

Carol Rainbow  
Online Tutor

# Ideas for using Breakout Rooms

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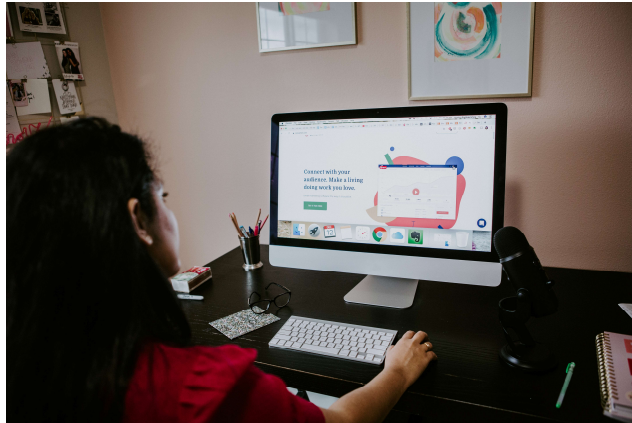
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## Home Alone

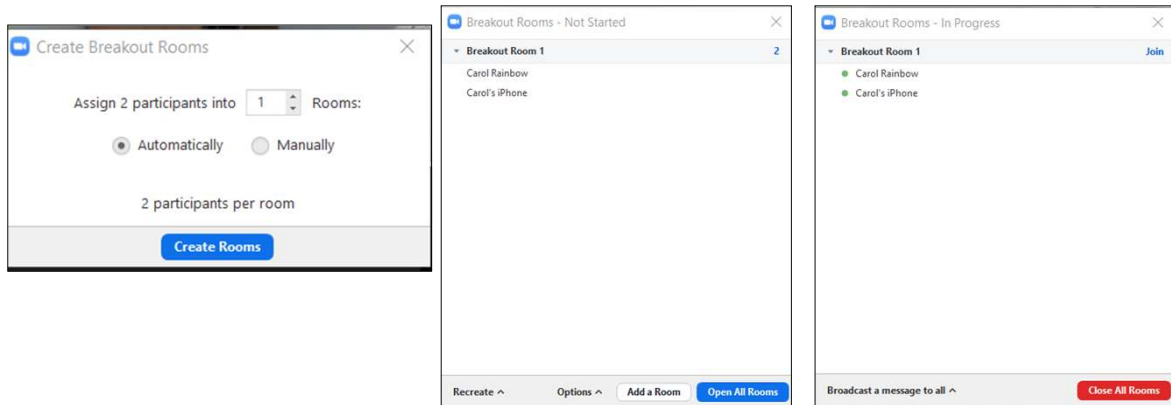


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The Synchronous session may be the only opportunity for learners to practice the target language – 12 or more in a room for 45 minutes is a very small amount of time so they need to be given speaking exercises in breakout rooms.

For anyone who does not know what a breakout room is, it is a set of small rooms where teachers can send small groups of students to work together away from the main group.

## Getting Started with Breakout Rooms



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Some breakout rooms have to be set up with work in beforehand e.g. Adobe Connect and Blackboard Collaborate

Other need work to be taken in with the students – that can easily be done, a small piece of text such as a question to discuss can be shared in the chat box beforehand, students could take a photo with their phone, the teacher could share it by email before the lesson.

Text files, photographs etc can be shared by the chat box before they go into breakout rooms.

In Zoom Breakout rooms need to be set up beforehand. Go to your settings ( on the Zoom app, there is a cog just under your name – click on that to get into your settings ) and tick the box to turn them on in the Advanced settings.

Make a phrase or sentence about the picture



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Pictures are an ideal source for discussion as are infographics, graphs and charts.

<https://graphicmama.com/blog/infographic-examples-education/> Infographics

<https://theteacherjames.com/2014/11/03/better-charts-and-graphs/> graphs and charts

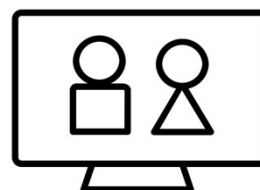
## Ranking Tasks 1

Small groups, two or three learners discuss something and have to agree on the top 5 between them.

