



These activities help teachers to build student connections and to develop positive classroom relationships and climate. The activities can be used at the beginning of the year to help students get to know each other and then as required to build collaboration and cooperation. Most activities can be modified to suit the ages and needs of the group.

It is important to discuss with your students the skills they are developing, as well as any challenges they have completing the activities.

Examples of questions that could be used include:

- What was difficult about the task?
- What made the task easier?
- What did you need to do to be successful?
- What did you learn you have in common with another student?
- What is something new, different, surprising or special you learnt about another student?

Changing chairs game

- Everyone sits on chairs, placed in a circle, except one student. This student stands in the middle and calls out a description of some members of the group. For example:
- "Whoever is wearing black shoes or whoever has a brother".
- These students quickly swap seats. Whoever is left without a seat goes in the middle and takes a turn.
- This activity helps students to see how much they have in common with others.

The little-known fact

- Each student writes down something about themselves that other students don't know and gives it to the teacher. Examples could include unusual pets, holidays, interests, skills and hobbies.
- The more obscure the better. Remind students not to share anything confidential or sensitive. The teacher reads each one out and asks the students to guess who wrote it.
- This activity helps students to get to know others outside their immediate friendship circle.

True or false

- Ask students to introduce themselves and make three or four statements about themselves, one of which is false. The rest of the group votes on which statement they think is false.



Problem solvers

- Ask students to work in small groups. Nominate different roles for each team member such as group manager, reporter and recorder if needed. Create a simple problem scenario for the group to work on in a short time.
- Once the group has analysed the problem and prepared their feedback, ask each group to present their analysis and solutions to the whole class. When groups provide feedback to the class, encourage students to consider how different points of view and opinions can vary without being right or wrong.
- Example problem: Your group is shipwrecked on a desert island. You just have time to pick three items to bring with you. What do you bring and why?
- Variation: Provide a prepared list of items from which students must pick three.

Ball-toss name challenge

- Students stand in a circle. One person starts by saying someone's name and throwing the ball to them. That person must catch the ball and throw it to a different person, saying their name as they throw it. Everyone should have a turn of catching and throwing. The goal is not to drop the ball.
- A harder variation requires students to remember the exact order in which they caught and passed the ball and repeat the throwing pattern but this time in silence.
- This game is a great way for a new class to learn names and build group cooperation.

Human pretzel game

- Ask students to divide into groups of 6 to 8 and form a small circle. Students then grab different hands across the circle, forming a tangle of hands.
- Challenge them to untangle themselves without letting go of each other's hands by stepping over arms and moving arms over heads. Groups will either find it impossible to untangle or end up in a circle.
- This game helps students get to know each other and promotes group cooperation.