



30 days of icebreakers



Putting together a yearbook is stressful. To help your staff get to know each other and work as a team, use ice breakers, team builders and get-to-know-you activities.

These games are not in any particular order; simply pick and choose the activities that suit your goal for the day. Tweak these games to fit your students, school and environment. Many of them can be done more than once — just change a few details, ask a new question and you have a new game.

Obviously, this list does not contain every ice breaker game. This is simply a collection of games that students have responded well to and had fun participating in. These activities have been created from a variety of resources and experiences.

1. Draw a Pig Personality Test

Learn about your staff with the Draw a Pig Personality Test. Tell each student to get out a blank piece of paper and a pencil, and tell them they have five minutes to draw a pig. They can draw the pig as detailed as they would like. When time is up, read to them from the Pig Analysis. Ask them if they think the analysis correctly describes their personality.

The analysis: if the pig is drawn:

- Facing front – Indicates you can be direct, enjoy playing devil's advocate, and neither fear nor avoid confrontational discussions
- Facing left – Indicates you believe in tradition and are friendly, and may remember dates well
- Facing Right – You tend to be innovative and active, but may forget dates and may not have a strong sense of family
- Toward the top of the paper – Indicates you are positive and optimistic
- Toward the middle – Indicates you are a realist
- Toward the bottom – You tend to be pessimistic and possibly behave negatively
- With large ears – Indicates listening skills; the bigger the ears, the better the listener
- With a long tail – Indicates intelligence; the longer the tail, the smarter you are
- With many details – You are analytical, but may be overcautious and have trust issues
- With few details – Emotional; tend to focus on the larger picture rather than details; may be a greater risk taker and may make reckless and impulsive decisions
- With fewer than 4 legs showing – You may be living through a major period of change, leading you to struggle with insecurities
- With 4 legs showing – You tend to be secure and to stick to your ideals, which others see as being stubborn.



Source: Teach Them.

2. Draw a Mountain Personality Test

On a blank piece of paper, tell each student to draw a mountain scene. It should include a mountain, a road or path, some trees and any other details. Here's a quick guide for interpreting the drawings:

The mountain itself:

- If your mountain keeps climbing higher and higher, without an end in sight, you tend to be self-driven and self-motivated.
- If it goes up, stops at a level peak, such as a butte, your friends rely on you greatly.
- If your mountain goes straight up, peaks and then straight down, like a triangle, you are a multi-tasking person who is not disappointed easily with failure.

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The road or path:

- If your road goes straight through the mountain, you are a direct, to-the-point person.
- If your road turns around the mountain repeatedly, then you are a cautious person.
- If your road travels straight across one side of the mountain, then you are a peaceful person who sees the world with calm and serene eyes.

The trees:

- If your trees show great detail, with lots of leaves and branches, you are creative.
- If your trees contain fruit, you are a daydreamer who seeks out adventure.
- If your trees are simple twigs with leaves on them, you are a person who enjoys following the rules of life, and you are precise in your actions.

The sky:

- If you put a sun in your picture, you are a sunny person.
- If it is nighttime, you are full of ambition and optimism.
- If it is raining, you are a person who is prone to lethargy and possibly depression.



3. The House Personality Test

Have each student draw a house. Consider the bottom of the paper to be the ground. The artwork should include most of the paper and can include landscaping and other details such as a door, windows, a walkway that leads up to the house, a garden and themselves in the garden.

The drawing should reveal some personality traits. For example:

- A small house represents a desire to abandon family life; a large house means the person feels overwhelmed by his family.
- Weak lines for walls represent a fragile ego; strong wall lines indicate a need to strengthen boundaries.
- A detailed roof means a person concentrates on fantasies; an incomplete roof means a person avoids challenging ideas.
- The inclusion of windows, doors and sidewalks indicates an openness to other people.
- The inclusion of bushes, shades, shutters, bars and curtains indicates a person's hesitation to be open with other people.

