



**SELECTED DRAMA WARMUPS
AND DRAMA GAMES**

**FOR THE
PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

Selected by Alkeiya September 2009

Drama Games

Drama games generally fall into one of three categories:

physical

verbal

concentration

Some will overlap and others will not be so clearly defined but, as a guide, these three definitions apply to the majority of drama games. Young people (and adults!) learn a tremendous amount from playing games and drama games are just a natural extension of a young child's normal play behaviour.

The difference, however, is that drama games will also teach the participants to understand rules, instructions and acceptable modes of behaviour. They also help to build confidence in those who are shy or reluctant, and will often reduce aggressive behaviour. This is why I feel that it is perfectly acceptable, certainly as a Primary teacher, to spend some time on games alone and not to feel too guilty about not 'progressing' to more complex drama work. A term of games can achieve a great deal in the learning development of a group of Primary-aged children - so go ahead!

Many drama books contain games and the trick is to find those that suit your purpose with a particular class. Also, don't be afraid to try and devise your own drama games to achieve particular aims if you can't find anything suitable - you'll probably find it in a book somewhere one day, anyway! Some of the most popular and useful games used with a wide variety of age groups and abilities are in the following pages.

Planning a Drama Lesson

When planning a complete drama lesson...

(1) Consider your.....AIM.

Do you want to develop speaking and listening skills? Improve concentration? Build confidence? Explore the life of the Victorians? Teach young children to count? Understand and appreciate a particular story or novel?

(2) Work out your.....OBJECTIVES.

How can your aim be achieved? What is the simplest route to take? Are games suitable to achieve your outcome? What games? Do you need a stimulus? Is your aim clear and do your objectives meet it?

(3) Think about.....CONDITIONS.

What age group are you working with? How much space do you have available? What abilities or difficulties do your children have? What resources are available to you? Do you have a separate time allocated for drama? How much planning and preparation time can you spare?

(4) Spend time on your.....PREPARATION.

What resources or equipment are required? Where can you find the information you need? Do you need to research a subject? What problems or difficulties might arise? Do you have answers to possible questions? Are your activities sensibly structured and balanced?

(5) Reflect on the.....OUTCOME.

Did the children achieve what you wanted them to? If not, why not? What could you have done differently? Did the lesson retain its focus? Were the children 'on task' at all times? What skills, knowledge or achievements can you build on?

k-2
allo e
name games with bag(s)
mirror greeting
mirror line
mirror pairs---chorus
chorus provocation

clapping games
musical statues
simon says
shape to shape
Grid Go
hug tag
All the same , change
giants wizards elves
Creep up Jack

60 sec fairy tales: favorite stories
hodgy podgy –rhythm one word story
screaming viking
space jump
what are you doing
telephone charades

Physical, tag, clapping, simple movement, follow my leader, clapping, mime work

Follow their lead in game of pretend.; use stimulus---familiar stories, music, pictures, sounds

Establish boundaries with games and simple exercises.

3-4

allo e

name games with bag(s)

mirror greeting

mirror line

mirror pairs---chorus

chorus provocation

shape to shape

Grid Go

hug tag

all the same change

superpowers

giants wizards and elves

scissors paper rock

Creep up Jack

Fruit chairs

Telephone Charades

60 sec fairy tales/adventure story

alphabet

fortune cookie

freeze tag

hodgy podgy

superheros

screaming viking

space jump

what are you doing

Yes and

Older children will role-play in a much more sophisticated manner, thus enabling you and them to explore contexts in a more focussed way. They can respond to stimuli well and be self-aware enough to form opinions, give reasons and assess their work constructively. However, it is essential that you remember that drama is concerned primarily with process and it is not essential that you end up with a finished product, as children from age 7 upwards will want to 'show' their work to each other

games with more complex instructions & physical games with more concentration

Introduce more activities which require negotiation and working with others.

Issue-based drama works extremely well with older children - using dilemmas and problems which they can relate to, or drawing upon experiences they may have had, can lead to some very powerful work.

This age group can understand the concept of role-play and this can be explored in a variety of ways and by using a number of different drama methods
games with more complex instructions & physical games with more concentration games.

5-6

allo e

name games with bag(s)

mirror greeting

mirror line

mirror pairs---chorus

chorus provocation

shape to shape

Grid Go

hug tag

all the same , change

autograph bingo

super powers

human knot icebreaker

giants wizards and elves

scissors paper rock

Fruit chairs

Telephone charades

Creep Up Jack

60 sec fairy tales/adventure

the question game

alphabet

foreign film

fortune cookie

freeze tag

genre switch

hodgy podgy

superheros

screaming viking

space jump

Yes and

The Question Game

Children in Years 5 and 6 will enjoy the opportunity of directing and developing the drama work themselves and will happily take a single idea or issue as far as it will go for a sustained period.

Using a stimulus also works well with this age group, especially as a basis for exploring individual problems, dilemmas or issues.

They will want to 'perform' much more and need to be carefully monitored to ensure that they don't divert into too much product-based drama, or theatre.

Continue using drama games regularly as they teach a variety of social skills and will implicitly build confidence and develop concentration and cognitive ability.

