

# → GUIDELINES

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CAFE

### INTEGR**ACTION**

Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers



Co-funded by  
the European Union



---

# 1 Summary of the Method

PAGE 03



---

# 2 Detailed description of the effective activities with learners using the method

PAGE 03



---

# 3 Step-by-step guide to establishing Language and Culture Cafés

PAGE 05



---

# 4 Best Practice Example from Finland

PAGE 07



---

# 5 Methods vocabulary, grammar, discussion, cultural activities:

PAGE 08



---

# 6 Language and cultural Materials

PAGE 09

# CONTENTS



# SUMMARY OF THE METHOD

The IntegrAction project, by looking at the good praxis already developed in Finland through the partner organization Learnmera envisioned to launch, in all countries part of the consortium, language and cultural cafes as a way to improve and facilitate the access of migrants to second language studies as well as social connections through participation in cafés, which are informal meetings based on voluntariness but also systematically organised. At the same time that they are gaining access to social, informal environments of the resident country, they will be integrating a community of learners and tutors, which is often a key success factor in establishing a quality life in a new country.

## Purpose of the method

The scope of the activity is that of practicing the L2 language (and languages in general) in an informal way, especially focusing on spoken language and improving conversation and communication skills, as well as cultural exchange. In this manner, the local participants and tutors can teach the refugees and migrants about their own culture and they can learn valuable information about the migrants' cultures. This enhances cultural understanding and communications. The language and culture café is easy to establish, only some preparation work is needed for finding a suitable venue (or it can be organized in the classroom), as well as some tutors for different languages where needed.

## Description of the target group

The group of learners can vary from big to small – in a big café, there can be several different groups/tables for different languages, or the same language can be divided into several groups/tables. To ensure effective communication, the groups/tables should be 4-6 persons in size.

## Resources and materials for the activities

Time: 1-2 hours

Pen, paper, flashcards, games, worksheets, books, texts – different kinds of material can be used to facilitate discussion and provide topics and themes for the language table. These can include flashcards that have pictures or words for basic vocabulary (for beginners), discussion and debate cards with different topics that can be discussed (for more advanced), and games, such as word explanation game (each person explains a word and the others have to guess), name game (each person gets a name of a known person and has to describe them), memory game and many others. Also, other material can be used, such as different exercises on worksheets, or books and texts for discussing together. There will be material both on the languages spoken as well as the culture of the host country - e.g. Finland - typical Finnish vocabulary, cultural words that the tutor can explain names of famous Finns that can be discussed etc.

# Detailed description of the effective activities with learners using the

# METHOD

---

## **Objectives**

A language and culture café is an informal way to practice speaking and spoken communication in a second language. It is also a very good way of creating community spirit and social relations within a group, for example students on a course can get to know each other better, or migrants can practice the native language of their new home country and a way for locals to practice the languages migrants speak and to teach their native language. It is also a good way of creating social contacts and integrating migrant learners in the home country by meeting locals and learning about the culture.

## **Skills gained by this method**

The method will help at improving spoken and communication skills in a second language, learning to create social connections, learning about other cultures when speaking with learners from different cultural backgrounds.

## **Step-by-step description of the procedure**

The café can be organised once a week or several times a week either in a classroom or in a more informal venue, such as a café, restaurant, library, etc. The organiser will have signs for the languages spoken in the cafe, which will be placed on different tables. It helps to be organised, even though the participants should be able to choose freely which languages they would like to speak or teach (depending how many languages there are available). If possible, there is a tutor at each table who is a native speaker of the language spoken at that table, and they facilitate the conversation by offering topics or providing material, such as picture cards for beginners, or discussion or debate cards on different themes or topics, cultural vocabulary.

## **Expected outcomes**

Strengthening the learners' skills in speaking and communicating in a second language, learning about cultures as well as creating social connections between a group of learners. The learners will become more confident in using the spoken language. In a group with learners from mixed cultural backgrounds, the learners can also learn about other cultures and share information about their own.

## **Possible risks that may happen**

As the method is based on social interaction, there may be issues such as conflict among some persons in the group. This can be solved with having at least one or two tutors who facilitate discussion and supervise the situation. It also helps to provide material (such as discussion topics) that are suitable for each target group.

---

## Step-by-step guide to establishing

# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CAFES

### 1. HOW TO FIND EVENT VENUES

The language and culture cafe can take place in a public or private venue, either a cafe, restaurant, bar, a library or other public building with suitable spaces.

