Back to school guide:

Teaching with tech

Poll Everywhere

For students and teachers alike, the new school year is an exciting time. Opportunities, new skills, and new friends await. Whether you've been on campus for a while or if you're brand new, being in a new class with new faces can be quite nerve-racking. Help put new students at ease - and maybe even have some fun - with these handpicked icebreakers perfect for your classroom. Click the question to copy into your Poll Everywhere account. Don't have one? You'll be prompted to create one in just a few steps.

Clickable image icebreakers:

Where are you from? →
Simple, yet powerful. This question allows students to discover commonalities and shared experiences. It can also help out-of-towners feel more at home in their school's city.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be? →
This dream-worthy question is telling and inspirational. Beach fanatics bond over their love of surfing while mountain lovers plan their next campout. This is a great way for students to let down their guard and bond with their classmates.
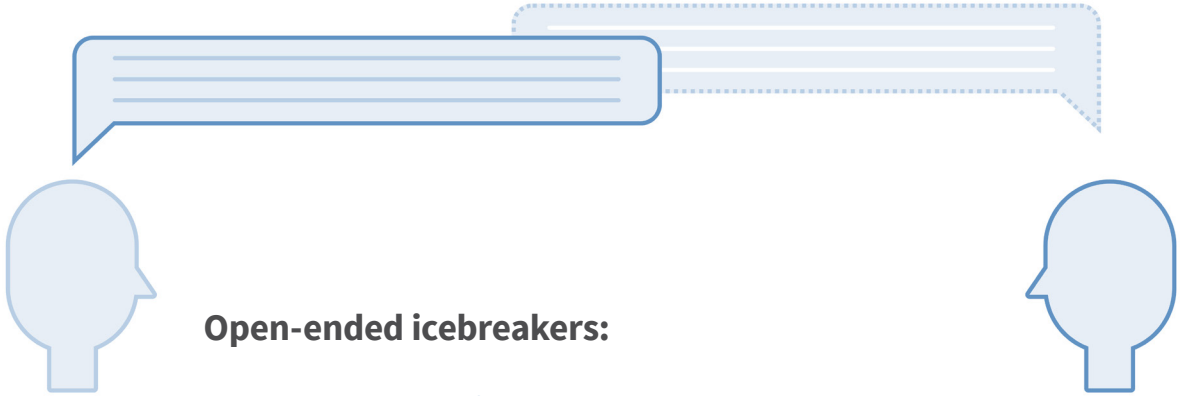
Word cloud icebreakers:

What inspires you? →
Art. Children. Traveling. The possibilities are endless. Watching the responses grow with repetition is heartwarming and can even become hilarious, depending on who is in class.

If the person sitting next to you had to describe you using one word, what would it be? →
Not only does this set the stage for getting to know each other, but it also encourages conversation. Since your students may have varied levels of familiarity, the responses can range from casual to profound.

Open-ended icebreakers:

What is something that few people know about you? →
Maybe that hidden juggling talent isn't so hidden, or maybe you'll learn that more than half of your class has a passion for animation. This question is a win-win, students learn more about each other, and you gain some valuable insight into what your class enjoys.

What is your dream job? →
Those three students who are engineers-in-training might also make great study buddies! Similarly, the future authors in the room may bond over their shared love for the written word.

What languages do you know how to speak? →
Hablas español? If you're teaching a class to new college students, you may have a variety of languages spoken. Learning who else speaks the same language may come as a pleasant surprise.

If you could choose any famous person to have dinner with, who would it be? →
Fictional or non-fictional. Dead or alive. This question invites both imagination and introspection, serving as talking points for new conversations.

What is the most adventurous thing you have ever done? →
You may be quite surprised at how many of your students enjoy skydiving or rock climbing. This could also serve as inspiration for classroom bonding activities or outings.

What is something you would like to learn? →
Initiate an insightful dialogue regarding what piques your students' interest. Their answers can help you craft your lesson plans or syllabus in a more personalized way, allowing for increased student engagement.

Your favorite things icebreakers:

What is your favorite book? →
This brings back memories of reading *The Great Gatsby* or *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Book lovers may even be inspired to pick up a new book that their classmates just recommended.

What is your favorite class you have ever taken? →
Hopefully, it's yours! Either way, this provides an opportunity to gauge students' interests a little more. A great conversational follow-up may be to ask why they enjoyed that particular class.

What is your favorite song to sing at karaoke? →
These answers might surprise you! Your class might share a love for 80s music, specifically Madonna. It's no doubt that music is a great bonding tool, and a class trip to karaoke might be a great way to build classroom comradery. Also, watching your students sing to Madonna's "Material Girl"? That's pretty priceless.

What is your favorite way to spend your free time? →
This insightful question offers a window into your students' personality types. Are they more introverted or extroverted? Quiet or adventurous? This information can help you figure out ways to more effectively engage with the class.

What is your favorite thing to do in (insert city your school is located in)? →
There's no better way to learn about a city than by asking locals! Students new to the city may be surprised to learn there's an exotic tea lounge right next to their dorm or that the bowling alley offers student discounts on weeknights.

These questions provide a great opportunity to spark valuable conversation between students and for you to gain a deeper insight into their personalities. 'Get to Know You' games can be uncomfortable, but they don't have to be! Use the questions above to help lighten the mood. Customize these icebreakers or create your own variations to fit the needs of your classroom.