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ASK FORS

"Ask Fors" are requests for suggestions from the audience. Improv actors receive some of their best material when the crowd shouts out simple, zany, and/or creative ideas.

Typical Ask Fors include questions such as, "Can I get a location?" or "Can I get an occupation?" However, they can be much more unusual and inventive. Once the audience suggestion is accepted, an improvised scene can begin. Performers utilize the audience's "ask-for" and do their best to generate characters, conflict, and laughter.

Would you like to create some Ask Fors of your own? Try this: Write a list of words from A to Z. (Ex: Animal, Body, Career, Dinner, Etc.). Then, create sentences or questions which ask information from a potential audience.

Here's my list of Ask-Fors:

An animal you would not expect to find in an apartment?

A part of the human body?

A poor career choice?

A historical figure you would like to invite for dinner?

A celebrity you would not want to meet in an elevator?

A product known for false advertising?

A board game?

The worst location for a resort hotel?

A brand new invention?

The punch-line of a really corny joke?

A person you would not expect to be a karate instructor?

A foreign language?

The first thing you would buy after winning the lotto?

Fill in the blank: "I am a professor of (BLANK) – ology."

A person you would not want to meet at a nude beach?

A phobia?

A topic for a pop-quiz?

An unlikely subject for a rap song?

A really cool super power?

A title of a television show?

An occupation that requires a uniform?

The wrong place to take a date on Valentine's Day?

A place you would not expect to find a weather man?

Something you would not find in an X-Ray?

The name of a yoga position?

The name of the new exhibit at the zoo?

AUTOGRAPH BINGO GAME

Summary: Autograph Bingo is an icebreaker that asks people to mingle and find people that match interesting facts listed on a bingo card. The game is useful in that it causes players to discover interesting and humorous facts about each other.

Ages: 12 and up. Recommended # of people: Larger groups of 24+ people.

Messiness Factor: No problem. Materials required: bingo cards prepared in advance and writing utensils. Recommended Setting: Indoors.

Autograph Bingo is a fun way to help both new acquaintances and old friends discover facts about each other. The goal of this icebreaker game is to mingle and obtain the signatures of people who have the facts listed on their bingo card. Just as regular bingo rules, once a player successfully obtains a full row (5 in a row) on his or her Bingo sheet, whether obtained horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, he or she shouts "BINGO!"

Setup: Prepare a table with 5 rows and 5 columns (5×5), with interesting facts inside the boxes. These facts can include humorous or bizarre things. For example you can use facts such as:

Speaks more than two languages

Enjoys walking in thunderstorms

Likes anchovies

Has been to Alaska

Has gone skydiving before

Has more than three sisters

Has gone without a shower for more than three days

Try to be as creative as you can. Like traditional bingo, you can mark the center square as a "Free Space". After you are finished preparing the table, print out enough copies. You are ready to play!

How to Play: Pass out pens and the bingo cards to each player. Explain the game along with the following rule: each person you talk to may only sign your sheet once (so that people can interact with as many people as possible). When everyone is ready, say "Go!" and begin the game! Once a player shouts "Bingo!" everyone returns to the center and the person must introduce the people who signed his or her sheet. If desired, you can ask each person to explain their fact. The Autograph Game is a great way to learn humorous or unique facts about people. Have fun!

COMPETITIVE IMPRO GAMES

Most improvisational activities are guided by a very loose format. Actors might be given a location or a situation in which to create a scene. For the most part, they have the freedom to make up their own characters, dialogue, and actions. Improv comedy groups play each scene in hopes of generating laughter. More serious acting troupes create realistic improvisational scenes.

There are, however, many challenging improv games that are competitive in nature. They are judged usually by a moderator, host, or even the audience. These types of games generally put a lot of restrictions on the performers, resulting in a great deal of fun for the viewers.

Some of the most entertaining competitive improvisation games are:

The Question Game

Alphabet

World's Worst

Remember: Although these games are competitive by design, they are meant to be performed in the spirit of comedy and camaraderie.

THE QUESTION GAME

In Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, the two bumbling protagonists wander through Hamlet's rotten [Denmark](#), amusing themselves with a combative "question game." It's a sort of verbal tennis match. Stoppard's clever play demonstrates the basic idea of the Question Game: create a scene in which two characters speak only in questions.

How to Play: Ask the audience for a location. . Once the setting is established, the two actors begin the scene. They must speak only in questions. (Normally one question at a time.) No sentences ending with a period – no fragments – just questions.

Example: LOCATION: A popular theme park.

Tourist: How do I get to the water ride?

Ride Operator: First time at Disneyland?

Tourist: How can you tell?

Ride Operator: Which ride did you want?

Tourist: Which one makes the biggest splash?

Ride Operator: Are you ready to get soaking wet?

Tourist: Why else would I be wearing this raincoat?

Ride Operator: Do you see that big ugly mountain down yonder?

Tourist: Which one?

And so it continues. It might sound easy, but continually coming up with questions that progress the scene is quite challenging for most performers.

If the actor says something that is not a question, or if they continually repeat questions ("What did you say?" "What did you say again?"), then the audience is encouraged to make a "buzzer" [sound effect](#).

