

5 Icebreakers That Actually Work



1. Two Truths and a Lie (Teacher-Safe Version)

How it works: Students write 3 short sentences about themselves (2 true, 1 false). Others guess.

Why it works:

- Low pressure
- Personal, but safe
- Works at almost any level

Tip: Limit preparation time to 2 minutes to keep it spontaneous.

2. The Last Question

How it works: Write one interesting question on the board, e.g.:

- *What made you laugh recently?*
- *What's something small that made your day better?*

Students answer in pairs, then change partners.

Why it works:

- Immediate speaking
- Positive tone
- No materials needed

3. Common Ground

How it works: Students work in pairs/groups and must find **5 things they have in common** (not obvious ones).

Why it works:

- Encourages real communication
- Reduces tension in new groups

Extra challenge: No sentences starting with *We both like...*

4. The Photo in My Phone

How it works: Students choose one photo on their phone and explain:

- why they took it
- what story is behind it

Why it works:

- Authentic
 - High engagement
 - Perfect for teens & adults
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5. One-Minute Opinions

How it works: Give a simple statement:

- *Homework should be optional.*
- *Social media does more harm than good.*

Students speak for 1 minute, then switch partners.

Why it works:

- Focus on fluency, not accuracy
- Easy to scale by level

3 Activities When “The Plan Runs Out”



1. The Alphabet Game

How it works: Choose a category (food, jobs, verbs, adjectives). Students say words from A–Z.

Why it works:

- Zero prep
- Surprisingly challenging

Extension: Each word must be used in a sentence.

2. Sentence Expansion

How it works: Write a very simple sentence on the board:

I went out.

Students take turns adding information:

- when
- where
- why
- with whom

Why it works:

- Great for grammar awareness
- Naturally differentiated

3. Question Chain

How it works: One student answers a question and then asks a new one to another student.

Why it works:

- Keeps everyone alert
- Builds listening skills

Rule: No yes/no questions (B1+).