



THEATRE GAMES



These theatre games may be used by the teacher or the drama mentor as needed to facilitate the process.

Objectives: The Students will be able to:

Vocabulary
Characterization
Stage left
Stage Right
Center Stage
Upstage
Downstage
conflict
Objective tactics
Foils resolution

- Create something out of nothing.
- Work as a *COMMUNITY*
- Learn the *names* of their classmates
- Exercise group *focus*
- *Risk* in a safe environment
- Understand *Characterization* and implement it
- Understand *stage directions* and a brief history of the stage.
- Understand the meaning and use of *gestures*.
- Practice their persuasive *writing skills*
- Understand the terms *conflict, objective, tactics, and foils*

Approximate lesson length: See individual games for length

Materials needed: Refer to each game; but always have creativity and imagination!

Cross-curricular objectives: Music, Drama, English

Process: Games 1-3 are getting to know you/build community relationship games to be played in the beginning of the process. Select one or two. Games 4-6 should be played to CREATE as a community; choose one at the beginning of the process. Games 7- 10 help in the staging process; utilize age appropriately. **Number 11** is full of rehearsal **warm-ups** and **activities** to bring focus to the practicing process. The theatre games in the **UFO-YP section** bring further depth for older students.

1. Name Game! -5 minutes

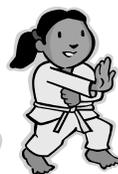
Purpose: Get to know names and something about each person. Understand how pantomime and gesture communicate ideas. Develops action!

a) Gather students in a circle. Have each student say their name and do a gesture for each syllable. The action should be simple and can demonstrate a hobby, interest they have or something that they do everyday. Example: I say “Pam-e-la” and gesture a paddle stroke on each side of my body- one stroke per syllable- to show I like to canoe. At first everyone should create and do their action at the same time.

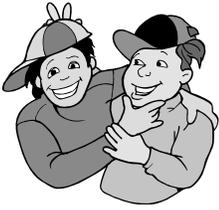


b) Then, each student says their name individually and demonstrates the gesture and everyone repeats the name and gesture. Repeat the process around the circle until all have shared their name and gesture.

c) If time allows or at another time have those who wish to challenge their memory demonstrate all the names and gestures for everyone.



2. "Do You Love Your Neighbor?" -10 Minutes



Purpose: Aids with focus as the students must pay attention. It encourages action and helps to acquaint the students with each other.

- a) Arrange chairs in a circle; one chair per person playing, minus one.
- b) One person stands in the middle of the circle and approaches a person sitting in the circle and asks: "Do you love your neighbor?"
- c) If that person answers: "Yes, I love my neighbor," the two people sitting on either side of him/her, quickly tries to exchange seats before the person in the middle sits in one of their chairs.
- d) If they answer "No," they continue with, example: "But, I love everyone who has brown eyes". Everyone in the circle with brown eyes finds a new chair.

3. "Slap, Slap, Clap, Snap" – 10 Minutes

Purpose: Getting to know you game and rhythm recognition

- a) Sit on the floor in a big circle.
- b) One person starts the action: "Slap, Slap, Clap, Snap." This is done by patting one's legs with both hands, clapping in front of you, and then snapping with both hands. Do it several times until everyone in the circle is comfortable with the rhythm.
- c) The leader then calls out the name of a person in the "snap," and that person has to call out a different name on the next snap, etc.
- d) Any time the rhythm is broken, the person who broke the rhythm is out. The person sitting next to the one who missed should start the rhythm again. Repeats it several times until everyone is comfortable with it, and on "snap" calls out a name, etc.
- e) When everyone gets comfortable with the game, increase the fun by speeding up the rhythm.



4. THE MACHINE – 5 minutes

Purpose: Working as a community to create something new! Develops creativity, concentration, and group cooperation.

- a) Start with one student making a noise and a simple repeatable gesture.
- b) When the student has a rhythm and another student has an idea for a movement which connects to the first gesture that student joins the first student by making a new noise and movement which connects to the original gesture.
- c) Each student joins in with a new noise and gesture and connects to the others in some way until all students are involved in creating the machine.

Evaluation:

- 1 What did you imagine the machine you created was?
2. What was your part in making it?
3. How could we make the machine better?
4. Was it difficult to keep your concentration until everyone was creating the machine?

VARIATION: Decide on a type of machine and then have everyone create it together- everyone starts at the same time.

5. CREATIVE PAPER - 5 Minutes

Purpose: Individual creativity –creating something from nothing and connectivity game.