The "loser" who failed to properly respond sits down. A new actor joins the competition. They can continue using the same location / situation or a new setting can be established.

QUESTION GAME (version 2)

2 teams face off. 2 players begin and must speak only in questions. First one to get stumped is out. The next player on the team must step in place and continue the scene with the other player.

ALPHABET

This game is ideal for performers with a knack for alphabetization. The actors create a scene in which each line of dialogue begins with a certain letter of the alphabet. Traditionally, the game starts off with an “A” line.

Example:

Actor #1: All right, our first annual comic book club meeting is called to order.

Actor #2: But I’m the only one wearing a costume.

Actor #1: Cool.

Actor #2: Does it make me look fat?

Actor #1: Excuse me, but what’s the name of your character?

Actor #2: Fat man.

Actor #1: Good, then it suits you.

And it continues all the way through the alphabet. If both actors make it to the end, then it’s usually considered a tie. However, if one of the actors flubs up, the audience members make their judgmental “buzzer” sound, and the actor at fault leaves the stage to be replaced by a new challenger.

Normally, the audience supplies the location or the relationship of the characters. If you tire of always beginning with the letter “A” the audience can randomly select a letter for the performers to begin with. So, if they receive the letter “R” they would work their way through “Z,” go to “A” and end with “Q.” Ugh, it’s starting to sound like algebra!

WORLD’S WORST

This is less an improv exercise and more of an “instant punch-line” game. Although it’s been around a long time, “World’s Worst” was made popular by the hit show, *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

In this version, 4 to 8 actors stand a in line facing the audience. A moderator gives random locations or situations. The performers come up with the world’s most

inappropriate (and incredibly humorous) thing to say.

Here are some examples from *Whose Line Is It Anyway*:

World's Worst thing to say on your first day in prison: Who hear loves to crochet?

World's Worst thing to say on a romantic date: Let's see. You had the Big Mac. that's two dollars you owe me.

World's Worst thing to say at a Major Award Ceremony: Thank you. As I accept this major award, I'd like to thank everyone I've ever met. Jim. Sarah. Bob. Shirley. Tom, etc.

If the audience responds positively, then the moderator can give the performer a point. If the joke generates boos or groans, then the moderator may want to good-naturedly take points away.

Note: Veteran improv performers know that these activities are meant to entertain. There aren't really winners or losers. The whole purpose is to have fun, make the audience laugh, and sharpen your improve skills.

Young performers might not understand this. I've seen kids (from elementary through middle school) who become upset about losing a point or receiving a negative reaction ("buzzing sound") from the audience. If you are a drama teacher or a youth theater director, consider the maturity level of your actors before trying these activities.

CATCH MY NAME

Sit or stand participants in a circle (or in their classroom places). Use a beanbag or small, soft ball. Give this to one of the participants and ask them to throw it to someone else in the group, calling out the name of the person they are throwing to. Ask that person to throw to someone else. Allow this throwing and catching process to continue until it is achieved with some speed.

Follow-on: Introduce another beanbag or ball, so that two are being thrown at the same time. Instruct the thrower to remain silent and tell the catcher to shout out the name of the person who has thrown to them. Instruct the thrower to remain silent and ask everyone to call out the name of the thrower.

FORTUNE COOKIE

Are you a guru? Or a wisecracker?

Everybody loves a fortune cookie, especially if they get a good fortune. Some love it even more if the cookie is a little sassy. My mom adds "in bed" to the end of hers for a little clean fun. Learn something about your students when you ask them to write fortune cookies. Are they gurus? Or wisecrackers?

Ideal Size

Any size works. Break into small groups if desired.

Use For

Introductions or an energizer in the classroom or at a meeting.

Time Needed

30-60 minutes.

Materials Needed

None. If desired, provide little strips of paper similar to the fortunes found in Chinese cookies.

Instructions

Inform your students that for the next few minutes, they are fortune cookie writers. Ask them to write as many fortunes as they can think of in the next few minutes. Then go around the room and have everyone share their favorite. If used for introductions, each student will introduce themselves first.

Example Hi, my name is Homer Simpson. The fortune I write for you is, "You will fall in love on Flag Day."

FREEZE TAG

This improvisation game is a great theatrical exercise for performers at any level. It works best in groups of eight or more. Two volunteers step onto the stage while the rest of the actors sit and wait for the right moment to join in.

As with most improv activities, audience participation is essential. The actors on stage will request suggestions for a specific location. If this is a classroom exercise, the drama instructor should encourage the audience to be creative with their suggestions. For example, "Stuck inside a giant vending machine" or "In the break room of Santa's Workshop" is far more inspiring than "Shopping mall."

The performers listen to a few of the suggestions. They then quickly select an interesting setting and the scene begins. The goal of the actors is to invent characters and dialogue "off the cuff." They should quickly establish a storyline and conflict. Also, they should be encouraged to move about the stage space, pantomiming whatever they wish to incorporate into the scene.

After the actors have been given enough time to create an interesting situation, the performers sitting in the audience can now participate. All they need to do is shout, "Freeze!" The actors on stage will then stand motionless. Whoever called out "freeze" enters the stage space. He or she takes the place of one of the actors, recreating the exact same pose. This can sometimes be challenging if the actor happens to be in a ballet position or crawling on all fours. But that's part of the fun!

