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Drama is an effective way of teaching, as it uses active learning styles likely to motivate and sustain the attention of a wider cross section of pupils. Activities can include role-play, drama games, improvisation, group discussion and individual or pair work.

The activities which follow can easily be used along with other teaching techniques, or you might like to choose some to put together as a drama session. They are suited to a range of learning levels, so you will need to decide what is appropriate for your group. To begin with, you could use a couple of warm up activities which may not even use language, but will introduce the class to the enjoyment, participation and cooperation which is a natural part of drama activities.

3D Living Pictures

Project a picture onto the whiteboard and ask the students to create a tableau of the characters in the image. You can use a picture from a story book, a photograph or a work of art. Use thought tracking to hear the thoughts of the characters and use 'Video Clip' to bring it to life.

Useful pictures: 'The Snail and the Whale' by Julia Donaldson; paintings by L.S. Lowry; any contemporary/historical photos or illustrations. See this page for lots of examples: <https://padlet.com/david317/3d-living-pictures-axat6p3i7tw2m3v8>

Begin an enquiry-based approach by spending just a few minutes on asking the students to look carefully at what is going on in the scene and to think of comments they would like to make or questions they would like to ask. The process encourages students to raise their awareness and they do not need to justify their comments or have their questions answered at this point.

Make a circle with the whole class. Invite up to 10 children to look carefully at the picture and then to place themselves in the space as one of the characters. As they enter they explain who they are and hold a still position.

Thought Tracking

Individuals are invited to speak their thoughts or feelings aloud - just a few words. Walk through the space and invite each character in turn to speak their thoughts aloud. This can be done by tapping each person on the shoulder or holding a cardboard 'thought-bubble' above their head.

Action Clip (Improvisation)

Explain that the scene will come to life for a short time. Children should speak and behave as their character from the picture.

Spotlighting

Explain that you are going to find out what was happening in different parts of the scene. Begin by recreating the tableau. As you walk around, invite each group of characters to come to life and be heard. As you move away, they freeze back into a tableau.

Soundscape

You can also create a soundscape based on the painting. With the children sitting in a cluster or a circle, discuss with them what kind of sounds might be heard in the scene, including words that people could be saying. When they are ready, conduct the sound picture by raising and lowering your arm as a volume control. You could also try bringing in different sections one by one, conducting the children like an orchestra. This could be recorded and played back while the children look again at the picture.

Additional Characters

Invite the rest of the children who have been watching to add themselves to the tableau as additional characters. As they enter, they should add a statement about themselves, for instance 'I am a young boy sweeping the floor'. Once more invite the whole group to bring the scene alive for a short time.

Devise conversation between characters

This can be done in pairs or groups.

Role Play

The teacher speaks as one of the characters – can the students guess who he/she is? Depending on the ability of the students, they can also try this in pairs with one of them playing a character for the other to guess.

Cut the picture up

Cut the picture into sections and give part to different groups for them to create an improvisation or freeze frame and thought tracking.

Try using some of the following prompts:

I can see...

I wonder...

I imagine...

Action Clip

Bring freeze-frames to life in just a few moments.

This is a follow-on to freeze-frames, enabling students to bring the scene to life through improvisation. Explain that you would like the group to bring the scene alive for a few moments with speech and movement. Initiate this by saying “Action!” or clapping your hands to start the scene. Let the improvisation run for a short time – ideally before the performers run out of steam – and then end it with another signal such as “Cut!”, “Freeze!” or by clapping your hands a second time. The improvisation will usually last for just a few seconds and certainly no longer than one minute.

Action Clip gives the students the opportunity to enjoy acting out a small part of the story without worrying about how to start or finish the scene. The teacher can easily control how much is shown by saying “freeze” or “cut”, especially if the students start to repeat themselves or run out of things to say. After a few sessions of working in this way students will become more and more confident about devising and presenting short scenes.

Tip Use *Thought Tracking* to find out what each of the characters are thinking and feeling.

Adverb Game

The group stands in a circle. One volunteer (let’s call her Rachel) goes outside the room while the group decides on an adverb, such as “quickly”, “cheerfully” or “secretly”. Rachel is called back and stands in the centre of the circle. She asks any individual or a few members of the group to mime an activity. They should do this in the manner (style) of the word. Example activities could be digging a hole, writing a letter or playing the piano. As soon as the volunteer has an idea of the adverb, she can make a guess at it. If she has not got it quite right she can ask other people to do more activities and is allowed up to three guesses. At this point another volunteer goes outside while the group chooses a new adverb.

Variations

- With younger children two volunteers can go outside the room to keep each other company.
- The game can be played in small groups with one person guessing in each group. To make it easier, each group can be provided with a box or bag of adverb cards to pick from at random.

Here are some adverbs of varying difficulty to get you started:

<i>Angrily</i>	<i>Boldly</i>	<i>Calmly</i>	<i>Carefully</i>	<i>Cheerfully</i>	<i>Confidently</i>
<i>Dreamily</i>	<i>Enthusiastically</i>	<i>Fiercely</i>	<i>Gracefully</i>	<i>Greedily</i>	<i>Happily</i>
<i>Innocently</i>	<i>Joyfully</i>	<i>Lazily</i>	<i>Miserably</i>	<i>Mysteriously</i>	<i>Nervously</i>
<i>Painfully</i>	<i>Politely</i>	<i>Quickly</i>	<i>Quietly</i>	<i>Reluctantly</i>	<i>Sadly</i>
<i>Secretly</i>	<i>Silently</i>	<i>Sleepily</i>	<i>Slowly</i>	<i>Timidly</i>	<i>Wearily</i>

Alphabet Objects

A competitive game where everyone must think of unique objects beginning with a particular letter of the alphabet.

Everyone walks around in the space. Instruct the players that they must move around the room buzzing like a bee (or you can vary this with baaing like a sheep, clucking like a hen etc). The teacher calls out a random letter of the alphabet and the students have five seconds to make the shape of an object with their body which begins with that letter. It doesn't matter how 'correct' the shape is.

Next the teacher asks each player to name their object one by one. If two or more people have made the same object, then those players sit out. The remaining students walk around the space and the teacher calls out a new letter. Keep playing until there are only one or two people left.

This can also be played with themes instead of letters of the alphabet. Themes can include: household objects, buildings in the city, animals, character from a movie, video game character, cartoon character, emotions, occupations, sports, hobbies, objects related to a story/movie, musical instrument, Christmas gift, character from history, celebrity, pop star, method of transport, gadget, object/animal found on the beach...

Anyone Who...

For this game everyone needs to be sitting in chairs in a circle, apart from one person (the caller) who stands in the centre. That person thinks of something which is true about himself and calls out a sentence beginning with "Anyone who...", such as "...anyone who likes football."

