when approximately one third of the group is eliminated to bring participants back into the game. If playing multiple rounds, this call should not be used in every round.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time, play until a winner emerges, or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Screaming Viking

First introduced by Mitchell Carey (2018), Screaming Viking requires participants to team up in groups of three to create silly noises and gestures to avoid becoming the person in the middle.

Important Information

Materials Needed: None

Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle (recommended) or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that one person will start in the middle of the circle and try to trade places with someone in the circle by causing them to make a mistake.
- Instruct participants that the person in the middle will point to an individual and say one of four commands for that participant, and those to their immediate left and right, to do.
 - **Screaming Viking**- the participant in the middle is the Viking and must hold their hands to their forehead, using their pointer fingers to mimic the horns on a Viking helmet, and scream “AHHHHH”. The participants to their immediate left and right must make quick rowing/paddling motions with their arms.
 - **Smurfs**- the pointed to participant plus the participants to the immediate left and right must link arms and sing the Smurf Song, "Laaa, la, la-la, la-la".
 - *Note: The Facilitator may need to play the Smurf song for participants before starting as some participants may not be familiar with the tune. The Surf song can be substituted for a more recent, widely known, cartoon theme song like Perry the Platypus' theme, or the Doofenshmirtz jingle from Phineas and Ferb.*
 - **Chia Pet**- the participant who was pointed to becomes a chia plant by striking a pose while the participants to the immediate left and right form a circle around the middle participant with their arms becoming the pot. All three participants must sing the Chia pet jingle: "Ch-ch-ch-chia"
 - **Jello**- the participant who was pointed too must wobble like gelatin (Jello) while the participants to the immediate left and right form a bowl around the middle participant with their arms.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.



Introductory Icebreakers

Materials Required



Koosh Ball Name Game

The Koosh Ball Name Game adds a kinesthetic component to the typical name game format.

Important Information

Materials Needed: One Koosh Ball (possible to substitute with another ball)

Ideal Group Size: Over 8 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle (recommended), sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that everyone in the group will take turns introducing themselves by tossing a Koosh ball across the circle. If participants are wearing name tags, encourage them to place their name tag on their right shoulder so they are more visible to other participants.
- Instruct each participant to say their preferred first name and up to three other pieces of information or fun facts. For college students this may include criteria like name, class standing/year in school, major and fun fact while professional groups may prefer name, position in organization, time working for organization, and fun fact.
 - *Note: Fun Facts should be fun! Past favorite examples include naming a favorite (like favorite cereal) and answers to silly questions (Would you rather look like a potato or feel like a potato?).*
- The facilitator will start the activity by introducing themselves and tossing the Koosh ball to another participant in the circle. Remind participants to make eye contact with the person they intend to toss the Koosh to before tossing it. If participants are wearing name tags encourage the group to say the intended recipient's name in addition to making eye contact.
- Once each participant has introduced themselves the facilitator should transition to Koosh Ball Chaos or a different activity.

Koosh Ball Chaos

Koosh Ball Chaos is a progression of the Koosh Ball Name Game where participants can practice saying each other's names.

Important Information

Materials Needed: 3-5 Koosh Balls or other small, toss-able objects

Ideal Group Size: Over 8 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle (recommended), sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that this activity is designed to challenge their skills of name recognition.
- Instruct Participants that the facilitator will start the activity by saying a participant's name and tossing a Koosh ball to that participant.
 - *Note: If the group previously played Koosh Ball Name Game the facilitator can instruct the group to toss the Koosh ball in the same order participants introduced themselves or chose to establish a new order.*
- Participants will continue passing the Koosh ball until each participant's name has been said. The Koosh should return to the facilitator at this time.
- Instruct participants to repeat their same pattern of motion with a slight increase in pace.
- After the Koosh ball has made its way around the circle a second time explain to participants that you (the facilitator) are going to make the game harder.
- Explain that after approximately four participants have passed the first Koosh ball, the second will be introduced to the circle. Participants should toss the second Koosh around the circle in the same order as the first.
- After the second round add the remaining Koosh balls into circulation for a third round based on whether the group wants to proceed with 3, 4, or 5 items in the final round.
- The facilitator should transition to a new activity once all the items have been successfully placed in circulation or if participant interest appears to decline after three rounds.

