

## Examples of online ice-breaking activities

- 1. Example/Idea:** [Please Introduce Yourself!](#) In my online course, in my ice-breaking activity i use a video of my daughter introducing me from her perspective, as well as slides to do deeper more contextualized introductions including, experiences relevant to the course, prior knowledge, expectations, etc.. I do this to begin to create and build a sense of Class Community, Instructor Presence, & Social Presence.  
**Tool:** VoiceThread, YouTube, & PowerPoint. <https://voicethread.com/share/5678630/>
- 2. Idea:** A simple introductory online discussion. To make this engaging and interactive, it should be modeled by the instructor and ask for more than your name and a little about you.  
**Examples:** 2 truths and a lie. Expectations for the course. Prior knowledge and experiences in the discipline. Have students interview each other and then write up what they learn.  
**Tool:** simple threaded discussion.
- 3. Idea:** A simple low-stakes quiz/self-assessment on Course Information and Syllabus details to make sure students read the information at the start of the course.  
**Tool:** simple quiz.  
**Variation:** Have Students annotate the syllabus and co-create expectations, rubrics, etc.
- 4. Idea:** A simple low-stakes assignment to demonstrate students' abilities, access, create, use tools, resources. Examples: Submit a word document in a particular format. Post to twitter with a specific hashtag. Access and submit something to a third-party service or resource.  
**Tool:** Depends. Could be an attachment to a discussion post, assessment, assignment...
- 5. Idea:** One of my favorite ice breakers is share the story of your name. It works well with people who know each other well, as well as those who don't. And also frequently leads to learning about learners' context and background. Questions around what is your favorite meal to cook also works well as an 'easy' topic to discuss that may lead to learning about learners' context and background.
- 6. Idea:** "What Would You Hold" - students take a photo of an object in their hands - one that they will keep with them forever and explain its importance to them. From <https://twitter.com/dmaduliwilliams/status/1176692355446890496>
- 7. Idea:** I ask students to share via text or video, "if given a single hour of "free" or "choice" time, how would you spend it?" The responses are often related to self-care, de-stressing, connecting with others, etc. I can then use some of these later on to

connect individually with Ss

<https://twitter.com/TinaRPage/status/1176866864724697093>

8. **Idea:** Another one I like is Windows or Doors. Students post a picture of a window or door - where is it? What does it represent? What's on the other side? Students share everything from the window in their bedroom, doors to museums or famous places, doors to their homes back home...  
<https://twitter.com/dmaduliwilliams/status/1176745150493577216>
9. **Idea:** encouraging learners to share their [#socialmedia](#) profiles often creates additional layers of socialization/interaction for community building.  
<https://twitter.com/mweinraub87/status/1176642128182538240>
10. **Idea:** For online classes where students might be from all over the globe, it can be fun to have folks check in on a map. Another fun one I've heard about recently is asking students to introduce themselves by sharing one boring fact. Takes the pressure off and can be fun!  
<https://twitter.com/shannonriggs/status/1176708290962755584>
11. **Idea:** This is what was built into my course. discussion board - Introduce yourself, you program. Post 3-5 pictures or images that best describe you. They can be pictures you have already taken or images from other sources. Describe how the pictures represent who you are.  
<https://twitter.com/lkoster/status/1176832668299866112>
12. **Idea:** One of the online icebreaker activities I have found success in is including a question asking for 2-3 fun facts in my introductory student survey. I compile these fun facts and create a Kahoot game for my online class to play synchronously or asynchronously.  
<https://twitter.com/dorothyhirata/status/1176924282162577408>
13. **Idea:** Generally ice breakers come early in the course. Ice breaker discussions are a plus. Tell us why you are taking the class (subject), or what you expect to learn in the class (subject), or how this class (subject) will empower you to achieve your learning goals.  
<https://twitter.com/philosophypaul/status/1177155895295430656>
14. **Idea:** In discussion forum getting people to introduce themselves, what/why they are studying, and their favourite movie. And then follow up on answers to get small conversations going. Creates a nice online atmosphere.  
<https://twitter.com/DrJamesBrunton/status/1191673378786205699>
15. **Idea:** I have my students make a brief Adobe Spark video about themselves and share it in a Slack channel. Does double duty, that.  
<https://twitter.com/RyanStraight/status/1176739001404772357>