A brand new scene begins with a different setting and different characters. No more suggestions are taken from the audience. Instead, it is up to the performers to invent the situation. Drama instructors should ask students to let the physical positions influence the storyline of the next scene. For example, if one set of performers is frozen while in the middle of a tug of war contest, the next scene could take place at an Amish barn raising. Also, instructors should make certain that each scene is given enough time to develop. Usually two or three minutes is ample time to establish character and conflict.

At first, improvisation activities might be very challenging for unseasoned performers. Yet, we often played these sorts of games when we were children. Remember: Improvisation is simply an advanced form of playing pretend.

GIANTS, WIZARDS AND ELVES:

Summary: An icebreaker / action oriented game good for medium and large sized groups. Similar to a game of rock, paper, scissors, two teams face off and decide to become either "giants," "wizards," or "elves." Giants defeat elves, elves defeat wizards, and wizards defeat giants.

Ages: 10 and up. Recommended # of People: 20 and up (large groups work fine too!). Messiness factor: Might break a small sweat! Materials Required: None. Recommended Setting: Indoors or Outdoors.

Setup: Teach everyone how to become three characters: the giant, the wizard, and the elf. Each character features hand motions and a noise.

For the giant, each person stands on their tippy toes, lifts up their arms, and makes an angry growling noise: "Rooooar!"

For the wizard, each person crouches a little bit, flutters their fingers as though they are casting a spell, and they make a magical noise: "Wooooo!"

For the elf, each person gets down very low on their knees, cups their hands around their ears, and makes a high pitched elf noise: "Eeeeeee!"

Practice each motion together a few times. Divide everyone into two teams and have them separate into opposite sides of the room. The game involves several rounds. For each round, the following takes place:

Each team forms a huddle and decides to become a giant, wizard, or elf.

Both teams then line up and face each other, about 5 feet apart.

The facilitator says "3..2..1..Go!"

Each team acts out the giant, wizard, or elf (whatever they decided to become).

As soon as they act out their character, the winner tries to grab the loser and pulls as many people over to their side as they can. The loser tries to run away, back to their side, in order to be safe. The winner of each round is determined by the following. The giant defeats the elf because giants "squash" elves. Elves defeat wizards by outsmarting them, chewing at their legs. The wizard defeats the giant by "zapping" them with a magic spell. Identical characters are a draw (no one wins). This process keeps repeating for multiple rounds until one team is entirely consumed (or when time runs out.)

Variations: Other variations of this game exist - or you can make up your own. Be creative!

HODGY PODGY

Summary: Hodgy Podgy is a simple (and entertaining!) rhythm game that has each person go around taking turns adding words to create a story.

Ages: 10 and up. Recommend # of people: 6-15. Messiness factor: No Sweat. Materials Required: None. Recommended Setting: Indoors.

Instructions: Hodgy Podgy (also known as Hodgey Podgey and the Hodgy Podgy Word Game) is a simple yet very fun rhythm game.

A group of people stand in a circle, with everyone facing the center. Choose a person who will start the round. He or she starts to clap a relatively slow rhythm (slap both legs on the first beat, then clap hands on second beat, thumbs-up on left hand for third beat, and thumbs-up on right hand on fourth beat, and repeat the four beat cycle). Everyone in the circle matches the rhythm set by the leader. To start each round, the leader says (while clapping to the rhythm, one beat per word), "Hodgy podgy, hodgy podgy, hodgy podgy, hodgy podgy!"

The leader starts a sentence by saying any word on the one beat (for example, he or she could say the word "Big" as he or she slaps their legs on beat one). The next person in the circle must continue the story by adding the next word in the sentence by the first beat of the next rhythm cycle (for example, the 2nd person could say "dogs," so the sentence is now "Big dog"

.."). The third person in the circle must continue the story by adding the 3rd word in the sentence at the right time (for example, the person could say the word "eat," making the current sentence "Big dogs eat..").

The next person in line must continue the sentence. Each word must make logical and grammatical sense when added to the sentence.

If a person wants to end the sentence, he or she says a punctuation word, such as "period" or "exclamation point" or "question mark."

At this point, the next person in the circle starts the new sentence

An example of a sample round of play would look like this (assuming there are 6 players in the circle):

Player 1 (while clapping a 4 beat rhythm): “Hodgy podgy, hodgy podgy, hodgy podgy, hodgy podgy!”

Player 1 starts sentence on beat one: “Big..”

Player 2 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..dogs..”

Player 3 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..eat..”

Player 4 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle:

“..yummy..”

Player 5 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..food..”

Player 6 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..when..”

Player 1 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..they..”

Player 2 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..are..”

Player 3 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..hungry..”

Player 4 ends sentence on beat one of next cycle by saying: “..PERIOD..”

Player 5 starts new sentence on beat one of next cycle: “They..”

Player 6 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..are..”

Player 1 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..very..”

Player 2 continues sentence on beat one of next cycle: “..smelly..”

Player 3 ends sentence on beat one of next cycle by saying: “..EXCLAMATION POINT..”