As soon as the category is called out, anyone who likes football must move to a different chair while the caller tries to sit down on one of the empty seats. This usually leaves somebody else standing in the centre. Players are not allowed to return to the chair they got up from or to sit on the next chair along – otherwise it is too easy.

The game can get extremely lively, so remind players to take care when crossing the circle. If the caller can't think of a new category, he or she can say "All change!", at which point everybody must move to a new seat.

Useful categories include:

Anyone who likes/doesn't like... coffee/getting up late/cats/sports/spaghetti

Anyone who is wearing... trousers/black shoes/a pullover/blue/earrings

Anyone who has been to... London/Disneyland/the Berlin Wall

Anyone who has... a pet/sister/garden

Anyone who owns... a musical instrument/teddy bear/mobile phone

Anyone who went... to the cinema last week/on holiday this year

Anyone who would like to... fly in a hot-air balloon/go bungee jumping

Anyone who has ever... told a lie/been on a date/kept a diary

Anyone who will... watch TV tonight/go shopping at the weekend

Anyone who is afraid of... spiders/crowds/horror movies

Anyone who is allergic to... cats/nuts/homework

- If you wish you can set a particular theme, such as hobbies or favourite foods.
- To check comprehension of a book, everyone could be a character from a book. Statements would be something like 'Anyone who met the White Rabbit, attended the tea party, is an animal'. Or a movie – such as 'Titanic'.
- The game can also be played as 'Move if...' or 'Change places if...'
- If you prefer you can play the game without chairs – the group stands in a circle and people move into the gaps.

Bippity Bippity Bop

Age: 7 to adult

Players: Whole Group

Time: 10 – 20 minutes

Skills: Concentration, Energiser

A popular and fast-moving game with mimed shapes and actions.

Bippity Bippity Bop has a simple structure with lots of 'add-ons'. Begin by learning the basic game and add the other rules one by one. There are many variations and if you play it for long enough you will soon be making up new ones of your own.

The Basic Game

One person (the Pointer) stands in the centre of a circle made by the group. The Pointer's aim is to swap places with someone in the circle by catching them out. She chooses somebody at random and says one of two phrases – either "Bippity bippity bop" or just "Bop". If she says "Bippity bippity bop" then whoever is pointed at (the Target) must say "Bop" before the Pointer gets to the end of the phrase. If the Target doesn't manage to do this in time, he swaps places with the Pointer. If, however, the Pointer just says "Bop," then the Target must remain silent. In this case if the Target accidentally says "Bop" then he switches places to become the new Pointer.

Of course the Pointer can alternate between "Bop" and "Bippity bippity bop" as often as she likes. She can spin round to point at people unexpectedly or stay pointing at one person saying a mixture of "Bop" and "Bippity bippity bop" until she catches them out!

Variations

Once the group have got the hang of the basic game you can start to introduce the additional rules listed below. For any of these, the Pointer adds the name of an object before saying "Bippity bippity bop". This time, as well as the person pointed at, the people on the left and right of that person also take part. The three of them work together to make the shape of an object by the time the pointer has finished saying "Bop." If the object has not been made correctly then whoever the Pointer thinks was the most at fault switches places to become the new Pointer.

Drama Games and Activities
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Toaster, bippity bippity bop: The person who is pointed at becomes a piece of toast by bouncing up and down with their arms by their sides. The players on either side of the piece of toast make the toaster slot by holding their arms out towards each other with the toast jumping up and down between them.

Elephant, bippity bippity bop: The person who is pointed at forms the head of the elephant by holding their nose with one hand and putting their other arm through to make the trunk. They can also make elephant sounds. The people on the left and right hold out their arms towards the middle person to make the shape of the elephant's ears.

Aeroplane, bippity bippity bop: The middle player makes flying goggles by making the 'OK' sign with both hands, holding the hands together and turning them upside-down over his or her eyes. The people on the left and right hold out one arm each to make the wings.

Bunny, bippity bippity bop. The middle person holds up two hands as paws and the people on either side wiggle their hands next to the bunny's head to make the right and left ears.

Mixer: The person in the middle holds their hands above the heads of the people on each side. The two people on the side turn round and round like two whisks.

James Bond: The player being pointed at has until the person in the middle counts to ten to put their thumbs and pointer fingers together like a gun and the people on their left and right have to put their hands on the person's shoulders, pop their foot up, and say really high-pitched "Oh, James!"

Roller Coaster: The person they point at and the two people around them are now riding a rollercoaster, with the two side people in front and behind the person who was pointed at. The person in front is squatting, the middle person is bent down and the person in back is up high as if they are going down a hill.

Toaster: person in the middle jumps up and down and says "I'm burning I'm burning" or "boing, boing" while the people on either side make a box around the toast to act as a toaster

Mixer: The person in the middle holds their hands above the heads of the people on each side. The two people on the side turn round and round like two whisks.

"James Bond" where the player being pointed at has until the person in the middle counts to ten to put their thumbs and pointer fingers together like a gun and the two people on their left and right have to put their hands on the person's shoulders, pop their foot up, and say really high-pitched "Oh James!"

Surfer, where the middle person would be the surfer and the two on the sides were the waves,

-Elvis: The person in the middle pretends to be Elvis while say thank you thank you very much like Elvis would say it. The people on either side act as fan girls and say oh Elvis while waving there hands at their face as if it is hot outside.

Taxi – the person in the middle puts their hands on the "steering wheel" and "drives", the people on the outside wave their hands and scream "TAXI!"

Viking: The person who was pointed to would have to put their hands on the side of their head and make Viking ears and scream like like a Viking would scream and the 2 students on the side would pretend to row like they were on a boat.

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Tornado-Person in the middle has to spin around and swoosh while the other two have to scream in terror

Fake out: they'll say things like pine tree, hurricane, or tomato instead of the real ones to screw people up. If they do mess up, the person in the middle has to go to the middle of the circle. It's so fun!

Washing machine: student spins like clothes and the two on either side make the box.

Aeroplane: Student pretends to wear goggles and both either side makes the wings.

Christmas tree- person in middle puts arms straight up, two on sides do jazz hands for twinkling lights.

Hedgehog on a motorway - middle person curls into a ball whilst waving their fingers on top of their head and the two others drive round and round the hedgehog making car and horn noises.

Milking the cow – the middle person wiggles the fingers of both hands downwards like udders and moos and the people on each side milk the fingers.

Body Numbers

Play some music and ask the students to move around the room. Stop the music and call out a number – start with two. The students have to find a way to have only two points of contact with the floor (it can be just standing). Play the music again and stop it. Call out a different number e.g. five. The students have to make a different shape with their bodies with five points of contact. The points of contact can be anything – a foot, an elbow, fingers, knee, head etc.

Try several numbers then ask them to work in pairs. This time they have to join their bodies together to make a shape with their partner – having a certain number of points of contact with the floor – try 3, 5, 12 and so on. Finally you can do the same thing in small groups.

