# Icebreaker: Find Someone Who . . .

**Icebreakers** help us create a sense of community which is essential when we are going to work with people. In the classroom, especially in a foreign language class where students need to try to get their mouths to pronounce unfamiliar words and sounds, people need to know that they are in an environment where it is safe to take risks and make mistakes. I use a few different icebreakers at the beginning of a semester to facilitate the process of getting to know one another and this is one of my favorites.

This icebreakeris basically this is a game of BINGO. It’s important to take a few moments before playing to make sure that everyone knows the rules of the game and understands how to play because not all of our students are from the United States and some might not be familiar with it. I usually ask the class for a volunteer who can explain what the object of the game is, and how you get a BINGO by having 5 answers vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.

Because I teach Spanish, I create questions that have to do with student experiences with the language and culture. It is easy to customize the BINGO with questions that relate to a specific discipline or instead use general questions that simply help students to get to know one another as in the example below.

**Remember**: When giving the instructions to students, emphasize that the game is an excuse to meet people; everyone is to get up and move about the classroom. When they approach a classmate, each student should introduce him/herself and then ask the classmate a question. If the person has done the activity, the asker should record his/her name and pose a follow-up question; again, it’s more about getting to know classmates than about winning the fabulous prize for getting a Bingo! Also, for that reason, students can only use each classmate’s name for one square.

**Demonstrate**: It’s a good idea to do a few practice examples, either you can approach students and model the interaction you desire or you can ask students to model one or two examples.

**Play**: Then, have your students all stand and begin the game. They should approach a classmate, introduce themselves, ask a question, and if the person responds in the affirmative, write the person’s name and a detail or two in the appropriate box. If someone gets four in a row, the student should say BINGO and then call back their answers as this step will allow students another opportunity to hear classmates’ names and learn a little bit about them. If you have small prizes (pencils, bookmarks or candy, for example) to award to the winners, it adds to the fun.

**BINGO Board:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Has studied at another college besides CCRI | Has a child | Has taken the bus in Rhode Island | Has visited another country | Plays a musical instrument |
| Plays on a sports team | Was born outside the United States | Exercises every day | Works while attending college | Has friends or relatives who speak another language |
| Takes more than three classes | Has enjoyed WaterFire in Providence | \* | Commutes more than 30 minutes to study at CCRI | Has moved to RI from another state |
| Is the first in his/her family to attend college | Wears glasses to read | Hasattended a concert during the past year | Speaks a language other than English | Has a pet |
| Likes pizza | Has studied at CCRI for more than 1 year | Has taken classes in another community college | Has lived in a state other than Rhode Island | Takes classes on more than one CCRI campus |

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