Icebreaker Cards

100 question cards (light · medium · deep) · 10 quick game cards · host script

How to use

Keep each color in its own stack so you can choose the depth.

Order	Two or three rounds of light, then one or two medium. Deep only for groups that will keep meeting
Pairs vs circle	Up to 8 people, one circle. More than that, split into pairs or groups of 3–4
First answer	The host answers first. It shows how long and how personal to go
Pass	Saying "pass" ends it. No reason asked, no coming back to it
Time	30 seconds to a minute per answer, 10 minutes total
Drawing cards	Whoever answers draws the face-down card

●○○ Light ●●○ Medium ●●● Deep

Pick a 10-minute game

Game	Group	Time	Online	Movement
1. One-Word Check-In	3–30	3–5 min	Works as is	Seated
2. Name Chain	6–20	5–10 min	Rename yourself	Seated
3. Interview & Introduce	4–12	10 min	Breakout rooms	Seated
4. Three Things in Common	Groups of 3–5	8–10 min	Breakouts + shared doc	Seated
5. The Big Wind Blows	10–40	10 min	Raise hands instead	Lots
6. This or That	8–60	5–10 min	Poll or reactions	Some
7. Stand on the Line	8–30	5–10 min	Dots on a whiteboard	Some
8. Show One Thing	4–8	1 min each	Anything within reach	Seated
9. Card Swap Mingle	10–40	10–15 min	Shuffle breakouts every 2 min	Yes
10. Chat Waterfall	5–100	3–5 min	Online only	Seated

Host script

Swap the [brackets] for your own group.

Opening (30 sec)

Hi, I'm [name], and I'll be running things today.

Before we start, let's take ten minutes to get to know each other.

Three rules. There are no right answers. If you'd rather not answer, just say "pass", no reason needed. And what's said here stays here.

Each game (20 sec)

Next up is [game]. One rule: [rule in one sentence].

I'll go first. [Your answer].

You've got [n] minutes. I'll [clap twice / ring the bell] when time's up. Go!

Closing (30 sec)

Thank you. Pick one thing you heard and ask that person about it at the break.

Now let's move on to [next item].

Common mistakes

"Just say whatever you like" with no example	Answer first yourself. It sets the length
Starting with deep questions	Two or three light rounds first, deep only for groups that will keep meeting
20 people going one by one	Split into pairs or small groups. 20 × 1 minute is 20 minutes
Circling back to someone who passed	A pass is final. Move on
No time limit	Say "just ten minutes" before you begin
Personal questions at work	Leave out pay, religion, politics, dating, marriage, and age
Jumping straight into the agenda	Close with one line that bridges to what's next

Question cards 1–12

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●○○ Light 1 **What was the last thing you ate before coming here?** First meeting	●○○ Light 2 **What song have you played the most lately?** First meeting	●○○ Light 3 **Morning person or night owl?** First meeting
●○○ Light 4 **Pineapple on pizza: yes or no?** First meeting	●○○ Light 5 **Could you happily stay home all day on a day off?** First meeting	●○○ Light 6 **What snack or drink are you hooked on right now?** First meeting
●○○ Light 7 **On a trip, are you a planner or a wing-it person?** First meeting	●○○ Light 8 **What did you want to be when you were little?** First meeting	●○○ Light 9 **You suddenly get a free hour right now. What do you do?** First meeting
●○○ Light 10 **Describe a funny video you saw recently, words only.** First meeting	●○○ Light 11 **What's one thing you always do on the way to work?** Team & work	●○○ Light 12 **Coffee, tea, or just water?** Team & work

Question cards 13–24

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●○○ Light 13

Quick lunch decider or menu agonizer?

Team & work

●○○ Light 14

What's one thing that's always on your desk?

Team & work

●○○ Light 15

Music while you work? If so, what kind?

Team & work

●○○ Light 16

Meetings: morning or afternoon?

