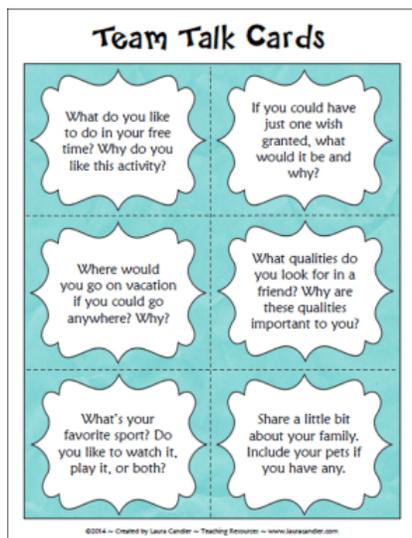


Team Building Activities

During the first week of school it's critical that you allow plenty of time for building team spirit. I like to have random teams for the first few days of school, and I change the teams daily. I find that changing the teams each day, combined with having them participate in lots of teambuilders, allows the kids to really get to know each other. After the first week of school I set up my real "heterogeneous" teams and I did a few more teambuilders with them. Below, I describe some simple teambuilders I use during the first week or two. You can find more detailed information about team building as well as a variety of different team builders in *Back to School Super Start*.

1. Name Tents

I give the kids a 6" by 9" piece of white construction paper and I have them fold it to make a "tent" that stands up. They write their name on it in fancy letters and decorate it with pictures that tell about themselves. Then they take turns telling about their name tents. I usually give about 30 seconds to a minute for each person's introduction.



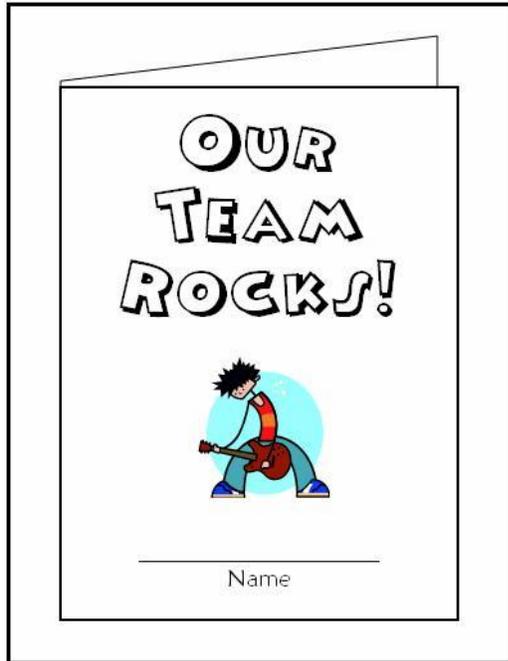
2. Team Talk activity

You'll need to print out the Team Talk cards in the Cooperative Learning files for this. These are just a set of ice breaker question cards. Stack a set of cards face down in the middle of each team. One person becomes the Question Reader, turns over the first card and reads it aloud. It might be, "Where would you go on vacation if you could go anywhere?" The Question Reader gives think time and everyone gives thumbs up when they are ready. Then the Question Reader gives his answer first, followed by the each team member. At the end of that round, the next person on the team becomes the Question Reader.

Download Team Talk cards here : [Team Talk cards](#)

3. Team Interview

Brainstorm a list of interview questions with the class on the overhead. The list can include anything the kids want to learn about each other – favorite foods, birthplace , hobbies, family members, favorite vacation spots, etc. Then designate one person on each team to stand and be interviewed by their team mates. The other students take turns asking the interview questions in Roundrobin format until you call time (about 2 minutes). Then that person sits down and the next person stands. Students should know they have the right to pass if they consider a question too personal for any reason. Younger kids enjoy rolling up a sheet of paper to make a "microphone" that one person holds up to the interviewee. This gets passed around the team.



4. Team Compliment Cards

This is a quick teambuilder that works wonders when your teams are having trouble getting along. Click on the card link for full directions and a blackline master.

Download card here : [Card link.](#)

5. Team Challenges

Team challenges are engaging activities where students work together within their teams to compete against other teams in the class. These types of activities provide opportunities for students to learn how to collaborate in order to compete, and how to be good sports. Emphasize the importance of congratulating the winning team and not complaining or pointing blame within their own teams.

One Team Challenge activity you might want to try is "Write 12". Students work in teams to be the first to list 12 items as specified on a topic card. For example, they might list 12 fruits, 12 holidays, or 12 types of animals. This freebie includes 10 topic cards and a template for you to create your own. Taking time to have students participate in these

types of activities will go a long way towards helping to create a warm and caring classroom environment.

Classbuilding Activities

In addition to Teambuilders, you need to do plenty of Classbuilders during the first week of school. These activities will help the students to get to know everyone in their class, not just the kids on their team. Start by having everyone wear name tags for the first day or two. Play your favorite name games so that kids can learn each other's names.

1. Classmates Mix

This is a fun icebreaker activity. Students mix around the classroom until you say give a signal to stop. Then they pair up with the closest person. You call out an icebreaker topic such as the ones below. Students talk over their answers until you call time, and then they begin mixing again. Continue with several rounds for as long as time allows. You might try 3 rounds one day and 3 rounds the next day if your students have trouble handling the movement at first. (The STOP technique works well for classroom management during classbuilders.) Here are some discussion topics to get you started:

- Share a little information about yourself and your family.
- What are some of your favorite things? Talk over your favorite foods, colors, animals, or anything else that's a favorite of yours.
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What's the best book you have ever read? What did you like about it?
- What's the best movie you have ever seen? Why did you like it?
- What's your favorite subject in school? What do you like about this subject?
- What are your strengths? What kinds of things do you do well?
- How would you change this school if you were the principal?
- What can students do to make school a better place to be?

2. Appointment Clock Buddies

The objective of this activity is to pair students in several ways so they will have different sets of partners for upcoming lessons. Appointment Clock Buddies works best after your students are familiar with the basic “Classmates Mix” activity above. Just a little word of warning – this is a great activity, but if you don’t follow the directions about making sure kids are writing their buddies’ names on the same line for each step, you’ll have problems at the end. Been there, done that! I’m hoping to save you the experience that I had! Clock

Download clock buddies here : [Clock Buddies](#)

3. Compass Buddies

Compass Buddies is similar to Appointment Clock Buddies, but the graphic organizer has the points of the compass instead of times on a clock. This variation was suggested by Monica Horn and I created the activity pages to go with her suggestion. The complete directions are on the last page of the Compass Buddies freebie.

Download compass here : [Compass Buddies](#)