

## BREAKING THE ICE WITH MODALS

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Icebreaker activities are great ways to get students talking. Icebreakers are even better when students are both talking and practicing a specific language skill or component. “Find Someone Who...” is a common icebreaker in which students get a list of characteristics and they must find classmates who meet the characteristics on the list. For example, the worksheet might say, “Find someone who has traveled to Japan.” Students must then walk around the room asking classmates about their travels. Once they find a student who has traveled to Japan, they get that student’s signature and move onto the next item on the list.

In this week’s Teacher’s Corner, we modify the “Find Someone Who...” game to include modals. The goal is for students to ask questions and give answers using modals. The game is a lot of fun and can be adapted to fit the level, needs, and experiences of your students.

### LEVEL

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Intermediate and above (knowledge of question formation and modals necessary)

### LANGUAGE FOCUS

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Speaking  
Listening

### GOALS

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During this activity, students will be able to do the following:

- Practice using modals in situations related to possibility, ability, and predictability
- Form questions and answers using modals

### MATERIALS

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- Paper and pencils/pens
- Worksheet: Find Someone Who... (Appendix A)

## PREPARATION

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- Make enough copies of Worksheet: Find Someone Who... (Appendix A) for all students in the class.

## PROCEDURE

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1. Warm up the class by asking some questions to get students thinking about modals and questions.  
Here are some examples to use:
  - a. Would you like to climb a mountain?
  - b. Are you going to be wealthy in the future?
  - c. Can you swim?
2. Tell students they are going to play a game called “Find Someone Who...” and explain the directions.
  - a. Each student will get a copy of a worksheet with phrases.
  - b. To play the game, the student will pick one phrase to turn into a question using a modal.
  - c. Then the student will go around the room and ask the question to classmates to find someone who answers “yes.”
  - d. When the student finds a classmate who answers “yes” to a particular question, the student must get the classmate to sign next to that item. The student can have their classmates sign only once on the worksheet.
  - e. After finding a classmate to sign for one item, the student then forms a question for another item and repeats asking the question to classmates.
  - f. The first student to get a signature for every item on the list wins.
3. Hand out copies of the “Find Someone Who...” worksheet. Give students time to review the items on the list and to ask questions about anything that they don’t understand.
4. Have students stand up. Tell them they have 10 minutes to talk to classmates and to try to get every item on the list signed.
  - a. Tell students “Go,” when you are ready to start the clock.

5. As students circulate, take time to listen and ensure that students are asking questions accurately.
6. When the first person finishes, review his or her worksheet. Ask the student to read his or her answers in complete sentences.
7. Finish the activity by having all students make complete sentences using the answers they have. If you want, you can collect and check the sentences each student writes.

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### VARIATIONS

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There are a number of possible variations and adaptations for this activity. One variation starts the activity by asking students to write the questions they will ask before the activity starts. Each student gets a worksheet and spends time turning each phrase listed into a complete question. Students then have the questions ready before they start the game.

Another alternative is to have students create their own worksheet. Each student must come up with a single item to use in the game. Post all the items on the board. The students then copy the phrases into their notebooks before starting the game. Students now have a worksheet that is better tailored to their experiences.

Finally, teachers can rewrite the items listed on the worksheet to match the language level and the experiences and background of the students.

## APPENDIX A

### **Find someone who...**

1. would like to travel around the world. \_\_\_\_\_
2. is going to a university. \_\_\_\_\_
3. can bake desserts. \_\_\_\_\_
4. would eat bugs for money. \_\_\_\_\_
5. is going to watch a movie this weekend. \_\_\_\_\_
6. will have children. \_\_\_\_\_
7. can speak multiple languages. \_\_\_\_\_
8. will be famous. \_\_\_\_\_
9. would go camping for 30 days. \_\_\_\_\_
10. can play an instrument. \_\_\_\_\_