16. **Idea:** Values affirmation activity ...as a way for students to introduce themselves.  
<https://twitter.com/KevinKelly0/status/1177269867029790720>  
**Example:** Adapted from <https://t.co/aSwyS7xmaM?amp=1>
17. **Examples:**  
<https://onlineteacheryouniversity.com/3-ways-to-break-the-ice-with-your-online-students/>
- Share a picture of your favorite place to study. Why is this where you do your best work? Here is mine:
  - Share a clip from a movie that you love and **explain why you love it**. Here is mine:
  - Share three (3) nouns and two (2) verbs that **best represent who you are as a person**. Explain why each noun and verb you selected represents who you are. Your explanations do not need to be lengthy. **Bonus Tip:** Turn the responses into a **Word Cloud**
18. **Idea:** I think [@padlet](#) is a great tool for ice breakers. Ask students to post an image of their study space, review a favorite local restaurant, a music track they like. Ok it's not academic but it raises awareness of each other helping build community.  
<https://twitter.com/KTDigital/status/1176645516584783872>
19. **Idea:** Flipgrid introductions and a fun silly fact about yourself.  
<https://twitter.com/i/status/1176637420789358593>
20. **Example:** I share a google map with my students and ask them to add their own layer with markers for where they are (literally) and where they hope to go (metaphorically) via the course <https://digitalstorytelling.community.uaf.edu/mark-the-map/>
21. **Idea:** I've asked students to scroll through their phone and share an image of something that brings them joy :) I've seen their families, friends, travels, gardens, and homes.  
<https://twitter.com/DrCarrolWarren/status/1176871936539987974>
22. **Idea:** I use a "view from my window" prompt and ask students to share a view from their main study area. They are asked to describe it (not actual location), to reflect on why it is or isn't a good study area, and to describe what they'd do to change it if they could.  
<https://twitter.com/bethmcmahon/status/1177009720881831937>
23. **Idea:** having people share enjoyable moments they have had on social media opens up a lot of discussion.  
<https://twitter.com/mrkampmann/status/1176726057451491328>
24. **Idea:** I like to use padlet for people to post something light hearted but related to the course to introduce themselves and share something about more personal  
<https://twitter.com/drnsheridan/status/1176895983218778112>

25. **Idea:** My new favorite is” what is the kind of thing a Teacher has ever done for you?” , I also use the old favorites... You’re on an island what two books do you take and why or, would you rather fly or have x-ray vision and why.  
<https://twitter.com/Lorarts/status/1176979200651091969>
26. **Example:** [https://padlet.com/k\\_lindsay/sparks](https://padlet.com/k_lindsay/sparks)
27. **Idea:** Using Padlet embedded in Canvas, students post an image that represents them & then write a Haiku describing their identity as a learner. Then they reply to 3 peers ...<https://twitter.com/iLearnNow/status/1176888937249296384>
28. **Idea:** "Post a picture that is relevant/meaningful for you and why" Some students do not like posting pictures of themselves.[https://twitter.com/Bio\\_prof/status/1176711815046344704](https://twitter.com/Bio_prof/status/1176711815046344704)
29. **Idea:** I have an oldie but goodie - the 6 word autobiography (@NPR had a story about this years ago and I think a book was published too). It was a written post. I have found over time letting students write it as subject line then post a video about it takes creative pressure off.<https://twitter.com/shannonhwhite/status/1177762157171281920>
30. **Idea:** Where do you see yourself in five years?<https://twitter.com/donaverde/status/1176706381388427264>
31. **Idea:** One of my professors had us do a flipgrid video. One of the questions was to know if we were a cat person or dog person.<https://twitter.com/brocansky/status/1176637420789358593>
32. **Idea:** -self video intros -single slide intro (only name for text; rest are pictures) -post a meme in a discussion on how you’re feeling this sem.  
[https://twitter.com/swinning\\_id/status/1176639190047571968](https://twitter.com/swinning_id/status/1176639190047571968)
33. **Idea:** Highly recommend @Flipgrid if the course is asynchronous for intros and opportunities to participate using videos which helps build a feeling of community[https://twitter.com/a\\_llie/status/1177034549739569153](https://twitter.com/a_llie/status/1177034549739569153)
34. **Idea:** I do video and/or text introductions on the discussion board, then ask students to post an image & fun fact to the visual roster: google doc in landscape mode with 0” margins, & a table grid with places for them to enter info. Quickly put a name with a face throughout semester.<https://twitter.com/annefensie/status/1176841754084921344>
35. **Idea:** I had a friend make a YouTube video related to the course content but also full of questionable assertions and asked my students to discuss it - no marks. Almost everyone chimed in and course participation for the first “real” discussion topic was

