

A FREE EXTRACT FROM
DRAMA LESSON PLANS FOR BUSY TEACHERS: 40 IDEAS FOR DRAMA
THAT WILL BRING THE CURRICULUM TO LIFE (BOOK ONE)
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Published by Suitcase Kids
www.suitcasekidsdrama.co.uk
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SECTION 1: FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS.

Weeks:

1. Freeze!
2. Voice
3. Movement in Space
4. Story and Character
5. Improvisation
6. Status
7. Trust
8. Mime
9. Mask
10. Audience and use of space

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS SESSION PLANS

WHAT'S IN THE FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS SESSION PLANS?

These session plans teach participants essential drama skills or concepts that they will use in all four books in the series. These are: learning to respond to “Freeze!” and creating tableaux, voice, movement in space, story and character, improvisation, status, trust, mime, mask, audience and use of space. The sessions use learning to respond to “Freeze!” and movement in space as a form of positive classroom management.

During the Foundational Drama Skills sessions participants build a drama vocabulary and familiarity with a set of games and warm ups that will help engender confidence and enthusiasm. The rest of the session plans in this series books explore and build on these skills. Some of the games and activities included are repeated, honed and developed later. In fact, this is where we kick off with several of the themes are repeated throughout the series.

HOW TO USE THE FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS SESSION PLANS

You can use these session plans in two main ways. They operate as a term-length scheme of work. Alternatively, you can run one-off workshops throughout the year on any or each of the foundational skills covered. You can incorporate your own topic or story from the wider curriculum, or ask your students to suggest one. If you have time, I suggest that you read through the Foundational Drama Skills *and* the Storytelling session plans, to find ways to connect and combine them.

CREATE A DISPLAY IF YOU CAN

I also suggest that you create a display of the work you do on Foundational Drama Skills so you can refer back to it, but if that isn't possible any reflective work or drawing and writing can be done in notebooks, or translated into a discussion activity.

A NOTE ON WARM UPS

During the Foundational Drama Skills sessions participants will develop familiarity with the voice and movement warm ups you use, and with the ‘movement in space’ and ‘freeze’ games you play. This is so that students know what to expect when they come into the drama session. The warm ups are also flexible so you can incorporate your own topics, themes, stories and characters right from the start of the session. As there are so many out there, I suggest that you compile and keep your own scrapbook of voice and movement exercises, and warm up games that you can dip into during the year. You can share this with colleagues.

A NOTE ON THE ‘WHAT NEXT?’ ACTIVITIES

Each session includes at least one suggestion for a ‘what next?’ activity. These are optional extras, designed to allow you to extend the session as you wish.

WHY ARE THERE TEN SESSIONS?

I've given you ten sessions here. If you need to truncate them it is fairly easy to combine them. If you need to create more sessions to fill the term, I suggest doing three things: go over the work on

'Freeze!' to create much more polished tableaux, return to the session on improvisation and reuse the activities with different themes and / or stories, and use the 'what next?' activities as springboards for extra sessions.

WHY USE A CIRCLE?

Drama encourages better communication, collaboration and negotiation. It provides an ideal environment to support students to work together to develop trust and friendships. That said, you'll find there are some students who will find drama activities, or the drama space itself, challenging. Non-classroom environments, group or pair work, performance, touch, open space, dialogues, and self-expression can all present challenges. Also, when everyone has permission to move around the space in a way they might not do in other lessons, classroom management can prove tricky. You can help yourself with both of these challenges by using a circle.

Working in a circle sets up a simple structure. You can refer to it regularly. You can even maintain it throughout the lesson. An open drama space presents interesting possibilities, so the circle is also a structured introduction to the opening out of space.

As I've said, circle work is a good way to manage the drama session, meaning you don't have to watch every corner of the Drama studio or classroom at once. You can adapt your activities so that the students remain in a circle (standing or sitting) for the whole lesson. If members of the class become too energetic, you can ask the whole class to return to the circle and sit down. You can also use the circle as a way of presenting work and for discussions. Because everyone can be seen easily, you need to work on group trust at the same time as establishing the space. The activities and games in this book will help you to do that.