4. Awesome adjectives

Tell your class to form a circle, with a leader in the middle. Instruct each person to think of the first letter of their first name, and pick an adjective that starts with the same letter.

The leader should go first, stating her name and the adjective chosen. For example, I would say, "My name is Jessica and I am judgmental." The next person would repeat this process, recalling what the previous person said. So the next person would say, "My name is McKenna and I am magical... She is Jessica and she is judgmental." This would continue around the circle, until it gets back to the leader, who tries to name everyone in the group and their adjectives. This game tests memory while everyone gets to know one another.

5. Awesome actions

This is an adaptation of the previous ice breaker. Have your class form a circle, with the leader standing in the middle. Everyone in the circle should have enough room to move around. Instruct each person to think of the first letter of their name, and pick an action that starts with the same letter. They need to be able to perform this action.

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After an exciting win in a paper airplane relay, Orange Glen High School Editor in Chief Mercedes McNabb high fives her teammate, Photography Editor Juan Vazquez.

The leader should go first, stating his or her name and chosen action. For example, I would say, “My name is Jessica and I am jumpy,” and then I would proceed to jump up and down. The next person would repeat this process, recalling what the previous person said as well. So the next person would say, “My name is McKenna and I am moving. She is Jessica and she is jumpy.” McKenna would jump as she introduced Jessica and then do an action to go along with “moving.” This would continue around the circle until it gets back to the leader, who tries to name everyone in the group, their actions and their moves.

6. First impressions

In the center of a piece of paper, tell students to write their name in big letters. If your students do not know everyone’s name yet, you can also instruct them to write an identifying characteristic about themselves so that someone looking for them can find them. For example, I have glasses and blonde hair.

Collect all the papers and redistribute them six or seven times, with each student writing down their first positive impression of the person named on the paper. When students get their papers back, have them write their birthday on it. Tell students to line up by birthday and share their favorite “first impression” someone wrote about them.

7. School trivia

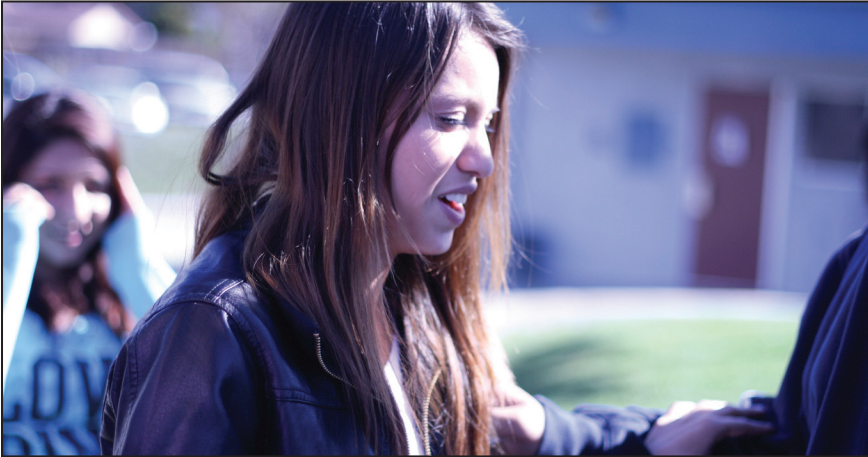
Based on your school’s information, write a quiz that covers important school information.

Have the students break into small groups. Let them know they will be working in teams to complete a task and that their ability to use resources and work together will be crucial. Give them a time limit and then trade quizzes with another group and correct them. The group with the best school knowledge wins!

Suggested questions:

- What is the school’s address? Phone number?
- How many students are enrolled?
- Who is the principal?
- When did our school open?
- When is our last day of school?
- How many pages long is the yearbook?
- How many issues does the school newspaper put out?
- How much does a prom ticket cost?
- When is homecoming?

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Making owl noises, Mercedes McNabb from Orange Glen High School tries to find her partner during the Barnyard Chaos ice breaker.