higher. <https://twitter.com/navbassi/status/1176862909231558656>

36. **Idea:** What super power you'd want. I saw someone do "least interesting thing about you" <https://twitter.com/nicolesotoECO/status/1176660001198354432>
37. **Idea:** Padlet wall for selfies or favorite activity/item.  
[https://twitter.com/Ven\\_VVE/status/1176816311734865920](https://twitter.com/Ven_VVE/status/1176816311734865920)
38. **Idea:** I've used 6 pictures about me, an emoji autobiography. I've also asked them to share their name stories or numbers about me. I always include several options (usually 3) so everyone has an entry point and feels comfortable with one of the options. [https://twitter.com/tina\\_zita/status/1176822643800104961](https://twitter.com/tina_zita/status/1176822643800104961)
39. **Idea:** My first experience as an online student was a discussion board entitled 'My Top 3', people talked about books, films, sports, countries to visit, vegetables to grow ... generated loads of discussion & connections  
<https://twitter.com/Staplefordk/status/1176902646210408449>
40. **Example:** Create an online avatar and share it <https://avatarmaker.com>  
<https://twitter.com/KazJESL/status/1177308416642932736>
41. **Idea:** When I taught Educational Technology, I had students create Vokis. They could design any Voki avatar they liked but they had to record their own voices to go with them. <https://twitter.com/MBMessner/status/1177751268091191296>
42. **Idea:** I give my students an online map and tell them to plot the following: 1) where you are living now, 2) your favorite place you have visited, and 3) your bucket list location. Really starts a conversation. When we meet people, we either talk about geography or the weather. <https://twitter.com/RSchultzGeoTech/status/1176872148968923138>
43. **Idea:** I do something similar but mine have to make a "life map" of 5 favorite places they have been and 5 they want to go. It's a good conversation starter. And they can do it as a "drag and drop" map in ArcGIS Online (<http://tinyurl.com/dragdropmap>) can share my directions and grading rubric too.
44. **Idea:** After 19 yrs & many approaches, I found the 2 truths and a lie works for true engagement the 1st week. I have them post a bio & then their list. I have them guess for the first week & then give them the prompt when to disclose the lie for extra credit. I start it w/my bio & list. <https://twitter.com/dreilley/status/1177281635047231489>
45. **Example:**  
<https://netart.commonsc.gc.cuny.edu/2019/08/26/back-to-teaching-reminders-from-net-art>

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46. **Idea:** I ask students to “Create a Word Cloud with words that describe yourself.” It’s easy to learn and fun to do. <https://twitter.com/PennyJohnson201/status/1176951078841176065>
47. **Idea:** I use a good old fashioned intro DB, but the prompt asks them also to share their experience/knowledge of the class topic(s) and their hopes/fears about the course. Then I ask them to respond to those hopes/fears. Seems to quickly build community! <https://twitter.com/drwrenmills/status/1176903349586857987>
48. **Idea:** Something as simple as a joke. On the first conference I tend to say something on the like "This first online conference it's just an occasion for me to scare you before we actually start!" Many will get it is a joke, laugh and break the tension. also, and I do this depending on group/situation, I try to tell them something non-academic about me, I teach to practitioners, and this helps to connect better. [https://twitter.com/YasmineAhmed\\_ya/status/1176958191734800388](https://twitter.com/YasmineAhmed_ya/status/1176958191734800388)
49. **Idea:** For the introductions discussion I have my students create a free account with Storyboard That and create a 3-pane strip to accompany their introduction. <https://twitter.com/camtracie/status/1177020775699603458>
50. **Idea:** Using a discussion forum, I ask students to introduce themselves by using a gif that represents them. I also ask “if you could be any candy bar, what would you be and why”. The responses are great!! [https://twitter.com/emilyh\\_33/status/1177774684609421317](https://twitter.com/emilyh_33/status/1177774684609421317)