Name and Number

Name and Number is a memory game where participants are encouraged to mingle with as many people as possible before sitting in a circle and writing down as many names as they can remember.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Numbered Worksheets and writing utensils for each group member, prenumbered name tags (based on the number of participants)

Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Give each participant a name tag with a number written on it. Instruct participants to place their name tag on their right shoulder so it is visible to all participants.
- Instruct participants to mingle around the area and introduce themselves to as many people as possible. The goal is to connect each group member's name to the corresponding number on their nametag and the worksheet. Emphasize that participants are not allowed to write down names or take notes during this stage.
- After a set amount of time, approximately 3-5 minutes depending on group size, ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. It is recommended that the group sit on the floor or in chairs.
- Give each participant a Name and Number worksheet and writing utensil. Instruct participants to write in as many corresponding names and numbers as possible on the worksheet in two minutes.
- After two minutes have elapsed instruct participant one to say their name so each participant can verify if they got it right. Repeat for each number in the group.
- Whoever has the most correct name and number combinations is the winner.

Name and Number Worksheet

Mingle with as many people as possible to learn their name and number. Write down as many corresponding name and number pairs as you can in the spaces below, whoever has the most correct name and number combinations wins.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

26. _____

27. _____

28. _____

29. _____

30. _____



Get to Know You Icebreakers

Materials Required



Question Ball

Question Ball is a fun get to know you game that is as creative and fun as the questions the facilitator thinks up.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Physical Question Ball or Bag full of paper slips with questions on them

Ideal Group Size: Over 8 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Prior to the group convening the facilitator should procure a cheap inflated plastic ball. Any medium sized ball with a smooth surface is ideal for writing questions on the surface with a Sharpie or other fine point permanent marker.
 - *Note: When writing questions on the question ball write legibly and take precautions to avoid smudging the marker ink. In lieu of a physical ball the facilitator may also create slips of paper to put inside of a bag for participants to draw from during the activity.*
- The facilitator can draw from the list of conversation starter questions included here in addition to adding unique creative questions of their own.
- When working with participants, ask the group to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle (recommended), sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that the group is going to play a get to know you game using the question ball/bag. Participants will toss the question ball/bag across the circle taking turns answering the question that their right thumb lands on when they catch the ball or answering the question on the paper they pull from the bag.
 - *Note: When using a physical ball sometimes the same question may appear multiple times in a row depending on how participants catch the ball. Give participants the option to “shuffle” by tossing the ball lightly in front of themselves and catching it.*
- Instruct participants to read their question aloud for the group before saying their answer. After answering the participant will pass the ball/bag to another group member in the circle.
- Depending on the size of the group, the facilitator may continue the activity until each participant has gone multiple times, questions are exhausted, or each participant has gone once in large groups.

Question Ball Conversation Starters

What is your favorite music to listen to and why?

What was the last movie you saw in the theater? What was good about it? What was bad?

Do you like to go camping?

What food can you absolutely not stand to eat?

What is your main ring tone on your phone?

Who is your favorite professional athlete?

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?

What was the last live sporting event you attended?

Are you artistic and creative?

What animal best represents you and why?

Who would you cast to play you in a movie?

If you could bring back one famous person from the dead, who and why?

Favorite college football team?

Do you have a tattoo?

Would you live in a different country? If so, what country would it be and why?

Where did you grow up?

Ever been on stage? What was it for? Did you have fun?

Ever met anyone famous before? If so, who was it? What were they like?

If you could meet one living celebrity, who would it be and why?

What's something you couldn't live without and why?

Where's your ultimate vacation destination? What would you do there?

Would you want to be famous? For what?

If abandoned alone in the wilderness would you survive?

Do you have any undiscovered or hidden talents? If so, what?

Using no more than 10 nouns, and ONLY nouns, describe yourself.

Do you have any pets? If so, what and why?

Would you rather look like a potato or feel like a potato?

Dice Breakers

Dice Breakers is a get to know you game that uses a 6-sided die to randomly select a fun question for participants to answer.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Physical 6-sided die or virtual dice generator

Ideal Group Size: Over 8 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that on their turn they will roll a 6-sided die to determine which question they will answer from a pre-determined selection.
- Sample questions can include:
 - 1: If you woke up tomorrow as an animal, what animal would you choose to be and why?
 - 2: Do you relate more with sunrise, daylight, twilight, or night? Please share why you picked your time of day.
 - 3: If you won an all-expenses paid vacation where would you go? Who would you take with you?
 - 4: Is there something that other people do that drives you crazy?
 - 5: If you could meet any historical figure, who would you choose and why?
 - 6: What is something you have always wanted to do, but have not done yet?
- Participants should take turns going around the circle rolling the dice and answering questions until everyone in the group has gone at least once.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Candy Confessions

*Candy Confessions (also known as Candy Introductions, the M&M Game, the Skittles Game, etc) is a get to know you game where participants answer questions or share fun facts based on which pieces of candy they draw. **Avoid candy with peanuts or other common allergens if possible.***

Important Information

Materials Needed: Assorted candy with at least 5 different colors, or types of candy in the bag.