BE FUSSY ABOUT YOUR CIRCLE

When you first introduce students to this way of working, I suggest being quite fussy about the way the circle is formed. Explore the shape itself and play games that use a circle or that focus on the formation of shapes. Keep asking them to form the circle until it looks like a circle! You could even give them particular people to sit next to each time they sit in the circle. I'm not in favour of boy / girl / boy / girl seating arrangements because I think it is a rather reductive and unhelpful reading of gender, but the ethos behind it - thinking carefully about where you are sitting - is a good. You could play a game where students have to stand in order of their birthday - January birthdays at the front, December birthdays at the back rather than by age - and use that order for the circle. However you choose to do it, making a fuss about the circle early on makes it easier to establish as a familiar and safe space.

WORKING IN A CIRCLE: A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Here's one way to work in a circle. You can adapt this according to your topic or add your favourite games and activities from the rest of the book:

1. Start the session in the circle and use games to establish both the circle space and turn-taking. If appropriate, talk about the use of the circle as a performance space and the circle in theatre history.
2. Work on a whole group exercise, such as a mime or a rhythm or a gesture that students pass around the circle. In other words, get students to practise turn taking in the circle.

3. Do some work individually, in pairs or threes in the circle, seated or standing, re-establishing the circle at the end of each short activity.
4. For demonstrations of work, go around the circle, or ask students to perform or improvise in the centre of the circle with other students as audience. Where relevant, discuss the advantages of the circle as a performance space.

HOW ELSE CAN YOU USE THE CIRCLE?

1. Once you've established it, use the circle to sit down in moments of confusion or noise. Make it a familiar space.
2. Experiment with other theatre spaces: traverse, end on, open space, etc. Introduce the use of other spaces gradually. Open up the space and make it available by starting and ending with the group in a circle.
3. Establish the circle as a space to come back to and go away from for performance, discussion and demos.

ALTERNATIVES TO 'NOW GET INTO PAIRS!'

When I briefly taught drama in schools even walking across the playground could make students say "be your partner in Drama" to one another, in an attempt to 'bag' their co-worker before the lesson even started! You can help yourself out right from the start by using structured rather than informal group work. For example, you can play warm up games so students 'land' in pairs or groups rather than asking them to choose, and you can use sustained pair work then join pairs together into groups. This also has an added benefit: you end up segueing from activity to activity more smoothly if you don't have to say "Now get into pairs!"

SOME GROUP-WORK SAFETY NETS

1. Regularly work in threes as well as in pairs, so that being in a group of three doesn't become stigmatised.
2. Establish early on that the maths won't always work, so some people will be in a group of a larger or smaller number than that suggested.
3. Use and value individual work as well as group work. Don't always end with group work. This is important – don't assume that everyone works well in a group. People learn in different ways and some people like to learn on their own.
4. Define the roles you want group members to play in advance. This allows more confident students to help their peers.
5. Allow directors, observers, narrators, journalists, note-takers and / or cartoonists in some activities.
6. Allow miming and gesture instead of dialogue in some activities.
7. Use activities where the roles in the group or pair are equally valued but unevenly weighted. For instance, in hot-seating activities, some students may find it easier to ask the questions, especially if they have been prepared beforehand. You don't have to swap.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON CIRCLE WORK AND STRUCTURED GROUP WORK

Consider circle work and structured group work as two 'extra' foundational drama skills to add to the ten that are covered in dedicated sessions in this section of the book. Although working in an open space and informal or open group work are, of course, valid ways of operating, adding this kind

of structure to your drama sessions will help with classroom management and build the confidence of students to such an extent that it's a shame not to use them right from the start.

1. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: FREEZE!

TOPICS:

Drama skills, direction and facilitation, listening, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

'Freeze!' Freeze frames or tableaux.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED

To introduce the instruction to 'freeze' and the concept of freeze frames.