8. Barnyard chaos

To prepare for this game, make two sets of note cards with the following animals (number will vary depending on class size): cat, dog, monkey, donkey, cow, bear, frog, cricket, mouse, owl, elephant, dinosaur, pig, lion, wolf, duck, sheep, horse, etc.

Give each student a card and tell them not share its contents with anyone. Make sure every student will have a match as you distribute the cards. Share with the students that they are going to become their animal. They need to think about how this animal sounds.

In an open space, have the students form a circle. Instruct them to close their eyes and open their ears. They need to focus on their listening skills. Each “animal” will start making his or her noise, and the students (eyes closed) will carefully navigate their area, trying to find their match. When they do, they can open their eyes and move off to the side. When everyone is matched, each group demonstrates their animal sounds for the class. You can discuss why listening skills are important!

9. Move your butt

Create a circle of chairs with every student having a chair. The facilitator stands in the middle of the circle and all of the students stand in front of their chairs. The leader will make a statement that is true for her and that they feel may also be true for many students in the room. The leader will start the statement with “Move your butt if…” and conclude it with whatever the interesting fact is. For example, “Move your butt if you were born in another state.”

Then, every person to which that statement applies must step away from their chairs and find a new place on the circle, and not directly next to where they were already standing. Everyone, including the person who makes the statement, scrambles for a new seat, and the person remaining in the middle is the new leader. That person has to make the next “Move your butt…” statement. Keep going until all the students, or as many as possible, get a chance to be the leader.

10. Cinderella

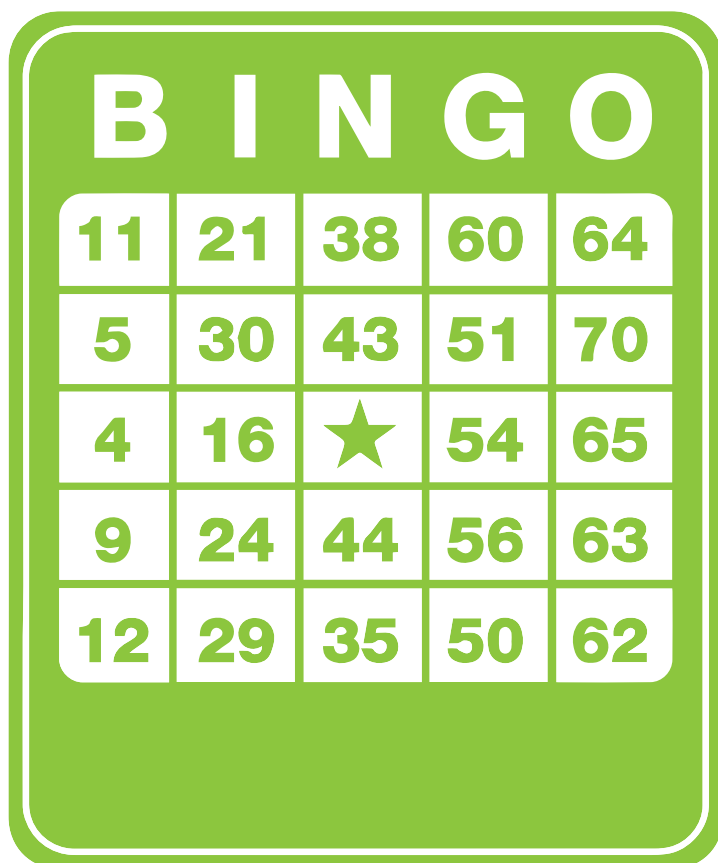
Divide the class into two groups — princes and Cinderellas with an equal number on each side. Have the Cinderellas remove one of their shoes and make a pile of them in the middle of the room. The princes dive into the pile of shoes, select one and find the owner. The pairs then interview each other, covering name, grade and what they look for in their Prince or Princess Charming. Each group shares this information with the class.

