

## Senior Boundary Breaking

### Lightweight:

1. What has been your favorite thing about high school?
2. You are saying goodbye to your favorite teacher from AHS after graduation. Who are they and what will you say?
3. Who or what has made you smile at AHS the most?  
Who or what has made you laugh the most at AHS?
4. What or who will you miss the most as you graduate?
5. In one word - sum up your four years of high school?
6. As graduation quickly approaches, what are your feelings? Are you happy, sad, anxious? Do you have mixed emotions?
7. How do you think teachers will describe you after you have graduated? How about other students? Are you happy with that?
8. Will you come to your reunions? Pick three people and tell what you think they will be doing in life, when they come to a reunion.
9. What motto do you think is fitting for the senior class as a whole?
10. What should be "the song" for the senior class?

### Middle weight:

1. What is one thing that you regret not doing during your high school career?
2. As a graduation gift, the Wizard from the WIZARD OF OZ agrees to grant you either more heart, more brains, or more courage. Which one would you like to have more of as you walk off of the stage with your diploma and you begin to prepare for the rest of your life?
3. What movie title, best sums up or describes your senior year? (or could be you entire school career).
4. What scares you the most about graduation?
5. If you could go back, and do things differently - start out as a freshman would you? Why or why not? If you would what would you do differently?
6. Do you feel, like the past four years have been well spent - or have you been too stressed out to truly enjoy yourself?
7. At what grade level in high school - do you feel like you grew up and matured the most?
8. Has high school, changed you at all in a bad way? Have you acquired prejudices and dislikes that you did not have when you entered?
9. Was it important to you in high school - if people liked you or not? Was it a big deal to fit in or were you your own person?
10. What, in school has brought you the most satisfaction? (extra curricular, sports, a certain class, etc.)



### **Heavyweight:**

1. What advice would you like to give to the underclassmen?
2. A fortune teller is staring into a crystal ball on your life ten years from now. Where do you want to be and what do you want to be?
3. Who do you respect and admire the most among the senior class?
4. What is the toughest decision that you have ever been faced with in high school? Did you make the right decision?
5. What is the most valuable lesson that you learned in school? How will it help you as you continue on throughout your life?
6. Did you find love in high school? Were you ever really looking? How has it changed you if you have?
7. How many true friends have you acquired in high school? Do you think the friendships will last past high school?
8. Do you like the person that high school has made you? Why or why not?
9. Will you be a different person when you receive your diploma? It's only a piece of paper! Is it more? How much more?
10. What advice would you like to leave for everybody in this group?

### **Group D Questions (Synthesis)**

- 1) Tonight, I learned the most about...
- 2) What is one gift you would like to give this co-op?
- 3) I want to learn more about...
- 4) The question that made me think the most was...
- 5) I think we did this because...
- 6) I was most surprised by...
- 7) I feel the person most like me is...
- 8) I feel the person least like me is...
- 9) If you could offer one piece of advice to this co-op, what would it be?
- 10) I would just like to say...



# Boundary Breaking

Monday night

**SKILL TRACKS:** Interpersonal Relations, Group Dynamics, Values Awareness

**MATERIALS:** none

**OUTCOMES:** self-disclosure and introspection; building trust and rapport within a group

## PROCEDURE:

Have the entire co-op sit in a circle. If possible, try to have everyone sit on the same level (entire co-op on the floor, in chairs, etc.). Tell the co-op that we will be having a structured conversation so we can learn more about each other. Explain that you, as facilitators, will be asking questions throughout the session to "guide" the conversation.

Read the following:

*We have just a few guidelines to follow during this activity...*

1. *After we've asked a question, anyone who wants to answer it first may do so. Then we'll proceed clockwise around the circle.*
2. *Only one person at a time answers the question. Please pay attention to the person who's talking.*
3. *You may pass on a question if you wish, and we can come back to you. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to.*
4. *In order to create a more supportive environment, please do not comment on anyone's answer unless comments are solicited. We're not here to debate, just to learn a bit more about each other.*
5. *Anything of a personal nature brought up during this activity will remain in the room.*

Begin questioning so that you can finish the activity at 8 p.m.