Suggestions:

**You can choose famous five people (alive or dead) to join you for a TV Chat show. Who would you choose and why?** Think film stars, musicians, writers, artists, politicians, sporting heroes, superheroes etc..

**What do you fear the most?** Think war, ghosts, illness, dentist, looking foolish, snakes, heights, dying etc..



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<https://tereomaori.tki.org.nz/Teacher-tools/Te-Whakaipurangi-Rauemi/Examples-of-second-language-learning-tasks/Ranking-tasks>

<https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-worksheets/search/ranking>

## Ranking Tasks 2

- **What would your ideal job be?** Sports person, film star, musician, pop star, author, doctor, brain surgeon...
- **What would be your favourite holiday destination and why?** Think - would it have a sunny climate, cold wintery climate, be a busy city, be a quiet village in the middle of nowhere, mountains, seaside, boating, sporting etc.
- **What are the top four most important characteristics of your teachers?** Think intelligence, humour, good looks, skills, confidence, having clear goals, being charismatic etc



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Choosing an apartment - large, near shops, near school, near bus stop, good security, quiet, nice view

Worst annoyances – a cold, stomach ache, snoring, late delivery of post/ parcel, bad weather , messy house , litter in the street

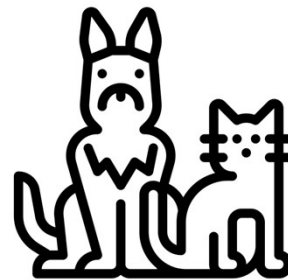
Greatest inventions

Most important things in life

## Sticky Statements

Giving pairs or small groups statements, where there is no right or wrong response gives a good opportunity for discussion. Groups need to come to an agreement to share with the class after.

- Dogs are better pets than cats.
- Animal testing on cosmetics is necessary.
- Young people should have to do some form of military or community service by law.
- Teachers give too much homework.
- Fast food shops should not be available.
- Peer pressure on social networks is beneficial.



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For older learners there are many more interesting sticky statements: - focus on giving opinions

Humans are better at creation than destruction.

Gay couples should not be allowed to marry.

Countries that have money should help those that do not have money.

Celebrities earn too much money.

Multinational global corporations are to blame for most problems in the world today.

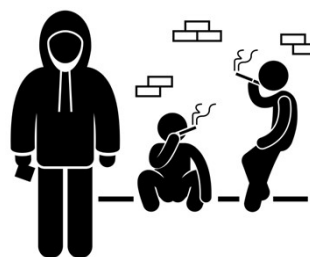
It is impossible to have a happy family life and a successful career.



## Ethical Questions

If you found your closest friend was a heroin dealer would you

- Go straight to the police?
- Confront him?
- Tell your parents and ask them what to do?
- Tell a teacher?
- Pretend you did not know?



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Share your agreed answer and explain why.

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Live question: I witnessed a bank robbery and followed the man down an alley away from the bank! Right or wrong? He dropped the money off at the orphanage on the way past.

I saw a boy put four packets of sandwiches in his school bag and walk out of the supermarket without paying – was he right or wrong?

A few seconds later:

He walked out of the store and gave one to each of the four homeless people sitting just down the road.

Did that make it better or worse?

<https://www.eslconversationquestions.com/ethics/>

<https://conversationstartersworld.com/good-questions-to-ask/>

Conversation Starters World has a huge selection of ideas, 350 Good Questions to Ask, 250 Conversation Starters, Would You Rather questions and more any of which could be the basis of a useful group discussion!

## Paired Interviews

- Worst travel experience
- Very happy occasion
- Reaction to a news item e.g. Coronavirus outbreak
- Dream holiday
- Nightmare situation

When  
Where  
Who  
What  
Why  
How



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Give group A one interview topic and group b another interview topic  
After five minutes bring them back and A reports B's response, after another five minutes in the breakouts B shares A's response.  
Don't try to listen to everyone's answer each time but do keep a record of who has had the chance to answer so that they all get a go.

