

Let's Break the Ice

Let's face it—the current icebreakers are underwhelming, overdone, and often dread-inducing.

Whether it's two truths and a lie, three fun facts, or desert island picks, we're putting immense pressure on people to come up with interesting things about themselves on the spot.

And once we start to overthink what our *audience* will think of our answers, the pressure builds even more. We may get stuck in our heads, obsessing over whether something will make us sound like we're boring, bragging, or borderline sociopathic.

Instead of making us wrack our brains with worry, these exercises should be fun and instinctual, allowing us to shine a spotlight on ourselves, while providing the space for connections to occur *naturally*.

So here are some fresh new options to help you shake things up!

The Newlymets Game

- It will work best with a small- to medium-size group of people who don't know each other very well
- Pair people up randomly (preferably with someone they've never met before)
- The pair has 10 minutes to find out everything(!) they can about each other—no detail is too small
- Then, one person at a time will go into the Hot Seat, where they will spend 2 minutes answering questions from the group ON BEHALF OF their partner
- The questions can be anything (appropriate) and can venture into the ridiculous (*ex. Do they believe more in ghosts or aliens?*)
- The person must attempt to answer as many questions correctly as they can, and if they don't know an answer, **they have to make one up!**
- Meanwhile, their partner keeps track of correct answers as well as how many times the person improvised on their behalf
- At the end of each round, the group must guess how many answers the person in the Hot Seat made up
- As an observer, you receive 2 points for guessing this number correctly, while the person in the Hot Seat will receive 1 point for every correct answer, and 2 points if no one guesses the correct number of improvisations
- At the end of each round, the partner will reveal all incorrect/improvised answers, and a new person will go into the Hot Seat until everyone's had a turn

One Lie

- This one is fairly simple, and works well for an event with a group of people that know each other well
- Each person must decide on One Lie to tell people about themselves, and everyone's aim is to slip it into conversation as many times as they can before they get questioned/called out on it
- The One Lie must be something that people would know/suspect to be untrue, but there are bonus points for lies that are more ambitious/outrageous
- The winner is whoever can get away with telling everyone their One Lie for the longest amount of time and to the most people

Spirit (Animal) Quest

- Suitable for people who aren't particularly well acquainted
- Before the event, everyone must submit what they truly believe is their spirit animal based on their personality (not just I'm a giraffe because I'm tall)
- Once you arrive to the event, you will receive a printed-out list of the animals that everyone answered, without their names attached (of course)
- It is your task to mingle and ask enough probing questions (without asking directly) to figure out what animals people most resemble
- The person who pairs the most people with their correct spirit animal wins!

Kid vs. Pet

- My personal favorite, it's perfect for when you have lots of people with young children
- People will anonymously submit (either live or in advance) funny things that were done recently by their kid or their pet (*ex. climbed to the top of the fridge and knocked the cookie jar over*)
- Everyone else must guess whether it was done by a kid or a pet, one point for each correct guess!

Not-So-Great Debates

- Rapid-fire debates on random, utterly insignificant topics (*golf, skinny jeans, cotton candy, roses, destination weddings, etc.*)
- A topic is announced, and then whoever thinks they have the strongest pro and whoever thinks they have the strongest con will have to face off!
- Timings can vary for opening statements and cross-examination, but no more than 4 minutes per topic

- At the end of the 4 minutes, everyone will choose who they think is the winner of the not-so-great debate!

Live NYT Connections

- Thank you to Wyna Liu and the NYT Games team for crafting such great mind candy for us every day!
- **Easy Mode:** Split people into teams and have them solve Connections from the archive
- **Hard Mode:** Split people into teams and have them try to come up with their own set of 4 groups of 4, which they will give to the other teams to solve afterwards!

Kick-starters:

- Little News - What's something you've seen or experienced in the last day or so that you haven't had the chance to tell anyone yet? What's something you're looking forward to in the near future?
- Quick Rants - 1 minute rants about anything that excites you (*ex. recently watched movies, tv show episodes, reality tv updates, sports games, concerts*)
- Brain Games - Something to get the cogs turning, like riddles, brain teasers, trivia questions; I'd highly recommend trying to solve cryptic crossword clues together!