The educator's tech supply list

Say goodbye to pens, paper, notebooks, and binders. *Back to school in 2019 is all about teaching through tech.* To help get you started on refreshing your classroom, we put together a list of the best apps for teachers that you may want to add to your educational arsenal.

For classroom management & organization:

Teacherkit →
Keeping your classroom management tasks in one place is easy with TeacherKit. From taking attendance, monitoring behavior, and tracking grades, this app does it all. What makes it even better is its ability to aggregate all this data into one cohesive student record which can easily be shared from the platform via email to both parents and students.

Additio →
For an even more robust classroom management tool, check out Additio. In addition to monitoring grades and attendance, it includes features that allow you to schedule and record interviews with parents as well as planning your classes and units - all within the app! If you're a fan of integrations, Additio does that too, seamlessly integrating with your Google Drive or Microsoft OneDrive files.

Trello →
Both students and teachers alike can benefit from this organizational and productivity must-have. With Trello, you can easily create checklists, monitor progress, upload images and articles, and assign tasks to others. All these features are great for individual organization but also work wonders for group projects and student discussions.

For digital learning:

WolframAlpha →
Students in any field of study will benefit from WolframAlpha. This go-to resource for science, math, physics, history, and pretty much anything else is also incredibly user-friendly. The ability to easily discover new information at the tips of your fingers will enhance both teaching and learning.

TED →
You can't go wrong with this one. For every teacher, student, and lifelong learner, TED has something to offer. Neuroscience, art, technology, culture, and evolution are just a few of the wide range of thought-leadership talks provided by industry experts. No matter what subject you're teaching, TED can be a useful resource for sparking class discussions, debates, lectures, or just general inspiration.

For student engagement:

StudyBlue →

A teacher's priority is always the success of their students. StudyBlue helps them get there by providing digital flashcards, quizzes, and study aids. Teachers can upload their own sets of digital study guides, even audio and video! Students can also share and create their own, allowing them to expand their study tools to far more than textbooks and lectures. In addition, as if it could get any better, students will also be able to access the 500 million StudyBlue study materials, which they can copy and edit for free.

Poll Everywhere →

Being a teacher in the digital age means constantly fighting for student's attention. Against their cell phones. Instead of fighting an uphill battle, why not meet them where they are? Poll Everywhere engages students directly from their device, allowing the dreaded cell phone to become a teaching aid. With this user-friendly platform, you can collect live feedback, drive retention, and gauge understanding all in real-time. Poll Everywhere seamlessly integrates with Keynote, PowerPoint, and Google Slides, allowing you to embed live polls into your program of choice and organize your lectures the way *you* want.

There you have it. The all-in-one list of the best apps for both teachers and students. Embrace the technology of teaching with apps that make your life easier and your students happier.
Learn how to create your first poll and prepare for a more engaged classroom this year.

During the summer months, we've been working hard at Poll Everywhere to provide product updates that help make your experience more innovative, accessible, and streamlined. From a fresh new look to Google SSO and increased responses on instructor plans, we've changed a lot. Read below for the scoop on each update.

What's new with Poll Everywhere

Announcing the all-new Poll Everywhere Beta

Be one of the first to try our all-new presentation app that seamlessly integrates with PowerPoint, Keynote, and Google Slides. Creating, inserting, and presenting Poll Everywhere activities in slideware has never been easier. You can add pre-made activities, create custom activities, edit, configure, and manage activities all within our redesigned presentation app.

To try out our new presentation app, navigate to the presenter app and click 'Try the Beta' to be directed to download the beta version.

Google Single Sign-On

New and returning users are now able to sign up and sign in to their Poll Everywhere accounts with their Google email address.

Poll Everywhere has a fresh new look

The sleek update to the Poll Everywhere visualization template includes changes to the anonymity display, voting instructions, and activity title. With voting instructions now located at the top of the activity, your audience can quickly and easily see how to respond. These changes to the visual settings help keep your audience's attention on your activated poll or activity.

Clean up & delete with peace of mind: the Trash feature

Spring cleaning before Back to School? We get it. We also understand those moments when you're absolutely sure you won't need something again, only to find out a few days later that you actually do. That's why we created the Trash feature. When deleting an activity, it doesn't necessarily mean it's gone forever. Deleted activities are moved to the trash page which you can access via the Trash button in the menu on the left side of the My polls page.

Added Student Features on Mobile Apps (iOS & Android)

Students can now manage all of their registrations and responses histories from within our mobile apps, including updating their name and email. They can even export their responses to email for added study power.

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Now on all paid plans: 700 responses
You can now do even more with your audience. With 700 responses per activity, we removed the worry of running out of responses. As the presenter, you have the freedom to fully explore the possibilities of adding student feedback to your next lecture, test prep, or engagement activity.

"Choose up to X options" is now great for classes of all sizes. With our most popular multiple choice activity, you can now have students respond several times without worrying about running out of responses.

Word clouds and clickable image responses can have even more engagement. Students can respond as many times as they want - the sky's the limit!

Poll Everywhere Individual Instructor plans even come equipped with student registration, custom branding, and reporting & analytics. With these features, you can register participants before or during the presentation, identify who responded, and keep track of their responses, scores, and grades.

Poll Everywhere Student Pays plans offer similar capabilities and are a great option for students. With unlimited questions, and an audience size based on class size, students can create endless, engaging activities to enjoy with their classmates.