## Sorting and Rehearsing Dialogues

### Doctor and patient

- Doctor: Oh, for how long have you had this?
- Patient: Doctor I am so glad to see you. I have had such a bad rash on my back which itches a lot and I can not sleep.
- Patient: About a week.
- Doctor: How can I help you?
- Doctor: Have you changed the washing powder?
- Patient: Okay I will, thanks.
- Patient: Thank you so much.
- Patient: Oh, yes, I have bought something different as it was on offer.
- Doctor: Perhaps it is a good idea to go back to your usual washing powder. However, for now, I will give you this cream, which will stop the itching.
- Doctor: If this doesn't help, please come and see me again.

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Decide who is the patient and who is the Doctor – number your lines and practice saying them

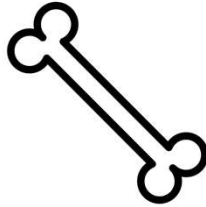
<https://www.esllibrary.com/courses/76/lessons>

<https://www.eslfast.com/easydialogs/>

## Make a story



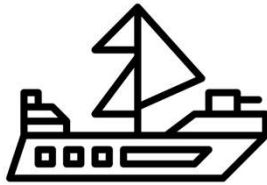
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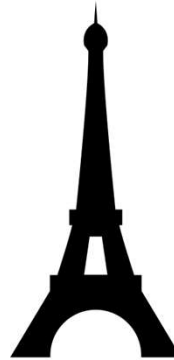
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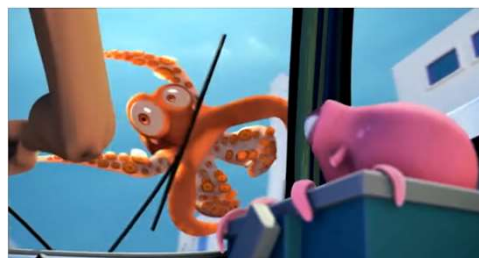
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Give learners 6 items / get each of them to bring something to the computer / in breakout rooms make up a story involving your six items and bring it back to the main room to share.

## Use Silent Videos

<https://vimeo.com/4352688>



- Recount the story in the - past
- In pairs write the narrative - present
- Write what happens next - future
- Give a list of verbs for student to develop sentences
- Make three questions for another group

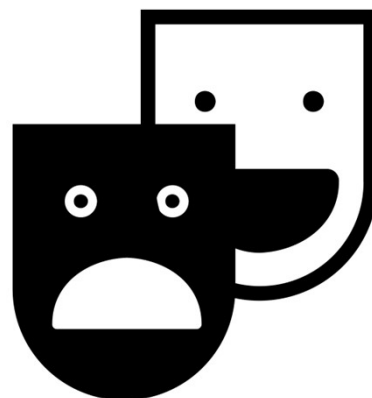
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<https://vimeo.com/4352688>

Film English is a great source of silent films. <http://film-english.com/blog/>

## Role-play

Homework not done  
Upset neighbours with loud music  
Planning a party for end of school  
Shopping for alcohol  
Booking a hotel  
Buying tickets for a flight / train journey  
A visit to the doctor / dentist / school nurse



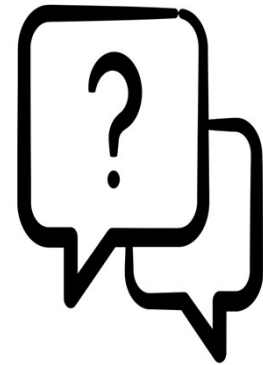
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<https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/esl-role-play-ideas/>

## Would you rather

- Would you rather be a deep sea diver or an astronaut?
- Would you rather be invisible or be able to read minds?
- Would you rather lose the ability to read or lose the ability to speak?
- Would you rather be covered in fur or covered in feathers?
- Would you rather be in jail for a year or lose a year from your life?
- Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or always be 20 minutes early?



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