Player 4 starts new sentence on beat one of next cycle by saying: “Bob..”

And the game continues, as players create silly stories together, word by word.

When a player makes a mistake (is unable to continue the sentence in time, or says something logically or gramatically correct) the round ends and he becomes the person who starts the next round. This game offers lots of entertainment and is a little educational too!

HUMAN KNOT ICEBREAKER

Summary: A good icebreaker or teambuilding activity for new people to learn to work together - in close physical proximity! The goal is to figure out how to untangle the human knot without letting go of hands.

Ages: 12 and up. Recommended number of people: 7-200 (group sizes of 10 are ideal). Messiness factor: Might break a sweat - (close proximity - hope you're not claustrophobic!). Materials required: None. Recommended setting: Both indoors or outdoors.

Goals of the Human Knot Game:

- Team building and communication
- Problem solving
- Ice-breaker or get to know others better

Setup for the Human Knot Game:

This game is versatile in that multiple group sizes can play. Form groups of about 10 people each. Have each group standing, facing towards each other, in a circle. Each person should be standing shoulder to shoulder. First, instruct everyone to lift their left hand and reach across to take the hand of someone standing across the circle. Next, have everyone lift their right and reach across to take the hand of another person standing across the circle. Make sure that no one is holding hands with someone standing directly beside the person.

How to Play the Human Knot Game

To play, the groups must communicate and figure out how to untangle the knot (forming a circle of people) without ever letting go of any hands. If you wish, this icebreaker can be played competitively, in which the facilitator says "Ready.. Set.. Go!" and has all the groups race to become the first group to finish. If any group member lets go of a hand (breaks the chain), then the group must start from the beginning, or you could impose a penalty/punishment for that person (e.g. wear a blindfold).

This game typically takes 15-30 minutes to complete. You can impose a time limit if you wish to make the game more challenging. When you are done with the Human Knot activity, you can ask some debrief questions if you wish, such as "How well did you group work together? What strategies did your group adopt? How did it feel to solve the game?" etc.

Variations

To increase the difficulty level, you can either (1) blindfold some of the players or (2) require that the game be played silently (no talking).

INDIANA JONES

How to play:

Before revealing the title of this improvisational scene, get several suggestions from the audience:

A state they would like to visit. (Example: Delaware)

A place they don't like to be. (Example: Public Restrooms)

Something they treasured as a kid. (Example: Tricycle)

An animal – or more specifically, an adorable animal. (Example: Hamsters)

Then, the moderator will put the suggestions together:

Moderator:

Welcome to the world premier of “Delaware Jones and the Public Restroom of Doom.” In this movie, you’ll watch “Delly” search for the Lost Golden Tricycle while facing his greatest fear: Hamsters.

Then, two or three actors put the insane premise into action. One actor (male or female) can play the hero character. Feel free to adopt Indiana Jones’ mannerisms, or spoof the character by portraying the complete opposite. (Think Woody Allen instead of Harrison Ford.)

Another actor can play the side-kick character or a turbulent love-interest character. An optional third performer can portray a villain character. Or, if the person is feeling silly enough, he could be a dreaded hamster! (Or whatever species the feared critter happens to be.)

For an initial conflict, recall some of the imaginative traps from the movie series:

Walls slowly closing in; Secret doors with skeletons inside; Booby-trapped treasures

SCREAMING VIKING

Summary: A stationary game in which players are seated in a circle, and one person points to someone in the circle and instructs them to act out a “screaming viking”, a “smurf”, a “chia pet”, among other humorous things.

Ages: 8 and up. Recommended # of people: 8-25. Messiness factor: No Sweat. Materials Required: None. Recommended Setting: Indoors.

How to Play

Screaming Viking is an entertaining game in which people act out silly motions and make noises. To begin, have everyone sit in a circle with one person in the middle. The goal of the game is not be in the middle at the end of the game. The person in the middle points at a person seated in the circle and then screams, “Screaming Viking! *(or one of the other formations described below)*. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten!” While the person is counting, the person who was selected and the people directly to the left and right must form a “Screaming Viking” formation, described below.

If any of the three people (the person selected and the people to the left and right of that person) do not correctly respond in time (before the count to 10 is up) then whoever messes up must go into the middle. The appropriate response can be one of the following:

1. Screaming Viking: each person to the left and right of the selected person must make a rowing motion outwardly to the sides, while the person in the middle must place his or her fingers to the sides of his/her head with index finger pointed upwards, like horns. All three people must scream loudly.
2. Smurfs: the 3 of them interlock arms and sing the smurf song, “La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la.”
3. Chia Pet: the three of them must act as a growing chia pet with hands lifting upwards. The 3 of them must should, “Ch-ch-ch-chia...”
4. Jello: the person in the center wobbles like jello, while each person to the side holds their arms out, forming a bowl. You can make up other appropriate responses — the sillier the better! The more enthusiastic and wacky you are, the more entertaining the game.
5. elephant: trunk and two ears
6. palm tree and two coconuts

SIXTY SECOND FAIRY STORIES

For a good exercise in impromptu storytelling, try performing a well known fairy tale in one minute flat. Drama classes and acting troupes alike can use the “60 Second Fairy Tale” to sharpen improvisational skills. It's also a great game for families and kids.