Which businesses or public venues to contact?1

- Public Cafes (or bars. In summer these gatherings could be organized in a garden with open bars)
- Social libraries
- NGOs meeting rooms
- Cultural centres
- Places offered by the Municipality
- Recommendations from personal and business networks
- Centrally located venues near public transport
- Schools and universities, campuses

Which kind of problem could be foreseen?

- The venue requires payment for using their premises
- People do not buy enough drinks (according to the owner) if the venue is booked in a bar
- Venue complains about the noise
- Venues are closed on public holidays or for renovation.
- Permits, insurance as it will be seen as an event that is being hosted (like a festival, concert etc)
- Unclear expectations from participants
- Venue is too busy (not enough table space)
- Café owners sometimes are afraid that the participants can disturb the other clients in the café

### 2. HOW TO FIND TUTORS

There are many ways and many kinds of people who could be tutors. Tutors are needed for different languages, mainly the main languages people wish to learn at the language café and they should be natives or with a good knowledge of the language and culture of the country, so that they can steer the discussion and teach about the local culture, or the culture they come from. Tutors could be university students, language teachers or teacher students who wish to get practice, elderly people with good skills and spare time, or any other native speakers of different languages who have immigrated and wish to share their knowledge in exchange for practising the language and learning about the culture of their new home country. They can also be locals wishing to support language learning or looking for a linguistic exchange (they could be elder people interested in social activism). These are general examples. In each country, venues might be changing.

### 3. TRAINING TUTORS

Tutors do not need to be trained teachers, but the selected tutors should be open-minded, sociable and energetic and speak the language on a native level. It is not most important for the tutor to know the rules and grammar, but to be able to answer questions and explain the origins and also cultural meanings of words and phrases. For grammar questions, it is good for the tutor to have a grammar book handy. The tutors do not need extensive training, as the requirements depend a lot on the participants, and the best way to learn is to try tutoring in practice. You can provide them with material in advance and give some tips on different ways of using the material, games, etc. As the cafe visitors change quite often, tutoring at the events differs from typical language courses and training that usually have a specific study program. It might be challenging for a tutor to repeat the same activities at each event, thus it is essential to provide them with additional hand-out materials and tips (e.g. on team building games and activities etc).

## 4. MARKETING LANGUAGE CAFES

What is the best way to reach people in your area and get them interested? How could we market language and culture café? Social media and online marketing, sometimes also flyers, emails, paid ads on Facebook as well as personal connections, are good ways of marketing the cafes. In the following, we present good practices on the best ways to market the cafés. Instructions and examples for setting up Facebook groups/pages.

Setting up a Facebook group:

Set up a Facebook group for the cafe as soon as you have decided on the time and location (and even before). A Facebook group is preferable to a Facebook page, as a group is interactive, and people can post themselves to look for language exchange partners or whether speakers of a certain language are coming to the meeting, etc. It is a good idea to moderate the group to avoid spam posts, especially as the group grows bigger. The most important thing is to create an event every time for the language and culture cafe and post it in the group. Also post systematically about any changes, so that people learn to rely on the information posted on the group. The group is also a good place to post about other international or cultural events in the city, and to ask for advice and communicate on other issues related to language exchange. Make sure that the discussions are relevant, however.

Dissemination & marketing methods for language cafes

Another way to keep participants or potential participants informed is to collect e-mail addresses at the event and create a mailing list and mail the event info and any changes each week. This is a less personal and less interactive way of communicating, however, and should be used merely for information. There are also many other methods both online and offline for marketing the cafes, such as:

- LinkedIn groups
- Twitter
- Websites
- Flyers / brochures / posters
- Instagram
- Forums
- Facebook groups
- Blogs
- Mailout
- Posting the event on other websites or social meetup sites like [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com), [www.internations.org](http://www.internations.org), [www.couchsurfing.com](http://www.couchsurfing.com)
- Vimeo
- YouTube
- Epale

## 5. BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE FOR HOW THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CAFES HAVE BEEN MARKETED IN FINLAND:

- Facebook group Cafe Lingua in Helsinki (now a large community of 11,000+ members) where weekly events and other related events are posted
- Through international organisations in Helsinki and cultural centres
- Jolly Dragon and Learning for Integration ry are organisations who are co-organisers for Cafe Lingua in Helsinki for 10+ years. They are an international organisation that organises activities and events (cultural, sports and social) for both Finns and international people living in Helsinki.
- Learning for Integration ry and its social partners' websites
- Numerous social media posts, mailing lists of different organisations as well as articles in Finnish and Swedish newspapers and even TV news (YLE)
- Read here the article Kuppi kahvia ja tunti kiinaa, kiitos! (A cup of coffee and an hour of Chinese, please!) <https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000002661589.html> which was featured in the biggest newspaper in Finland, Helsingin Sanomat.