Ideal Group Size: Over 8 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Instruct each participant to choose a number between one and five. The facilitator should distribute the corresponding number of whole candies or pieces from a central bag to the participant. Repeat for each group member reminding them not to eat the candy yet.
- Explain that each piece of candy represents a get to know you question. For example:
 - **Red**- Favorite hobbies
 - **Green**- Favorite place on Earth
 - **Blue**- Favorite genre of music
 - **Yellow**- Dream Job
 - **Orange**- Wildcard (share anything about yourself)
- The facilitator should adapt the categories based on the candy present.
- Instruct each participant to say their name and one fun fact about themselves based on the candy they selected. The facilitator can go first to give the group an example.
 - *Note: The facilitator can ask the group to share fun facts based on the number of candies they have instead of number of candy and corresponding candy category.*
- Go around the circle until all participants have a chance to share. After each participant has shared the group may eat their candy and receive more from the facilitator if they initially requested one or two pieces.
- The facilitator should transition to a new activity after offering the group candy for later.

Whose Is This?

Each participant writes down an interesting fact about themselves and the entire group tries to guess which fact goes with each group member.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Notecards (or small slips of paper) and writing utensils for each group member, a container to hold the written responses

Ideal Group Size: Over 8 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Give each participant a notecard and writing utensil. Instruct the group to write down something no one in the group knows about them. Emphasize that the notecards will be read aloud to the group to avoid participants listing something embarrassing.
- After everyone is done writing, ask participants to fold their cards in half and drop them into a centralized container.
- The facilitator will shuffle the cards and randomly pull one out to read to the group. Participants must deliberate and decide who they think the notecard belongs to.
- When the group reaches a consensus, ask the participant in question if the group is right.
- If the group is correct, the facilitator will place the “used” card to the side and draw a new card. If the group is wrong, the facilitator can either allow the group to guess again or shuffle the card back into the container.
- Repeat until all the cards have been correctly guessed.
 - *Note: This activity is also fun if you ask participants to play additional rounds where they write their favorite movie, favorite fictional character (can be from a specific franchise like Comics, Disney, or Harry Potter), or what song they are currently listening to most frequently.*

The Two Picture Game

*First introduced by Valeria Flores (2020), The Two Picture Game requires participants to scroll through their phone's camera roll for an embarrassing picture, and a favorite picture to share with the group. Because this game assumes participants have smart phones (or at the very least a phone with many pictures on it) so this game is recommended for **summer training only**.*

Important Information

Materials Needed: Cell phone with extensive camera roll

Ideal Group Size: 8-12 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Instruct participants to pull out their cell phones and scroll through their camera roll for an embarrassing picture and a favorite picture to share with the group.
- Give participants approximately 5 minutes to sort through their phones before calling the group together for sharing their photos and the stories behind them.
- The facilitator can instruct participants to share “popcorn style”, where the participants share without following an established order, or by taking turns moving around the circle to the left or right of the first participant who shares.
 - *Note: Sharing in a “popcorn style” allows quick thinking participants to share immediately while also providing time for other participants to process the question and think through what they want to share with the group.*
- When each participant has finished sharing, the facilitator should transition to a different activity.

All My Friends Who

All My Friends Who (similar to Never Have I Ever) is a tried and true favorite for increasing a group's energy levels while also promoting how much participants have in common with each other.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Poly-Spots, Post-It Notes, or another means of marking participant spots-one for each participant minus the facilitator

Ideal Group Size: 10-30 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing in a loose circle with the facilitator in the middle.
- Distribute spot markers to each participant and instruct participants to place the marker under their feet. The total number of spots in the circle should be one less than total number participants including the facilitator so there is always one person in the middle.
- Explain to participants that the person in the middle of the circle will say "All my friends who..." followed by a statement that is true about themselves. For example: "All my friends who love Star Wars", "All my friends who are wearing jeans", or "All my friends who like ice cream".
 - *Note: Encourage participants to make broad, inclusive statements instead of overly specific ones. More participants can relate to "All my friends who like pizza" compared to "All my friends who only eat pizza at Joe's Pizza on 31st street after 3 pm".*
- If a participant agrees with the statement (ie they also like ice cream), or finds it applicable to themselves (ie they are also wearing jeans), they must leave their current position in the circle and trade places with another participant who left their initial spot.
 - *Note: The facilitator can instruct participants in medium and large sized groups to move at least two places left or right of their initial spot to increase the chaos and competition.*
- Ultimately one person will be left without a spot because the person in the middle is also trying to steal a vacated spot in the circle while participants are moving around leading a new participant landing in the middle.
- The new participant in the middle can either say a new "All my friends who..." statement or say, "People to People!" if they cannot think of something right away which causes all participants to move and find a new spot.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Multiplication Card Game

This multiplication tournament game rewards participants who can quickly find answers to simple multiplication questions.