Circle And Cross

Ask everyone to hold up their right hand and draw a small circle in the air in front of them with their finger. Demonstrate this and get them to join in. Now ask them to drop their right hand and raise their left. With this hand they should draw the shape of a cross in the air. Demonstrate this as well. Now ask them to draw both the cross and the circle at the same time. Most people will probably be able to do this part.

Now ask them to swop hands so they are drawing a circle with their left hand and a cross with the right. This is the part that most people will struggle with – it can be quite amusing. Swop back and forth a few times.

Clap Across the Circle

The group sits or stands in a circle. One person begins by making eye contact with someone on the other side of the circle. Now they clap their hands and at the same time move their hands towards the other person as though they are throwing the sound across the circle. That person claps their hands a short distance away from their body as though catching the sound that the first person has made and simultaneously bringing their hands towards their body. If done well, the effect is as though an invisible ball has been passed across the circle. That person then makes eye contact with somebody else and claps towards them.

- It is important to make clear eye contact before you clap your hands towards somebody, otherwise no-one will know who you have in mind!
- If the group plays the game well, then it will really look and sound as though a ball is being passed around.
- As a variation choose a category and each student should name an animal, a colour and so on.

Conscience Alley

Count to 20

Sit or stand in a circle. The idea is for the group to count to twenty, one person saying one number at a time. Somebody is chosen to start the count. Anybody can say the next number - but if two or more people speak at the same time, counting must start again from the beginning. It is possible to get to twenty if everybody really concentrates - but try and be relaxed as well.

- Try doing it with and without eye contact.
- Other variations include members of the group facing outwards and closing their eyes or counting back from twenty to one.

Essence Machines (GIF Game)

This technique is useful for generating physical and aural ideas around a theme. A topic is chosen and people are asked to think of a repeating sound and action linked to that theme. One person starts off in the centre of a circle with their own sound and movement, then one by one the others step in, finding a suitable way to add in their own ideas. The machine can be frozen, then played back at twice or half the "normal" speed. Themes could include: optimism, pessimism, supermarket; hospital; bullying; emotions. You could have a machine that actually makes something, like chocolate biscuits, school dinners or weather conditions.

Experts

This is a very funny game where three people pretend to be experts on just about anything.

Set out three chairs in front of the group. Ask for three volunteers to play the role of 'experts'. Each one sits on a chair. Now explain that the experts will answer any question put to them. Choose a random theme, for example cookery, football, french films, nuclear power, transport or knitting. Choose a question related to one of the themes, for example, 'what are the best tactics for developing a good football team?', 'how does a nuclear reactor work?' or 'how do you make fish and chips?' Now explain that the experts can only speak one word at a time in order, for example:

A: I

B: think

C: that

A: a

B: football

C: trainer

A: should...

- Let each 'lecture' run for just a couple of sentences unless the experts are really getting into the swing of things!
- Appoint somebody as interviewer if the performers are doing well.
- The audience will probably have some great ideas for topics.

Eyes Down, Eyes Up

The group stands in a circle. On the command 'Eyes Down', everyone looks at the floor. On the command 'Eyes Up', everyone must look up and make direct eye contact with someone else in the circle. They are not allowed to change eye direction or look at the ceiling. If the person they make direct eye contact with is also looking at them, both participants must say 'Fie on thee!' (from 'The Comedy of Errors'), die a dramatic death and sit or lie down. Continue saying 'Eyes Down, Eyes Up' until you have a winner or winners. This can be played with any number of participants.

- You can practise 'Fie on Thee' before the game by getting students to say it and point at another student across the circle.
- Make sure that those who are out keep quiet so that participants still playing can concentrate and hear the commands.

Family Portraits

Groups have just a few seconds to make comical family tableaux.

Divide the class into groups sitting on the floor. Explain that each group is going to take it in turns to show a family portrait by making a tableau (freeze-frame). You're going to call out the name of a type of family (see opposite page) and the group has to make the portrait while you count down from three – without talking. They should try to include different ages in the grouping – children, adults, babies, grandparents (and pets) – and try to show the relationships between some of the characters.

Choose a group to start and ask them to stand up. Call out a type of family and count down from three before calling "Freeze!" Ask them to hold the freeze for a few moments and then call out another family for the same group. The less thinking and talking they do, the better!

At this point you can ask all the groups to stand up. Call out different families for them to try. There are bound to be some amusing images, so you can ask some groups to show what they came up with.

Encourage players to look at what other people in their group are doing so that they make contrasting characters, show different expressions and use varying height levels to make an interesting stage picture (it's amazing what you can do in three seconds).

- After a few rounds, ask the groups to devise their own families for the rest of the class to guess.

Shakespearean Families:

Magical Fairies Family
Shipwrecked Family
The Feuding Capulet Family
Witches' Family

Other Families:

Worried family
Monster family
Over-excited family
Hamster family
Bored family
Spy family
Rock star family
Superhero family
Royal family
Teacher family
Jellyfish family
Clown family
Dentist family
Sleepy family
Olympic athlete family
Robot family
Ant family
Victorian family
Goldfish family
Dinosaur family
Ballet dancer family
Alien family
Circus family
Mad scientists

Freeze Frames

A freeze-frame/still image can be used to quickly establish a scene that involves several characters. Because there is no movement, a freeze-frame is easier to manage than a whole-group improvisation, yet can easily lead into extended drama activities. Images can be prepared by groups to show to one another. Or a theme can be given and students can step into the space one by one and establish still images in relation to one another until the tableau is complete.

Suggestions:

- Devise three or four freeze-frames to show key moments in a story.
- Use Thought-Tracking
- Bring the scene to life with Action Clip

- Show the freeze frames in the wrong order and see if the audience can work out the correct sequence.

Benefits:

- Discussion of story/theme
- Comprehension of key points
- Cooperation with group
- Physical communication - facial and bodily expression
- Easy for all participants, regardless of acting confidence
- Cut straight to the point - no messy improvisation
- Easy to add speech and action

Frog in the Pond

Everyone kneels in a circle. The leader explains the different positions:

Frog in the pond: Hands on the floor

Frog on the bank: Hands on shoulders

Frog in the tree: Hands on your head

Frog in space: Wave arms above head

The leader practises these commands until everyone has learnt the corresponding movements. In the next stage the leader explains that people must do what the leader says, not what he does. So the leader can say 'Frog in space' but put his hands on the floor, or 'Frog on the bank' but put his hands on his head. This is a silly but fun concentration game.

Fruit Salad

Everybody sits on chairs in a circle with one person in the centre (the "Pip"). Each player is given the name of one of four fruits (e.g. apple, banana, orange, kiwi). Pip calls out the name of a fruit and everyone with that name quickly moves to another chair – while Pip tries to sit down on an empty seat. This means that there will probably be a new player in the centre – a new "Pip".

Instead of calling out just one fruit name, Pip can say "Fruit Salad" – which means that everyone must get up and move. Players can get quite excited, so remind them to take care when playing this game.

