



Digital Icebreakers That Shatter

Activities to Break the Ice
By Diana Benner

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About TCEA

About TCEA

TCEA is a member-based organization devoted to the use of technology in education. TCEA's primary focus is on integrating technology into the PreK-12 environment and providing its members with state-of-the-art information through conferences, workshops, newsletters, the Internet, and collaborations with higher education and business.

For more information on the benefits of becoming a member, visit tcea.org/membership. In addition, visit the popular [TechNotes blog](#) for additional resources, great tips, and ideas to help you better integrate technology into your school, classroom, or library.



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Breaking the Ice

Icebreaker activities are an effective way to help people get to know one another. Whether it is the first day of school or the start of a new training session, it is always a good idea to give everyone a chance to get to know each other. There are so many benefits of icebreakers.

If you are interested in encouraging interaction, promoting group community, or incorporating purposeful play, then icebreaker activities may be just what you need. This eBook contains some of my favorite activities. They are fun and easy to implement. Best of all, they will help get your school year or training off to a great start. Give them a try!

If you have a hard subject to teach or plan on spending long hours at a training, break it up with some purposeful play.

FUN

If you want to encourage people to interact with others that normally don't then try mixing up groups or teams.

INTERACTION

If you want an informal way for your group to get to know one another personally, professionally, or both.

INTRODUCTION

If you want to boost focus and learning outcomes then try active, hands-on involvement.

INVOLVEMENT

If you want to build and foster an important sense of community through shared experiences.

COMMUNITY

Conversation Starter Stones

About

Conversation Starter Stones are a fantastic way to help your students get to know one another. In addition, they are cheap and easy to make. For this activity, you will need some large glass stones (you can get a pack of 30 for one dollar at the Dollar Tree), glue, and scissors. The [template](#) I created for the conversation starter stones was created in [Google Drawing](#), so you can simply add it to your drive, edit it, and add your own topics. Make a copy of the [template](#) and cut out the starters individually and paste one on the bottom of each stone so that the writing is visible through the stone.

Ideas for Use

As your students enter the class, give them a stone. Next, pair them up with another student and have them discuss the topics on their stones. They could even trade stones to keep the conversation going. For an extension activity, have your students create a presentation about their topic using Google Slides, Microsoft Powerpoint, or [Office Sway](#). Have them present their topic to the entire class.

You can see examples of completed Sways using the stones [here](#).



Emoji Puzzle Pieces

About

Students these days use emoticons all the time. So why not have an icebreaker activity that incorporates them? This activity encourages student to get up out of their seats and talk to other students in the classroom. Locate the images you want to use and add them to slides in Google Slides or Microsoft Powerpoint.

Look at the [example](#) I created in Google Slides. Once you have all your images, simply print the slides, and cut the images into puzzle pieces. Make a copy of the [template](#) I created.

Ideas for Use



As your students enter the classroom, hand them an emoji puzzle piece that will match one other student in the class. After all the students are in the class, have them walk around the classroom and try to find the other student that has the matching emoji puzzle piece.

Once they have found their match, students can interview each other or quietly talk about themselves. Give them some guiding questions, just in case they get stumped on what to talk about. Have them share birthdays, their favorite snack food, best song to listen to while studying, etc. Just make sure it's nothing too personal. You could repeat this activity each day until every student has talked with every other student.

Two Truths and Lie

About

This is an incredibly easy icebreaker! Each person shares three statements (in any order). The statements will consist of two truths and one lie. The statements can focus on simple hobbies, interests, or past experiences that make each person unique. The lie can be outrageous, wacky, or sound like a truth. The goal of the icebreaker game is to determine which statement is false. Votes are then taken to see which statement is a lie. At the end of each round, the person reveals which one was the lie. An interesting variation of Two Truths and a Lie is “Two Truths and a Dream Wish.” Instead of telling a lie, a person says a wish. That is, something that is not true — yet something that the person wishes to be true.