- a) Hand out one sheet of blank paper to each student.
- b) Ask each student to fold their paper into something.
- c) Use the “something” they created to demonstrate what it is. First- all at once as a group.
- d) If time allows each student can show their object and action and the others can guess what it is they have created. Followed by finding commonalities in the objects they created or a common purpose to use them. Evaluation:
 - b) Did all students participate?
 - c) Was there enthusiasm?
 - d) Were students doing their own work?
 - e) Did this game encourage creativity, safety, & community in the classroom?

6. “NOT WHAT IT SEEMS” – 25 Minutes **Purpose:** Creativity



- a) Have a few different objects (i.e. household objects) set up.
- b) Explain to students that they will come up in front of the group and use that object in a way it’s not usually used (i.e. using a fork for a comb etc.) without using words if possible.

This game works well for large groups: Split them into smaller groups and have at least one object for each group and repeat the same process.

Evaluation:

- f) Did all students participate?
- g) Was there enthusiasm?
- h) Were students doing their own work?
- i) Did this game encourage creativity, safety, & community in the classroom?



7. Mirrors! -5-10 minutes

**Focus,
Concentration and
Movement**

Purpose: Focus and understanding of the give and take of creativity and action on stage.

- a) Pair each student. If you have an odd number of students you as leader may have a partner.
- b) Each pair faces one another while standing.

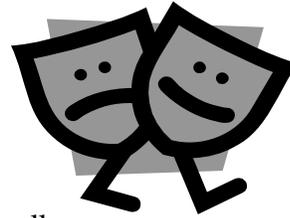
Assign one of the pair to be the leader and one to be the follower

- c) The leader should make slow deliberate movements that the follower can easily mirror.
- d) Switch the follower to leader and vice versa. Repeat.
- c) Switch again but have the leader increase the pace.
- d) Switch again and increase the pace once more
- e) Now call NO LEADER. The pair must focus and feel together what movement they would like to make.
- f) Evaluate with the students the ease of the process or difficulty. “What worked?”

8. “Character Walking” – 5 Minutes Purpose: Characterization/Creativity

Characterization

- a) Once you have chosen the characters for your opera, ask the children to gather into a circle.
- b) All together walk in a circle.
- c) Say the name of a character and ask students to walk as that character would walk.
- d) Change character and repeat until all characters have been used.



NOTE – you may also do this activity as “**Emotions Walking**”. Have the students show an emotion on their body as they walk around the circle. You can also have students come up to the front of the classroom one by one (or in groups) to demonstrate a character or an emotion by walking across the front of the room. The other students then guess what they were trying to portray. This is enjoyed by the students but does take more time and doesn’t include everyone at once, but is useful in preparation for **or** in auditions.

Evaluation:

- 1) Did this exercise increase the students understanding of characterization through movement?
- 2) Did all students participate?
- 3) Was there enthusiasm?

9. “Stage Directions” – 5 Minutes Purpose: Understanding the space for *Staging*

- a) Talk briefly to students about stage history and layout. i.e. Hundreds of years ago, stages were raked (meaning the back of the stage was higher than the front) and the audience space was flat. This was done so that the audience could see the actors more easily.
- b) Draw a stage on the board. With the previous information in mind...have students guess what each area of the stage was called (i.e. Upstage, Downstage, Center Stage, Stage Right, and Stage Left).
- c) Label each area as the students name them correctly.



- d) Ask a volunteer* to come to the front of the classroom. Have the volunteer face the other students (call them the audience).
- e) Now, ask the student to take one step to Stage Right. If correct, ask student to step back to Center Stage and repeat this process with all of the directions. Evaluation:

Upstage
Downstage
Center
Stage
Stage
Right
Stage Left

- 1) Did the students seem to grasp the concept of stage directions?
- 2) Did all students participate?
- 3) Were the students interested in this activity?
- 4) Do you feel that this activity will assist future staging?

(*It is also fun to have the whole class stand and follow the previous exercise together.)

10. A K-1 Game: “Doggie, Doggie, who has the Bone?”- 5-10 minutes

Purpose: Gain concentration and action skills in younger participants.

a) Students are in a circle and there is a bone in the center of the circle. One student is also in the center with the bone and plays the “doggie”

b) The “doggie” closes it’s eyes and someone takes the bone. All in the circle call out:

“**Doggie, Doggie, who has the bone?**” the “doggie must guess who has the bone. If the “doggie is correct the one holding the bone becomes the new “doggie” and the process repeats until all have had a turn or time for the game runs out.



11. Rehearsal Warm-ups!

1. Tongue twisters:

Purpose: To concentrate on the use of the articulation muscles and tools in the mouth. Focus on good diction and working the mouth broadly when forming the words (A few suggested tongue twisters):



🗨️ I thought a thought.
But the thought I thought wasn't the thought
I thought I thought.