- Explain that you can't sit down on an adjacent chair, or return to the seat you were on.
- You don't have to use fruit. Any theme will do, such as colours, animals or super-heroes.

Getting into Groups

This is a good game for practising simple numbers as well as categories.

It can sometimes be hard to break the class into smaller groups without somebody being left over, or the same people always working with each other – so why not make it into a game?

Call out a number, and people have to get into groups of that number. If they don't have enough in their group, they should make it look like there are the right number of people by spreading themselves out – making the group look bigger! The number can be as big or small as you like. Towards the end, pick a number that is the size of the group you want for the next exercise. Hopefully they will be fairly mixed up by then!

Can also be played with categories, e.g. month of birth, star sign, eye colour, number of siblings, musical instrument, type of house or flat you live in, number of pets owned, favourite season, type of shoes

Ghosting

Often when you give young actors a script to hold and read from in a rehearsal, all sense of play goes out of the window. Even for good readers it feels like a test. Ghosting liberates the actor from the page. At this stage of play, they don't need to know their lines, as they have a Ghost to tell them what to say.

Stage One: Hand out the scene and model a group read through. Ask for 2 volunteers but take away their scripts and give them each a 'ghost' assistant, who feeds them their lines. An appropriate delivery for the Ghosts is: quiet, pausing at punctuation, neutral in tone but with good articulation. The actors speak each line after it is given to them, paying attention to the other character rather than the Ghosts.

Stage Two: After going through the whole speech in this way, repeat the exercise with the Ghosts feeding the lines. But this time the actors must find their own modern language to convey the meaning of Shakespeare's text. If they get stuck at any point they can ask the group for help.

Stage Three: Play the scene again without the Ghosts, allowing the actors to use their own words. At this point encourage the actors to move more and to use the space.

Stage Four: Reintroduce the Ghosts and return to Shakespeare's text. Ask the actors to try to capture any moments they liked, or that the audience identified as engaging, whilst the actors were playing it in their own language.

This exercise is a playful way for students to find their own understanding of the text, and communicate fresh, engaging emotions to their audience. It takes time to do, but the finished product is worth it.

Giving Presents

A fast-moving game in which ideas are generated very quickly. In pairs, mime giving and receiving presents. The person giving the present must not decide what it is. The recipient should mime opening the present and only then say what it is. Don't pre-plan, just decide on the spur of the moment. Whatever it is, be really delighted and grateful – it is just what you have always wanted! Then quickly swap over and give a present back. Keep swapping over for a few minutes.

Use the game to practise simple language structures such as:

A: *I got this for you.*

B: *Thank you.*

B: (Opens present)

B: *It's just what I always wanted. Thank you so much.*

A: *You're welcome.*

Afterwards it is fun to go around the circle and find out some of the presents people received.

Guess Who?

Aim: To work out who you are

Everyone has the name of a famous person (fictional or real) stuck on to their back or forehead in a way that everyone can read the name except them. Sticky notes are a good way of doing this. By asking questions with yes/no answers, everyone has to work out who they are.

- Instead of people, use other categories such as jobs, objects or movie/book characters
- You can limit students to 20 questions

Here is a list of characters and objects from stories to start you off:

Pinocchio	Bambi	The goose that laid the
The witch from Hansel and Gretel	Alice in Wonderland	golden egg
Cinderella's slipper	White Rabbit	Sleeping Beauty
Red Riding Hood	Matilda	Ali Baba
Aladdin's lamp	Willy Wonka	Pied Piper
The beanstalk	Tin Man	Tintin
House of straw	Rapunzel's hair	Snowy
Lion King	Breadcrumbs	Goldilocks
Wizard of Oz	Harry Potter's wand	Gingerbread man
Mary Poppins	Puss in Boots	Thumbelina
		Ugly Duckling

Guess Who I Am

This is basically the character guessing activity from 3D Living Pictures. I usually start this by demonstrating to the class. I will secretly choose a character from the picture. I speak to the class as though I am that character and then see if they can guess who I am. After I have demonstrated, I ask the students to work in pairs. One of them chooses a character from the picture and speaks as that character for the other one to guess, and then they swop over. When they have all tried it you can ask them to show what they did to the rest of the class. They only have to speak a sentence or two, depending on their proficiency. 'Guess who I am' is great as in introduction to simple role playing and hot seating.

Hah!

In this game, everybody tries to make the same sound and movement at exactly the same time. To begin with, one person leads the group. Everybody stands perfectly still in a circle with their arms by their sides, facing towards the centre. When the group are focussed, the leader chooses a moment to make the sound and movement as follows: she takes a small step forwards, holding both hands out towards the centre of the circle and saying Hah! It is a short and sharp action and sound. Everybody else has to try and anticipate when this is going to happen, so that they make the sound and action at the same time – not afterwards.

Try it a few times with one person leading. After some practise, the group will start to sense when the leader is going to move. They are then ready to play the game with no leader, when the whole group has to try and sense the right moment. It is a challenging game, but can be achieved with the right degree of focus.

Hot-Seating

One of the best-known drama techniques, hot-seating is a powerful way of developing a character and eliciting questions from the group. In the traditional approach, the person playing the character sits on a chair in front of the group. Members of the group are then invited to ask questions. These can begin with simple facts such as name, age and occupation before moving on to more personal areas. It is helpful if the workshop leader takes on the role of facilitator to guide the questioning in constructive directions.

Sometimes the person being hot-seated may not know the answer to a question but it is usually possible to make up an imaginative response. For this reason it is not always necessary for those playing the characters to do much preparation. Hot-seating is not a test of knowledge but rather a way of developing ideas about the motivations of a character. It is surprising how much detail improvisers can come up with when they assume a role.

- Younger children can be hot-seated in pairs to give them confidence.
- Don't get bogged down in facts, but concentrate on personal feelings and observations instead.

Hot-Spotting

This is a version of hot-seating to use with freeze-frames. After thought-tracking in a freeze-frame, ask the audience if they have questions for any of the characters. The performers should stay in position in the freeze frame, but answer the questions in character. The advantages of this method are:

- Students are already in character
- They feel supported by the other actors in the freeze frame
- Questions are likely to be linked to a character's actions and motivations rather than 'in a void'

Human Bingo

Each person is given a sheet of paper set out in a grid like a bingo card. However, instead of numbers, each box contains a phrase relating to hobbies, interests or other personal information. A time-limit is given and everyone asks each other questions. When they find someone who fits one of the categories, they ask that person to write their name in the box. The winner is the first person to get a signature in every box or to gather the most names within the time-limit. You can make it a rule that each person can only sign one box on someone else's card. You will need to prepare the cards in advance and choose around 12 – 20 categories to suit the characteristics of the group members.

I Don't Believe You

How many of you like stories? How many of you like boring stories? Who can think of quite a boring way to start a story?