To help with classroom management.

To introduce a topic.

RESOURCES:

A particular theme or topic to explore.

Photos or images to explore in tableaux. (Optional)

WHAT COULD YOU USE INSTEAD:

A list of everyday activities, such as cooking, playing, writing, talking, going to the shops etc.

Pictures drawn by members of the group.

WARM UP:

Play any familiar game where participants have to stay as still as possible, such as musical statues, or sleeping lions. Introduce the idea of facilitation from the teacher who will tell them when to freeze or 'sleep'.

Teachers please note: You can use this session to introduce any topic, by adding a broad theme to the freezes – say, cooking, or space exploration, or Kings and Queens, or friendship. This could relate to a story you are using or link to a history topic or a subject from PSHE, for example.

ACTIVITIES:

Freezes. Students learn to:

1. Move around the room and then stop.
2. Freeze on the spot.
3. Stay still for ten seconds, thirty seconds and a minute.

Crucially, participants are developing a sense of the teacher as facilitator and director.

Signals. Students learn to:

1. Freeze on a particular signal. (It could be a clap, or it could be a scratch of the elbow.)
2. Freeze in an interesting shape (say 'baking a cake') and then 'come to life' for ten seconds (as the baker) and re-freeze.

Making shapes. So that students can practise a) responding to your direction, and b) the freezes themselves ask them to do the following:

1. Make up shapes or 'freeze frames' for everyday activities.
2. Make up shapes for everyday activities in pairs and small groups.
3. Make up shapes for everyday activities individually or in a group and hold them for a count of twenty.
4. Make up shapes on a particular theme – requiring some brainstorming in pairs and small groups first - and hold them for a count of twenty.
5. Make up a series of shapes on a theme in pairs and small groups.

WHAT NEXT?

Ask students to do any or all of the following:

1. Create 3D 'photographs' of particular events in groups. (Use actual photos or images to help with this if you can.)
2. Develop posed tableaux on a variety of themes using different starting points.
3. Develop a series of posed tableaux on a variety of themes using different starting points.

2. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: VOICE

TOPICS:

Drama skills, voice work, listening, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Voice, breathing, projection, inflection.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To introduce the role of vocal exercises and breathing.

To help with classroom management, because the games themselves are motivating.

To introduce a topic or a text, or song or poem.

RESOURCES:

A song or poem.

Teacher please note. Michael Rosen's work is great for reading aloud. For instance, you could use 'Oh Dear' which you'll find online here: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poems/oh-dear> For other poems, you could try a resource such as 'Poetry by Heart': <http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk/>

WHAT YOU COULD USE INSTEAD:

A song or poem suggested by the group or one that they already know well.

Teacher please note: I suggest that you develop a repertoire of voice games and breathing exercises that the students get to know and trust – and save them scrapbook style - as this will make them more willing to try out different voice techniques. It also helps if you can introduce several songs, poems or texts that they can get familiar with for the purpose of voice work, otherwise attempting to remember the words can take all the fun out of it! I highly recommend the work of Cicely Berry as a starting point.

WARM UP:

You could use a traditional voice warm up where participants go through the vowel sounds, concentrating on the shapes of their mouths and their breathing. Pretending to chew a toffee that gets bigger and bigger is good for warming up the jaw muscles. You could also ask each student to come up with a word to go with their name - Jolly Joe or Brilliant Betty, for instance – which they can use to practise speaking loudly (or softly) and clearly. It depends on the confidence of the group.

ACTIVITIES:

Whole group song or poem. Teach the group a song or a poem with a strong refrain or use one they already know. Practise singing or saying lines from it quietly, loudly, angrily, sadly, happily.

Whole group voice games and breathing exercises. Introduce your favourite singing and voice games and breathing exercises, and make them fun, with the aim of getting the students familiar with them by the end of the year. You can find plenty of these online (for example, the Central School of

Speech and Drama puts some of its resources online. This guide is by Kate Pringle: https://www.cssd.ac.uk/sites/default/files/module_1_an_introduction_to_voice.pdf) but I suggest you start to build your own resource pack to enhance your own familiarity as well as your participants'.