## BOUNDARY BREAKING QUESTIONING

**Types of Questions:** The list of Boundary Breaking questions is divided into four groups.

- **Group A — Lightweight Questions** are "surface" questions dealing with one's ideas, behavior and personality. These questions are on the low end of the risk and sharing spectrum. These are good questions to start with and lighten the mood if things get emotional.
- **Group B — Middleweight Questions** are questions that delve a little deeper into one's personal feelings and values. These questions are a bit more thought provoking and may involve higher levels of sharing and risk taking.
- **Group C — Heavyweight Questions** delve further into personal values. Because the questions involve the most personal sharing, they also involve the most risk to answer and generally should be limited in numbers.
- **Group D — Synthesis Questions** help to foster a sense of closure and wrap up the session.

(The actual questions in each group may be "lighter" or "heavier" depending on the order the questions are asked and the mindset of the person answering).

In order to facilitate feelings of trust and sharing, the questioning should start light and gradually progress into questions involving more trust and personal disclosure. Thus, you'll want to start with some lightweights while gradually moving into middle and heavyweights. It's okay (in fact, it's recommended) to vary the set the questions are taken from. For some people, the heavyweights can get pretty intense and a few light and middleweights can help to lighten the mood.

Some groups respond best to certain types of questions. Test the water with your questioning and try to really pick up on what people are saying. It is important to maintain the comfort of the group at all times. If you sense that the discussion may be getting a little too deep, you may want to ask something lighter. Conversely, if you sense that the discussion may be getting a little too shallow, you might want to ask something a bit heavier. The session should wrap up with a Synthesis question or two.

**Choosing Your Questions:** You'll want to choose at least 10 questions from each of the groups A, B and C, and two or three good Synthesis questions. You will most likely not use all of them, but it's good to have them on hand in case the co-op answers quickly.



# Boundary Breaking Questions

(Some questions have been excerpted from *The Book of Questions* by Gregory Stock)

## Group A Questions (Lightweight)

- #1. Why/how did you decide to <sup>become a member of 2PB or PBS</sup> attend the NASC Summer Leadership Workshop?
- #2. Describe your feelings about <sup>college</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. (hamburgers, school, student council, summer jobs, etc.)
- #3. What is the best movie you have ever seen?
4. Why did you decide to run for Student Council?
5. What free time activity pleases you the most?
6. What is your favorite subject in school or what would you like to study?
7. What is the best book you've ever read (or most recent one)?
8. What is one event relating to your student council that sticks out most in your mind?
- #9. What is your favorite television program or televised event?
10. If you could be any plant, animal, or mineral, what would you be?
- #11. If your <sup>line</sup> Student Council were a machine, what would it be?
12. If this co-op were a machine, what would it be?
- #13. What television commercial do you least like? Most like?
14. Describe the home you would like to design for yourself?
15. If you designed a bumper sticker, what would it say?
16. If you could be any inanimate object, what would you be?
- #17. What song best represents you or your friends?
18. What is your favorite holiday and/or season of the year?
- #19. I'm the kind of person who...
- #20. What was the best compliment you ever received?
21. What can be gained by being a member of student council?
22. If each day had two more hours, how would you spend them?
23. When is your <sup>line</sup> Student Council at its best? At its worst?
24. If you could spend a whole day with your best friend, what would you like to do?
25. If a movie were made about you, who do you think would play you?
26. If you could have been in any movie, which one would you have been in?
- #27. What is your most embarrassing moment? (or what embarrasses you)
28. I must stop...
29. Would you rather get \$10,000 for yourself or \$25,000 to give away?
30. What is the greatest problem in the United States?
31. If you could not live on the United States, where would you live?
- #32. What do you most often look forward to?
- #33. What do you most often dread?
34. What would constitute a "perfect" evening for you?
35. If you could vacation anywhere, without living there, where would you go?
36. What is your favorite sound?
- #37. Would you generally rather be overdressed or underdressed at a party?
38. What subject is the most frequent topic of discussion among your friends?
39. What's the best part of being on Student Council? The worst?
40. Who is the luckiest person alive?
- #41. Would you rather be a member of a championship team or the champion of an individual sport?
42. Would you like to be elected President of the United States? Why or why not?
43. What is your favorite quote?