Important Information

Materials Needed: List of simple multiplication problems and correct answers, this can be one sheet or multiple notecards

Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Split participants into two equal groups and ask each group to stand in two parallel lines facing each other.
- Explain to the group that a simple multiplication problem will be announced to the group such as “2 x 2” or “6 x 5”.
 - *Note: Multiples should be kept within the range of 0-12 to improve participant chances of getting answers correct. Remember, the goal is to make participants think, not to stump them with complex mental math.*
- When a participant knows the correct answer, they should try to say it out loud before the participant across from them does.
- Whoever says the correct answer first is the winner and moves on to the next round. The losers will share something about themselves with the group and step out of the line. In the case of a tie, both participants share but move on to the next round.
- The process will repeat until a final winner emerges to end the game. (The ultimate winner should share something about themselves before ending the activity.)
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.



Team Building Icebreakers

Materials Required



Helium Stick

The Helium Stick is a classic team building icebreaker designed to make a group of participants work together to achieve specific objectives such as raising and lowering the helium stick to specific heights.

Important Information

Materials Needed: One long stick, tube, or pole that will be known as the “helium stick”

Ideal Group Size: 10-20 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Split participants into two equal groups and ask each group to stand in two parallel lines facing each other.
- Explain to participants that you (the facilitator) have a magic helium stick in your possession that will magically move up and down using the will power of the group.
- Instruct participants to hold out their hands in front of their bodies with two fingers (index and middle finger generally) outstretched towards the opposite line at a comfortable height.
- Place the helium stick on top of the group’s outstretched fingers and direct one line to move their fingers on top of the helium stick so participants form an alternating “over/under” pattern with their fingers. Emphasize that all participants must always stay in contact with the helium stick for the magic to work.
- Explain that on the count of three participants should imagine the helium stick slowly rising to approximately head height. The helium stick may not move at first, but after a few seconds it should slowly creep upward.
- Once the helium stick has moved upwards approximately 18 inches ask the group to hold it steady for approximately 5-10 seconds. After a second count of three ask participants to envision the helium stick lowering down to waist level.
- After reaching the new milestone, ask participants to hold the helium stick steady for another 10 seconds before counting to three a third time and instructing participants to return the helium stick to its starting position.
- Collect the helium stick from participants and discuss how they felt during the activity. Ask the group what made the activity successful and what made it challenging.
- After a brief discussion the facilitator should transition to a new activity.

Guess Who

First introduced by Layne B. and Nate N. (2016), Guess Who plays out similarly to the board game of the same name or Headbands. Participants ask each other questions with the goal of discovering what is written on their mystery card.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Notecards with names written on them, one per participant per round

Ideal Group Size: 8-25 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask participants to space themselves evenly throughout the area. Participants should have room to move their arms around without hitting another participant.
- Explain that each participant will receive a notecard with a mystery word or name written on it. Remind participants not to look at their card before holding it to their forehead.
 - *Note: The mystery words can be themed around famous celebrities, fictional characters, historical figures, or franchise specific characters/items. A common thread through all the mystery words will allow participants to solve what is on their cards faster than if the words are totally random or obscure. Avoid niche figures or overly specific terms.*
- Participants can ask yes or no questions of the other participants to figure out what is on their card. In small groups this could be accomplished by taking turns asking questions in a circle while larger groups may be better off allowing participants to mingle and ask questions of each other simultaneously.
- Participants may guess what is on their card at any time but encourage them to make educated guesses instead of random guesses.
- Once all participants have correctly guessed the mystery words on their cards the facilitator can lead the group through subsequent rounds or transition to a new activity if participant interest seems to decline.