Ideas for Use

One way to incorporate this into your classroom is to use a collaborative [Padlet](#). Padlet is an online bulletin board and an easy way to get your students to collaborate with each other online. After you have created your blank Padlet, give your students the link and have them add three sentences about themselves (or their summer vacations). Two of the sentences should be true and one should be a lie. Next, each student (including you, teacher!) gets a chance to share their three sentences while the rest of the class takes turns guessing which one is the lie.

You can see my sample padlet [here](#). Since Padlet is no longer free for teachers, this same activity could be done on [Lino](#), [Scrumblr](#), or even [Flipgrid](#). See a sample Flipgrid [here](#). Use the password: iceBreaker.

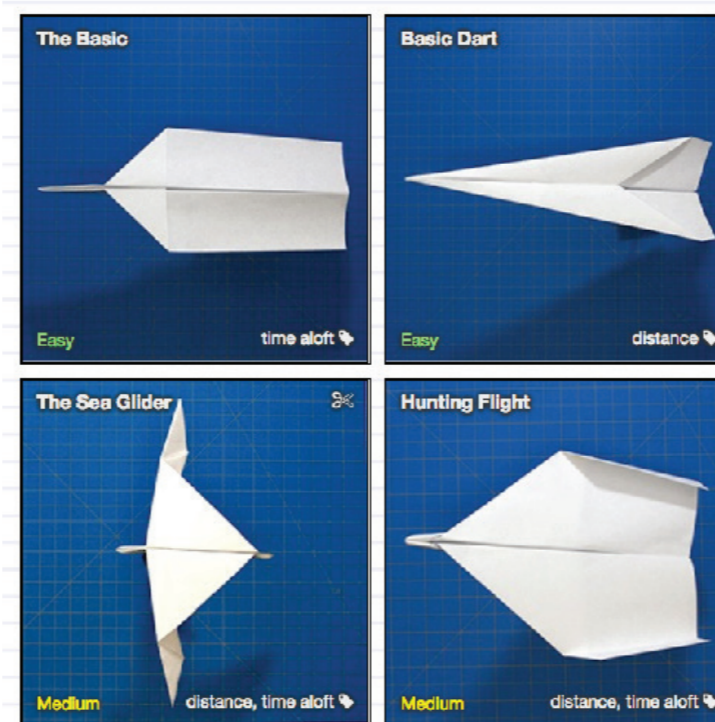
Fold, Fly, 'N Flock

About

Making paper airplanes is a simple but effective get-to-know-you icebreaker activity. The goal is to find the owner of the paper airplane that you pick up and learn a few things about them! The activity is ideal for all ages.

Ideas for Use

Give each of your students a blank piece of paper. Have them go to the [Fold 'N Fly](#) website and choose an airplane design. Once everyone makes a paper airplane, have them write their name and two questions to ask someone else.



When you give the cue, everyone throws their airplane around the room. They continue picking up airplanes and throwing them until you ask them to stop. You could also play music as your cue. Ideally, everyone would stop after one or two minutes.

Next, everyone will pick up one paper airplane that is closest to them. They must find the owner of the airplane they picked up and answer the questions on the airplane. Each person then introduces the owner of the airplane they have to the group. This activity

could be repeated several times. In addition, each person could talk about the airplane design they chose and why they chose it.

LEGO Mini Fig Video

About

Green screens, once a staple of any special effects film studio, are now becoming an exciting and realistic addition for digital classrooms. Therefore, why not use them for icebreaker activity so that your students can record a video introduction of themselves.

Ideas for Use

First, have your students design a LEGO mini figure of themselves. You can give your students a [pattern](#) to use as a starting point or they can design their own.

Next, purchase a green tablecloth at the Dollar Store, which you will then tape up on the wall. Then download a green screen app, such as the [Doink](#) iPad app. It only costs \$2.99 and is very easy to use. For a free option, you can try [Touchcast](#) iPad app or [Free Photo Green Screen Tool](#) iPad app. Use your iPad to take a picture that you will use as a background for the green screen. You could take pictures of the front of the school, the playground, or a spot in your classroom. Upload the picture to the app.

Then attach the LEGO puppet to either a green ruler or a green straw (usually available at Starbucks) and place it in front of the green tablecloth. Use the app to record a short video introduction with groups of students.