Here's How:

Your cast size should be at least three people. (Four or five would be ideal.) One person serves as the Moderator, a person who interacts with the audience and plays the narrator, if necessary. The rest of the cast are the fairy tale performers.

The Moderator asks the audience for fairy tale suggestions. Hopefully, the audience will shout out some great choices:

Snow White; Rumpelstilzkin; The Little Mermaid
Hansel and Gretel; Sleeping Beauty; Little Red Riding Hood

Then, the Moderator selects a story everyone in the cast knows quite well. Remember, narratives such as “Cinderella” and [“The Ugly Duckling”](#) are more preferable— and more performable— than obscure fairy tales from [ancient Babylonia](#).

The Performance Begins!

Once the story has been chosen, the 60 second show can start. To keep the storyline fresh in the mind of the performers, the Moderator should quickly recap the key events of the story. Here's an example:

MODERATOR: “Okay, great, I heard someone suggest “The Three Little Pigs.” This is the one where three brother pigs each go about building their new homes, one with straw, the other with sticks, and the third with brick. A big bad wolf proceeds to demolish the first two houses, but can't destroy the third. Now, let's see this famous fairy tale performed for us in 60 seconds! Action!”

Then the performers begin to act out the story. Even though they are trying to

complete the entire tale in a very short amount of time, they should still create funny, interesting characters. They should also establish setting and conflict. Whenever the cast members slow things down, the Moderator can prompt them by narrating a new event, or simply by reading from a stopwatch. Nothing moves a scene along like calling out, "Twenty seconds left!"

Variations

Although the fast-paced nature of this game is very entertaining, there's no harm in trying a "slower" five minute version. That way, actors can take their time and develop more character interactions and hilarious moments.

Also, if the well of popular fairy tales runs dry, feel free to try out some of these Aesop fables:

Tortoise and the Hare; The Mouse and the Lion; The Fox and the Crow
The Boy who Cried Wolf

Or, if the talented acting troupe has a taste for pop-culture, try performing a movie in a minute. See what you can do with films such as:

Casablanca; Star Wars; The Wizard of Oz; Grease; Gone with the Wind
As with any improvisation activity the goals are simple: have fun, develop characters, and think fast!

SUPERHERO IMPROV GAMES

Whether or not you are a fan of [comic books](#), you must admit that a lot of imagination goes into those dynamic superhero characters. And anything that involves a wild imagination can become exquisite improvisation material. Since superheroes are capable of doing the impossible, it's great fun to bring their action-packed antics to the stage. No fancy sets or costumes are required. With the power of pantomime, anything can happen!

Here are three superhero improvisation games to try out with your drama class or comedy troupe:

Superheroes:

This activity begins with one actor and a suggestion from the audience. The performer announces, "I am a superhero. What's my special power?" The audience will hopefully offer a lot of entertaining suggestions. The performer should quickly select the most "workable" suggestion.

The scene begins. The actor establishes his character, setting, and conflict. For example:

X-RAY MAN: Drat! That villainous Velveeta Woman has trapped me within her Velveeta Vault as it slowly fills with bland tasting [American cheese](#). But, I can use my X-Ray vision to see through her walls. Oh, there she is, waving at me. Curse you, Velveeta Woman!

Note: Feel free to be ever-so-much funnier than the above example.

Then the actor will introduce the next superhero. Through playful exposition, he will explain the new hero's name and superpowers. Example:

X-RAY MAN: It looks like I'm done for. Wait! Something is bubbling beneath the cheese. Why, I don't believe it. It's none other than Optimist Girl! Able to look on the bright side of any situation. Thank goodness you're here!

OPTIMIST GIRL: Don't worry. Everything is going to turn out terrific. Quick, hand me that glass of water – the one that's half full!

And the insanity continues. Each new superhero introduces the next character until five or six players have had a chance to show off their eccentric powers (and perhaps resolve the conflict).

Villains Anonymous:

In this improvised scene, five to seven performers sit in a semi-circle. All of the characters are recovering super-villains. They are attending a twelve-step program.

The group leader begins with an introduction, "Hi, I'm _____."

Everyone responds with a monotone, "Hi, _____."

The group leader will explain that he/she has been villainy-free for a certain amount of days. Then, the recovering super-villain discusses his/her destructive past and the ways in which he/she was thwarted by a super-hero. Then, the next wacky villain is introduced. Like the previous improv game, the person can introduce the villain by name and super-power, or that information can be left up to the next performer.

The challenge of this improv scene is that it might be too devoid of conflict. After all, the characters are simply reminiscing about the good old days. Remember, the villain characters can always be tempted back to their bad-guy lifestyle, and the group leader can try to talk them out of it.

Super Senior Home:

The above improv games feature very silly, newly invented superheroes. For "Super Senior Home," the actors should assume the role of famous, pre-existing comic book characters: Superman, Spiderman, Wonder Woman, Batman and Robin, the Incredible Hulk, etc.

The Gimmick: The superheroes are now in their 80s and 90s. They live together at a home for Super Senior Citizens.