Get into pairs and label yourselves 'A' and 'B'. A starts to tell a story with a boring sentence, for example: *I went to the shops...*

After a short while B can say *I don't believe you!*

A should then change what just happened in the story.

B – your job is not to change everything but try to make the story more interesting.

Other starters:

It was a dark and foggy night...

Once upon a time

You'll never believe what happened to me!

Last week was my birthday

Imaginarium

An amusing and unpredictable way to explore ideas or develop a scene.

The players stand in a circle and a theme is announced. One person steps forward and makes a freeze frame of an object or character related to the theme. As well as making the shape, the student should announce what she is, for example if the theme is the beach, the player can say "I am a deck chair" or "I am a life-guard".

Other players add themselves into the scene by making objects or characters related to ones that are already there (announcing what they are each time). Everyone continues to hold their positions. The game ends when all players have stepped in or when enough ideas have been added. At this point the director says "Whoosh!" and the players step back to the edge of the circle.

Only one idea at a time should be added so that everyone can see and hear what is being included. Players should think about how their characters and objects relate to each other, how they can make interesting shapes and how they can use different levels (high, medium or low).

It's best if players don't plan but just keep throwing in new ideas. Instead of judging which objects and characters are 'best', try using the game as a brainstorming activity to create inspiring ideas for the teacher and students to choose from. It can be helpful to take photos of the finished stage picture for future reference.

- Two or more players can step in at the same time if they think of an object to make together.
- It can be helpful to take photos of the finished stage picture for future reference.
- A soundscape can be created by the characters/objects.
- Use thought-tracking to find out what characters/objects are thinking.
- Ask players to add one or two adjectives to describe what they are.
- The game can be used to revise a topic, or create ideas for writing.
- If you have a large group, it's not necessary for everybody to step in - in fact it's nice to have an audience. Those who didn't take part can be the first to play in the next game.

Choose a theme from a play you are working on or try one of these:

Beach, rainforest, outer space, under the sea, kitchen, museum, classroom, restaurant, bravery, friendship, a dream, royal palace, city street, toy box, Romeo in Juliet's garden at night, a detective story, circus, heaven, pirate ship etc.

It is also fun to play the game without a theme: Anyone starts by making a random object or character. Other people add objects related to the first one, for example a flower, bee, grass, worm, hungry bird and so on. Continue until you are happy with the number of people in the tableau. At this point you can just say 'Whoosh!' to clear the space and a new sequence can begin.

Imaging the Text

By interpreting words through movement, students develop understanding of a text and put it into their physical memory.

Choose a script extract and divide it into short sections (e.g. couplets or four lines) to distribute to pairs or small groups. Students should underline what for them are the key words or phrases in the extract. Ask why they have chosen them – what made those words stand out? Can one of them demonstrate a gesture, shape or movement to go with one of the key words?

Next, each group finds a way to perform the lines, speaking chorally or breaking the line up between them as they move through the images. When the groups are ready, play back the whole speech by watching the groups perform in order. The exercise is not about showing the story, but physically interpreting abstract images, meaning and emotions.

Egeus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJP9wjiIXFA>

Romeo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kwFpiqQVfEg>

Line Up

This can be a whole group activity or an inter-group competition. Leaders will give the instruction for groups to line up in a particular way and each group should get in a line as quickly as possible. The twist is that they must do it in silence. Group members can't speak to one another but must communicate to get into the correct line. When the group is lined up appropriately all group members should clap to indicate they have completed the task.

Variations: Use this activity periodically throughout a long session or you can ask groups to come up with their own way of letting you know they're ready. (We have had groups yell, hum a song, put up their hands, etc.) This can add a lot of fun to the activity.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Line up by first name in alphabetical order.
2. Line up by surname in alphabetical order.
3. Line up in order by shoe size.
4. Size of thumb
5. Length of hair
6. Number of letters in your name
7. Colour of your top
8. Line up by house number, smallest to largest
9. Line up in order by the number of bones you've ever broken.
10. Line up in order by number of pets owned.

Magic Microphone

Use a felt-tip pen (with the cap on) or a pencil to interview characters in a freeze frame or scene. A bit like thought-tracking.

Make Me A...

The students get into groups of 5 or 6. Clap your hands and ask them to "Make me a..." while you count down from five.

A proud family... A street fight... A Shipwreck... A Spooky forest... A Magician casting a spell to make a storm... A Battlefield... A Roman temple... A tree in which a magic spirit has been trapped... A group of people planning a surprise attack.

Movie Trailer

Explain that the students are going to work on an advertising trailer for a new movie of a Shakespeare story.

- Talk about genre.
- Discuss key elements of a trailer
- Identify key points in the story which they would like to show in their trailer
- Add sound effects, music and movement if necessary
- Don't forget to announce the title and author of the play.

Non-Verbal Sentences

There are two versions of this game:

Version One

Give each pair of students a sentence or phrase on a card and ask them to prepare a freeze frame showing one person communicating the phrase to their partner - non-verbally. They should use as much body language and facial expression as possible, but no speech. When they are ready, ask each pair to show their freeze frame while the rest of the class try to guess the phrase. If necessary, you can display the list of phrases while students are guessing.

Version Two

Partner A has to communicate a phrase to partner B. Explain that person A is a visitor to a foreign country where they can't speak the language. Partner B is a native of that country who finds it difficult to understand the visitor. Partner A should try to communicate the phrase through body language and facial expression, with no speaking allowed. The pair should rehearse a short improvisation to share with the class.

Examples:

1. Go away!
2. It's all your fault.
3. Will you marry me?
4. Can you tell me the way to the railway station?
5. Turn left.
6. Please could you help me?
7. You must be quiet.
8. Don't interrupt me!
9. I'm so excited!
10. This sucks.
11. I need a doctor.
12. Can you tell me the way to the cinema?
13. Where are the nearest toilets?
14. How much is this?
15. It's so embarrassing
16. I think I just saw a ghost

where is the hospital/I need somewhere to stay/My phone is dead/How much does it cost/I don't understand/Where is the nearest hotel/We are lost/There's a fly in my soup/Can I buy a return ticket/Someone has stolen my passport/Can you tell me the way to the railway station?/Please could you help me?/My friend needs a doctor/Do you know the way to the cinema?

One Line Express

This activity introduces the idea that there is no one right way to say the line. It brings characters to life in the room.

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Give everyone a short line of text. It's important to stress that it doesn't matter if people don't understand their line at first because they might find out what it means by exploring this process. Work with a line you don't know. Work on your own. Don't worry about other people.

Start by asking participants to walk around the space murmuring the line in order to get used to how the words feel in their mouths.

