

Taken from Science of People article: <https://www.scienceofpeople.com/meeting-icebreakers/>

What is an Icebreaker?

An icebreaker is an activity, event, or game that is designed to break down social barriers, make others feel more comfortable, and facilitate social interaction. Icebreakers are usually performed at the beginning of a meeting or team session and involve a group of people.

From [conferences](#) to [team retreats](#), one thing learned is that an icebreaker truly can make or break an event. Here's the science on this:

- Harvard Business School professor Michael Norton gathered 221 participants and had them form groups of two to four people.
- Then, he asked them to do a campus scavenger hunt where they had to run around taking selfies in front of specific locations.
- They had precisely forty-five minutes to complete the hunt and the winners received a cash prize.
- *There was a catch. Half of the teams were asked to do a pre-scavenger hunt icebreaker together and the other half were simply asked to read an article together. The icebreaker groups had to form a circle, perform a series of rhythmic claps and foot stomps and yell, "Let's go!"

The results were clear. The teams that did the icebreaker before the scavenger hunt got the most selfies, had the shortest completion times, and reported liking each other more in the post-event survey. This is incredible! A couple of foot stomps, a few claps, and a cliché cheer improved performance, time, AND [likability](#).

What Are Good Icebreaker Questions?

Icebreaker questions are a fun, easy way to get to know people and lighten the mood. They are similar to icebreaker activities but usually do not require much or any preparation at all. Here are some great icebreaker questions you can ask!

10 Icebreaker Questions to Get to Know People

1. What is your proudest accomplishment?
2. If you could write a book, what would it be about?
3. What is the happiest moment in your life? What made it so special?
4. What is the scariest thing you've ever done for fun?
5. What is the best gift you've ever given/received?
6. What is your dream job?

7. What is something you were known for in college/high school?
8. What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?
9. Where is one place you'd love to travel to?
10. What does your ideal day look like?

10 Fun Icebreaker Questions

11. What is your spirit animal?
12. Who would win in a fight: a horse-sized duck or 100 duck-sized horses?
13. If you were a color, what would it be?
14. What superpower would you choose to have? Why?
15. What was your favorite television show as a kid?
16. If you had a time machine, what time period would you travel to?
17. If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?
18. If you had one wish, what would you wish for?
19. If you were stranded on an island, what 3 things would you bring with you?
20. What song best describes you?

Virtual Meeting Icebreakers

Not all meetings nowadays are in-person. Some are virtual. These fun icebreakers can be performed anytime, anywhere, no matter the distance!

Show and Tell

This is one of my favorite virtual icebreakers. Why? Because it reveals what your teammates really value! Here's how to perform this icebreaker:

1. Ask your remote team members to grab a nearby item (or even send a personal picture through group chat!). This item should be unique to them.
2. Share! Take turns sharing your item and the story or personal meaning behind it.

For example, I recently shared in my weekly team meeting a small personal item: a llama doll I received from one of my friends! It was a great way to show to my remote team how I value small gifts from friends, and an easy icebreaker, too! Win-win!

Meet the Pet (or child, or partner, or plant)

This icebreaker idea is super simple, and who doesn't like pets? It's best performed for remote teams that are newer and/or as a first-day icebreaker. Here's how:

1. Have your remote team grab their pets or show a picture of them.

2. Start the introductions! You can start off with the basics (name, age, where you got him/her), but make sure to throw in one personal/fun story you had with your pet. Pro tip: If your teammate does not have a pet, ask them to describe their ideal pet. Or meet each other's kids. Or meet each other's plants. Feeling funky? Ask them what their spirit animal is!

Partner Lunch

Want a fun way to make a meeting more... dare I say... delicious? Enter: the Partner Lunch. This icebreaker requires a bit of prep work with your team, and it'll be better if you're in similar time zones.

1. Schedule a time where you and your team can video call and eat a meal together.
2. Find a partner. Randomly assign partners in your team to talk one-on-one for 10-20 minutes before your group call.
3. Talk! Now's a great time for the partners to get to know each other over lunch. You can even have a list of [deep questions](#) to help facilitate discussion.

Rotating Questions

In small groups, you can use great questions to get people to open up.

1. Gather a list of icebreaker questions from earlier in the article, or check out my [favorite 57 conversation starters](#) you can use.
2. Have everyone take turns answering questions. If they don't like a question, they can choose another to answer!

Quiz Time

One of the funnest icebreaker activities is to take quizzes and compare the results with your team! Here at Science of People, we absolutely LOVE quizzes. We've got a ton of quizzes backed with science to help you and your team understand each other:

- How open are you to new experiences? Are you [extroverted or more introverted](#)? Are you agreeable? See your traits in our [Personality Test!](#)
- Are you good at figuring out nonverbal communication? See if you can spot these cues with the [Body Language Quiz](#).
- Have you ever noticed you date the same kind of person over and over again? That's because we have specific attachment styles—find out yours in our [Attachment Styles Quiz!](#)