The activity begins with two audience suggestions: A) What's a common activity for an elderly person? B) Name your favorite superhero.

Embracing those two suggestions, the actor begins the scene as a geriatric superhero. Other elderly comic book characters (and perhaps a nurse or two) enter the scene and participate in the suggested activity.

Don't forget, the characters should still possess some superpowers, though their super-skills might be a bit rusty.

And now that you know about these improv games, try them out. Visit our [Plays / Drama forum](#) and share your thoughts and experiences. In the meantime, UP, UP AND IMPROV AWAY!

LOOK DOWN, LOOK UP

Good for all ages. Non-physical. Excellent for concentration. Calming!

Stand group in a circle. Teacher gives instructions for everyone to 'Look Down'. On the command 'Look Up', everyone must look up and make direct eye contact with someone else in the circle who is participating in the game. They are not allowed to change eye direction or glance ineffectually, or look at the ceiling! If the person they make direct eye contact with is also looking at them, both participants are out and have to sit down. Continue saying 'Look Down, Look Up' until you have a winner or winners. This can be played with any number of participants and can go on for a long time.

Make sure that those who are out keep quiet so that participants still playing can concentrate and hear the commands. Please watch carefully for cheating and immediately remove anyone not playing

SURPRISE GUESTS

This improv game can be used as a light-hearted drama exercise or a theatrical party activity.

Set Up: One person volunteers to play "Host." The Host leaves the room. Three performers serve as the "Surprise Guests." Each one asks the audience, "Who am I?" Remember, as with any improv game, encourage the audience to generate creative suggestions; the more outlandish the better!

Surprise Guest Examples:

Guest #1: An Astronaut with a Severe Fear of Heights

Guest #2: An over-worked Elf from Santa's Toy Shop

Guest #3: A Drunken Martha Stewart

The Rules: Once the Guests have been established, the Host returns and the improv game begins.

First, the Host pantomimes getting ready for the party, then Guest #1 "knocks" on the door. The Host lets him/her inside and they begin to interact. A new Guest will arrive in about sixty seconds, so that in a very quick amount of time the Host will be interacting with three different "guest characters."

The Host wants to figure out the identity of each Guest. However, this isn't just a guessing game. The Guests should offer discreet clues that become more and more obvious as the improv game continues. The main point of the activity is to generate humor and to develop quirky, unusual characters.

Have fun! And remember, this and any other explanation of an improv game is just a blue print. Feel free to add your own style to make it work best for your drama classroom, theater troupe, or improv party.

TAXI CAB

Number of performers: 3 - 6

How To Play: Set up one chair for the "taxi-cab driver" and several chairs for the "passenger seats."

One performer plays the role of the cab driver. He/she starts the scene by pantomiming driving. Feel free to develop a funny, quirky "cab driver" character. After a few moments of "driving," the performer spots a customer.

The passenger hops into the back of the cab. Now, here's where the game begins. The second performer playing the role of the passenger should have a distinct personality.

Some examples: A secretive British agent.; A snobby Opera singer.; A hyper 4 year old.; A friendly, overly talkative old woman.

Here's the gimmick: The cab driver adopts the personality traits of his customer. When a new performer (a new passenger) enters the scene, the cab driver and the other passengers emulate the new personality/behavior. The passengers explain to the driver where they are going and what they plan to do.

After the passengers have interacted with one another, the cab driver will start to drop off his/her customers. When a passenger is dropped off and exits the scene, everyone switches personality again, until eventually the cab driver character is alone again and back to the original personality.

Dramatic Skills: This activity develops a performer's emulation ability. How well can the actor mimic the style of another performer? How quickly can an actor change his/her character? What ranges of emotions can the actors express?

Teachers and directors should encourage their cast to try as many new personalities and emotions as possible. Have fun! Oh, and don't forget to give the cabbie a decent tip!

TELEPHONE CHARADES

Summary: An icebreaker / stationary game in which a person acts out an action only for the next person in line, who in turn acts out for the next person. The acting typically becomes distorted over time and hilarious, as the last person in line tries to guess what the original clue was.

Ages: 10 and up. Recommended # of People: 5-6. Messiness Factor: No Sweat.
Materials Required: None. Recommended

Setting: Indoors.

How to Play

The Telephone Charades Game (also sometimes called "Charades Down the Line") is an icebreaker/stationary game that is a hilarious blend of the classic "telephone down the line" and "charades" game.

This group game is fairly simple to play.

Select five to six participants and ask them to leave the room. The audience chooses an action that is specific, silly, and obscure to act out (e.g. "a nerd's romantic first date", "washing an elephant", "going skydiving", etc.).

Once the clue has been decided, bring in all the participants and instruct them to face the right side. The moderator reveals the clue to the first person, who taps the second person on the shoulder and acts out the topic using charades rules (no talking allowed, no noises). The second person then taps the third person and acts out his or her understanding of what was acted out. This continues until it reaches the last person in line, who must guess what the action is.

This game is funny because the action mutates and changes based upon each person's interpretation of what is going on, often leading to confusion and silly motions.

YES AND

Jim Carrey's comedy *Yes Man* follows a vital rule of improvisational theater: Never deny your fellow actor. Instead, you should be willing and able to accept the ideas the character conveys. Then, you should add to the scene.