## 6. FUNDING OPTIONS

This section provides some advices on getting funding for running the cafes or its different aspects - tutors, preparing materials, coordinating the cafes.

TIPS:

- Funding can come from different sources: cultural foundations, migrant organisations/funds, government grants for education/culture/multiculturality etc.
- Foundations or organisations that might fund language cafes are those focused on the integration of migrants, advancing adult language learning, informal education, cultural events etc.
- It is worth being in contact with local actors, such as immigrant organisations or multicultural organisations, who might wish to cooperate or can give advice on where to get funding for such activities
- It is worth contacting government officials to get advice on which government departments deal with such funding
- Cities and municipalities often offer funding for multicultural and integration projects
- You can also look for sponsors who might be interested in being involved in organising the language cafe or funding it in order to get publicity (educational institutions, private language schools, venues, international organisations)

Follow these

STEPS



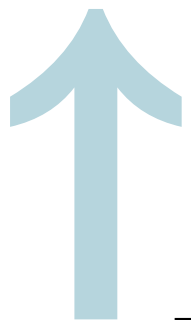


---

## CAFE LINGUA IN HELSINKI

The event is organised once per week every Monday evening from approx. 18-22. It has been running regularly for 15 years, changing from a student event to one where people of all ages and from all backgrounds participate. The event is run in cooperation between different associations in the Helsinki area, mainly Jolly Dragon and Learning for Integration ry. The event is well-known and also other cultural organisations attend the event. Materials include flashcards (picture cards for beginners, discussion and debate cards for more advanced) and different games (name game, Alias, memory game etc.) The events are open to all and sometimes the large number of Finnish learners, for example, causes a lot of stress for the Finnish tutor as they cannot help everyone at the same time. Participants also tend to have differing levels, and it is not always possible for the tutor to provide everyone with individual guidance. The recommendation is to collect in one group, participants with a similar language level. According to feedback surveys, all participants experienced the event as useful. Most of the respondents considered getting to practice the language you are studying with native speakers as the best thing about the event. Meeting people and making friends was also considered important.

**BEST  
PRACTICE  
EXAMPLE FROM FINLAND**





# METHODS FOR PRACTICING

vocabulary, grammar, discussion, cultural activities:

We have been using materials which we created through using [www.thelanguagemenu.com](http://www.thelanguagemenu.com) web tool. Besides, we have been using:

- role plays
- pictures, flashcards and worksheets
- boardgames and interactive games
- short movie with and without subtitles
- Oxford and Cambridge listening, speaking, reading materials and essays and tests with discussion sessions after the task is completed
- listening to music, reading the lyrics and singing
- online games and online chats
- having pen pals
- keeping a diary
- our own materials created with Adobe Creative Cloud software
- group and individual discussions
- reading newspapers, discussing news, and current events etc.
- grammar exercises and texts

Tutors also suggest videos or podcasts in accordance with participants level and interests and grammar exercises.

- American Tesol materials
- Working with native speakers
- Team-building games to engage all participants and make them effective in the process of speaking.
- Cultural activities, e.g. songs from different cultures. Memorizing lyrics of the songs and singing karaoke. Participants bringing food and vegetables belonging to the new culture they study.
- Watching BBC podcasts and give a brief presentation what we have understood from it.

• **Storytelling** is one of the useful tools that we implement to improve speaking skills. Writing or making up a story together. This can be done over the course of several weeks, or within one session. By writing a story together, you practice listening, speaking, and grammar.

• **Listening:** tutors can provide audio or video files (authentic material) including: dialogues, interviews, monologues from TV networks or free websites.

Tutors can submit some questions (closed or open depending on the level of participants and video typology).