Whole group games. Pass 'yes' and 'no' around a circle, asking each student to say it in a slightly different way. Next take phrases from the song or poem you've been using and say them in different ways. (Demonstrate first.) Finish by asking students to talk in pairs trying out different emphases.

WHAT NEXT?

1. Speak softly and loudly 'on stage'. (You could use an actual stage, or a stage created by a circle of participants.)
2. Use a different voice for a character.
3. Introduce discussion activities in pairs over the year with the aim that students can talk confidently with other members of the group about their ideas.

3. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: MOVEMENT IN SPACE.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, movement, different spaces, listening, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Moving around the room, using your body in space, mirroring, Laban.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To introduce 'the body moving in space' as a drama technique.

To introduce a particular theme or topic.

RESOURCES:

A particular theme or topic to explore.

The freeze games from session one.

The blog post on Laban movement referenced below. (optional)

WHAT COULD YOU USE INSTEAD:

A list of everyday activities to explore in movement, such as cooking, playing, writing, talking, going to the shops etc.

Ideas for 'freezes' from the participants.

WARM UP:

Repeat the vocal warm up from the last session and add in body isolation exercise: wiggle your fingers, your elbows, your shoulders, your toes, ankles, lower leg, upper leg, whole body, the freeze.

ACTIVITIES:

Whole group 'move around' game. Revisit the freeze games you developed with students in an earlier session. The aim is that the students are able to move around the space with confidence. You could turn this into a game of 'Yes, let's' or a variation of it, once they have learnt to freeze on your signal. This is where the teacher says 'Let's creep like burglars' or 'Let's jump like frogs' or 'Let's run like Usain Bolt' (or whatever you want to use) and the group call out 'Yes, let's' and join in.

Incorporate the instruction to 'Freeze!' and practise a few times before playing 'for real'.

Whole group cardboard boxes game: Students try moving around the room as if it is full of towers of cardboard boxes that they have to avoid knocking over.

Ideas for developing your movement workshop. Based on the theme or topic you have chosen, students learn to do the following. This may take several sessions:

1. Communicate using simple gestures.
2. Link a series of simple movements on the spot, then link movements in pairs and small groups.
3. Move around the space to music.
4. Use different levels.
5. Develop movements for a character.

WHAT NEXT?

1. **Mirroring.** After a movement warm up, get students into pairs, and have them take it in turns to pretend to be looking in the mirror (you can give them a theme to start off with, such as getting ready to go out). Next move into more careful, practised (and probably more abstract) movements – the ‘mirror’ has to reflect what their partner is doing.

2. **The Eight Efforts.** You may also want to start to introduce the eight efforts developed by Rudolf Laban. The Laban Efforts are listed in session three of the bonus section at the end of this book. You can read more online, for instance, in this blog post by Todd Espeland:
www.theatrefolk.com/blog/the-eight-efforts-laban-movement/

4. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: STORY AND CHARACTER.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, characters, jobs and careers. or a story or topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

'Freeze!' Characterisation, improvisation, roleplay.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To continue to work on 'freeze' and the concept of freeze frames.

To introduce the idea of 'playing someone else' on stage.

To introduce a story you are going to work on.

To introduce jobs and careers.

RESOURCES:

A list of different jobs.

Props and costume box. (Optional)

WHAT YOU COULD USE INSTEAD:

Jobs discussed by members of the group at the start of the session.

Props and costumes brought in by the group.

WARM UP:

Students move around the room in different ways: as if you're in a rush, very, very quietly, as if you're cross, or happy, or dragging your feet.

ACTIVITIES:

Different jobs. Students learn to:

1. Pretend to be people who do different jobs in a freeze.
2. Pretend to be people in different situations in a freeze.

Whole group / individual work. Tools of the trade. Students suggest what people doing particular jobs might wear or use. For instance, a builder might wear a hard hat, an architect might use a drawing board. Incorporate these into the freeze activity above. If you have a props and costume box, allow students to choose a prop or costume to use to bring their characters to life. Students work on facial expression, movement and voice to hone their characters.