This improv principle is known as "Yes And." Here's how it works:

Beginning scene, Character #1 will begin by establishing setting and plot.

Character #1: What a hot and miserable day to be a ranch hand!

Following the "Yes And" method, Character #2 will accept the premise and add onto the situation.

Character #2: Yep and the boss said we don't get no water until this fence is mended.

Character #1: Yes and ain't he the meanest cuss we've ever worked for?

Character #2: Yep and it's made me think about leaving behind this cowboy life and headin' off for San Francisco.

Now, the scene could continue on indefinitely with the actors simply agreeing with one another. However, it's best to develop conflict as well. Even though the performers constantly affirm each response doesn't mean they can't argue. For example:

Character #2: Yep and it's made me think about leaving behind this cowboy life and headin' off for San Francisco.

Character #1: Yes and you'd be broke twenty minutes after stepping off the stage coach.

Character #2: Yeah and I supposed you think you could do better?!

Character #1: Yes! And after I made my fortune panning for gold I come back and buy this sorry ranch and you'd be working for me!!!

After working on "Yes And" exercises, actors ultimately learn how to do scenes in which they embrace the ideas and concepts offered by fellow performers. You don't actually need to say the words "Yes And" for the system to work. Simply affirm what the character is saying and allow it to build the scene. If you deny your fellow performer, here's what happens:

Character #1: What a hot and miserable day to be a ranch hand!

Character #2: No it's not. And we're not ranch hands either.

Then the scene is dead in the water before it even had a chance.

YES

Great for connecting a group, for developing: looking, listening, focusing and cooperation skills. Any size works.

Use For

Warming up, listening, focusing, cooperation skills, in the classroom or at a meeting.

Time Needed

Flexible, 5 to 15 min

Instructions

Group sits in a circle;

First person stands and makes eye contact with one other person in the circle.

Second person , when they know they are being looked at, when the connection is made, then stands and proceeds to do as the first person did; make eye contact with someone., other than the first person.

First person moves to take the place of the second person, WHEN they have stood up.

Second person moves to take place of the third person, when they have stood up

Third person makes eye contact with fourth person

Fourth person stands

Third person takes place of fourth

WINK MURDER

Slightly physical. Requires noisy sound effects! Helps reduce inhibitions.

Sit participants in a circle. Choose a 'detective' - he or she leaves the room. Remaining participants shut their eyes and bow their heads - ensure no-one cheats! Teacher walks around outside of the circle and taps one of the participants on the back - he/she then becomes the 'murderer'. The murderer must not be revealed to the other players. He or she must then murder the others in the circle by winking silently at them. Those murdered should die horribly - either by collapsing or by falling off their chairs.

The detective is reintroduced as soon as the murderer is chosen and, by standing in the centre of the circle, must try to guess who the murderer is. The detective is allowed two or three guesses. Other players must try not to give away who the murderer is. If the detective doesn't guess in the two or three goes, the murderer is then asked to reveal his/herself by standing up. Either way, a new detective and murderer are chosen and the game begins again. Theatrical/acting skills can be introduced by asking participants to think about and portray their methods of death when dying, e.g. strangulation, falling off a cliff, poisoning, etc.

Teachers should praise 'good' deaths, watch carefully for cheats, take care not to allow the detective too much time, be fair to both sexes when choosing murderers and detectives, consider choosing two murderers on occasions - to make the game more interesting - and be prepared for a headache!

PLAYBACK IMPROVISATION GAMES

Mirror greeting ;in circle, 'one' in moves as feels, ends with name, rest mirror and offer to 'one'

Name games: throw 'bag' and say name: have two bags---etc
Say someone's name, walk towards them, named person say another and walk before first reaches them etc.

Mirror line: start at one end small, build in intensity action , sound and feeling.

Mirror pairs----chorus: hand of one leading face of another; change; follow body; change; have two following , three, four.....

Chorus provocation---two groups, one performs for the other in response to provocation from other group.

Creep up Jack: similar to 'What 's the Time Mr. Wolf':
keys or pencil case or? Behind 'wolf'; others creep up to try to steal item. ; wolf can catch out anyone if she see's them move. Aim to get item back to beginning point of players---all cooperate in passing item.

Space Jump: One person starts acting a scene/activity;
Someone says space jump' , person in middle freezes and the speaker adds and action that changes the scene into something else.---etc and then backwards.

Fruit Chairs: in a circle, each person is a fruit/chair is fruit; middle person has to say it 3 times quickly before the person on chair---then loser in middle.

'What are you doing': One person starts an action in the middle of the circle;
another person steps in and asks: 'What are you doing". First person answers a DIFFERENT action so second starts different action---etc

Shape to shape: in pairs one person creates shape, freezes; second creates shape that fits in with first then freezes; first person creates another shape---and so on

Grid Go Everyone walk---crawl-----slide-----hop-----slow----fast-----etc in a grid---stop start move; also as animals, fantasy creatures-

All the same, change: in a circle, one in middle who says something true for them eg 'everyone with white socks', they all have to change places and person in middle get into circle---etc