Team & work

●○○ Light 17

Favorite place to grab something near the office?

Team & work

●○○ Light 18

Your most-used emoji reaction at work?

Team & work

●○○ Light 19

Your favorite keyboard shortcut or work hack?

Team & work

●○○ Light 20

Notes: pen and paper or an app?

Team & work

●○○ Light 21

Best thing on the cafeteria menu?

Class & students

●○○ Light 22

What do you usually do between classes?

Class & students

●○○ Light 23

One thing that's always in your bag or pencil case?

Class & students

●○○ Light 24

One thing you want to do over the break?

Class & students

Question cards 25–36

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●○○ Light 25

If you could be an animal for a day, which one?

Class & students

●○○ Light 26

Invisibility or teleporting: pick one.

Class & students

●○○ Light 27

Best video, comic, or book you've enjoyed lately?

Class & students

●○○ Light 28

First thing you want to do when exams are over?

Class & students

●○○ Light 29

Forget your best subject. Which one do you actually like?

Class & students

●○○ Light 30

If our class had a nickname, what would it be?

Class & students

●○○ Light 31

The weather outside your window, in one word?

Online

●○○ Light 32

First app you open when you log on?

Online

●○○ Light 33

What are you drinking right now?

Online

●○○ Light 34

One thing you did before your first call today?

Online

●○○ Light 35

Alarm: up on the first ring, or snooze a few times?

Online

●○○ Light 36

What's the oldest thing you can see from your seat?

Online

Question cards 37–48

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●○○ Light 37

Send today in one emoji in the chat.

Online

●○○ Light 38

Best thing about the spot you're sitting in?

Online

●○○ Light 39

How many browser tabs do you have open right now?

Online

●○○ Light 40

One sound you can hear off-screen right now?

Online

●●○ Medium 41

What's something you started recently?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 42

What are you quietly good at that most people don't know?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 43

What are you recommending to everyone lately?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 44

One place you'd go back to, and why?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 45

A small win from this week?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 46

A life hack too good to keep to yourself?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 47

How would your friends describe you in one word?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 48

Best thing you bought this year?

First meeting

Question cards 49–60

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●●○ Medium 49

Something you tried for the first time and liked more than expected?

First meeting

●●○ Medium 50

What's your favorite part of the work you do now?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 51

On a good workday, how does the morning start?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 52

Where or when do you focus best?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 53

Something a coworker taught you that you still use?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 54

Explain your job to a 7-year-old in one sentence.

Team & work

●●○ Medium 55

A skill you'd like to pick up at work?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 56

A hidden part of your job most people don't see?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 57

One thing your first job taught you?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 58

One thing you'd like our team to try together?

Team & work

●●○ Medium 59

A moment from any class that stuck with you?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 60

A habit you only have during exam weeks?

Class & students

Question cards 61–72

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●●○ Medium 61

Something you've always wanted someone to teach you?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 62

A study trick you'd pass on to a friend?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 63

A recent "oh, now I get it!" moment?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 64

If you take away just one thing from this class, what should it be?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 65

What role do you usually take in group projects?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 66

What would you ask the you of one year from now?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 67

If you were the teacher for a day, what would you teach?

Class & students

●●○ Medium 68

Your little ritual for starting work or study at home?

Online

●●○ Medium 69

Funniest thing that's happened to you on a video call?

Online

●●○ Medium 70

How do you get back on track when you lose focus?

Online

●●○ Medium 71

An app you'd recommend to everyone here?

Online

●●○ Medium 72

Any personal rules for how you talk online?

Online

Question cards 73–84

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●●○ Medium 73

Most useful thing you've learned online?

Online

●●○ Medium 74

Something someone did on a call that made you think "they're good at this"?

Online

●●○ Medium 75

Something you'd like to do with this group in person?

Online

●●○ Medium 76

What works better on video, and what works worse?

Online

●●● Deep 77

Something you changed your mind about this past year?