The Hat Game

Initially introduced by J.D. Abbott (2016), The Hat Game (also known as the Name Game, Fishbowl Game, or Guess the Person) plays out over three rounds: describe the word, one-word description, and charades.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Notecards or slips of paper, three per participant per round, writing utensils for each participant, and one basket or container for the paper slips

Ideal Group Size: 8-12 participants

Difficulty: 2

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Instruct each participant to write down one word, name, phrase, or thing on each of their paper slips for the round. Request that participants refrain from obscure celebrity names and words that could be considered too complicated to guess by the group.
- Instruct participants to fold their pieces of paper in half before adding them to a central basket.
- The facilitator can either facilitate one large group or two smaller teams depending on the number of participants.
- After collecting all the paper slips explain that participants will play three rounds. In each round a single participant will draw a piece of paper from the basket and try to get the other participants (on their team or in the group) to guess what the paper says. The goal is to get through as many words as possible in one turn.
- If a word is guessed correctly it is placed in a separate pile away from the basket until the next round. If a word is passed or not guessed correctly it returns to the basket.
- In the first-round participants need to describe the word on the paper slip without saying it. Participants can use as many words as they want, but if the team is stumped or the participant doesn't know the word, they can pass and take a new paper.
- In the second-round, participants can only choose 1 word to describes the item. Participants may repeat their word multiple times but cannot add to it.
- In the third and final round participants must act out what is on each piece of paper following the rules of charades: no talking, no props, sound effects optional depending on group preference.
- If playing in teams, track how many words are guessed correctly by each team in each round. Whoever has the most points after three rounds wins.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds with new words or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Tarp Flip

Tarp Flip is a classic icebreaker that requires teamwork to figure out how to flip the tarp participants are standing on without any participants stepping off the tarp.

Important Information

Materials Needed: A tarp or blanket large enough to fit all the participants in the group on top of it with some room to spare

Ideal Group Size: 10-15 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Unfold the tarp (if needed) and lay it flat on the ground. Instruct participants to stand on the tarp together.
- Challenge participants to flip the tarp upside down while they are all standing on the tarp.
- Explain that each participant always needs to be touching the tarp. If a participant touches the floor (or otherwise leaves the tarp) the group must start over.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time, until the group finds success, or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.
 - *Note: To increase the level of difficulty the facilitator may ask some or all team members to stop speaking for short durations.*

The Boat Game

First introduced by Marcus Connor (2019), The Boat game is not an icebreaker for the faint of heart. Participants are encouraged to be polite in order to solve what makes their boat float.

Important Information

Materials Needed: A pen or other writing utensil (can be played without)

Ideal Group Size: 10-15 participants

Difficulty: 3

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Explain to participants that being polite is an important part of working with a group or team. Participants who mind their manners will go far in life and this activity.
- Instruct participants that they need to determine how to make a boat that floats. Participants will pass a pen to each other as they take turns guessing potential boat materials using the phrase: "My boat is made out of ____ and it floats".
- The facilitator will begin the activity by saying: "My boat is made out of ____ and it floats".
- The facilitator will pass the pen to another participant in the circle. Turns should progress around the circle at first but can transition to popcorn style as more participants zero in on how to make their boats float.
- The participant will accept the pen and make a guess ("My boat is made out of ____ and it floats"). Unless the participant says "Thank You" as they accept the pen and before making their guess, their boat will not float regardless of material.
- Example:
 - *Participant 1: *Takes Pen* My boat is made of rubber ducks and it floats.*
 - *Facilitator: Your boat does not float/It does not float*
 - *Participant 2: *Takes Pen* Thank you, my boat is made out of rubber ducks and it floats.*
 - *Facilitator: And your boat floats/And it floats*
- Facilitators should note that the pen exists to distract participants from the solution and The Boat Game can be played without it. The only thing that matters is if participants say thank you (or a variation of thanks) before saying if their boat floats.
- Facilitators can help direct participants towards the solution by occasionally interrupting players mid-sentence if they do not first say thank you to direct players

attention to the front half of the statement instead of at the material or use the phrase “just remember your manners” or “just be polite” if players ask for a hint.

- To check if a participant has solved the puzzle the facilitator can pass the pen back and forth with that participant multiple times so the participant can give the facilitator an example of a boat that floats and does not float. Alternatively, the facilitator can ask the participant in question to judge whether fellow participants’ boats float or sink to confirm they know the secret.
- Play until all participants solve how to make their boats float, this may take multiple sessions.

Traffic Jam

Traffic Jam is a complex puzzle game that requires teamwork and experimentation to solve. For a refresher on how to solve Traffic Jam, check out YouTube or the included graphic.

