Generating ideas with a team
Brainstorming is a group creativity technique by which efforts are made to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its members.

In other words, brainstorming is a situation where a group of people meet to generate new ideas and solutions around a specific domain of interest by removing inhibitions. People are able to think more freely and they suggest as many spontaneous new ideas as possible. All the ideas are noted down without criticism and after the brainstorming session the ideas are evaluated.

Brainstorming can also be used as an ice breaker when working with new groups (Apples And Oranges exercise). A popular method is to make use of a stack of cards, for e.g. the Brainfuel deck (https://brainfuel.nl).

Further reading:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brainstorming
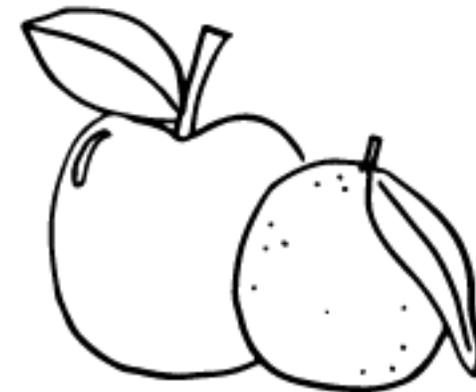
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Apples And Oranges

Let every participant draw a card from the deck. Ask them to think of an attribute they have in common with the card in question. Let everyone introduce themselves with what they have in common with the card and ask them for an example. This exercise helps making unusual associations that warm up the brain for the brainstorm. Bonus: it will give you some surprising insights into other participants that you don't get when just asking for their name and occupation.

Example

Harry draws a card of 'Nelson Mandela'. He introduces himself: Hello, my name is Harry and I am a student at Hogwarts. Just like Mandela I want to do the right thing and make the world a better place. That's the reason I saved everyone in this school multiple times.

Further reading:
https://brainfuel.nl/en/methods/apples-and-oranges/

Association Chain

Draw a random card and make sure everyone can see it. Ask the group: "What kind of associations do you get from this card?" Everybody writes the first one down and keeps on associating, so you will get a chain of associations.

Example

Let's say the card you get is the treasure chest card. What does this make you think of? This could be your association chain: treasure chest -> pirate -> parrot -> zoo -> tiger -> and so on!

Further reading:
https://brainfuel.nl/en/methods/association-chain/

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Brainwriting

Every brainstormer gets a chain of 5 post-its (by sticking a post-it to the bottom of the previous post-it). Set a timer and let each participant note down five solutions to the problem (one idea per post-it). When time runs out, let them slide their chain of post-its to the person at their right (or left, whatever you want).

Let everybody draw a card. Reset the timer and let them add new ideas to the chain inspired by the card. Repeat this process until everybody gets the chain back they started with.

To make Brainwriting even more dynamic and less time consuming, you can ask the brainstormers to just add one idea and then push the chain to the next person. This adds a little competition to the mix, that can make it even more fun.

Example

What if your restaurant is not running well and you want to brainstorm about a solution?

Thanks to the keyhole card you write 'we need to make our restaurant mysterious' on a post-it. The person right of you adds - with credits to the haunted house card –'exciting theme nights like a murder mystery game!' And even further to the right: 'organize a dinner in a secret location.' See? Other people can improve on your idea. Or at least devise some different ones!

Further reading:
https://brainfuel.nl/en/methods/brainwriting/

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