• **Speaking:** one of the most appropriate tools is role play starting from:

- a story: how a water molecule travels from ocean to land and back again to the ocean
- a letter: participants are part of a scientific group organising an expedition to space and must write a letter to the members of the Parliaments on the importance of funding such an expedition, by highlighting how data could be used to benefit humanity
- a problem statement: participants can provide a description of the problem, alternative explanations of its causes and a plan of action
- a political position: this brings evidence from various disciplines, such as social, economic and scientific research findings.
- a speech: participants may take the role of supporting or opposing, for example, climate and environmentalist concerns or same sex marriage.

The above listed topics are recommended to advanced participants.



# MATERIALS

---

The purpose of the materials is to provide tools for language learning as well as for discussions about culture. The material can include language material as well as words, concepts, texts etc. from the local culture that can be discussed or worked on together in the event. Here we provide some popular tools to create material and different methods for language learning and cultural activities for the cafes:

---



### ONLINE TOOLS

You can create worksheets, games and flashcards using online tools for teachers.

#### The Language Menu website

[www.thelanguagemenu.com](http://www.thelanguagemenu.com) can be used to create many different kinds of material. This website has 24 different online tools to make worksheets with and 40 languages that can be criss-crossed for bilingual material.

#### QR codes

Create QR codes with questions and work together in groups. This kind of material can also be used as a treasure hunt around the city.

- Use online flashcards tools like Brainscape to make digital flashcards, images, images + texts, discussion cards and use your iPad at the language cafes in addition to laminated cards or board games.



### TIPS ON HOW TO ACQUIRE MATERIAL

- Find board games and card/quiz games in second hand shops
- Find and print cards, games and pictures from online sources
- Make postings on your Facebook page/group, Twitter and ask if anyone has old board games to donate to the language cafe
- Use magazines, advertising flyers and newspapers as material.
- Use props. All kinds of items can be put in a basket and can be used to explain what they are, how they look, what they are made of, what you use it for and alternative uses for the items



### ICE-BREAKERS AND TEAM-BUILDING GAMES

Ice Breakers can be an effective way of starting a language and cultural café session, especially if the participants in your group/table do not know each other. Ice breakers are interactive and fun, and they help people get to know each other and facilitate the purpose of the event. Here are some suggestions for ice breaker activities:

---



## BALL PIT

1. Give each student 3 or 4 pieces of paper and ask them to write one question or an instruction on each one, reminding them to use their imagination a little – we don't want boring questions like "Where are you from?".
2. Once they have written a question, ask them to scrunch it up and throw it into the middle of the classroom – the ball pit. When everyone has finished there should be plenty of questions in the ball pit. As the teacher, it's also worthwhile putting some pre-prepared questions into the ball pit.
3. Ask students to come into the middle of the room, divide them into pairs and tell them to take it turns picking a 'ball' from the pit and then answering that question, before inviting their partner's own response.
4. Once they have answered the question tell them to throw the 'ball' back into the pit for someone else to find.
5. Switch the pairs around every few minutes, ensuring that students get to speak to as many people as possible.
6. Conduct class feedback, asking students to report any interesting things they learnt about their new classmates.



## FABULOUS FLAGS ACTIVITY

Hand out a sheet of paper, pens, and coloured pencils, crayons, and/or markers to each person. Explain the activity: "We're now going to draw flags that represent or symbolize us. Please design your own flag of you – include some symbols or objects that symbolize who you are or what you find enjoyable or important." You can show your own sample flag if you like. For example, you could draw:

- a guitar (representing your passion for music)
- a tennis racket (someone who enjoys sports)
- a country like India (representing your affiliation with a country)

Give everyone a set amount of time to draw (e.g. 15-20 minutes or so) and then reconvene. Ask for volunteers to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew. If it is a large group, you can divide everyone into smaller groups and ask them to share their flags with each other, or you can just ask a small number of volunteers to share.

### Variations

After everyone has finished sharing the individual flags, as a big group you can ask everyone to brainstorm ideas on what to draw for a large class-wide flag. Proceed to delegate individuals to draw certain parts of the class-wide flag. Alternatively, you can collect the individual flags and paste them onto a board to create a "quilt" of individual flags, representing unity.



## MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

1. Divide your students into groups of 4.
2. Give each group 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string, and a marshmallow.
3. Whichever team can build the tallest structure, wins -- the trick is, the marshmallow must be on top.
4. With the Marshmallow Challenge, you can strengthen your team's brainstorming and problem-solving skills, and your team can also have some fun. A win-win.



