



Ice Breakers for VLA Meetings

We have seen the benefits of starting off your VLA meeting with an ice breaker game. This creates a fun atmosphere and gets the students to know each other better. Whether you just do one your first meeting or have time for one per session, feel free to introduce one of these games.

The Marshmallow Challenge

Break your team into groups of four. Give each group 20 sticks of spaghetti or tooth pics, and a handful of marshmallows. Ask them to build the tallest freestanding structure they can. Sit back and see what happens. The marshmallow challenge makes the perfect icebreaker and team-building hybrid.

The one-word icebreaker game

Are you looking for an incredibly easy icebreaker game to kick off a meeting or training session? Look no further than the one-word icebreaker game, which, like its name suggests, doesn't need much explanation.

Break the meeting or training session participants into small groups of four or five people. Ask them a very simple question—e.g., "What one word would you use to describe our team culture?"—and give each team five or 10 minutes to come up with their answers.

Before finalizing their one word, teams will have rigorous discussions among themselves. Then it's time to ask each team to share their answers with the rest of the group—facilitating even more discussion.

- How would you describe your leadership style?
- What is the most negative trait that a leader can have?
- What is the most positive trait that a leader can have?
- What is most important to you as a leader?
- What is the best leadership style?

Would You Rather

Is there a better way to get to know your colleagues than to ask them bizarre questions?

Would You Rather is a quick icebreaker activity that involves asking, you guessed it, questions that begin with the words “would you rather.”

Give a person two scenarios and ask them to choose one of them. Make it more interesting by putting them in dilemmas.

Here are some ideas:

- Would you rather have the power to fly or to teleport?
- Would you erase all wars from history (without disrupting the current landscapes) or find a cure for cancer?
- Would you rather stop watching movies or stop listening to music?

Untangle

This leadership activity depends on how well everyone communicates and works together to achieve a common goal. In the process, one or two leaders will typically emerge to help and guide the team to success.

Here’s how it works.

Arrange everyone shoulder to shoulder in a circle. Instruct them to place their right hand in the right hand of someone on the other side of the circle. Next, instruct them to place their left hand in the left hand of a different person (can’t be standing right next to them).

Once everyone has joined hands, challenge the group to untangle themselves without breaking the chain. If they break the chain, they have to start over

from the beginning.

You can set a time limit on this exercise or allow it to progress to completion.

I am

If you are hosting an in-person leadership conference, then we recommend playing an icebreaker called I am. To begin this icebreaker, hand markers to all attendees. Then, ask players to use their markers to write an “I am” statement on their arms. For example, statements beginning with “I am” can include:

- I am resilient and strong
- I am talented and unique
- I am up for any challenge
- I am a confident and empowered leader
- I am able to stand back up after any challenge

Desert Island

In this activity, your team must envision themselves as plane crash victims on a deserted island. Depending on the group's size, you can split them into smaller groups. Have them work together to identify a set number of items from around the office that they think would be practical for survival.

At the end of the allotted time, have each group present the items and discuss why they believe these items would be helpful. This is also a good way to observe which members of your team take on leadership roles within their group.

Minefield

Minefield is an activity where you must construct an obstacle course. You can use pillows, office chairs and other items readily available to you. Split participants into equal teams and choose a leader for each group. The group leaders should stand at the end of the obstacle course with their blindfolded team members on the opposite side.

One by one, the team leader must instruct their team members on how to navigate around obstacles. The leader that gets each member of their team to the other side first, wins.

Crocodile river

This leadership-building activity is similar to minefield but different in the methods used to execute it. For this activity, create an obstacle course that replicates a river filled with crocodiles. You can make this more challenging by creating a set of rules such as *"touching the ground means you have to start over."*

You can also make things more difficult by only allowing certain objects to be used by participants to cross the "river." Split the participants into groups and give them a limited amount of time for each of them to get across the "river." This will require teamwork and patience, and the team that gets across first, wins.

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