## Group B Questions (Middleweight)

1. Describe your feelings about \_\_\_\_\_. (friends, family, what you've accomplished this year)
2. What event of the last three months stands out in your mind the most?
- \*3. If you could offer one piece of advice to your student council, what would it be?
- \*4. If you could have a sixth sense, what new ability would it give you?
- \*5. What is your greatest strength?
- \*6. What is your greatest weakness?
7. Which of your senses do you value the most?
- \*8. What is the greatest value that guides your life?
- \*9. What do you want to know most about people that you never get to ask them?
10. What day are you looking forward to the most?
11. Do you consider yourself to be a positive person or a negative person? Why or why not?
- \*12. What is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen?
- \*13. How do you release your anger?
14. If you could have chosen another name as a child, what would it have been?
15. Tell about a special bond you've had with a person you've just met.
16. What makes a good leader?
17. What do you want to be doing ten years from now?
18. What gives you the most security?
- \*19. When are you most insecure?
20. I get frustrated when...
- \*21. I hope...
- \*22. I hope I never...
- \*23. When is someone like a brother or sister?
24. How do you think your parents would describe you?
- \*25. What is something you could improve upon?
26. Who do you consider as your mentor?
27. Would you spend a year in perfect happiness if afterwards you remembered nothing of the experience?
28. What is something you feel too young to do? Why?
29. What is something you feel too old to do? Why?
30. If your best friend wrote a book about you, what would be the title?
31. Generally speaking, do you believe that people are innocent until proven guilty? Why?
32. Which sex do you think has it easier in our culture?
33. If you could have a committee of any three people (living or dead) to help you make decisions, who would you choose?
- \*34. For what in life do you feel the most grateful?
35. I usually conform if...
36. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would this change anything about the way you are now living, and how?
37. If you were having a dinner party and could invite any 5 people (dead or alive) who would you invite?
38. How do you deal with stress?
- \*39. When you do something embarrassing, how much does it bother you to have other people notice it and laugh at you?
- \*40. If you were guaranteed an honest answer to any question, who would you question, and what would you ask?
41. What talent would you like to have that you don't already have?
42. How are you different than you thought you'd be when you were in grade school?
43. If you could trade lives with someone, who would it be?
- \*44. Do you judge others by higher or lower standards than you use to judge yourself?



## Group C Questions (Heavyweight)

1. Describe your feelings about \_\_\_\_\_. (god, yourself, love, friends, etc.)
- \*2. What's the biggest mistake you ever made?
- \*3. I am a leader when...
4. When do you feel most lonely?
- \*5. What is your biggest fear?
6. Who/what do you love the most?
7. Describe the person you would like to spend the rest of your life with?
8. Who has the hardest task today? Parent, student or teacher.
9. If you had only one week to live, what would you do?
10. What is the most spiritual event you have experienced?
11. What decisions are hardest for you to make?
12. I wish that once, just once...
13. What do you think people like in you the most?
- \*14. What do you think people like in you the least?
15. What is your most treasured memory?
- \*16. Is it okay for a man to cry?
17. What person has most influenced your life?
18. What one day in your life would you like to live over?
- \*19. When do you die a little? — — — —
20. When do you feel the most joy?
- \*21. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
22. When do you feel most alive?
23. What person would you follow the farthest?
- \*24. What do you value most in a relationship?
- \*25. What brings a tear to your eye? a smile to your face?
26. When did your life last take a major shift?
27. What does it mean to be old?
28. What is the last thing you would give up?
29. What rights does a baby have?
30. What is your most important goal right now?
31. How would you react if you found out someone close to you had AIDS?
- \*32. For what do you think you would lay down your life?
33. What should you do that you have put off?

## Group D Questions (Synthesis)

- \*1. Tonight, I learned the most about...
2. I think we did this because...
3. I want to learn more about...
4. The question that made me think the most was...
5. What is one gift you would like to give this co-op?
- \*6. I was most surprised by...
- \*7. I feel the person most like me is...
9. If you could offer one piece of advice to this co-op, what would it be?
10. I would just like to say...



Writers," and to discuss the game with your students. This is a great way to gauge your students' reaction to the activity and to show how their experiences may parallel those portrayed in the film.



### Feedback

#### Freedom Writer feedback

"As a shy student, this game got me to open up and share my personal experiences with a room full of strangers, in a way that didn't make me feel like I was being put on the spot. Each time that I stepped on the line, I looked around and realized that I was not alone."

#### Freedom Writers Diary quote

"...I was able to express my own feelings in a place where people heard my voice, and my opinions were never judged." —Diary 10

#### Teacher Talk

"My students love the Line Game and, once we play it, they beg to play it again. This game sneaks up on them, and my favorite part is the reaction writing after the game. They always think it starts out as another goofy day in English class playing some weird game, but they walk away with new knowledge about each other and themselves, and a connection to their classmates they never thought possible. I have also used the Line Game to safely discuss a situation or special event. The activity brings the class together on a deep level; one day you are a group of people, the next day you are a family."