## ONE WORD GAME

1. Divide meeting participants into smaller groups.
2. Tell them to share with their group one word that describes X.
3. Once they've shared the word with their groups, you can invite them to share their word with the entire room.
4. This game encourages everyone to think about a certain topic in smaller groups ahead of time, which could increase participation during the meeting.



## CRAZY QUESTIONS AND ANSWER

1. You will need two index cards for each adult that will participate. If you collect and keep the cards, you can use this game multiple times.
2. On half of the cards, write as many questions as you have adults. And on the other half, write answers from our list. Here are some suggestions:

### Question

Would you like to be a millionaire?  
Would you like to find yourself in a harem?  
Do you often visit restaurants?  
Do you go to work with pleasure?  
Do you wear a wig?  
Have you any shortcomings?  
Do you like music?  
Are you always so polite as today?  
Are you able to love?  
Do you like to dance?  
Would you like to sit next to me?  
Do you love children?  
Do you often have appointments?  
Do you love me?  
Do you behave decently while drunk?  
Are you jealous?  
Are you sorry that you are married?  
Are you modest?  
Would you like to have many new friends?  
Do you often tell lies?  
Can you flatter?  
Can I rely upon you?  
Do you smoke?

### Answers

No, once I tried, but it ended up a disaster.  
Being on the verge of despair only.  
We are not angels. Things happen.  
It is my life's work.  
I do it with the greatest pleasure.  
Once, but only in a weak moment.  
I am not capable of such a stupid thing.  
I have only one dream and that is it!  
No, I'm well bred. I will answer you in private.  
I must plead the 5th amendment.  
Only in the bathroom.  
Every other day.  
By no means!  
If it is cold outdoors.  
On a payday.  
It is quite necessary on Saturday.  
To while away the time.  
Only while having a rest in the health resort.  
People do not speak about it aloud.  
During my lunch hour.  
I'll do it if you will do it.  
I dream about it after dinner.

3. Stack the cards in two piles, one for questions and one for answers.
4. The first player chooses a question and reads it aloud.
5. The next player chooses an answer and reads it aloud. These two cards are set aside.
6. Continue the game until all the questions have been asked and answered.



## ONE WORD

Keep things simple by having everyone describe their current mood in one word. You can have people explain their one-word mood descriptor if you want to add more depth to your icebreaker, but you can also just go with the flow and enjoy how cryptic some of the answers can be.  
"I feel alpaca."



## FAVOURITE KNOCK-KNOCK ICEBREAKER

Have everyone tell their favourite knock-knock joke. Cell phone research is absolutely allowed, and laughter is mandatory.



## AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO...?

1. This activity provides an informal atmosphere and helps the trainer as well as the participants to get to know each other. With respect to the context of intercultural competence, the activity raises awareness for the challenges that people face who are considered to be "different". Although people have a lot of things in common, they are also different and unique. It can sometimes be difficult for us to deal with these cultural differences.

The main target of this activity is to gain an understanding that people are different and that it is important to consider this. Being "the only one" can be an everyday experience especially for immigrants and the participants of this activity experience this first-hand. The group is standing in a circle. You as the trainer ask the participants: "Please think about something (a habit, an experience, a circumstance...), that you think no one else in the room shares." Then, each participant steps into the centre of the circle, only one at a time, and says: "I am the only one, who..." (e.g. "... always wears red socks"). If there is someone else in the group, who shares the same thing, this person joins the other participant in the centre in order to demonstrate this. In case of no one else sharing this experience, the group continues. It is not important to do it in turn. Sometimes it takes pressure off people to allow them to step into the circle as soon as they can think of a habit, hobby, experience, etc. It is not a requirement to state something that they think no one else shares.



## FABULOUS FLAGS ACTIVITY

Hand out a sheet of paper, pens, and coloured pencils, crayons, and/or markers to each person. Explain the activity: "We're now going to draw flags that represent or symbolise us. Please design your own flag of you – include some symbols or objects that symbolise who you are or what you find enjoyable or important." You can show your own sample flag if you like. For example, you could draw:

- a guitar (representing your passion for music)
- a tennis racket (someone who enjoys sports)
- a country like India (representing your affiliation with a country)

Give everyone a set amount of time to draw (e.g. 15-20 minutes or so) and then reconvene. Ask for volunteers to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew. If it is a large group, you can divide everyone into smaller groups and ask them to share their flags with each other, or you can just ask a small number of volunteers to share.