Important Information

Materials Needed: Poly-Spots, Post-It Notes, or another means of marking participant spots- one per participant plus one extra

Ideal Group Size: 10-15 participants

Difficulty: 4

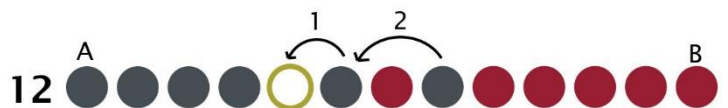
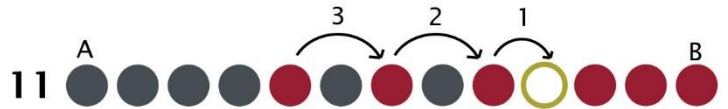
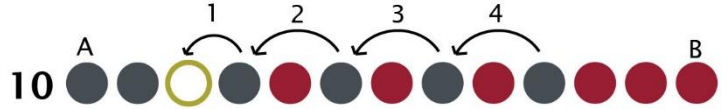
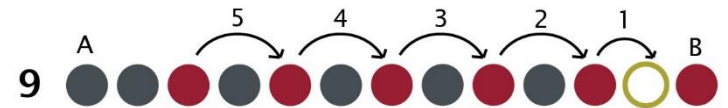
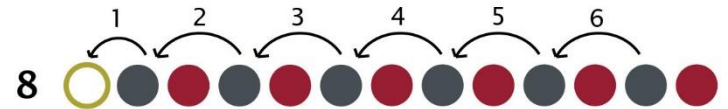
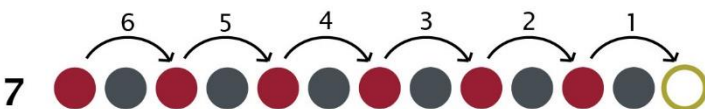
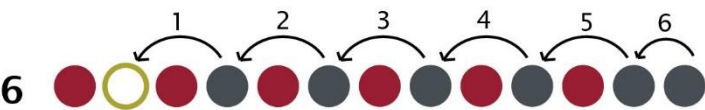
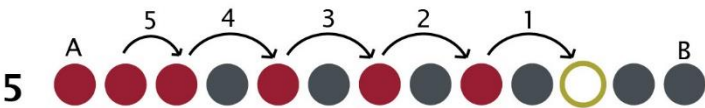
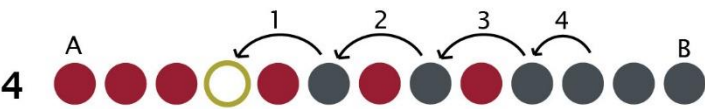
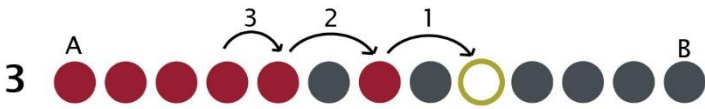
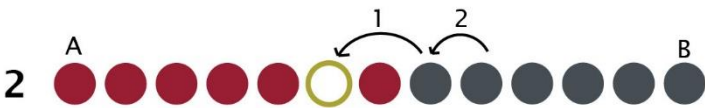
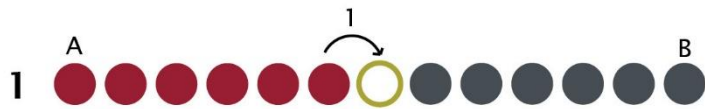
Instructions

- Place the spot markers in a straight, horizontal line approximately 10 inches apart from each other. There should be an equal number of spots on each side of a center spot that directly correlate to how many participants are involved. The center spot will remain open while all other spots should be occupied by a participant.
- Split participants into two even groups. If there are an odd number of participants, the facilitator can join a team or leave the end cap open on one side.
- Ask each team of participants to stand on a marked spot. All participants should face the center.
- Explain to participants that they need to figure out how to move their team from side A to side B and the team from side B to side A without breaking the rules.
- Instruct participants that they must always face forwards. Participants can move forward to an empty space, or jump over an opposing teammate, but cannot jump their own team, share a spot, or move backwards. Only one person may move forward at a time from either team.
- If any rules are broken, or the group becomes stuck, the group must start over.
- When the group figures out how to successfully maneuver through the activity the facilitator can lead the group through the following discussion questions:
 - Was your group successful in your task?
 - Were you successful as a group?
 - Did everyone participate?
 - Did you communicate effectively?
 - In what ways did you act together as a group to solve the challenge?
 - Did anyone feel frustrated during the activity? How did you deal with this?
 - Think about these keys to success of problem solving in groups:
 - Communication
 - Planning
 - Motivation

How to Solve Traffic Jam

By Katya Farinsky

Traffic Jam is a complex puzzle that requires teamwork and experimentation to solve. Participants are split into two groups (depicted here in crimson and grey) with one empty spot in the middle. Please review the Student Ambassador Icebreaker Anthology's entry on Traffic Jam to review the full ruleset. Here is the 12-participant solution for Traffic Jam.