11. Skin the snake

Participants stand in a line. Each person bends over and puts his right hand in front. Then each person places his or her own left hand through his or her own legs and grasps the right hand of the person behind them. The person at the end of the line lies down and the line backs over him or her—each person lying down in turn. After everyone is lying down in a human chain, the last person to lie down stands back up and walks back forward, pulling the entire line up slowly.

12. Group numbers tag

Start in an open space. A leader calls out a number and a body part. Once the number and part are called, the students must break into groups of that number and have all of the identified body parts touching. For example, if the leader says, “7 left elbows,” the students would create groups of seven and they all must touch their left elbows. Any student who did not make it into a group of seven is eliminated. Keep playing until only a few students remain.



13. BINGO

Create a BINGO card of statements possibly true of your students and community. Make enough cards to create a variety of different ones (tip: go to Google and enter “make your own bingo” and find a site that will do this for you).

Give each student a BINGO card. Tell them they have a limited amount of time to circulate around the room and find people who agree with the statements on the card and initial the square that applies to them. They can only use a person one time and they cannot sign their own card. When finished, the student with the most initials on their card wins. Review afterward by going through all the statements on the squares and learning who they apply to.

To get you started, here are some statements to consider:

- I was born in another state.
- I am the youngest child in my family.
- I have a pet fish.
- My favorite color is orange.
- All of my grandparents are living.
- I do not like tea.
- I've never ridden on an airplane.

14. Staff theme song

To help your upcoming staff bond before summer workshop, ask them to select a popular song to rewrite the lyrics to. Print the lyrics to the song, divided by verse. Have students break into groups and give each group a verse of the song to rewrite so it applies to yearbook and journalism. When done, put the verses together for a new staff theme song.

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15. Your two cents

Give every student a coin. Have them look at the date and think about that year. Instruct them to get on a computer (or their phone) and find one significant event that happened during that year. Once they all have found their significant fact, tell them to line up in chronological order and share their fact. Take some time to reflect on the importance of history and how that relates to our jobs as journalists and reporters.



16. Name posters

On a blank piece of paper, tell students to write their names in the middle, and jot down an identifying characteristic that would help another student pick them out of the class. The students then trade papers. Once the new person has the paper, they each need to draw a picture of an animal that reminds them of person whose paper they have. They trade again, and this time they write down a compliment for that person. They continue trading papers, writing down a color they associate with that person, something they look forward to learning from that person, and other facts/impressions/silly things about the person whose name is on the paper. Take care to make sure students don't get the same paper more than once. Once the papers have circulated around eight to 10 times, return them to their owners and let students reflect on the information.

17. Human knot

Have all students stand in a circle. They all need to grab hands with people around the circle who are not standing directly next to them. Once they are all latched on to one another, explain that they need to untangle the knot they have formed. They cannot let go of one another, but they can climb over each other or twist around to try and detangle themselves. Not all knots can be untangled, but it is a good demonstration of team work and cooperation.

18. M&Ms game

You need a jumbo-sized bag of M&M candies for this one. Offer the candies to the students. They can take as many or as few as they like, but they need to take at least one. They need to organize them by color and they CANNOT eat any of them.

Once everyone has their candies, explain that each color candy is going to represent something they have to do or share with the class. Red represents something they love to do. Green represents something they are proud of. Yellow is their favorite food. Blue is a goal they have for themselves. Brown represents an animal noise. Orange is a dance move. For every M&M they have of that color, they have to share or perform the information associated that color. Once they have performed for each color, they can eat the candies.

19. The perfect staff

With students in groups of four or five, ask them to empty the contents of their pockets or purse onto the desks. Each group goes through the items and selects five they can associate with journalism and creating the perfect staff. For example, students could use a pencil because journalists always have to be ready to write and the perfect staff has members who are prepared to work. They could use a piece of gum because it is flexible and good staff members need to be flexible (and minty fresh).