New group

●●● Deep 78

What plan are you most excited about right now?

New group

●●● Deep 79

What would you tell yourself from a few years ago?

New group

●●● Deep 80

A situation where you always end up helping?

New group

●●● Deep 81

A line from a book or film that stayed with you?

New group

●●● Deep 82

What do you hope you're still doing in ten years?

New group

●●● Deep 83

A habit of a past coworker you'd like to copy?

Team & work

●●● Deep 84

A moment at work you're proud of?

Team & work

Question cards 85–96

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●●● Deep 85

What kind of praise actually keeps you going?

Team & work

●●● Deep 86

A lesson from a mistake you'd like to share with the team?

Team & work

●●● Deep 87

What does "doing good work" look like to you?

Team & work

●●● Deep 88

What kind of team do you hope we are a year from now?

Team & work

●●● Deep 89

Something you wanted to quit but finished anyway?

Class & students

●●● Deep 90

A teacher who really got you: what were they like?

Class & students

●●● Deep 91

When did you first feel you were good at something?

Class & students

●●● Deep 92

What do you do when a friend seems to be having a hard time?

Class & students

●●● Deep 93

One personal rule you want to keep?

Class & students

●●● Deep 94

What would you like to hear on the last day of this class?

Class & students

●●● Deep 95

Something that got better while working or studying apart?

Online

●●● Deep 96

Something you're pulling off on your own lately that deserves a shout-out?

Online

Question cards 97–100

Cut along the dashed lines. Color = depth, small label = where it fits. Anyone can say "pass".

●●● Deep 97

Something you learned about yourself while working or studying apart?

Online

●●● Deep 98

What recharges you when you're worn out?

Online

●●● Deep 99

A small habit that's changed how your week goes?

Online

●●● Deep 100

A moment you felt like one team, even miles apart?

Online

Game cards 1–4

Cut along the dashed lines. The host holds one card per game.

One-Word Check-In

1

Say how you feel right now in one word, or as a weather report.

Group	**3–30**
Time	**3–5 min**
You need	**Nothing**
Online	**Works as is**
Movement	**Seated**

1. The host goes first: "I'm partly cloudy, clearing later."
2. Go around the circle or the video grid, one word each.
3. One extra sentence at most.
4. At the end, the host repeats two or three of the words.

Variation A color, a food, or today's battery percentage instead of weather.

If it stalls If answers get long, restate the rule: one word plus one sentence.

Name Chain

2

Put a word that starts with your name's first sound in front of your name.

Group	**6–20**
Time	**5–10 min**
You need	**Name tags (optional)**
Online	**Rename yourself**
Movement	**Seated**

1. Pick a word with your name's first sound: "Sunny Sam," "Jazzy Jess."
2. The next person repeats everyone before them, then adds theirs.
3. If someone blanks, the whole group helps.
4. After one lap, the last person tries the whole chain.

Variation A favorite food instead: "Tacos Tom."

If it stalls If memory pressure is high, repeat only the last three people.

Interview & Introduce

3

Interview a partner, then introduce them to the group.

Group	**4–12**
Time	**10 min**
You need	**Question cards**
Online	**Breakout rooms**
Movement	**Seated**

1. Pair up. With an odd number, one trio.
2. Two minutes each: ask your partner three question cards.
3. Pick one thing you heard and jot it down.
4. Introduce your partner to the group in 30 seconds: "This is..." With 13 or more, introduce within groups of four.
5. The person introduced may correct one thing.

Variation Make it a quiz: "What did they want to be as a kid?" Everyone guesses, then the partner answers.

If it stalls Running long? Shrink it to "name plus one thing."

Three Things in Common

4

Find three things true for everyone in your group.