### Variations

After everyone has finished sharing the individual flags, as a big group you can ask everyone to brainstorm ideas on what to draw for a large class-wide flag. Proceed to delegate individuals to draw certain parts of the class-wide flag. Alternatively, you can collect the individual flags and paste them onto a board to create a "quilt" of individual flags, representing unity.



## THE NAME GAME

Each participant introduces herself/himself by stating their own name combined with some personal statements. This creates a personal atmosphere right from the start. Social and societal dimensions of names may also be revealed: Some people are often wrongly addressed as a man / woman; people with rare or unusual names sometimes use another name to make it easier for others; etc. It becomes clear what a huge effect on one's own identity the name has. And sometimes some funny personal stories are told which provides a relaxed atmosphere.

Duration Approx. 20 - 30 minutes - depends on group size.

Each participant should introduce herself/himself. The group stands in a circle. The trainer instructs the group: Each person introduces herself/himself by stating answers to the following questions:

- What is your name?
- Who has given you your name?
- What does your name mean?
- Can you think of a short story related to your name?

In order to break the ice, the trainer can start.



### TOILET PAPER ICEBREAKER

This idea from Life-hack requires minimal effort and minimal funds. To play, pass a roll of toilet paper around and have everyone rip off how much they would usually use.

Everyone will probably think you're crazy. When the toilet paper makes it all the way around the circle, have everyone count their squares. The number of squares each person took is the number of fun facts they have to reveal about themselves



### SPEED "DATING" ICEBREAKER

Have everyone sit near people they don't work with. Tell everyone to look to their right and announce that they'll be spending the next 5 minutes speed networking with the person next to them. The goal: 5 conversations in 5 minutes. Set a timer; every time the buzzer goes off, it's time for people to find a new conversational partner.



### PAPER AIRPLANE YOU

This fun writing icebreaker works well with participants that are at least at an upper-beginner level.

To start, participants write three to five facts about themselves on a piece of paper. Then they put their creativity to work by folding that paper into a paper airplane. (If you aren't sure how to make an airplane that flies, check out this article on creating the best paper airplanes.)

On your count, everyone flies their planes toward the middle of the room. Then participants pick up a plane that landed near them.

Participants take turns reading the facts written on the plane and trying to guess whose it was. Let the class help if individuals get stuck.

If you like, you can tailor the facts students write to suit the topic of the class. For example, if you're doing a sports unit, have students write three sports they like. If you're studying travel, they could write three places they would like to go.



### FOUR CORNERS

This listening-based icebreaker can be a bit of a challenge for beginners. So kee it for intermediate to advanced participants or tailor your questions to the language level of your participants.

Before playing, label the corners of your room one through four. Then ask get-to-know-you questions. For this activity, asking about their favourites is a good way to go. For example, ask about their favourite sports, their favourite movie genres, their favourite animals, etc. You'll be giving participants four answer choices—one for each corner. For example, if you're asking about favourite animals, you might give them these choices: 1. Dog 2. Cat 3. Fish 4. Bird.

Participants then move to the corner that represents their answer.

Not only does this help participants get to know one another, it also lets them see what they have in common with other participants in your group. And that's a good starting point for chit chat and/or developing friendships.



## TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

There is always the tried and true, 2 truths and a lie. Fun way to keep all involved and laughing. Sit in a circle and go around, each person introduces themselves, then shares 2 truths and a lie. The rest have to guess.



## A GOOD YEAR

This one is fun. Give everyone a coin. Ask each of the participants to tell the rest something about them that made that year memorable (if the coin is older than the person, swap it out for a new one!)



## DON'T JUDGE ME

I had each team member anonymously write something they've done and felt guilty about during the week that they haven't told anyone. We had some funny ones like: I ate my kid's last fruit snack and some others like: I accidentally banged my car door on someone else's car (no damage though!). Sometimes it's best to free ourselves of something we've done that may be frowned upon.



## SOMETHING ABOUT ME

Each member of the group must say something true about themselves. If it is also true of anyone else in the group, the person must stand up.



## SAY CHEESE

This super fun speaking activity takes some preparation on your part, but your participants will love it. Not only that, you can tailor it to work with any level depending on the icebreaker questions you choose.

To prep the activity, gather some old film canisters (ask at a photo lab—they usually have some they're getting rid of) or use plastic Easter eggs or other small, opaque containers. Tape an icebreaker question on the outside of the container. If you need some ideas for questions to ask, look at this list for inspiration.

