

Icebreaker Activities

It may be challenging to know where to begin when you meet with your student(s) for the first time. This packet is here to help! Below you'll find icebreakers that will make getting to know each other easy and fun, enabling you to build a meaningful and long-lasting relationship with your student(s).

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Roses and Thorns

Activity Description:

You and your student can do this icebreaker every week! Roses and Thorns is a game where you come up with one good thing and one bad thing that happened during your day. If you meet with your student once a week, you can have them come up with things that happened recently instead of things that happened that day.

Example:

Ms. Megan: "What was your thorn and rose for the weekend Sam?"

Sammy: "Well, we went to the movies, so that's my rose! But my brother pushed me and I hurt my ankle, so that's probably my thorn."

Tips:

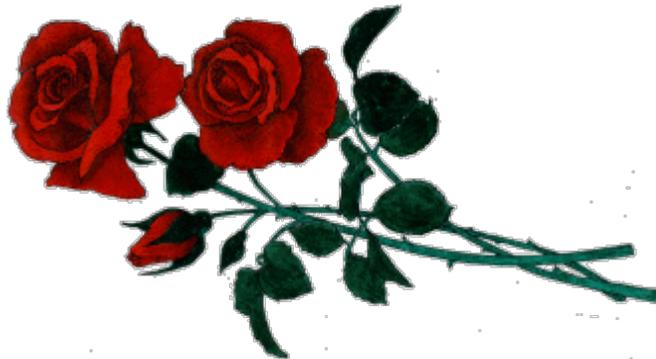
- As always, ask questions! This is a short activity, but if you ask your student questions you can get better insight into their life.

Amp Up:

- Along with a thorn and a rose, ask your student to include a "bud." A bud is a way they're growing. For example, if a student is having trouble in math but they are getting help, they are growing into a better math student, and that's something to celebrate. They could also be growing by helping their parents with chores or by trying to be nicer to their younger siblings.

Amp Down:

- If your student is having trouble coming up with a rose you can ask about future roses (things they are looking forward to). Sometimes kids who are going through tough times find it difficult to come up with roses.



5 in Common

Activity Description:

The object of this game is to find 5 (or more!) things the two of you have in common. These things can't be physical traits such as hair color, eye color, or gender. They must be five non-physical things, such as favorite food, favorite color, etc.

Tips:

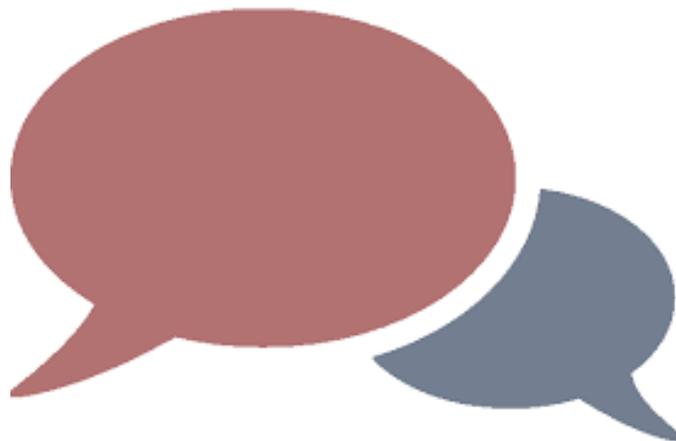
- Go back and forth asking each other questions so one person doesn't do all of the thinking.
- Write down the things you have in common so you don't lose track.
- Don't be afraid to let the conversation wander – if your student mentions a favorite video game, ask them what they like about it; make connections!

Amp Up:

- Move beyond favorite colors and foods, ask about favorite things to do on the weekend, pet peeves, favorite vacation spots, etc.

Amp Down:

- If you're struggling to find 5 things in common, allow answers to be less specific by asking questions such as "do you prefer movies or TV shows?"
- If you're still struggling to find 5 things in common, ask questions that have a yes or no answer, such as "do you want to visit Europe someday?"



Roll the Dice, Break the Ice

Activity Description:

Roll 2 dice and add up the numbers that they land on. Use that number to find a statement down below! You and your student should take turns rolling the dice and completing the statements.

