



## ICEBREAKER

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# EXPLAIN IT TO AN ALIEN

*In this virtual meeting icebreaker participants play a game as verbal charades to promote understanding of STEM fundamentals and terms.*

**Time needed** 10-15 minutes

**Materials** You will need a list of terms and forbidden words like this:

### EASY

- **Rocketship** (forbidden: space, rocket, planets, astronauts)
- **Computer** (forbidden: coding, laptop, keyboard, smartphone, Internet, type, online, screen)
- **Science lab** (forbidden: lab coats, research, scientists)

### MEDIUM

- **Simple Machines** (forbidden: lever, pulley, wheel & axle)
- **Coding** (forbidden: computer, online, laptop, hacker, code)
- **Chemical Reaction** (forbidden: chemistry, physics, atoms, reaction, react)

### HARD

- **Ichthyology** (forbidden: fish)
- **Biotechnology** (forbidden: biology, technology, GMO)

## Steps

NOTE: It is helpful to think about how your group could be divided into smaller groups ahead of time. That makes it easier to shuffle participants between groups.

1. Divide the participants into breakout rooms, approximately 2-4 in each room. Make sure to write down who is in what room to make step number 4 easier. (2 mins)

2. Assign each group (breakout room) a STEM-related word and its banned descriptors (see list below)
3. Tell each group to come up with a way of describing the word without using the banned words/phrases
4. Then, once the time is up, shuffle the participants into another set of breakout rooms, so that no one is in a group with a previous group member
5. Have each person try to describe their word to the other group members, based on their discussion in the previous part
6. Afterwards, reconvene as one whole group, and discuss.

If working with in-person groups rather than a video conference, divide the participants into separate groups, instead of breakout rooms as noted above.

If working with a small group, you can choose one person and message them privately (or ask the other participants to turn off their audio) the word that is going to be guessed and the words they can't say. Then, have the rest of the people in the group try and guess it. Use the extra challenge if necessary.

After the large group debrief the person running the meeting will act as an alien using phrases like "I do not know that word" or "explain more" to push the girls deeper into their explanation.

## Extra Challenge:

This extra challenge can be used if the girls already presented their group's word and there is still extra time in the breakout room. As a group they will have to choose one the words and come up with ways to explain the word to one of the following:

- An alien
- Explain it as you would to a toddler
- Explain it as you would to a grandma

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*This icebreaker was created by 2020 EngineerGirl Ambassadors Diana Sobolieva, Elizabeth Halton, Nikki LaPierre, Ishika Nag*