Group	**Groups of 3–5**
Time	**8–10 min**
You need	**Paper, pen**
Online	**Breakouts + shared doc**
Movement	**Seated**

1. Split into groups of 3–5.
2. In three minutes, find three things everyone in the group shares.
3. Nothing obvious ("we're all here").
4. Each group reads theirs out. Applause for the most surprising one.

Variation Two things in common, plus one thing only you have.

If it stalls Stuck? Hand the group three light question cards to mine.

Game cards 5–8

Cut along the dashed lines. The host holds one card per game.

The Big Wind Blows 5

If the call is true for you, get up and find a new seat.

Group	**10–40**
Time	**10 min**
You need	**Chairs (one fewer than people)**
Online	**Raise hands instead**
Movement	**Lots**

1. Chairs in a circle, one person standing in the middle.
2. They call something that's true for them too: "The big wind blows for everyone who had coffee this morning!"
3. Everyone it's true for gets up and moves to another seat, not the one right next to them. The caller grabs a seat too.
4. Whoever's left standing calls next. If nobody moves, call again.

Variation "Hurricane!" means everyone moves. Online, raise a hand if it's true; the last hand up calls next.

If it stalls Keep calls to today and tastes. Rule out looks, age, and family before you start.

This or That 6

Pick one of two and walk to that side of the room.

Group	**8–60**
Time	**5–10 min**
You need	**A and B signs on the walls**
Online	**Poll or reactions**
Movement	**Some**

1. The host reads a two-option question: "Mountains or beach?"
2. A goes left, B goes right.
3. Find one person on your side and swap reasons for 30 seconds.
4. Next question. About five is plenty.

Variation Four options, one in each corner.

If it stalls If everyone ends up on one side, the question was too easy. Use one that splits the room.

Stand on the Line 7

Stand somewhere between "totally me" and "not me at all."

Group	**8–30**
Time	**5–10 min**
You need	**Floor tape (or just the two ends of the room)**
Online	**Dots on a whiteboard**
Movement	**Some**

1. One end of the room is "totally me," the other "not me at all."
2. The host reads a statement: "I stick to the plan."
3. Everyone stands where they fit.
4. One person from each end and the middle gives a one-sentence reason.

Variation After standing, swap reasons with the person nearest you.

If it stalls If everyone crowds the middle, make it concrete: "I book hotels a month ahead."

Show One Thing 8

Introduce yourself through one thing you have on you.

Group	**4–8**
Time	**1 min each**
You need	**Whatever's in bags and pockets**
Online	**Anything within reach**
Movement	**Seated**

1. Take one minute to pick something you have on you.
2. Start with "This is my..., and I..."
3. One minute per person.
4. One listener asks one question. With 9 or more, split into groups of four.

Variation Something you're wearing today instead.

If it stalls If people can't choose, suggest things everyone has, like a pen or a water bottle.

Game cards 9–10

Cut along the dashed lines. The host holds one card per game.

Card Swap Mingle

9

Ask a partner your card's question, swap cards, find a new partner.

Group	**10–40**
Time	**10–15 min**
You need	**One question card each**
Online	**Shuffle breakouts every 2 min**
Movement	**Yes**

1. Everyone gets one question card.
2. Pair up and ask each other your card's question. One minute each.
3. On the host's signal, swap cards and find a new partner.
4. Repeat three to five times.

Variation Two circles, inner and outer. Only the outer circle moves one step.

If it stalls With an odd number, the host pairs in. Cut long answers with a bell or a clap.

Chat Waterfall

10

Type your answer, wait, then everyone hits send at once.

Group	**5–100**
Time	**3–5 min**
You need	**Video call chat**
Online	**Online only**
Movement	**Seated**

1. The host asks a short-answer question: "What's for lunch?"
2. Everyone types an answer in the chat but doesn't send it.
3. "Three, two, one, send!" Everyone hits enter.
4. The host reads two or three matches or favorites.

Variation In a room, write on paper and hold it up at once.

If it stalls Someone sends early? Laugh and move on. Keep questions one-word answerable.