See an [example video](#) that features me and my colleagues, Miguel Guhlin and Peggy Reimers.

QR Code Icebreaker

About

QR codes are everywhere and are so easy to create. As you know, once scanned, a QR code can take you directly to a website or reveal images or clues.

Ideas for Use

TCEA's own Peggy Reimers, created a [QR Code Icebreaker Activity](#) that you can use or make a copy of to modify. All you have to do is print the QR codes and cut them into four pieces. Give each student one of the four pieces of the QR Code. Next, have your students find their group based on their category (the words on the QR Code piece). Once in their group, have your students scan the QR code to reveal if their category is correct. Lastly, ask each student in the group to follow up with their favorite item in the category, such as favorite color, favorite food, etc. This activity can be replicated over and over until all students get to know one another.



My Emoji

About

Emojis are so popular these days that students are using them all the time. Using emojis in the classroom is something different that will keep your students engaged. So why not have your students create their own emoji and then write a paragraph about themselves as an icebreaker activity?

Ideas for Use

An easy way to have students create an emoji that represents them is to set up a Google Slide for them to use. On the Google Slide, you can include the activity directions as well as images you have already selected. Students can then drag and drop images or even insert their own. After they create their emoji, they can then write about themselves or write why they designed their emoji the way they did. You always want to encourage your students to be creative with this project. After all your students have created their emojis, display them on the projector and let the students talk about their emoji.



If you would like to see an example, go to the [About Me Emoji Google Slide](#) and create one for yourself. Note that you must be logged into your Google account to access it. Read the directions on the first slide and then pick a slide that doesn't already have an emoji created on it. Don't forget to include your first name.

You can get your own copy of the "About Me Emoji Google Slide Template" [here](#).

All About Me Drawing

About

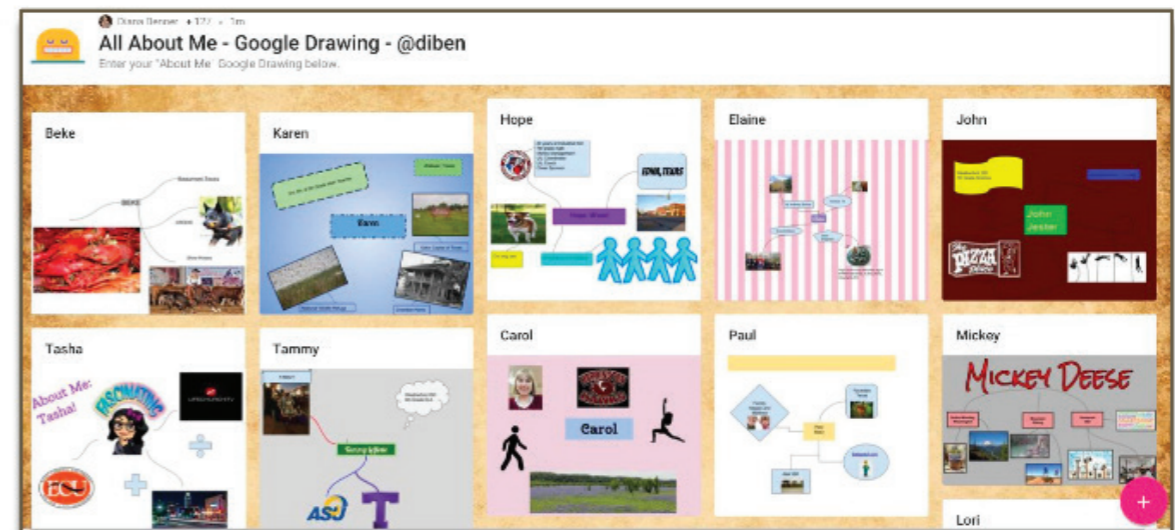
The goal behind an All About Me icebreaker is to help students learn about each other and each others' families. It really helps students realize that every person is unique and special. They also learn that every person's thoughts and ideas are important and no one person is more or less important than another!

Ideas for Use

To create an All About Me Drawing, have your students go to their [Google Drive](#) and create a Google Drawing from scratch.