The next stage is to try the line in different styles. Participants are asked as a group to pronounce their lines in any of the following ways:

- Imagine there are people hidden in the walls. Walk to a fixed point and whisper the line urgently to an imaginary character as a matter of life and death.
- Highlight the vowels (lose the consonants)
- Speak only the consonants
- Same balance of vowels and consonants
- An over the top, hammy actor. Push to a "10". Out-ham the others.
- Tell the line to someone at the top of a mountain. Use the body for each and every word.
- Whisper the line to an imaginary person as if it is a secret.
- As if they are a market trader using their line of text to sell their wares
- Now as if they are using their line of text to tell a story to a young child
- The next stage is to walk around the room and build the line one word at a time. Go back if it doesn't feel truthful.

To,

To be,

To be or,

To be or not, etc.

- Choose most important word (for now) and make a gesture to go with it.
- Say whole line and walk to fixed point. Make the gesture then move on.
- Find the right place in the room to say the line:
- Close your eyes and imagine 3 things:
 - 1) who you are
 - 2) who you are speaking to
 - 3) how you want them to feel/what you want them to do

The teacher taps people on the shoulder to speak line out loud. That person opens their eyes to speak. The rest of the group, still with eyes closed, listen to the delivery of the lines. Most important is the listening. At first tap people so they are overlapping then speaking on their own.

One-Two-Three

This pair game develops focus and communication skills and is a useful step towards other drama activities. Students can sit or stand for the first part of the game. It's a good idea to demonstrate each stage with a partner.

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Working in pairs, face each other. Start counting from one to three between yourselves, over and over, for about 30 seconds.

A: 'One'
B: 'Two'
A: 'Three'
B: 'One'
A: 'Two'
B: 'Three'

Make sure that you ask one or two pairs to share what they are doing with the rest of the class in between each stage. It's a lot of fun, especially when people make a mistake!

Now that you've got the hang of that part you're ready for the next stage. We'll do the same thing again, but instead of saying the number 'one', clap your hands. You should still say 'two' and 'three' aloud.

A: (Claps hands)
B: 'Two'
A: 'Three'
B: (Claps hands)
A: 'Two'
B: 'Three'

Now that everyone has mastered that, the next step is that instead of saying 'three', you should bend your knees. You should still clap your hands for the number 'one' and say the number 'two'. So you'll need to stand up.

A: (Claps hands)
B: 'Two'
A: (Bends knees)
B: (Claps hands)
A: 'Two'
B: (Bends knees)

Tips:

- Make sure you allow time to encourage pairs to show everybody else how they are doing after each step. It's fun watching people trying to concentrate, especially if it goes a bit wrong!
- You can also use this game to practise words and phrases. After teaching the actions for one and three, explain to the students that you need something to replace the number two. You can give out a card to each pair with random words on such as "umbrella", "guitar" and "bicycle" or a set of words related to a theme. Each pair must then think of an action to go with their word and practise the game with the previous actions as well. This is not impossible - it is great fun! Then each pair can show what they have created to the rest of the class.

- It is also fun to use short phrases such as "cup of tea", "can I help you?" and "how do you do?"

Open and Close

When groups have devised a series of *Freeze Frames*, Open and Close provides a very effective way of presenting them. Let's say that the groups have devised a short story told in three key images. Once they have decided on their images they should practice moving from one to the next.

When the time comes for sharing the work, the audience members sit in front of the first group and close their eyes. When the players have their first still image ready, the workshop leader says "Open". The audience open their eyes for a few moments and look carefully at the scene. When they have had time to look at everything, the leader says, "Close" and the audience close their eyes again. The group moves quickly and quietly into the second image and then the audience are asked to open their eyes. The process is repeated until all the images have been shown. This creates the amazing effect of looking at a series of photographs or a three-dimensional flip-book – which has to be seen to be believed!

- The process enables the group and the audience to focus on the important images rather than the shuffling movement between them.
- For extra dramatic effect play some atmospheric music while groups show their images. For example, silent movie music would be good for a sequence based on the Victorians.

Person to Person

For breaking down inhibitions, mixing up the students and teaching parts of the body.

Students stand in the space. Explain that when you call out 'person to person', everyone should find a new partner. Try this a few times, quite quickly. Now tell them that when you call out two parts of the body, partners should connect them together. For example: finger to nose. Begin with easy ones and move on to challenging (and possibly slightly embarrassing ones). In between, say 'person to person' so that students are changing partners quite often and have less time to feel embarrassed.

Suggestions: finger to nose, elbow to shoulder, little finger to big toe, back to back, middle finger to middle of the back, side by side, knees to knees, tummy to tummy, ear to knee, palm to ankle, ring finger to elbow, knuckles to chin, sole to sole, bottom to bottom, shin to chin...

Variation: To help break the ice, ask the students to make the sounds of different animals as they are walking around.

Role On The Wall

A large or life-size outline of a body (this can be as simple as a gingerbread man) is drawn on a sheet of paper, which can later be displayed on the wall. This is often done by carefully drawing around one of the participants lying on the sheet of paper. Alternatively you can project an image onto the paper and draw around the silhouette.

Words or phrases describing the character are written directly onto the drawing by the teacher and pupils or attached with sticky notes. You can include known facts such as physical appearance, age, family, location and occupation as well as subjective ideas such as personality, likes/dislikes, friends/enemies, attitudes, motivations, secrets and dreams.

- The strategy works well in combination with other approaches such as hot seating.

Say It Again, Sam

Play around with any lines from a play or course book dialogue with this game. Try playing with them in pairs first and then as a group stand in a circle.

A: To be or not to be?

B: That is the question

MACBETH: This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH: A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Or this example from a Course Book:

A: Do you want me to help you with anything?

B: I'd really appreciate it

A: I've completely forgotten your name

B: Don't worry, I'm sure you'll remember it

One person chooses someone across the circle, crosses over to him and says the line in any way they like. The speaker reacts and replies as appropriate. The two people swap places and the second player now crosses to a third, speaking the line in a different way. The aim is to put different emphases on the words each time - to find different ways of playing the lines. Players can be given different emotions to express through the lines or they can just come up with their own way each time. You can make the line have a different meaning simply by stressing a different word each time.

Sculptor and Statue

Divide the class into pairs. The sculptor has to mould their partner into a statue to represent a chosen theme. The statue should start off in a neutral position and the sculptor should move them carefully into position. You can show the facial expression you would like using your own face. You can give out cards to pupils with titles on them, or ask them to think of their own idea.

- When they are finished the sculptors can walk round the "exhibition" and try to guess what the statues represent.
- You can use various themes, for example hobbies, occupations, actions, emotions, famous people, characters from a story, people from different countries.

The Shepherd and the Stone

This drama session is based on '*The Shepherd and the Stone*' from '*Stories For A Fragile Planet*' and uses several drama games and techniques.

