

Fast Friends

Teaching students to have quality conversations with their peers can help them build strong, healthy relationships and increase their sense of belonging. For the fast-friend activity, students will be assigned a partner to befriend over the course of a month (Echols & Ivanich, 2021). During your fast-friend activity, provide students with a list of questions to guide them in their conversations with their peers. Here are a few sample questions used in the “fast-friend” activity that you may consider using with your students. Additional questions can be found by visiting the articles under the reference section below.

1. What is your favorite subject in school?
2. What is your favorite dessert or flavor of ice cream?
3. What is/was your favorite pet? (If you’ve never had a pet, what pet would you choose if you could?)
4. What’s your favorite thing to do during summer vacation?
5. What is your favorite TV show or movie?
6. Do you like to get up early or sleep in on the weekends?
7. What foreign country would you most like to visit and why?
8. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
9. Describe your worst haircut ever.
10. Describe your best friend (without saying his/her name).
11. If you had to move from your school, what would you miss the most?
12. If your house was on fire and you had time to safely grab one thing before running out, what would it be?
13. If you could be famous for something, what would it be?
14. Describe one quality you wish you had.

15. What would a perfect day at school be like?
16. What would you like to change about your life if you could?
17. Name one thing that would make your parents/family proud of you and one thing that would make them disappointed in you.
18. Name one thing you and I appear to have in common.

Grade Level: All

Materials: List of questions to promote conversation and relationship building. See recommended list above.

Duration: 30 minutes per month, or as needed.

Implementation: 1. Assign students to a partner in the class.
2. Once a month, for 30 mins, have students practice asking and answering questions with their partner.
3. Change partners every few months.

Does it work?

Developing friendships with peers is a key part of improving student wellbeing, as it helps them have a greater sense of belonging. One study tested an intervention called “fast-friends” where students were given conversation skills training and assigned to become friends with an assigned partner in the class (Echols & Ivanich, 2021). The study observed 301 seventh and eighth grade students in a Midwestern middle school. Students were randomly assigned a same-gender partner, who they reported to have not known well. Students were also assigned a control partner. For 30 min., once a month, over the course of 3 months, students participated in relationship building activities with their fast-friends partners. The first two sessions, students took turns asking each other questions that became increasingly personal. In the last session, they participated in a team block tower activity, competing against other “fast-friend” partnerships. At the end of the sessions students reported that they knew their “fast-friends” better and considered them friends (Echols & Ivanich, 2021).

References:

Echols, L. & Ivanich, J. (2021). From "Fast Friends" to true friends: Can a contact intervention promote friendships in middle school. *Journal of Research on Adolescence/Early Review*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12622>

ADDRESSING
WELLBEING
IN SCHOOLS

*An Educator's Practical Guide to Improving
Wellbeing*

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DAVID BOREN



Fawson, S., Bates, M., & Boren, D. M. (n.d.). *Addressing Wellbeing In Schools*. EdTech Books.
https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing