



MAKE FAST FRIENDS

"Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, 'What! You too? I thought I was the only one.'"

—C.S. Lewis

OVERVIEW

Students participate in a "speed-friending" activity by taking turns describing themselves to classmates in 30 seconds.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- At the beginning of the year to help students get to know one another
- To cultivate a positive classroom climate
- When students are having a challenging time getting along with each other

TIME REQUIRED

- 10 minutes

LEVEL

- Middle School

MATERIALS

- Stopwatch or other timer

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Get to know each other by sharing about themselves for 30-second intervals

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

Take a moment to reflect on some of your closest friends. What brought you together? What do you share in common?

INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation: Arrange chairs in two rows facing each other.

- Start by introducing the Fast Friends activity to your class with this script:
 - *Today's challenge will help us get to know each other--fast. We're going to take turns describing ourselves in 30 seconds or less, so start thinking about what you'd most like other people to know about you.*
- Have the students sit in two rows facing each other.
- Say to students:
 - *How would you describe yourself in 30 seconds or less?*
- Have students quietly think of a quick self-description. They could include things they like to do, what's most important to them, or what makes them a good friend.
- Choose one row to start.
- Tell students:
 - *When I say "go," everyone in the first row will have 30 seconds to describe themselves to the person opposite them. Then it'll be the other row's turn. I'll tell you when it's time to switch. Ready? Go. Start the 30-second timer.*
- After 30 seconds, say:
 - *Time's up. It's the other side's turn now.*
- Have the students in the other row describe themselves to the person opposite them while you time them for 30 seconds.
- After students from both rows have participated, have everyone stand up and move one chair to the right. Students at the end of a row will move to the beginning of the same row.
- Repeat the process, as time allows.

CLOSURE

- Ask students:
 - *Did you learn something new about someone in this class? What did the person say that caught your interest?*
- Give students time to think, then call on them to tell the class their ideas.

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do you notice whether students have made new friends after participating in this practice?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Numerous studies show that positive peer relationships affect students' academic success and mental well-being. Indeed, one study found that having these kinds of connections can explain up to 40 percent of adolescents' [academic achievement](#). Other studies have linked healthy relationships between students to higher [self-esteem](#) and [resilience](#), decreased [loneliness](#), greater [health](#) and well-being, and increased [engagement](#) in school.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

When students feel a [sense of connectedness](#) at school—where there is at least one adult on campus who cares that they are there and where they feel connected to peers—a fundamental psychological need of theirs is being met.

And when students feel connected and cared about, they are better able to expend energy on helping and caring for others, which in turn, fosters a sense of belongingness for everyone at school.

SOURCE

Adapted from an activity in the [Second Step](#) program, a social-emotional learning curriculum created by [Committee for Children](#). Since 1979, Committee for Children, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has advocated for policies to enhance, gathered research to support, and developed educational programs to advance the safety and well-being of children through social-emotional learning (SEL).