



Icebreaker Questions and Ideas

Since UWS courses are based primarily on discussion and participation, it's essential that students become comfortable speaking to their peers early on. In order to break the ice and build a sense of lively, good-humored community, we suggest trying some of these activities and icebreaker questions in the classroom – perhaps even at the start of every class.

Icebreaker Questions

Rapid-Fire “Would you rather...?”¹

- Have hair for teeth OR teeth for hair?
- Fight one horse-sized duck or 100 duck-sized horses?
- Use sandpaper for toilet paper OR vinegar for eye drops?
- Have no knees OR no elbows?
- Have hiccups for the rest of your life OR feel like you need to sneeze and not be able to forever?
- Have the ability to read minds but be illiterate OR just have the ability to read?
- Be on a desert island with a very attractive person; they are top-half fish OR bottom-half fish?
- Have a bell go off every time you found someone attractive OR feel a sharp pain in your side every time someone said your name?
- Be a dragon OR have a dragon?
- Be really hairy all over your body and not be able to shave OR not have one hair anywhere?
- Be rich and ugly OR poor and good looking?
- Always have to say everything on your mind OR never speak again?
- Be able to turn invisible OR be able to fly?
- Be three feet shorter OR three feet taller?
- Lick a smelly armpit OR chew on a rotten toenail?

Other “Would you rather...?”²

- Go back in time or visit the future?
- Be able to teleport or fly?
- Drink coffee or tea?
- Watch TV or read a book?
- Have a pet lion, pet elephant, or pet whale?
- Medal in the Olympics or win a Nobel Prize?
- Have an appetizer or dessert?
- Wake up early or stay up late?
- Have a dog or a cat?
- Live somewhere it's always hot or somewhere it's always cold?
- Live in the mountains or on the beach?
- Live under the sea or on the moon?
- Meet your descendants or your ancestors?
- Be reincarnated as a cat or a dog?

¹ Courtesy of Bofang Li.

² Adapted from Carly Hill, “The #1 List of Icebreakers,” <https://teambuilding.com/blog/icebreaker-questions>.

Assorted³

- Pull out your phone. What's your most used emoji?
- You can only eat one food again for the rest of your life. What is it?
- What's your go-to karaoke anthem?
- What superpower would you most want?
- What dog breed would you be?
- Do you prefer big dogs or small dogs?
- What's your favorite holiday?
- What season would you be?
- What vegetable would you want to be?
- If you could be any animal (real or fictional) other than human, what would it be?⁴
- If you could travel to any country, what would it be? Why?⁵

Other Icebreaker Ideas

- Two Truths and a Lie – see [this blog post](#) for tips on how to play
- [Eye Spy](#) – using the students' backgrounds to find things
- [Show and Tell](#) – students share something in their homes/dorms such as a pet, special object, etc.
- [Bingo](#) game – find one online or make your own on a theme like writing, college, or the topic of the UWS course)
 - Pandemic-themed Bingo – [download a sample game board](#)

³ Unless otherwise noted, adapted from Carly Hill, "The #1 List of Icebreakers," <https://teambuilding.com/blog/icebreaker-questions>.

⁴ Courtesy of Lisa Rourke.

⁵ Courtesy of Elissa Jacobs.