

## Getting to Know Your Student

Understanding your student's interests and finding common ground is important in developing your relationship. Asking open-ended questions are a good idea to start conversations, but it can be helpful for you to do some fun, structured things to get to know your student.

### Art Icebreakers

#### Family Pictures (First Grade and up)

Both student and Reading Mentor draw pictures of their families and then take turns describing each family member in their pictures.

#### Art About Me (First Grade and up)

As you get to know your student, your student will be curious to know more about you, too. Share things about yourselves with one another by each making an "About Me" collage. Draw pictures or bring in old magazines to cut up. If you don't have art supplies to work with, make a collage of words to describe your unique characteristics.

### Writing Icebreakers

#### Memory Game (Second Grade and up)

Play a game where you will each talk about yourselves and then see who can remember the most facts about the other person.

Invite your student to share at least ten things about her/himself.

Example: "My name is Juan. I'm in fourth grade. I have a brother and a sister..."

Then tell at least ten things about yourself.

Example "My name is Mark. I am a lawyer and a grandfather. I'm from Florida..."

When you have each finished introducing yourselves, each of you write down as many things as you can remember about the other person. Reading Mentors can write for students as necessary.

When you both are finished with your lists, tally up to see who remembered the most facts!

### **Top Ten List** (Second Grade and up)

Encourage your student to come up with a Top Ten List about the summer (or school break, school year, etc.) Let your student be serious or funny and you'll find out a lot about what your student finds interesting or meaningful. Share a Top Ten of your own too!

### **Admirable Qualities** (Third Grade and up)

Who does your student admire? You and your student should each write your own answers to these questions:

- Who is this person and what do you admire about him/her?
- What makes this person so special to you?
- What qualities/characteristics of this person would you like to have?

Compare your answers and make a list of the different qualities that people admire. Who else has these qualities? Find some biographies of people who have these qualities

### **Write by Numbers** (Third Grade and up)

Ask your student to choose a number between one and ten. (With beginning writers, choose a number between one and five.)

Start a story, writing only as many words as the number your student chose. For example, if your student chose the number four, you can only write four words at a time.

Your student has the next turn. For example, if you wrote "The big, shining, sun..." your student has to add the next four words, such as "melted my purple popsicle."

Continue writing together until you agree the story is finished. It is okay to let it get silly!

### **Perfect Day** (Second Grade and up)

Talk about things you both love to do. What does your student imagine as the perfect day? Who would your student want to spend this day with? Each of you come up with a perfect day and compare them.

*My perfect day*

I would do:

I would go to:

The weather would be:

I would want these people to be with me:

I would eat:

## Poetry Icebreakers

### Name Acrostic Poems (Second Grade and up)

Get to know more about each other by using the letters in your names to create two acrostic poems. An acrostic poem uses the letters in a word to begin each line of the poem. All lines of the poem relate to or describe the main topic word. Since the main words in these poems are names, your student's poem should describe your student, and your poem should tell something about you. For example:

Student:

**B**ring lunch to school  
**O**wls are my favorite animal  
**B**est friend to Mikey  
**B**ubble-gum chewer  
**Y**ells at soccer games

Reading Mentor:

**T**all and thin  
**I**nterested in science  
**M**ajored in chemistry in college

### "I Am" Poems (Third Grade and up)

Both student and Reading Mentor create an "I Am" poem to share things about themselves with each other. Follow the format below then read the poems aloud.

*I Am*

I am (two special characteristics)  
I wonder (something you are actually curious about)  
I hear (an imaginary sound)  
I see (an imaginary sight)  
I want (an actual desire)  
I am (the first line of the poem restated)  
I understand (something you know is true)  
I say (something you believe in)  
I dream (something you actually dream about)  
I try (something you really make an effort about)  
I hope (something you actually hope for)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