Questions:

1. My favorite movie is...
2. My favorite place is...
3. My favorite band/singer is...
4. My favorite song is...
5. My favorite television show is...
6. My favorite book/author is...
7. My favorite sports team is...
8. My dream car is...
9. My favorite food is...
10. My dream job is...
11. If I were a millionaire, I would...



Setting Goals

Activity Description:

Goal setting is important to the success of your student. Reaching their goals will allow them to feel successful and confident, which is why it is important for them to learn this skill. Setting goals will also help you see the positive impact you're having! You can check in on your student's progress and help them when they get stuck.

Tips:

- Keep goals realistic and measured. Kids shouldn't set goals that are too high or impossible to reach. For example, instead of setting the goal of reading 100 books by the end of the school year set the goal of reading for 15 minutes each night before bed.
- Think of the obstacles that could prevent your student from reaching their goal and figure out ways to combat them. For example, if a child's goal is to be nicer to their siblings, teach them how to walk away and calm down before handling frustrating situations.
- Remind your student that they don't have to achieve all of their goals. Goals are something to work towards and aim for. Falling short isn't necessarily a bad thing as long as they keep moving in the right direction. Remind kids to learn from their slip-ups and roadblocks. Keeping a record of goals set and tracking how children work toward them can help with this.
- Try to encourage goals that aren't competitive. Say a student wants to get the highest test score in their class. A better goal would be to score over 80% on all their tests. This way the goal encourages a healthy mindset and the student controls the outcome.



2 Truths and a Lie

Activity Description:

A classic get-to-know-you icebreaker in which each person states 2 truths and a lie. The goal is to figure out which statement is the lie! This game can be played in pairs or in large groups.

Example:

Ms. Megan: "Okay, I'll go first. I'm from Texas, I love to play volleyball, and I have 2 dogs and a cat."

Sam: "Is the lie that you don't have 2 dogs and a cat?"

Ms. Megan: "Nope, that's true! Their names are Tex, Molly, and Max."

Sam: "Hmm... hey! You said you're from Arizona! That's the lie!"

Ms. Megan: "Ah, you got it! Okay, your turn!"

Tips:

- If your student is having trouble coming up with a lie, just tell them to think of something that's true for them, then say the opposite. For example, if your student loves playing dodgeball, they can say they dislike dodgeball.

Amp Up (for older kids):

- Variation: *Two Truths and a Dream Wish*. Instead of stating a lie, a person says something that is not true — yet something that they wish to be true. For example, someone that has never been to Hawaii might say: "I visited Hawaii when I was younger." This interesting spin often leads to unexpected results as people often share interesting wishes about their lives.



Marooned!

Activity Description:

You are marooned on an island. What five items would you bring with you? This activity sparks fun discussions and allows volunteers to understand what's important to their students.

Tips:

- Let kids be creative! Bring up things they hadn't thought of, like how it may seem like a good idea to bring their electronics, but eventually their gadgets will run out of power! It's amazing what kids will come up with if you give them a challenge!

Amp Up (for older kids):

- What should you bring to the island in order to survive? If you're stuck on an island, should you bring something to purify water? What about shelter? Lots of older kids enjoy brainstorming about these things.
- Have them draw out their island and the things they'd bring. Draw your island too!



Dream Vacation

Activity Description:

Ask your student to describe the details of their ideal dream vacation. Take turns! Your vacations can be to somewhere real or imaginary. Do you want to go to the Bahamas or Neverland? Canada or Hogwarts? It's up to you and your imagination!

Tips:

- Ask lots of questions! Why did your student pick a certain dream vacation spot? Would they bring anyone along?
- Ask if they've been on a fun vacation in the past and what that was like.

Amp Up:

- Draw your dream vacations! Include who, what, and where in the drawings.
- Encourage your student to use their imaginations and go into the smallest details! Be creative and goofy so they feel comfortable being goofy too! For example, maybe your dream vacation includes a hotel that serves every food imaginable and has a water slide that goes from the hotel room to the pool!
- Think of and share more than one vacation.