Energizers/Fun Icebreakers

Materials Required



Pick Six

Pick Six is a fast-paced game where participants challenge each other to “Pick Six” things within a given category before a 15-second timer elapses.

Important Information

Materials Needed: A timer or equivalent app, Koosh ball

Ideal Group Size: Under 25 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs
- Explain to participants that they will take turns naming categories and naming six items within that category before a 15-second timer runs out.
 - *Note: Pick Six can be played without a hard time limit by asking participants to name six items as fast as they can. This alternative take can help alleviate anxiety in shy groups.*
- Before starting the game, the facilitator should provide examples of good and bad categories. Past favorite categories include Pick Six types of trees, plants, flowers, colors, breeds of dogs, brands (ie cars, shoes, cosmetics, etc.), celebrities, or fictional characters (ie from books, movies, TV shows, comics, etc.). Categories to avoid include breeds of cats (but cat fur colors could work), niche topics (ie card games besides Pokémon or obscure tv/movies), or industry specific vocabulary.
 - *Note: The only exception to this rule is if the person picking the category knows the group will have a fair shot at answering successfully. For example, Computer Scientists could easily pick six coding/programming languages, but a group of Sociologists may struggle to name more than one.*
- The facilitator will start the game by designating a timer (either a participant or themselves) and picking a participant in the group to “Pick six ____”. The facilitator will then toss the Koosh ball to the person they are asking to Pick Six.
- After a participant catches the Koosh ball (or hears “Go”) they will try to name six items as fast as they can before time runs out.
- Once a participant names six items, or runs out of time, they select a new category and toss the Koosh ball to a new participant.
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play for a set amount of time, play until the entire group completes a set amount of turns, or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

Heads or Tails Tournament

Heads or Tails Tournament is a quick game that is great for filling downtime. Participants are asked to pick heads or tails and see who survives the elimination process based on a physical or virtual coin flip.

Important Information

Materials Needed: A two-sided coin, a virtual coin, or online random Heads/Tails generator

Ideal Group Size: Over 15 participants

Difficulty: 1

Instructions

- Ask participants to gather for the activity, there is no specific shape that participants need to form but all participants should start standing.
- Explain to students that the group is going to play a Heads or Tails Tournament and see how long each student can stay in the game.
- Instruct participants that they can choose either Heads or Tails.
- To choose Heads, instruct students to raise both arms directly above their head in the air like a capital “H”. To choose Tails, instruct students to hold their arms out to the sides so they form a 90-degree angle with their body forming a capital “T”.
- Slight variation is fine if the participant’s gesture can be clearly identified as Heads or Tails.
- The facilitator should give participants approximately 10 seconds to decide whether they want to choose Heads or Tails. Once time has expired, flip the coin and announce if it lands on Heads or Tails.
- Participants who correctly guessed which side the coin landed on advance to the next round while participants who guessed incorrectly are out and should sit down or move to the side.
- The remaining participants are again given approximately 10 seconds to decide if they want to pick Heads or Tails and the facilitator flips the coin a second time once time is up.
- Repeat the elimination process and continue flipping the coin until only a few participants remain.
- If there are only two participants left the facilitator may dictate that only one may choose heads and the other must choose tails to find a single winner.
 - *Note: There may be one clear winner or a tie depending on the participant’s choices and how many participants remain towards the end of the activity. If there are fewer than five participants remaining and all the participants choose the same side resulting in total elimination after the coin flip, the facilitator can declare those participants co-champions and restart the activity.*
- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.



Style Guide

How to Add to the Anthology



Adding to this Document

The first version of the Student Ambassador Icebreaker Anthology was a physical binder of icebreakers compiled by previous Student Ambassadors starting around 2016. The Ice Breaker Binder lived in the Ambassador Office where successive Ambassadors added to it in pieces. In 2020, the document was recreated from the ground up so it would be cohesive, useful, and relevant for future Ambassador teams.

One of the biggest changes for the second edition, besides becoming a digital document, is the implementation of a standard format across entries. The original Ice Breaker Binder was literally a collection of individual printed pages, stuffed in plastic sleeves, inside a 3-ring binder. Almost no documentation of who added to the binder, when they added material, or where that material came from was kept. To re-create this document digitally, everything had to be re-typed by hand based on scans of the original binder pages.

Keep this history in mind as you add to this living document.