Small group / individual work. Telling a story. Introduce a story to the group. Take a selection of characters and ask questions about them. Ask the group to create freezes related to the story either in small groups or individually. Get into a circle and 'bring the freezes to life' in the middle of the circle, adding narration from the text.

WHAT NEXT?

1. Using a particular story or topic (say from English, R.E., History or Science) over the next few weeks, students learn how to *pretend to be someone different* in an improvisation in pairs or groups, in situations suggested by the teacher. They can continue to learn to work on facial expression, movement and voice to hone their characters.
2. During PSHE, students can learn to take part in roleplay, by pretending to be different people. You could also introduce 'freeze tag' at this point – where members of the group can say 'Freeze!' and replace an actor in a roleplay to take it in a different direction.
3. Students can also make up their own characters based on a theme or given starting point, by writing about them and drawing them first.

5. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: IMPROVISATION.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, improvisation, listening, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Improvisation, voice, movement.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To introduce improvisation.

To introduce a particular theme or topic.

RESOURCES:

A particular theme or topic to explore.

Materials to make posters of key words. (Optional)

WHAT YOU COULD USE INSTEAD:

Ideas suggested by members of the group.

Students own notebooks. (Optional)

WARM UP:

1. Redo your voice and movement warm ups from previous sessions, with the aim that these become more and more familiar to students.
2. Redo a freeze game from an earlier session. Have students move around the space in a particular way and respond when you say 'Freeze!' At this point, kudos should be given to participants if they respond when you speak quietly or give a subtle signal.

ACTIVITIES:

Whole group improvisation: Students now take part in a whole group improvisation. For instance, everyone is a 'servant' in the kitchen of a tutor palace. They are getting ready for a banquet. Or they are all at a disco when suddenly the lights go out. Have them practise a few times first so they respond when you say 'Freeze!'

More ideas for your improvisation workshop. Students learn to:

1. Move around the space performing one task. For instance, shaking hands / waving.
2. Move around the space performing two tasks. For instance, shaking hands / waving and saying hello.
3. Demonstrate a freeze for different everyday situations on the spot.
4. Demonstrate a mime for different everyday situations on the spot.
5. Work on an improvisation of an everyday situation with a partner.
6. Work on an improvisation of an everyday situation in a small group.
7. Take part in a whole group improvisation – waiting at a train station, or arriving at a party, for instance.
8. Work on an improvisation based on a 'dilemma' suggested by the teacher, in a small group.

9. Create their own improvisations based on various starting points or situations suggested by the teacher, in small groups.

10. Plan, direct, rehearse and perform their own improvisations based on various starting points or situations suggested by the fellow students and the teacher, in small groups.

WHAT NEXT?

Work on developing a Drama Vocabulary. Go over what you've learnt so far, relating back to the topic or text you are exploring through drama where appropriate. You could even create posters to stick on the wall describing these key words: Freeze! Voice, Movement, Story, Character, Improvisation.

6. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: STATUS.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, social status, body language, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Status games, improvisation, freeze frames.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To introduce status.

To work on a particular theme or topic.

RESOURCES:

A particular theme or topic to explore. (optional)

WHAT YOU COULD USE INSTEAD:

Ideas suggested by the group.

WARM UP:

Redo your voice and movement warm ups from previous sessions, with the aim that these become more and more familiar to students.

ACTIVITIES:

Whole group improvisation: Students now take part in a whole group improvisation. For instance, they pretend to be walking along a busy street. Then introduce the idea that there is a homeless man living rough near-by.

Whole group discussion: What is 'status'? For example, talk about body language and status, social status and the status you are 'inside your head'.