🏆 One-One was a racehorse.
Two-Two was one, too.
When One-One won one race,
Two-Two won one, too.

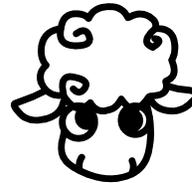


👄 Say this sharply, say this sweetly,
Say this shortly, say this softly.
Say this sixteen times very quickly.



♦ Rubber Baby Buggy Bumpers! (Repeat. Increase the tempo.)

🐏 Silly Sally swiftly shooed seven silly sheep.
The seven silly sheep Silly Sally shooed
Shilly-shallied south.
These sheep shouldn't sleep in a shack;
Sheep should sleep in a shed.



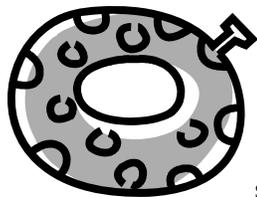
VARIATIONS: Ideas to replace tongue twisters-

△ Once the class has created the libretto, pick a phrase or two from their own work and have them repeat these sentences!

🎵 Singing a song that can stand alone out of their opera is also a great warm-up!

2. Stretches:

➤ Stretch and bend while singing conflict lines from the opera. Each student may sing the part of their choice. Any “yoga” stretch will work or movement that the students create. Breathe in when stretching or extending breathe out when bending or releasing.



3. Breathing:

☛ Have the students form their lips into small Cheerios© size holes and slowly breath in air through the mouth (expanding the lungs) while you count to ten. Have the students hold their breath for ten counts and then slowly release the breath through their teeth making a hissing “s” sound.

4. Mirrors and character walking/ emotion walking are great ways to warm-up (refer to page 23)!

5. “Thought Tracking Tableau”-1 minute

Purpose: to bring focus to difficult moments in the practice process. This helps the performers identify what is missing and what is working in the scene.

- have the students practice the difficult section
- When they get to a tricky part call out “FREEZE”
- While the performers are “frozen” (holding very still) tap a performer on the head which is the cue for them to tell what their character is thinking at that moment of action.
- Repeat until all of the performers have shared their inner thoughts.

This helps the performers understand how their actions relate with the others in the scene. It also helps to have a tableau so that they performers can evaluate if the audience can see all the performers at any given time.

UFO-YP: (Ideal Activities For Older Students)

1. Juliet & Lord Capulet – 30+ Minutes Purpose: Creative Writing Dialogue

- Count students off in pairs
- Assign one’s to be Juliet and two’s to be Lord Capulet
- First Juliet writes a letter to her father explaining why he should let her go on a date with Romeo – she/he has one minute to do so (have a designated timer)



- d) Next the father has one minute to respond to this letter and must say “no” and explain his reasons.



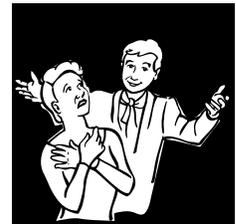
- 1st time Father says no
- 2nd encourage Juliet to choose a different tactic
- 3rd Father’s answer’s still no
- 4th Juliet different tactic
- 5th Father may either say yes or no – but must give a defense of the decision.

2. PERFORM DIALOGUES FOR THE CLASS

Purpose: Improvisational activity

*CONFLICT/RESOLUTION – 30+ Minutes

Explain and engage in improvisational activity:



Conflict
Foil
Tactic
Objective
Resolution

- a) Ask students for volunteers.
- b) Have a student draw an objective (i.e. “complete the following math problem on the board $68/24$ ”) out of a hat and read it to class.
- c) Have three students draw foils (i.e. you are a fireman sent to evacuate the building, or you are the Publishers Clearinghouse Sweepstakes prize committee coming to announce the winner, you are Barney and must hug everyone) out of a hat and read them to class.

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- d) Allow first student to start their objective. *Periodically send in the foils to try thwarting student #1*
- e) Teacher will call “scene” when the objective has been completed, or it’s obvious that the foils are too great.
- f) Analyze what tactics the foils and the student with the objective used to complete their tasks.
- g) Ask the students, “Which tactics worked best?”



Remember: The purpose for utilizing theatre games is not just to have fun, but should be used within the process to gain an identifiable goal. Refer to the purpose for each game and use it within the Opera Creation Process whenever needed. Games may be repeated as necessary or continued and built upon during later sessions. The students should know *why* they are doing these activities.

HAVE FUN EACH TIME WITH A GOAL IN MIND!