Specific styles and language are used to prevent an overwhelming number of fonts, incomplete instructions, and poor formatting from rendering this document an un-usable mess. Several “frequently used instructions” were established to create cohesion between entries and aid in future writing. Please use these frequently used instructions as applicable and modify existing instructions so they fit with your new additions. Closely following the existing entry format and styles will allow this document to be effective for as long as possible.

When writing please note the following stylistic constraints:

- Icebreaker should be one word, not two (ie icebreaker not ice breaker)
- Icebreakers should be referred to as an “activity” within an entry
- The person leading the activity is known as the facilitator
- The people doing the activity are referred to as participants, group members, or collectively as the group
- Wherever the activity takes place is referred to as the “area”
- Avoid using the words “play” or “game” if possible
- Mirror existing examples of descriptions when writing a new entry. Descriptions can be one or two lines of text, but never longer than three lines of text.
- For examples of crediting a specific Ambassador for introducing a new, *unique* icebreaker refer to Guess Who, The Hat Game, or Screaming Viking. Ambassadors should be credited for the year they introduced the game, not the year(s) they were on the Ambassador Team. Established games like Pictionary should be uncredited.
- For an example of crediting a WSU staff member who introduced a new icebreaker see Stomp, Clap, Jazz Hands.
- Keep new entries to one page unless absolutely necessary
- Write concise steps in the instructions section that start with action verbs like “explain” or “instruct”. Draw on the Frequently Used Instructions section and mirror existing language whenever possible.

Examples of Frequently Used Instructions

Get Into A Circle

- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle, sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. Depending on the area, this can be accomplished by standing in a circle (recommended), sitting on the floor, or being seated in chairs.
- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing.
- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity, participants should be sitting on the floor, or seated in chairs.
-
- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing in a tight circle, almost shoulder to shoulder.
- Ask the group of participants to arrange themselves into a circle. For this activity participants should be standing in a loose circle.
- Ask participants to gather for the activity, there is no specific shape that participants need to form but all participants should start standing.

Form A Line(s)

- Split participants into two equal groups and ask each group to stand in two parallel lines facing each other.
- Explain to participants that they will be asked to work together, as a team, to create a horizontal line without talking to each other.

Get into Pairs

- Divide participants into groups of two and ask the pairs to space themselves evenly throughout the area. Participants should have room to move their arms around without hitting another participant.

Ending the game

- The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.
- When a mistake occurs, the activity should be quickly restarted. The facilitator can either allow participants to play multiple rounds, play until a winner emerges (if they wish to employ elimination), or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.
- If the round moves quickly the facilitator can allow participants to play multiple rounds or stop the activity if participant interest appears to decline.

- Depending on the size of the group, the facilitator may continue the activity until each participant has gone multiple times, questions are exhausted, or each participant has gone once in large groups.
- When each participant has finished sharing, the facilitator should transition to a different activity.
- After a brief discussion the facilitator should transition to a new activity.

WSU Brand Standards

WSU Vancouver and the WSU system have well developed brand standards that should be respected by future Ambassadors who are adding to this document. For more information about WSU brand standards please visit the following links:

Vancouver Brand Standards:

<https://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/marketing-communications/branding-style-guidelines>

WSU Brand Standards:

<https://brand.wsu.edu/>

For all documents it is preferred that the Stone font family is used. However, Lucida Sans and Palatino Linotype are acceptable substitutions in lieu of purchasing additional licenses. Please refer to the following graphic for typography and color information within this document:

Icebreaker Anthology Typography & Colors					
Lucida Sans Font Family			Palatino Linotype Font Family		
Lucida Sans Regular			Palatino Linotype Regular		
<i>Lucida Sans Italic</i>			<i>Palatino Linotype Italic</i>		
Lucida Sans Demibold Roman			Palatino Linotype Bold		
<i>Lucida Sans Demibold Italic</i>			<i>Palatino Linotype Bold Italic</i>		

Basic Design Rules

- For documents that will be digitally distributed or viewed primarily through a screen use the Lucida Sans Font Family.
- For printed documents use the Lucida Sans Font Family for headings and the Palatino Linotype Font Family for body text/paragraphs.
- When deciding between using black or white text always choose a high contrast combination of background elements and typography. Use black font on light backgrounds and white font on dark, saturated backgrounds.
- Never combine red and black text/background elements together.
- Do not use WSU logos without consulting the brand standard guides and obtaining permission for use.
- Documents should primarily use crimson and grey theming. Black and white elements are fine in addition to the approved accent colors of green, orange, blue, and yellow. More shades and tints can be found in the WSU Brand Standards linked above.



Student Ambassador Icebreaker Anthology

Version 2.0 | Edited by Katya Farinsky | Fall 2020