Small group improvisations. Use any or all of the following status improvisations, then discuss the results:

1. A homeless person stumbles upon an invitation to a film premiere. He decides to go along. What happens next?
2. A bank robber is on the run and the police have issued a description. They arrest her twin sister who is a successful business woman. What happens next?
3. A 13-year-old boy is thrown out of a pub because he tried to buy a drink. He thought he'd look older if he wore his brother's clothes. What happens next?
4. The Queen disguises herself as a shop keeper for the day. What happens next?

WHAT NEXT?

Create some characters based on the status improvisations and ask students to draw and write about them. Revisit some of the skills learnt in previous sessions, for example, create some freeze-frames or tableaux.

7. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: TRUST.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, trust, working with others, listening, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Trust, movement in space.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To work on trust and the concept of trust in drama.

To introduce a PSHE topic.

WARM UP:

Do a breathing warm up, concentrating on the in breath (breathe in sunshine) and the out breath (send it towards a spot on the wall). Redo your voice and movement warm ups from previous sessions, with the aim that these become more and more familiar to students.

ACTIVITIES:

Whole group 'move around' game: Revisit the freeze games you developed with students in an earlier session. The aim is that the students are able to move around the space with confidence. Play 'Yes, let's' (from the session on movement) or a variation of it.

Honing and revising: Repeat any of the exercises you've already practised so far this year, with the aim of making them familiar so that students develop a repertoire of drama skills. You can vary themes, stories or topics so that the games don't become too repetitive.

Pair work. Trust game 1. Label partners A and B. Partner A leads B around the room. Repeat this, while one partner has their eyes closed. Extend this by taking the group into a bigger space or by allowing only minimum contact such as holding little fingers.

Pair work. Trust game 2. Partners sit back to back and link arms at the elbow. Revisit your breathing warm up (breathe in sunshine / breathe out towards a spot on the wall). Now have partner A breathe out as they flop forwards, and in as they sit upright. Partner B is does the same, in opposition to partner B.

Whole group discussion: What is trust? Why is it important in drama? What else has required trust so far this year?

WHAT NEXT?

Ask students to suggest drama techniques and games they have enjoyed so far this year. You could add these ideas to the display on the wall, or even ask students to lead the class in some of the games they most enjoyed. The aim is, again, to develop students' repertoire of drama skills and their confidence in talking about them.

8. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: MIME.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, mime, body language, gesture, communication, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Mime, movement, improvisation.

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To introduce mime, gesture or body language.

To continue to work on improvisation and movement.

To introduce a PSHE topic on communication.

RESOURCES:

A particular theme or topic to explore. (Optional)

Some ideas for mimed objects.

WHAT YOU COULD USE INSTEAD:

Suggestions from the group.

WARM UP:

Redo one your movement warm up from previous sessions. Add some mimed movements such as waving hello across a crowded street, drawing, eating an ice cream, baking a cake, walking upstairs, waving down a bus.

ACTIVITIES:

Pair work. Mirroring. Revisit the mirroring activity from the session on movement in space. Name the pairs A and B. Ask A to mime something in the mirror and B to respond. Ask volunteer pairs to perform their mirror mimes in front of the group.

Whole group work. Pass a pretend – i.e. mimed - prop. around the circle and ask students to mime an action associated with the prop. For instance, a spoon could be used to stir, taste or serve food. Second time round, students invent their own mimes – talking on the telephone, reading a book, putting on a necklace, eating a banana, for example – and everyone else tries to guess.

Pair work. Students invent and improvise a scene where two people meet and have a short conversation. Next, ask them to repeat the conversation but to mime, exaggerating the body language to get their point across.

Small group improvisations. Revisit one of the 'status improvisations' from the earlier session on status (involving the homeless man, bank robber, 13-year-old, or the Queen). Students rehearse and retell the story in small groups. Once they have a clear sense of how the story unfolds, they show the work to the rest of the group, but can only mime what happens.

WHAT NEXT?

Ask students to add information about their improvisations to the display or to write about them in their notebooks.

9. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: MASK.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, masks, storytelling, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Mask work

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To introduce the students to masks.

