# Ice Breaker: One Word

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| **Audience**  large= 20+, medium= 10-20, small = under 10 | Medium, Large |
| **Team Size** | Works best for about 20 participants |
| **Activity Level**  highly active, medium effort, low impact | Low |
| **Title** | One Word |
| **Description** | Connect the group to the meeting theme, tis icebreaker helps the group explore their thoughts on a common issue. It generates enthusiasm and unstructured discussion. |

**Materials**

* None

**Set Up**

* Write instructions for reference (i.e. project on a screen, write on a white board or flip chart)

**How To/Conduct or Run the Ice Breaker**

Divide the meeting participants into groups of four or five people by having them number off. (You do this so that your participants get to know fellow attendees. People generally begin a meeting by sitting with the people they already know best, when your goal is normally team building across a group.)

Tell the newly formed groups that their assignment is to think for a minute and then to share with their group the one word that describes X. In the first venture with this icebreaker, leading a session on organizational culture, the request from the group was that they think about their current culture and come up with one word to describe it.

This icebreaker is a perfect segue into the topic of the meeting or training class. The group was fascinated by the variety of the words chosen by the other participants to describe their culture.

Consequently, the icebreaker did provide a snapshot into the current thinking of the group about their culture.

(The group's one-word culture descriptions ranged broadly: funky, family, fun, bipolar, fractured, cohesive, inspiring, and motivational are samples of their chosen words.)

This icebreaker sparked spontaneous conversation in every group as the participants questioned each other about the meaning of their one word. They asked for examples and found that the combination of the participants' chosen words did describe their current organizational culture.

Upon completion of the initial spontaneous discussion, ask the participants to share their one word with the larger group. Ask for a volunteer to start and then, ask each participant to share their one word that described their culture. (Even your most quiet members are comfortable sharing their one word.)

Next, after the participants have listened to the variety of words from the larger group, ask them to explore several questions in their small group. In this instance, asking each participant to select one word to describe their [organizational culture](https://www.thebalance.com/culture-your-environment-for-people-at-work-1918809), the participants were then asked these follow-up questions.

* Is this culture consistent across buildings and departments?
* Is this the culture that you want to have in your organization?
* Does this culture support the accomplishment of the environment you desire for employees and the achievement of your company goals?

Your opportunity for follow-up questions is endless. These debriefing questions can support the content of your training class or meeting.

Debrief the icebreaker by asking for a volunteer from each group to share a point or two that highlighted their discussion. (You will find that many of the session attendees took notes.)

Because your participants are almost always your best source of laughter and fun in a  meeting or training session, each of these steps generated remarks, insights, ah-has, and examples.