Once there, they can add text, images, and links to the Google Drawing as they record facts such as where they are from and their favorite sports, hobbies, etc. Once your students have completed their drawings, have them save them as an image and upload them to a collaborative Padlet.

If you would like to see an example, take a look at my [All About Me Padlet](#).



Animated Fidget Spinner

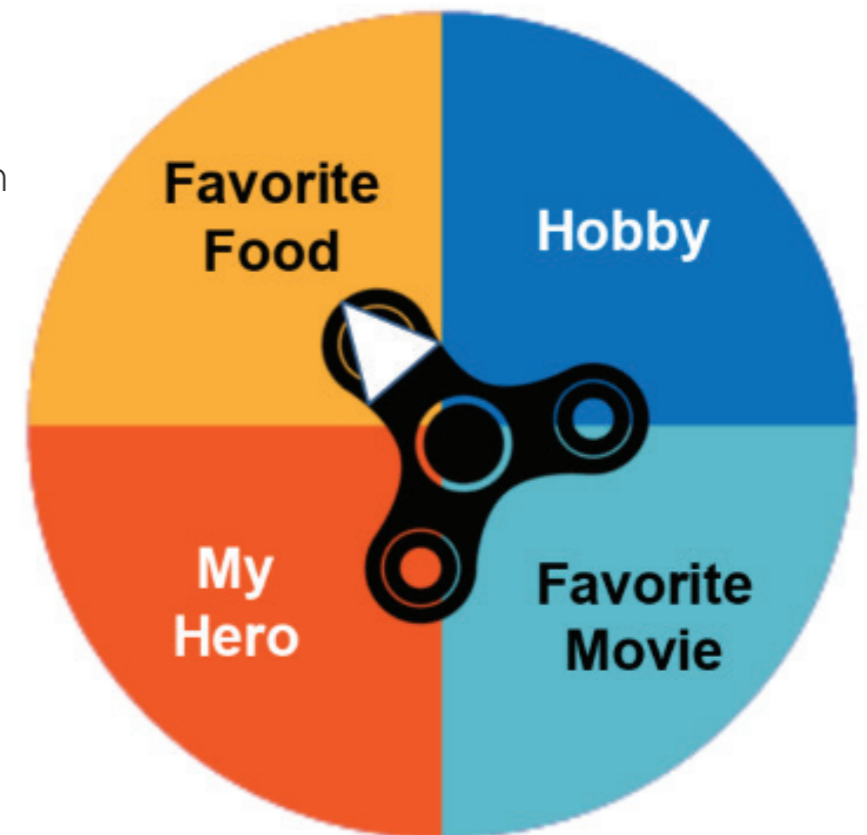
About

A fidget spinner is a toy that consists of a ball bearing in the center of a multi-lobed flat structure made from metal or plastic designed to spin along its axis with little effort. Children and adults alike became obsessed with them and Forbes named them the must-have toy of 2017. For this icebreaker, I used animations in Microsoft PowerPoint to allow the spinner to spin and land on different parts of a colored wheel.

Ideas for Use

For this particular icebreaker, you can pull the spinner up on the screen and group students into teams to discuss the topic the spinner lands on. This is a great way to connect with students while allowing them to get to know one another. You can always change the topics on the spinner and keep spinning until it lands on different topics.

Get your own copy of the Fidget Spinner Icebreaker Template [here](#).



Conclusion



Conclusion

In conclusion, as you prepare for the first day of school or are getting ready for that first training, don't forget to try one of these icebreakers. There is nothing more important than giving others the opportunity to get to know one another.

If you try some of the activities in the ebook, please reach out to Diana on [Twitter](#) or via [email](#) to share how it went.

About



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About Diana

Diana is a Director of Professional Development at TCEA in Austin, Texas. She has served as an instructional technologist, instructional designer, and an online learning specialist, supporting districts all over Texas and in state government for over 20 years. Diana earned her Masters of Education in Educational Technology from Texas State University – San Marcos. She loves working with teachers to help them utilize digital learning in the classroom.

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