Put a small item inside each container. If you want to have pairs of participants working together, put the same item in two different canisters. If you want groups of three, then put the same item inside three different containers. Good items to put inside the canisters include pennies, cotton balls, popcorn kernels, erasers, etc.

To play, give each participant a random canister. Tell them not to look in their container but to shake it instead. Using the

sound of the canister only, they should then find the person/people who have the same item in their container.

By limiting participants to the sound of their item and permitting them to listen only to their own canister, students will have to describe what they hear to find their match, which will give them good speaking practice.

After they find their partners or groups, have each person introduce him/herself and answer the question on the outside of their canister. The other members of the group should also answer each question.

To maximise the effectiveness of this activity, make sure the matching items all have different questions on the outside of the container. Or keep it simple and put a different question on each canister.

Another great aspect of this game is once you set it up, it will be ready to use anytime you need to use up a few minutes. And you can change things up whenever you want by putting new questions on the outside of each canister or changing the items that are inside.

---



## CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

You may never have wanted to try speed dating, but your participants will definitely love this icebreaker twist on it. For intermediate and advanced levels, it's a fun, active way to get to know lots of people in a short amount of time—and it provides excellent practice for real-world conversations.

To prepare for the activity, have your group divide into two groups and form two circles in the middle of the room, one inside the other so each person is facing one partner.

17

Present an icebreaker question to the group and give participants a chance to answer. After one minute, call out, "rotate!" The inner circle should move one spot clockwise. Participants should now be facing a new partner.

Call out another icebreaker question and give them a minute to answer before rotating again. Keep going in this manner until you run out of time or until participants are back facing their first partner.



## COOTIE CATCHER QUESTIONS

Did you ever make a cootie catcher as a kid? I couldn't go through a single day in fifth grade without encountering one. And your intermediate and advanced participants will have fun making their own for this writing and speaking activity modified from The Spruce.

18

Have participants follow the directions linked above to make a paper cootie catcher. Under each flap (the "fortunes" area), they should write a get-to-know-you question. Participants pair up and play, answering the questions that they land on.

Give each person a chance to run the cootie catcher and to answer a question from their partner's before switching pairs and going another round.



## WHERE ARE YOU FROM? WHERE WILL YOU GO?

In this intermediate level icebreaker, participants will talk with one another to try and guess where their friends have been and would like to go. You'll need a world map for this activity, so grab an empty bulletin board and get one up before you start.

Give each participant two pushpins or straight pins to put on the map. Each person should put one on the map to mark where they're from and another to mark where they would like to go.

Once all the pushpins are in place, the group tries to decide who placed each pushpin on the map.

This is a flexible activity that you can adapt to the skill level of your participants.

For beginners, have them ask simple questions:

- Mario, are you from Italy?

- Anna, do you want to go to the Bahamas?

For intermediate level, encourage them to use modals and phrase their guesses as statements:

- Mario might be from Italy.

- Anna could've marked the Bahamas.

Challenge your advanced participants with this activity by requiring them to give reasons for their guesses. For example:

- Anna probably chose the Bahamas because she loves the beach.

No matter what level your participants are at, they'll be increasing their vocabularies as they read and practice using the names of countries around the world.





## WHO'S IN YOUR CIRCLES?

Icebreakers that focus on discourse may not be all that common, but your intermediate and advanced participants will have fun with discourse when they learn who's "in their circles."

You don't have to do any prep before the meeting but at the start of the activity, have each participant draw three concentric circles on a blank piece of paper.

Pick a topic for the round (such as favourite food, favourite season, etc.) and have participants write it in the centre circle. They should label the second circle "Love," the third circle "Like" and the space outside the circles "Don't like."

In the innermost circle under the topic, each student writes something (say, a food) they love. Then participants mingle with one another, bringing their papers with them, and ask how a particular participant feels about the food they wrote.

When one of them answers, the person should write their name in the appropriate area of their paper.

Play for a few minutes and then start again with another topic (sport, type of music, favourite season, etc.) with a new sheet of paper.

After a few rounds, encourage them to discuss common interests with people who share their inner circle on different topics.



