

5 SOCIAL SKILLS ICEBREAKERS

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Fun Activities to Build Communication,
Connection, and Classroom Community



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Building a Brighter Tomorrow

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TEACHER NOTES



These five icebreakers are designed to help middle school students feel comfortable with one another, build communication skills, and create a positive classroom environment.



PURPOSE



Icebreakers help students get to know each other, reduce anxiety, encourage participation, and build connections that support a positive learning community.

WHEN TO USE



- First week of school
- Advisory or homeroom
- Transition times
- Before group work or discussions
- Social skills groups
- Anytime your classroom needs a connection boost!

TIPS FOR SUCCESS



SET THE STAGE

Set clear expectations and model respectful listening and sharing. Remind students to be kind, inclusive, and supportive.



ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Invite all students to participate, but honor individual comfort levels. Offer options for students who may not want to share aloud.



KEEP IT SAFE

Create a safe space where every student feels valued. Avoid questions that may be too personal or sensitive.



DEBRIEF AND CONNECT

Use the provided discussion prompts to help students reflect and make meaningful connections.



HAVE FUN!

Your energy sets the tone! Be enthusiastic and enjoy getting to know your students.



REMEMBER:

The goal is connection, not perfection. These activities are flexible—adapt them to fit your students and your classroom!





ICEBREAKER #1

Two Truths and a Dream



PURPOSE

Help students learn about one another while practicing communication, listening, and relationship-building skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pencil or pen
- Optional recording sheet

HOW TO PLAY

1. Ask students to write two true facts about themselves.
2. Ask students to write one future dream, goal, or aspiration.
3. Students take turns sharing all three statements.
4. Classmates guess which statement is the dream.
5. The student reveals the correct answer and shares more about their goal.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What did you learn about your classmates?
- Did anyone have a dream similar to yours?
- Why is it important to learn about other people's interests and goals?
- How can finding common interests help build friendships?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have students find a classmate with a similar interest or goal and discuss what they have in common.

RaMP CONNECTION

R

Reinforcement: Praise students for participating and listening respectfully.

M

Modeling: Demonstrate how to share examples before students begin.

P

Prompting: Provide sentence starters for students who need support.



ICEBREAKER #2

Common Ground Challenge



PURPOSE

Help students discover shared interests and experiences while practicing teamwork and respectful conversation.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chart paper or notebook paper
- Pencil or marker
- Timer

HOW TO PLAY

1. Place students in pairs or small groups.
2. Give each group 3 to 5 minutes to list as many things as they have in common as possible.
3. Remind students to avoid obvious answers such as "we are all in this class."
4. Invite each group to share their top three connections.
5. Celebrate surprising, kind, or creative commonalities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was one connection that surprised you?
- Was it easy or difficult to find common ground?
- How can shared interests help students feel included?
- What can you do when someone seems very different from you?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Create a class "Common Ground Wall" where students add shared interests they discover throughout the week.

RaMP CONNECTION

R

Reinforcement: Recognize students for including everyone in the conversation.

M

Modeling: Model asking follow-up questions such as "What do you like about that?"

P

Prompting: Give category prompts like hobbies, food, music, pets, sports, or favorite places.

ICEBREAKER #3

Would You Rather?



PURPOSE

Help students practice making choices, explaining their thinking, listening to others, and respecting different opinions.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Would You Rather question list
- Open space or simple hand signals

HOW TO PLAY

1. Read one age-appropriate Would You Rather question aloud.
2. Students choose their answer by moving to a side of the room, raising a hand, or showing one/two fingers.
3. Invite a few students to explain their choice.
4. Encourage students to respond respectfully, even when they disagree.
5. Repeat with several prompts as time allows.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Did anyone have an answer that surprised you?
- How can people disagree without being unkind?
- What did you learn by listening to someone else's reason?
- Why is it helpful to explain your thinking clearly?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Let students write their own school-appropriate Would You Rather questions and use them in a future group.

RaMP CONNECTION

R

Reinforcement: Praise respectful disagreement and thoughtful explanations.

M

Modeling: Model a complete answer: "I would choose ____ because ____."

P

Prompting: Offer sentence starters for students who need help explaining their choices.

ICEBREAKER #4

Speed Connections

PURPOSE

Help students practice starting conversations, answering questions, and building comfort talking with different peers.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Timer
- Conversation prompt list
- Optional bell or signal

HOW TO PLAY

1. Arrange students in two lines, circles, or partner pairs.
2. Give students one conversation prompt.
3. Partners talk for 45 to 60 seconds.
4. Signal students to thank their partner and rotate to someone new.
5. Continue for several rounds, changing the prompt each time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which prompt was easiest to answer?
- What helped the conversation feel comfortable?
- What did your partners do that showed they were listening?
- How can you start a conversation with someone new?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have students choose one conversation skill to practice during lunch, group work, or advisory that week.

RaMP CONNECTION

R

Reinforcement: Notice students who use eye contact, kind words, or follow-up questions.

M

Modeling: Model how to greet a partner and end a conversation politely.

P

Prompting: Post sentence starters such as "One thing I like is..." or "Tell me more about..."



ICEBREAKER #5

Mystery Classmate



PURPOSE

Help students learn about peers through clues while practicing inference, listening, and positive classroom connection.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Index cards or paper slips
- Pencil or pen
- Container or basket

HOW TO PLAY

1. Ask each student to write three clues about themselves without writing their name.
2. Collect the clues and mix them in a container.
3. Read one card aloud at a time.
4. Students guess which classmate the clues describe.
5. The mystery classmate reveals themselves and may share one additional fact.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which clues were most helpful?
- What did you learn about someone in the room?
- How can noticing details help us connect with others?
- What makes a clue too easy, too hard, or just right?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Repeat the activity later in the year and compare how much more students know about one another.

RaMP CONNECTION

R

Reinforcement: Reinforce students for sharing appropriate and positive clues.

M

Modeling: Model examples of safe clues before students write.

P

Prompting: Provide clue categories such as hobbies, favorite foods, pets, talents, or interests.