To continue improvisation and movement work.

To introduce a topic or story, particularly work on myths and traditional tales.

RESOURCES:

Flexible pieces of card, with holes punched either side, and string (with thanks to Root Experience who used this method of 'instant' mask making in one of their workshops).

WARM UP:

Repeat the voice and movement warm up from previous sessions, then play one of the freeze games that the group identified as a favourite.

ACTIVITIES:

Individual work. Ask students to isolate particular movements. For instance, ask them to smile with a hand or a foot, or make their elbows angry.

Whole group work. Students make masks out of the cardboard and string, using pens to make the faces. They can give them any expression they like.

Small group work. Students make up a scene where two people meet at a bus stop and have a short conversation about the weather. Next, mix up the group so they are now in groups of 3, and have one person direct a scene at a bus stop with two actors – who wear their cardboard masks.

Small group improvisations. Again revisit one of the 'status improvisations' from the earlier session on status (involving the homeless man, bank robber, 13-year-old, or the Queen). Have one student direct in each group. They can continue the story from the last session or invent something new.

This time the masks must be incorporated somehow.

WHAT NEXT?

Ask students (in small groups) to research a particular theatrical tradition where masks were / are used and to present their work to the rest of the group at the beginning of the next session.

10. FOUNDATIONAL DRAMA SKILLS: AUDIENCE AND USE OF SPACE.

TOPICS:

Drama skills, audience, space, or a topic of your choice.

TECHNIQUES USED:

Audience awareness, movement in space,

THIS SESSION COULD BE USED:

To get the students to start to think about the position of the audience.

To help with spatial awareness.

To help with rehearsing and polishing improvisations from previous sessions.

RESOURCES:

It helps if students can move freely through space in this session and also that you can rearrange the shape of the audience more than once.

WHAT YOU COULD USE INSTEAD:

You can ask students to move chairs into different configurations if you orchestrate it from the front.

WARM UP:

1. Play a game that involves students moving through the whole space. For instance, walk like a man on the moon, tiptoe very carefully, take big strides, walk as slowly as you can. Periodically ask some students to stand out and watch – or form an audience.
2. Ask students to stand in a circle. Use your - by now familiar – voice and movement warm ups, paying close attention to staying within the circle.

ACTIVITIES:

Pair / whole group work. Still in the circle, students form pairs, and discuss the improvisations they have worked on so far this year. Ask them to rehearse a conversation from one of these improvisations, or create new improvisations – for example, a Customer Services desk and a complaining customer, or a waitress, and a customer who hates their food. Have one or two pairs perform their work in the middle of the circle. Take a look at Keith Johnstone's *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*, Methuen Drama, new ed, 2007, for more.

Whole group discussion. What kind of space are you performing in? (in the round) What's good about it? What are the challenges? Rearrange the space so that the students are performing to a differently shaped audience – for example two rows of people facing each other (traverse). Discuss what happened when the space changed.

WHAT NEXT?

If students have the opportunity to go to see some theatre, ask them afterwards about the way space was used, and where the audience were seated. You could do similar with images of plays being performed in different spaces.

WANT MORE?

Take a look at the rest of Book One here:

On Amazon: viewbook.at/DramaLessonsBook1

On other ebook platforms such as iBooks: <https://www.books2read.com/u/3nOY08>

In the first book in the series you'll find the following four sections:

Foundational Drama Skills (this one!),

Storytelling,

Communication,

and Using Props and Costume.

You'll also find a bonus section on putting on a Radio Play – all about Babushka, which is suitable for a Christmas production if that's your thing.

There are forty sessions in the book, divided into four sections, enough material for you to run one drama session a week over the school year. (Plus the bonus section!) You and your students can add your own topics, learning objectives, stories, or ideas throughout.

You can use the exercises in a variety of ways, for instance, an individual activity might form a springboard for a whole lesson. The activities tend to get more open and more challenging as you progress through each session, as you progress through each section, and as you progress through the book.

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