

“Getting to Know You” Activities for First Meetings For Mentors and Mentees

Excerpted and/or adapted from www.education-world.com

1. It Takes One Minute to Know You

You and your mentee try and figure out how many things you have in common (that aren't obvious) in one (or two, or three, or five, etc.) minutes.

2. Mentoring Dictionary

Write five questions on a piece of paper. 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?

Etc.

Ask your mentee to write those same questions on a piece of paper and to add to that paper five more questions they want to ask you. Interview each other and record the responses. Then you can each use the interview responses to write a "dictionary definition" of your partner to include in a Mentoring Dictionary. You might model this activity by creating a sample dictionary definition about yourself.

3. Fact or Fib?

You and your mentee are going to share some information about yourselves. You'll learn about some of your backgrounds, hobbies, and interests from the 60-second oral "biography" that you will present. Each of you should take notes; as the other person speaks, you should record what you think are the most important facts being shared. When you finish your presentation, each of you should take turns talking about 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. Then each of you gives the other a "fib quiz." 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.

4. Write Each Other a Letter

Write a letter to your mentee. In that letter, introduce yourself to them. Tell them about your hopes for the mentoring experience and some of the fun things that you'd like to do. In addition, tell them a few personal things about yourself; for example, your likes and dislikes, what you did over the summer, and your hobbies. Ask questions throughout the letter. You might ask what mentees like most about school, what they did during the summer, what their goals for the new school year are, or what they are really good at. In your letter, be sure to model the correct parts of a friendly letter. During your initial meeting, show your mentee the letter and then pass them a sheet of stationery. Have your mentee write a return letter to you. In this letter, they will need to answer some of your questions and tell you about themselves. This is a great way to get to know each other in a personal way.

5. People Poems

Each of you use the letters in your name to create an acrostic poem. For example, Bill could write

Big
Intelligent
Laughing
Loud

Each of you must include words that tell something about yourselves -- for example, something you like to do or a personality or physical trait. This activity is a fun one that enables you to learn how both view yourselves. Allow older mentees to use a dictionary or thesaurus. You might also vary the number of words for each letter, if you want to expand the exercise.

6. Another Poetic Introduction.

Use the form below (or create a variation) to create poems that describe yourselves:

Name _____
Title (of poem) _____
I will never _____,
I will never _____,
and I will never _____.
I will always _____.

This activity lends itself to being done at the beginning of the mentoring year and again at the end of the year. You and your mentee will have fun comparing your responses and seeing how the students *and* the responses have changed.