

## Getting to Know Your Tutee

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Tutors and tutees alike may be eager yet nervous when they first meet. To alleviate initial awkwardness, spend some time talking casually with your tutee. Ask friendly, informal questions to show interest and give the child time to relax and grow comfortable. Some children will quickly open up and talk freely while others will be more quiet and reserved. Don't overwhelm a child who is reluctant to talk with a barrage of questions. Instead, try an activity to learn more about the child and potentially spark some discussion.

Conversation supports literacy development; when you speak with a child, you are strengthening literacy skills as well as building a relationship. Look below for a list of potential conversation topics and a few getting-to-know-you activities for your initial meeting with your tutee.

### Conversation Starters

Get to know your tutee much as you get to know any new person you meet: Ask open-ended, non-threatening questions, and share a bit about yourself, too. Let the student's responses and body language be your guide to which topics to explore more deeply and which to steer away from.

- Share a book that you enjoy with the child and ask him to tell you about one that he likes
- Talk about favorites: animals, TV shows, athletes, foods, movies, toys, games, subjects in school — anything that is age-appropriate and sparks the child's interest
- Ask *What if* questions. For example, *What if you could take a trip anywhere you wanted? Where would you go? What if you could do any job in the world? What job would you choose?*, etc.

### Icebreaker Activities

Children who are shy or reluctant to talk may need more time to open up. Engaging in an activity together can help break the ice. Here are three simple activities you can try:

- Ask the child to draw a picture and describe it to you. Engage the child in a discussion about what she has drawn. Let the child draw anything she wants, or provide some suggestions if the child asks for them.
- Make an All-About Me mini-book (directions and a template are attached).
- Create getting-to-know-you cards. You and your tutee each need an index card. Write an alliterative nickname for yourself (i.e., Adventurous Andrew) in the center of the card. In the upper right-hand corner of the card, write something that is important to you. In the top left-hand corner of the card, write something you want to learn. In the bottom right-hand corner of the card write something you are good at doing. In the bottom left-hand corner, write the name of your favorite food. When you are done, share with each other. See the example on the next page.

**Getting-to-Know-You Card**  
**Example**

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build model cars	mom and dad
Jumpy Joseph	
pizza	skateboarding

# All About Me Book

## Directions

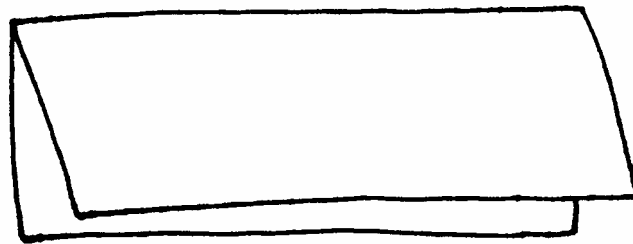
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**Objective:** An activity to help the tutor and child get acquainted

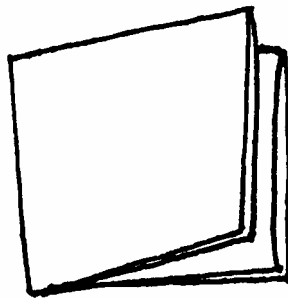
**Materials:** Template (at the end of this document), scissors, pencil, crayons, markers or colored pencils

**Directions:**

Fold the paper lengthwise (hotdog style) corner to corner, edge to edge.



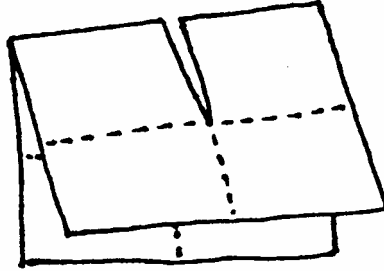
Fold that piece in half. Use the dotted lines as a guide.



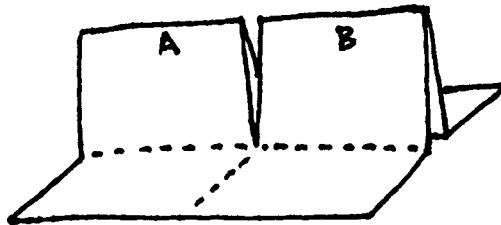
Then fold in half again (hamburger style).



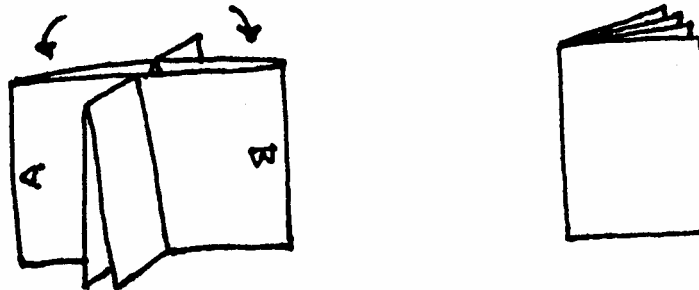
Open the whole page again then refold on all of the existing folds. Fold the whole page in half (hamburger style). Cut down the center on the solid line to the scissor symbol.



Put your hands on both sides of the page, pull up and in.



Fold the whole thing together and you have a mini-book!



Go through each page and talk about the topics. Both the student and tutor can illustrate the mini-book together as they discuss each page. Share your books with each other when you're done.

This is  
where I live.

This is  
my favorite game.

This is  
my favorite food.

This is my favorite  
subject in school.

**All  
About**

I want to  
read books about \_\_\_\_\_.

This is  
a picture of me.

This is  
my family.