- (i) A *soundscape* of the rainforest is created by the group.
- (ii) The group make *Ten Second Objects* related to the story, e.g. a jewel, shepherd and flock, range of mountains, forest, diamond mine.
- (iii) The group are given extracts of the story and devise *short scenes or freeze frames* relating to each extract.
- (iv) The teacher reads the story and the students *mime the scenes* for each part.
- (v) In groups, work on *Role on the Wall* for the shepherd.
- (vi) *Hot seating* – Interview one member of each group in role as the shepherd.

Slap, Clap, Click, Click

Stand or sit in a circle. The leader begins a 4/4 rhythm, which everybody joins in with:

- One – slap both hands on thighs
- Two – clap hands together
- Three – click fingers of right hand
- Four – click fingers of left hand.

Give a number to everybody around the circle from "One" to however many there are. Get the rhythm going again. One person begins by saying their own number on the third beat and somebody else's number on the fourth beat. Whoever's number was called on the fourth beat calls their own number on the third beat of the next bar and somebody else's number on the fourth. So it could go like this:

- Slap – clap – six – ten
- Slap – clap – ten – seven
- Slap – clap – seven – two

And so on. If and when a mistake is made, stop the game and begin again. Emphasise the steadiness of the beat. You could also try giving everybody a word from a particular category instead of a number.

Slide Show

Ask each group to prepare a presentation on a particular theme. One of them will be the presenter and the others will "be" the slide show. The presenter has an imaginary remote-control which he presses to show the next slide. As the presenter goes through the speech, the other group members have to jump into position to make a tableau each time the remote-control is pressed. This should not be too thoroughly rehearsed as the element of surprise makes the presentation more entertaining. The ideas should be developed both by the presenter and the actors making the slides, who can add visual ideas to carry the story along.

Suggested themes:

- ★ A recipe
- ★ A vacation slide show
- ★ A natural history documentary
- ★ A history lecture on a famous event

Soundscapes

Students create the atmosphere of a scene or environment by making appropriate sounds with their bodies and voices. Musical instruments, physical objects and recordings can also be used.

Select a theme such as the seaside, a city or a jungle. Sit the pupils in a group and ask them for examples of sounds that might be heard in this environment. Explain that the group is going to create a picture using sound – using their voices (and body percussion if appropriate!) The teacher (or a confident student) acts as conductor whilst the students are the “human orchestra”. The conductor controls the overall shape of the soundscape by raising her hand to increase the volume or bringing it to touch the floor for silence. Sections of the group can be faded in and out as appropriate so that all the sounds are heard.

Status Images

To introduce this activity, you can ask the students to walk around the room showing different statuses – high, low, very low, very high. Now in pairs, create a still image where one of you has a higher status than the other. Show your image to the others and let them guess who is “high” and who is “low”. Discuss why there may be areas of disagreement. Make another image showing high and low status in a different way. Try to make an image where you have equal status and see if the onlookers agree!

Stop, Go, Jump, Clap

Students walk around the room. The teacher asks them to do four simple actions: stop, go, jump and clap. The teacher starts simply, using these instructions one at a time. Once students are confident with the instructions, the teacher starts to use the instructions in combination, for example, ‘stop, jump, clap, clap’. Finally, just when the students think they have ‘got it’, tell them that the instructions now mean the opposite of what they really mean. So ‘Go’ means ‘Stop’, ‘Jump’ means ‘Clap’ and so on. This usually causes much hilarity and head-scratching.

Stop, Go, Jump, Clap, Show Me

This is an extended version of the previous game, used to explore characters, emotions and actions.

Students walk around the room. The teacher asks them to do four simple actions: stop, go, jump and clap. The teacher starts simply, using these instructions one at a time. Once students are confident with the instructions, the teacher starts to use the instructions in combination, for example, ‘stop, jump, clap, clap, jump, go’.

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The command 'Show me' is added after 'Stop' with the name or description of a character (fictional or real) to show as a freeze-frame. You can also use occupations, emotions and actions. Encourage students to use facial expressions and their whole body.

Show me:

- *Dracula, an evil villain, Sherlock Holmes, Wonder Woman, Harry Potter*
- *Astronaut, bull fighter, dog trainer, firefighter, hairdresser, plumber, spy*
- *Amazed, depressed, angry, nervous, proud, in love, confused, shocked, terrified*
- *Driving, golfing, knitting, playing piano, skiing, washing dishes, writing*

You can also ask the students to move and act as the character/emotion after they have made the statue. Can they jump/clap in character?

Once they have made a few characters, can they slowly transform from one character to another on the count of five?

Afterwards find out if pairs managed to communicate their issue. Ask some pairs to show their improvisations and see if the audience can guess the situation.

Storytelling Whoosh!

A story is acted out by all the participants as it is narrated.

The whole group stands or sits in a circle. Explain that everybody will have the opportunity to participate in the telling of a story by becoming characters or objects. All they have to do is step into the space and mime some action or make a still image. Sometimes they will be given words to speak. If at any time you say "Whoosh!" and wave your arms, they should clear the space by returning to their places.

Begin telling the story and as soon as a key character, event or object is mentioned, signal to one of the participants to step into the circle to become the character or make a still image. If more than one character is mentioned then more players can step in together. An object can also be made by several people – for example a forest.

As more characters or objects are introduced, pick players from all around the circle so that everybody takes part at some point. This means that different members of the group may get to play the same character at various times and everyone gets a chance at trying different roles regardless of gender. The story continues to be told with more players stepping in as required so that a scene is quickly built up. Characters can interact with one another and speak improvised dialogue or lines from a play. This can be done with you reading the line and the character repeating it.

Any time that the activity inside the circle becomes too lively, congested or confused, simply wave your arms, say "Whoosh!" and everyone returns to their original places to become members of the audience again. It's like wiping the slate clean. The story continues to be told with characters and objects stepping into the space as required. You can say "Whoosh!" as many times as necessary during the story – it's a very useful secret weapon!

Participants will listen to, take part in and most of all remember the story because they help to tell it. The strategy can be used for simple or complex stories – ideally there should be plenty of characters and lots of action. For this reason the approach is often used by the Royal Shakespeare Company in workshops. I would also recommend using Greek myths, fairy tales and traditional stories from different cultures.

RSC video: of Whoosh: <https://youtu.be/1ANp0cbRasU>

Ten Second Objects

Divide the class into small groups of around 4 - 6 students. When you call out the name of an object all the groups have to make its shape out of their own bodies, joining together in different ways while you count down slowly from ten to zero. Usually every group will find a different way of forming the object.

Encourage groups to observe how they can use different levels with their body shapes, i.e. high, medium and low. Once students get the hang of this activity they can be given a couple of minutes to devise an object of their own that the rest of the class try to guess. They can add movement and sounds if appropriate (younger children will tend to do this anyway).

Just about any object can be made in this way, including objects from a theme you are exploring, a play you are rehearsing, a story you have told or are about to tell. Objects can be any shape or size and can include locations, environments, letters of the alphabet, words, numbers and so on. You may want to take some photos as many of the shapes will look quite ingenious and will serve as a reminder of the learning experience if displayed on the wall.