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20. Airplane

Tell students to write their names and addresses on one side of a piece of paper. On the other side, instruct them to write down four goals they have for themselves for the year and four things they are proud of. Have each student fold the paper into an airplane and fly it. Then each student needs to find a paper that is not their own. They need to read the goals and write down feedback on how that person can achieve them. After reading the things that person is proud of, they should add another thing to the list that they are impressed by. Then, they need to give the paper to the teacher, who will mail them to the students at the end of the semester.



21. The Dalai Lama Personality Test

Ask each student to make three lists on a piece of paper, with room to write to the right of the lists. The first list contains these animals in order of their personal preference: pig, tiger, horse, cow and sheep. The second list contains an adjective for each of the following nouns: dog, cat, rat, coffee and ocean. The last list contains the names of people they associate with each of the following colors: yellow, orange, red, white and green.

Each of the categories represents something different about the students' personalities and their relationships. For the list of animals, each one represents the role a certain element plays in that person's life. The order they are ranked in demonstrates where that thing falls in the writer's life. The pig represents money. The tiger represents pride. The horse represents family. The cow represents career. The sheep represents love life.

The second list relates to the writer's views of himself and others. The description of the dog represents how that person sees themselves. The cat describes that person's actual personality. The rat describes their enemy's personality. Coffee describes that person's love life. And the ocean represents the writer's outlook on life.

The final list represents the roles that other people play in the writer's life. The person listed for yellow is someone the writer will never forget. The person for orange represents a really reliable friend. The red person is someone the writer loves deeply. White represents the writer's twin soul. Green is the person the writer looks up to.

22. Follow the leader

Send one person out of the room and shut the door. Have the rest of the group get into a circle and select one person as the leader. Every person in the circle must follow exactly what the leader is doing, without revealing the leader to the person who is outside. Once the leader is selected, ask the person outside to come back in and sit in the center of the circle. The leader will begin an action and the rest of the group will slowly pick it up. The leader will change his or her movements. The person in the center has three guesses to try and figure out who is leading the group. Continue with a new leader and a new hot seat as many times as you would like.

23. Line up!

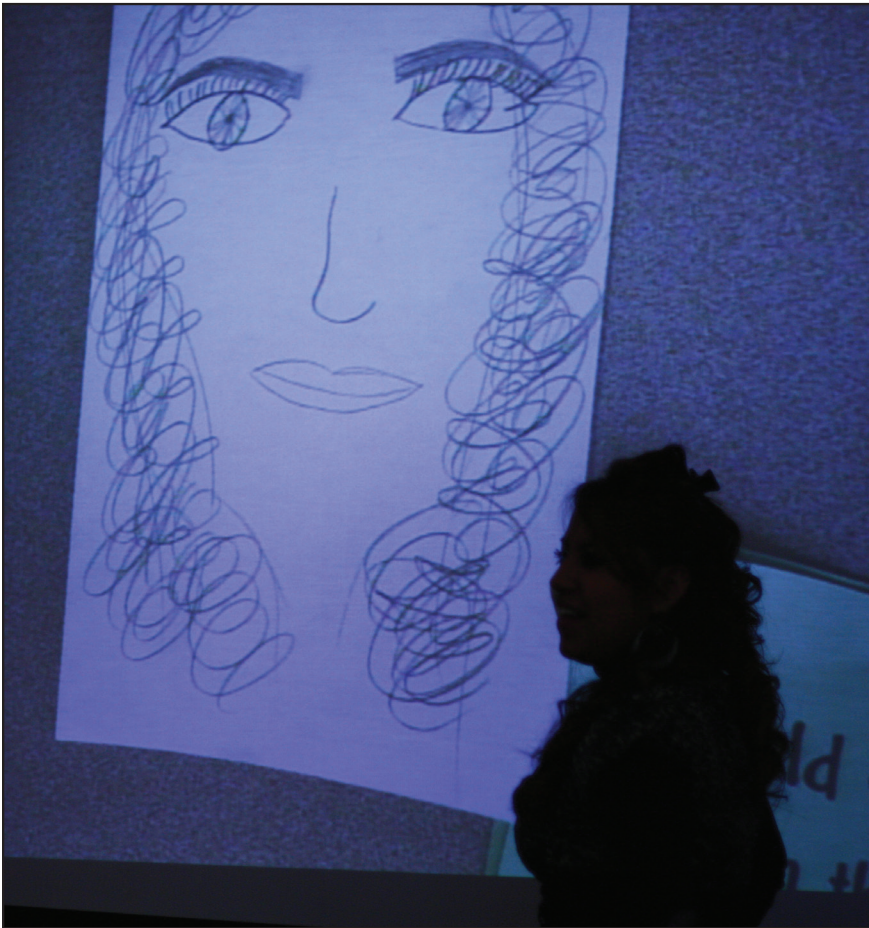
Divide students into three equal groups. Tell each group that you will give them a fact or piece of information and they will need to sort themselves accordingly as quickly as possible. Ideas for sorting include lining up by youngest to oldest, largest to smallest shoe size, shortest to longest distance traveled to school, or number of sports played from most to least. Do this several times and assign points to the group that wins each round. The group with the most points wins.

