

## ICE-BREAKERS LYCEE

**1) Student dictionary.** Write five questions on the board. Questions might include the following: What is your name? Where were you born? How many brothers or sisters do you have? What are their names? Do you have any pets? Tell students to write those questions on a piece of paper and to add to that paper five more questions they could ask someone they don't know. Pair students, and have each student interview his or her partner and record the responses. Then have each student use the interview responses to write a "dictionary definition" of his or her partner to include in a Student Dictionary. You might model this activity by creating a sample dictionary definition about yourself. For example:

**Reynolds, Kim.** proper noun. 1. Born in Riverside, California. 2. No brothers or sisters. ...

Have students bring in small pictures of themselves to paste next to their entries in the Student Dictionary. Bind the definitions into a book, and display it at back-to-school night.

**2) Hands-on activity.** Have students begin this activity by listing at least 25 words that describe them and the things they like. (No sentences allowed, just words!) Then ask each student to use a dark pen to trace the pattern of his or her hand with the fingers spread apart. Provide another sheet of paper that the student can place on top of the tracing. (Since the tracing was done with a dark pen, the outline should be visible on the sheet below.) Direct students to use the outlines as guides and to write their words around it. Provide students a variety of different colored pencils or markers to use as they write. Then invite students to share their work with the class. They might cut out the hand outlines and mount them on construction paper so you can display the hands for open house. Challenge each parent to identify his or her child's hand.

**3) Chain gang.** Begin by asking students, "Who can do something really well?" After a brief discussion about some of the students' talents, pass out paper and ask students to write down five things they do well. Then provide each student with five different colored paper strips. Have each student write a different talent on separate paper strips, then create a mini paper chain with the strips by linking the five talents together. As students complete their mini chains, use extra strips of paper to link the mini chains together to create one long class chain. Have students stand and hold the growing chain as you link the pieces together. Once the entire chain is constructed and linked, lead a discussion about what the chain demonstrates (for example, all the students have talents; all the students have things they do well; together, the students have many talents; if they work together, classmates can accomplish anything; and the class is stronger when students work together than when individual students work on their own). Hang the chain in the room as a constant reminder to students of the talents they possess and the benefits of teamwork.

**4) Fact or fib?** This is a good activity for determining your students' note-taking abilities. Tell students that you are going to share some information about yourself. They'll learn about some of your background, hobbies, and interests from the 60-second oral "biography" that you will present. Suggest that students take notes; as you speak, they should record what they think are the most important facts you share. When you have completed your presentation, tell students that you are going to tell five things about yourself. Four of your statements should tell things that are true and that were part of your presentation; one of the five statements is a total fib. (This activity is most fun if some of the true facts are some of the most surprising things about you and if the "fib" sounds like something that could very well be true.) Tell students they may refer to their notes to tell which statement is the fib. Next, invite each student to create a biography and a list of five statements -- four facts and one fib -- about himself or herself. Then provide each student a chance to present the 60-second oral biography and to test the others' note-taking abilities by presenting his or her own "fact or fib quiz." You can have students do this part of the activity in small groups.

**5) People poems.** Have each child use the letters in his or her name to create an acrostic poem. For example, Bill could take his name and write

Big

Intelligent

Laughing

Loving.

Tell students they must include words that tell something about themselves -- for example, something they like to do or a personality or physical trait. Invite students to share their poems with the class. This activity is a fun one that enables you to learn how your students view themselves. Allow older students to use a dictionary or thesaurus. You might also vary the number of words for each letter, according to the students' grade levels.

**6) Food for thought.** To get to know students and to help them get to know one another, have each student state his or her name and a favorite food that begins with the same first letter as the name. For example: "Hi, my name is Latrece, and I like liver." As each student introduces himself or herself, he or she must repeat the names and favorite foods of the students who came before. Watch out; it gets tricky for the last person who has to recite all the names and foods!

**7) Bring something special.** For example: your favorite hiking boots!

"I tell my students that my hiking boots -- which I call my "happy shoes" -- are one of my most sentimental objects". "They tell a lot about me, I say. Then I invite the students to ask questions and take notes about my hiking boots in order to get to know me better. Usually students come up with such questions as *Where have you been in your boots? Why do you call them 'happy shoes'?* and *How long have you had them?* What I want the class to discover is that I am passionate about traveling and that I have trekked all over the world in my 'happy shoes.'

"After the question session," Adams continued, "I ask the students to write a brief paragraph that tells what they learned about me that they would not have otherwise known. Then I give the assignment for the next day; each student is to bring in a sentimental object of his or her own. No one has to get up in front of the room to share it -- ninth graders are afraid of this kind of exposure! -- but I will visit each person's desk and ask the student to show me the object he or she brought. I admire and fuss over each object and ask several questions about it. Then I ask each student to write a paragraph that describes his or her object and explains what it tells me about the student that I would not know if we'd simply gone over classroom rules the first day." "Students have brought in beautiful objects -- a girl's baby quilt made by her mother, fly tying equipment, keys to dirt bikes, stuffed animals, woven scarves, rings, photo albums of friends, you name it!" said Adams. "Students appreciate the personal, yet nonthreatening, interest I take in their objects."

This activity could be easily adapted for use with younger students, added Adams. "Sixth graders would probably be jazzed about introducing their objects to the class!"

### **8) Famous person**

People write a famous name on a piece of paper and pin it on someone else's back. Person tries to guess what name is pinned on his/her by asking others around the room yes or no questions. Variation: Use famous place instead of famous person.

### ***Spare Time***

- Summarize the plot of a book you have enjoyed. Can your classmates guess its title?
- Tell the class about the worst TV program you have ever seen.
- Tell your classmates about the (computer) game you like best.
- Do you like reading comics? Which are your favorites? Why?
- Think about your favorite radio program. Tell your neighbour, adding reasons why you think s/he should listen to it.