

### Start-of-Semester Icebreaker: Sharing Characteristics and Making Commitments

<p><b>Goals:</b> To establish commonalities among students and to promote commitment to preparedness.</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Have students stand up and leave their desks. Identify one corner of the room as the “YES” corner and another corner as the “NO” corner. You can also establish a “SOMETIMES/MAYBE” corner if you wish. Ask students about 8-10 yes/no questions. Students answer the questions by moving to the appropriate corner. The questions can be about students’ lives outside the classroom, including their work/life/family responsibilities, their use of social media, their aspirations, hobbies, backgrounds, etc., or anything else you feel would be interesting and appropriate. In addition, I always ask the following question: <i>Who will commit to coming to every class prepared and on time (barring illness or crisis)?</i> For the students who move to the YES corner, acknowledge their commitment and its importance to their success. For the students who do not move to the YES corner, ask what it would take to get them there. Sometimes after a</p>	<p>little discussion, students are willing to commit themselves. Even if they are not, they usually walk away with a better understanding of the expectations of the course, the requirements of success, and their own priorities and practical challenges.</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Explicitly asking for a commitment to preparedness may push some students outside of their comfort zones.</p> <p><b>Challenges:</b> Explicitly asking for a commitment to preparedness may push some students outside of their comfort zones.</p> <p><b>Participant Level:</b> WC <b>Prep Time:</b> S <b>Class Time:</b> S/M <b>When:</b> B</p> <p><b>Submitted by:</b> <b>Prof. Michael Berman</b> <b>Montgomery College</b></p>
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#### Code Legend:

Participant Level: **WC** (Whole Class); **GR** (Groups); **P** (Pairs); **I** (Individual Students)  
Prep / Class / Results Analysis Time: **S** (Short); **M** (Medium); **L** (Long)  
When to Use During Semester: **B** (Beginning); **M** (Middle); **E** (End); **A** (Any time)