24. The ABCs of yearbook

Create a poster of the ABCs of yearbook. Give each student a sticky note with a letter of the alphabet on it. Tell the students to think of a word that starts with that letter and is associated with yearbook. They can be creative, but the word **MUST** start with the appropriate letter. Starting at A, go through the alphabet and have the students share their word and post them to a board. When you are complete, you will have a poster with the ABCs of Yearbook.

25. Self portraits

On a blank piece of paper, instruct each student to draw a self-portrait in five minutes. They can draw anything they feel represents them, but they cannot use any words, numbers or symbols. Collect the drawings. Hold up the pictures one at a time and have the class try to guess who the portrait belongs to.



Sharing her self portrait, Orange Glen High School senior Ana Resendiz laughs along with the class. The students had to draw pictures of themselves, which were then displayed for the class.

26. Decorate lockers

Before a big game, cheerleaders decorate athletes' lockers to pump them up for the big event. Do the same for yearbook staff members when approaching a big deadline.

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27. Mummy wrap

Divide the students into small groups of four or five and provide each group with one roll of toilet paper. One student in each group is designated as the mummy, while the other team members are the wrappers. The students have to carefully wrap their mummy in the toilet paper, without breaking it. The team to do the best wrap, using the most toilet paper before it breaks, wins.

28. Journalism Pictionary®

Divide the students into small groups. Have each group identify their strongest communicator and send that person to the front of the room. The teacher will then instruct the communicators that they are no longer allowed to speak. They can gesture, but no words are allowed.

Give the communicators a journalism-related term to illustrate on the board while their team members try to guess it. No words or symbols can be drawn. Each group will have one person at the board, all drawing the same term at the same time, while each group is trying to guess it. When someone thinks they know the answer, they must raise their hand. When a word is guessed correctly, that team gets a point. At the conclusion of the game, the team with the most points wins. Ideas for what to draw: deadline, copy, edit, print and photo.

29. Build your foundation

Tell students to draw a house on a blank piece of paper. It needs to be large enough for them to write on and add details to. Each element of the house will be an element of their life that they have to think about.

On the foundation, tell them to write the names of the people who have supported them the most. In each window, have them write the names of two people they always turn to when they need to talk about something. In the door, have them write the name of the person they feel has had the strongest influence on their life. In the attic, have them write one thing about themselves that people don't know. In the chimney, have them write what they think they will be doing 10 years from now. Post them so students can remember who supports and influences them, and also to help them keep an eye on their goals.

30. Race Track

Have students design a track around the room for a friendly competition. Decorate and laminate race cars and use tacking putty to attach them to the track. You can chart any type of progress on this track, such as ad sales, yearbook sales, deadlines met and pages completed.

For more information on helping your staff get to know each other and orienting the leaders to their positions in the beginning of the year, use the Staff Management Through Team Building unit of the Yearbook Suite, found at walsworthyearbooks.com/yearbooksuite.