Here are some popular ideas to get you started: a car, a cuckoo clock, a fried breakfast, a washing machine, a famous work of art, a volcano.

Thought Tracking

Once students have made a tableau, explain that when you tap them on the shoulder you would like them to speak the thoughts or feelings of their character aloud. At the beginning this may just be one or two words but students will soon gain confidence to express themselves in longer sentences.

Two Truths and a Lie

Variation:

Duration: 20mins

1. The group is split up into smaller groups of 3-4 people. Each person then introduces themselves to the other members of the group, then all but one of them thinks of a strange thing they do/have done; the other group member thinks up a lie about him/herself. Each group member then stands in a line and gives their statement to the other groups, e.g:

I have been teaching for 10 years.

I have a pet newt called, "Isaac Newt."

I lived in Switzerland for a year.

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2. Each of the other groups may then ask ONE "lie detector" question (directed at one of the members of the group standing) to get further information, in order to determine which statement is false.

For example:

- Teaching - Where have you taught? What have you taught?
What year did you start?
- Pet - What does Isaac eat? Where do you keep Isaac?
- Switzerland - Where did you live in Switzerland? What language was spoken in that part of Switzerland?

3. The other groups then vote on which statement is a lie. The group standing then reveals which one of the statements is a lie! If any of the other groups got this correct then they receive one point.

We Tube

A bite-sized way of delivering a presentation

Talk about a few categories of videos where there is a presenter such as video tutorials, cooking demonstrations and nature documentaries. Explain that each group will present a short 'video' as a performance. There will be one presenter and the others will perform the video, being whatever is needed, whether it is objects, animals or people. The group should discuss the idea or story and decide who will be the presenter. This should not be too thoroughly rehearsed as the element of surprise makes the presentation more entertaining. The ideas should be developed both by the presenter and the actors performing the video, who can add suggestions to carry the story along.

Suggested themes:

- A recipe
- A vacation
- A natural history documentary
- Looking after a pet
- A history lecture on a famous event
- A popular science show
- A section from a course book

What Are You Doing?

The following activity is not only fun, but is also a painless way to explore the present continuous! It works well if it follows a lesson on hobbies, occupations or everyday activities. It begins to introduce some simple language along with actions, which will help to reinforce vocabulary.

Stand in a circle. The first person starts miming an activity. The person to their left says "What are you doing?". The person miming the activity has to keep acting and at the same time say the name of a different activity - in the present continuous. For example, if they were "eating

an apple", they could say "playing the piano". The second person then starts "playing the piano".

The first person stops their mime. Now the third person asks the second, "What are you doing?". The second person keeps "playing the piano" and names a different activity which the third person must mime. Advanced students: There should be no repetition and no similar activities. For example if you are miming "climbing a ladder", you cannot say "climbing the stairs".

Where Do you Stand?

A fast and effective way of discovering everybody's opinions about a subject.

Set up two chairs a long way apart and put a sign on them saying 'Agree' and 'Disagree' or 'Yes' and 'No'. Read out a statement and ask everybody to choose a place to stand in between the chairs that they feel represents their view. The nearer they stand to one of the chairs, the stronger the opinion they are expressing. Those who don't know, are open-minded or don't want to say can move towards the middle. Emphasise that everybody's point of view will be respected and encourage each person to decide for themselves. Give them a few moments to make their decision.

Once they have chosen their spot you can ask individuals why they chose to stand where they are. Gather a few opinions from different places in the continuum. Next you can ask if anyone would like to change position now that they have heard differing points of view. Ask those who change their positions why they did so.

Like the well-known strategy *Conscience Alley*, the approach can be used to explore a decision faced by a character or more general moral dilemmas.

Here are some ideas for statements you could use:

- I prefer cats to dogs
- Precious jewels are more valuable than trees
- It's OK to borrow something from a friend without asking them
- If you are entitled to vote, you should do so
- Honesty is the best policy

The activity can be applied to test comprehension of texts in course books. Many books contain true/false exercises which can be easily used.

The game can also be adapted for curricular subjects, for example:

- Henry VIII was a good King
- Nuclear energy is better than renewable energies
- Physical activity is better than diet when you want to lose weight
- Weight and mass on the moon is greater than on the earth
- I would prefer to live in Ancient Sparta than in Ancient Athens
- If people think the government is wrong about something, they should say so

- The Big Bang is the origin of the universe

Who's Telling the Truth?

Divide into groups of three or four. Each group should choose a true anecdote that has happened to one person in the group. Each member of the group learns the story and then has to make up a slightly different version. When they are ready each member of the group tells the story to the other groups. Once the stories have been told, people who were listening can ask three questions of each storyteller. They then vote on who they think was telling the truth.

Word Tennis

In this word-association game, participants have to keep thinking up words in a chosen category and 'bat' them to each other. Whoever repeats a word or can't think of one is out, and somebody else takes his or her place. You can demonstrate with two participants and then play in teams of four or five.

Each team forms a queue facing another team. The two players at the head of each line play each other until one of them can't think of a word – or repeats an earlier word. That person goes to the back of the line and the next player takes their place. Ask the players to mime batting the words to each other – it's more fun with actions.

Categories

colours
fruit
vegetables
sea creatures
flavours of ice cream
fairy tales
pets
jungle animals
desserts
celebrities
sports
hobbies
capital cities
adverbs
adjectives

- Change the categories as often as you need to maintain interest. Students will soon come up with their own interesting suggestions for new themes.
- For language learners you can put word lists on display around the space.
- If necessary give a word limit for each person so that everyone gets a turn – otherwise someone who is really good could keep going while the other team members wait to have a turn.

Yes, Let's!

Whole group game. One person starts with a suggested action - "Let's play the piano", for example. Everyone else shouts, "Yes, let's!" and the whole group carries out the action with as much enthusiasm as possible. After a while someone else can suggest a new action - "Let's be spies!" - "Yes, let's!" The aim is for the whole group to fully commit to the activity. Try not to rush too quickly from one activity to the next - explore each one for a while.

Zombie Walk

Stand in a circle. One person (A) starts by making eye-contact with someone else (B) across the circle. When B notices the eye-contact, he should give his permission by saying 'Yes'. A starts to walk towards B slowly holding her arms out in front like a zombie. B must quickly make eye-contact with someone else (C) across the circle. When he gets permission (with a 'yes), he starts walking towards C before A reaches him. Zombies are not allowed to walk unless they have permission. If the zombie catches you, you are dead (although of course zombies are already dead).

It takes a few attempts before people get the hang of it. Eye contact must be made very clearly. One thing that can go wrong is that B starts walking before she has got C's attention and received a "yes". People panic because they have said "yes" and somebody is walking to take their place.

- To make sure everybody gets a turn, ask each person to stand with their arms folded once they have crossed the circle

Books

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