- IS IN LOVE
1. Who has ever been heartbroken
  2. Who has ever cried themselves to sleep
- has ever felt unaccepted at school

- who
- wants to be friends with a particular person,
  - but doesn't know how to approach them
  - has had a huge fight with a family member in the past month
  - has done something this year that they regret

has learned something about <sup>their classmates</sup> themselves from this game



### Set 3: Personal experiences and sensitive subject matter

1. Who knows someone with a learning disability?
2. Who has ever heard gunshots?
3. Whose electricity/gas/water/ has ever been turned off?
4. Who has ever been asked to join a gang?
5. Who knows someone who is in a gang?
6. Who has had a close friend or a relative die?
7. Who knows where to find drugs?
8. Who has a family member who has done time or is doing time in jail?
9. Who has ever been in juvenile hall or boot camp?
10. Who has lost someone to senseless violence?



### National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards

- Standard 2. Reading for Understanding
- Standard 3. Evaluation Strategies
- Standard 4. Communication Skills
- Standard 5. Communication Strategies
- Standard 6. Applying Knowledge
- Standard 9. Multicultural Understanding
- Standard 11. Participating in Society
- Standard 12. Applying Language Skills



### Vocabulary concepts

- Validated
- Acceptance
- Bias
- Prejudiced
- Relevance



### Assessment

Describe how you felt standing on the line. How did you feel when there were only a few people on the line? How did you feel when a lot of people stepped in? Was there ever a point when the whole class stepped in? How did that feel? Were you ever the only person on the line? How did you feel? What did you learn about yourself from participating in this activity? What did you learn about others?



### Taking it further

This activity elicits a lot of emotion from its participants, and it may be helpful to have a class discussion following the activity. After the actual game, it may be interesting to show a clip from the movie, "Freedom



- If their answer to the question is "no," no movement is necessary.
- **Step 4:** Use a random method to separate the class into two groups. For example, have everyone say either "one" or "two" as you point to them, and then separate the "ones" and "twos" to form two parallel lines of students.
- **Step 5:** Begin by asking questions that are simple and silly and that obviously pertain to the majority of the students. To get the students familiar with the exercise, the questions should be easy (refer to suggested questions). Keep the game at a brisk pace, because a sense of urgency allows more questions to be covered.
  - The questions should be easy, generally pertaining to everyday activities or pop culture, such as a recent sporting event or a favorite musician.
  - Judging by the students' level of comfort, the questions should become more specific. Possible secondary topics include school, family, and community.
  - The last set of questions, although sensitive in nature, may be the most enlightening for you and your students. To avoid precarious situations, begin this set of questions with "Do you know someone who..." When you feel that the students are participating fully and are truly engaged, you may start to ask more personal questions.
- **Step 6:** Tell the students that they can also ask questions. Volunteers will most likely ask questions that pertain to them, which is an excellent way to learn something that you may have missed, or will prompt additional questions from other students. Remind them to begin their questions with, "Do you know someone who..."

A list of sample questions follows. These should be adapted to your students. In preparation for this activity, memorize the questions you want to ask so that you do not have to refer to your notes in front of your students. Working without notes helps create a spontaneous environment and allows you to gradually increase the seriousness of the activity.



### Sample questions

#### Set 1: Day-to-day activities and pop culture

1. Who has a brother/sister?
2. Who likes rap/country/pop?
3. Who likes (a particular entertainer)?
4. Who likes (a particular show)? *Jersey Shore*
5. Who has seen (the latest movie)? *The Green Hornet*
6. Who watched last night's (sporting event)? *Carolina/Duke*
7. Who likes to dance? Who thinks they're a good dancer?
8. Who lives in (the city where your school is located)?
9. Who would like to own a car?
10. Who has ever been late to class?

#### Set 2: School, family, and community

1. Who has ever had detention? *ISS*
2. Who takes a bus to school? *Two buses? Three buses?*
3. Who lives only with their mom or their dad?
4. Who lives with a relative that isn't your mom or dad?
5. Who trusts your teachers?
6. Who trusts the police?
7. Who plays school sports?
8. Who feels safe in their neighborhood?
9. Who has ever had a family reunion?
10. Who has ever been in a fight?

*has ever talked trash about someone they don't know*  
*has ever had a false rumor spread about them - they care about*  
*WANTS to go to college*

is going to king comet

