



BREAK THE ICE

Part 1: Vocabulary in Context

Complete the following sentences using the best word or phrase from the box. Use each option once.

awkwardness	tension	vulnerable	standstill	icebreaker	defuse
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1. The massive storm brought all shipping on the river to a complete _____ until the coast guard could clear the debris.
2. After 20 minutes of silent staring, Sarah cracked a joke to try and _____ the difficult political discussion at the dinner table.
3. The beginning of the meeting was filled with uncomfortable _____ until Professor Ndlovu arrived and started the presentation.
4. Introducing himself using a silly dance move was a great _____, and everyone in the class started laughing.
5. Small, older trading ships were more _____ to the thick, unforgiving ice than the robust new vessels.
6. The _____ in the room was so thick you could cut it with a knife before anyone finally spoke.

Part 2: Situation Practice (Break the Ice!)

Read the following scenarios and decide which person needs to "break the ice." Then, write a short sentence or comment that they could use. Remember to keep it lighthearted!

Scenario A

- **Characters:** Ben (from Liverpool, UK) and Xoli (from Durban, South Africa).
- **Setting:** They are the first two people in a new Zoom meeting for a university project. They both have their cameras on but haven't spoken.
- Who needs to break the ice? _____
- **What could they say?**

Scenario B

- **Characters:** Lin (from Shanghai, China) and Omar (from Oslo, Norway).
- **Setting:** They are sitting at a small table at a large international conference dinner, waiting for food. They don't know each other.
- Who needs to break the ice? _____
- **What could they say?**

Part 3: History Check

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. The idiom "break the ice" originally referred to:
a) Starting a conversation with a nervous person.
b) Ships physically clearing a path in frozen waters.
c) Digging a hole to access water in winter. d) A metaphor for breaking a bad habit.
2. Which word best describes the atmosphere *before* someone tries to break the ice?
a) Jovial b) Stagnant c) Dynamic d) Enthusiastic

Part 4: Usage and Vocabulary

Complete the following sentences using the best word or phrase from the box below.

/ awkwardness / hesitation / defuse / tension / standstill /

3. Sarah tried to defuse the situation with a silly dance, but it only made everyone laugh.
4. The meeting came to a complete standstill because no one wanted to speak first.
5. There was a moment of hesitation before Mark finally asked his question.
6. The general feeling of tension made everyone avoid eye contact.

Part 5: Scenario Analysis and Application

Read the scenarios and write a one-sentence "icebreaker" response that would be appropriate for the situation.

7. **Scenario:** You start a new job and walk into the kitchen where three colleagues you don't know are eating lunch in total silence. **Your Icebreaker:** _____

8. **Scenario:** You are trying to speak to a famous but intimidating artist at an exhibition, and you are both looking at a weird sculpture. **Your Icebreaker:** _____

Part 6: Idiom Expansion Challenge

Many idioms use the word "Break." Match the new idiom to its correct meaning and then use it in a sentence.

Idiom	Meaning
A. Break a leg	I. To reveal important or shocking news.
B. Break the news	II. To move faster than the previously set record.
C. Break the mold	III. Good luck (often used before a performance).
D. Break the record	IV. To be completely different from the traditional or standard example.

9. **Break a leg** matches with: _____
Sentence: _____
10. **Break the news** matches with: _____
Sentence: _____

Teacher's Key

Part 1: Vocabulary in Context

1. The massive storm brought all shipping on the river to a complete **standstill** until the coast guard could clear the debris.
2. After 20 minutes of silent staring, Sarah cracked a joke to try and **defuse** the difficult political discussion at the dinner table.
3. The beginning of the meeting was filled with uncomfortable **awkwardness** until Professor Ndlovu arrived and started the presentation.
4. Introducing himself using a silly dance move was a great **icebreaker**, and everyone in the class started laughing.
5. Small, older trading ships were more **vulnerable** to the thick, unforgiving ice than the robust new vessels.
6. The **tension** in the room was so thick you could cut it with a knife before anyone finally spoke.

Part 3: History Check

1. b) Ships physically clearing a path in frozen waters.
2. b) Stagnant.

Part 4: Usage and Vocabulary

B. Usage and Vocabulary

3. defuse
4. standstill
5. hesitation
6. tension

Part 3: Idiom Expansion Challenge

Idiom	Meaning
A. Break a leg	III. Good luck (often used before a performance).
B. Break the news	I. To reveal important or shocking news.
C. Break the mold	IV. To be completely different from the traditional or standard example.
D. Break the record	II. To move faster than the previously set record.

9. **Break a leg** matches with: **III Example Sentence:** Before the concert, the stage manager told the band to "break a leg."
10. **Break the news** matches with: **I Example Sentence:** The doctor had to gently break the news to the patient about the test results.