## AFFIRMATION CARDS

- give each person an affirmation card
  - give them one minute to think of one situation that relates to the card (positive or negative)
  - let the first 3 people tell their name and story (no challenge, just to break the ice)
  - optional, if needed: teach a technique related to your topic (e.g. voice variety)
  - give a challenge for the next 3 (e.g. they should vary their voice at least once in the story)
  - optional: teach another technique (powerful endings)
  - give another challenge for the next 3 (e.g. to have a powerful/inspiring ending to their story)
- Continue, varying challenges

Bonus:

- give challenges by what they have trouble with (e.g. if one person speaks too soft, go to the end of the room and tell him or her to speak, without shouting, so that you can hear what he/she says)

Notes: you can modify the technique to other fields unrelated to public speaking



## FACE2FACEBOOK

Each participant receives an A4/A3 paper with a template of a Facebook account.

They have to fill in the name, update their status and info (hobbies, location, work & studies, etc.). In order to add friends, they will have to walk around the room and meet the other participants, sharing info of their profile. Also, they can draw each other profile photos. Depending on the size of the group, this activity can take up from 20 to 40 minutes. The "profiles" will remain on a wall and they can be used during the project to send messages, give likes, add more friends, etc. Face2Facebook can be, additionally, used for reflection. The template can also contain 3 empty posts, stating only "feeling hopeful", "feeling scared" and "feeling confident", where participants are supposed to write their expectations, fears and contributions, individually, which can be later discussed in the group. This part, including the discussion, can take up to 30 minutes. Due to the fact that the "profiles" remain visible during the whole project, trainers can invite participants to go back to these sections during daily/mid-term/final evaluation and update their status.



## RHYMED CAPITALS

The participants are given 20 minutes to create a rhyme for their name and a story about their "country". Also, each of them needs to develop a symbol to associate with the rhyme and the story (for example, the name of a participant is Oleksandra, it rhymes with "salamandra", so the country is the name of salamandras and fire and a symbol/pictograph given to the tourist can be salamandra, fire or sun) and draw simple icons by the number of participants (30 icons - 30 participants; can be also developed and printed at home as homework).

The participants are separated in two groups:

- "Tourists"
- Countries/Capitals.

The tourists travel from "country" to "country" and listen to stories about the mythical geography made out of the participants' rhymed stories. In the end of the cycle the tourists and capitals exchange places.

When all stories are heard, each participant needs to guess (remember) 2 to 5 random pictographs from those given to him(her)/from a pile. (optional) After the name game, the participants may build a "mythical/fairy-tale" map of Europe. The developed personal icon may be later included in the badge of the participant.



## EXTREME EVENT DISASTER GAME

Each player is assigned the role of a character in a community and operates through that worldview. The game facilitator reads from a script to build narrative drama and issue challenges to players throughout the game. Players first work in groups to weigh trade-offs and decide how best to prepare their community for disaster. Then, a disaster strikes and players must put their resources into action to address problems popping up around the community. In this phase, players face ethical dilemmas and additional surprise challenges keep them on their toes. The game wraps up with a guided discussion to drive home key messages about what it takes to build community resilience.



## ERASMUS+ QUIZ

Form a circle and one of the participants will be in the middle. Each turn, a different person will present a question to the person who is in the middle of the circle, and that person has to try to answer it.

After the answer, the person who asks will give the correct answer. If the person fails, the person who asked him will throw at him a balloon full of water, if the weather is nice, and, if the weather is bad, the person who asked will paint anything on the face of the person who failed.

Once the person answers the question and the punishment is made, another person will stand in the middle and a different person will ask him a new question.

The game finishes when all the questions have been asked. All the participants should have stood at least once in the middle of the circle.

It would be a good idea if, at the end of the game, a single person would read again all the questions that were asked and people answer them so they will memorise the majority of the questions.



## MY SECRET

Participants are sitting in a circle with their eyes closed. One of the players opens his eyes and tells his secret or an unusual fact about himself. Only those who have a similar secret or a similar fact open their eyes. The game finishes when a full circle of secrets is made.



## GUESS MY NAME

Each participant needs to explain his name without using words. Participants are not allowed to write or draw. This game is for a team who do not know each other at all, and it is great in an intercultural environment.



## THE ORACLE

The participants are sitting in a circle with an A4 paper in their hands. They write their names on the top of the A4 and pass the paper to the left. The facilitator starts reading out a few phrases of a horoscope prediction, the participant writes it down. Participants continue writing the prediction for 30 seconds and pass the paper to the left once again. The facilitator reads another phrase and participants have to finish the second prediction. After the circle is made, participants read their predictions out loud.

### Disclaimer:

KA2 2019-1-IT02-KA204-063302

"The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein"<sup>17</sup>