

Zip, Zap, Boing



Whole group



10 minutes



Standing in circle

Description

This fast-paced activity requires participants to focus, listen actively, take turns, collaborate and build group cohesion.

Method

- Participants are arranged in a circle facing inwards towards each other.
- Participant one starts with a “zip”, saying the word and passing the “zip” with their hands to the person on the right. They continue to pass the “zip” to the right until someone chooses to say “zap”.
- The “zap” is then passed by hand to the person on the left and continues around the circle.
- Participants may alternate between “zip” and “zap” whenever it’s their turn.
- The “boing” is then introduced by any participant who receives a “zip” or “zap”. This can be “thrown” across the circle to another participant who catches it and either passes a “boing” a “zip” or a “zap” to the next participant, remembering the correct directions for each.
- The facilitator builds momentum across the game with the aim not to let the rhythm drop.
- Any participant who falters or hesitates gets a “strike” – three strikes and the participant is out.

My Notes/My Reflections



Circle Count



Whole group



5 minutes



Standing in circle

Description

This activity requires participants to focus, listen actively, take turns, collaborate and build group cohesion.

Method

- Participants are arranged in a circle facing inwards towards each other.
- Participant one starts the count to 20 (alternate the number to include the number of participants in the game).
- Without looking at each other, or communicating, the group aims to count to 20 (or the number that equates to the number of participants) aloud. The count is in random order across the circle and participants cannot count in the order of the circle.
- Each participant says one number only.
- If two or more participants start a number simultaneously, the count clears and the whole group must start at number one again.
- The activity ends when the group reach the final count without a restart.

My Notes/My Reflections



Statues



Whole group



10+ minutes



Standing in circle/ semi circle

Description

This activity may be used for participants to experience blocking, framing, sequencing, improvising and responding.

Method

- The facilitator invites one participant to volunteer to take a pose (reminder that it must be easy to hold as they may hold this position for several minutes).
- The facilitator explains to the participants that they are now visitors to a gallery. Ask them to consider the “statue” they are viewing. Invite suggestions for the title of the statue.
- The facilitator asks one further participant to take a pose beside the first “statue” thus creating two statues within the frame.
- The facilitator asks the other participants to consider how this has changed the image.
- Depending on the group size, the facilitator may invite one or two further participants to join the statue.
- The facilitator considers with the remaining participants: What is this image communicating? If this was on the front page of a newspaper, what would the headline be?

Extension

1. Thought tracking: what is going on in each of the characters’ heads? The facilitator asks each character in the frame to give one sentence to show their thoughts.
2. The facilitator asks the “statues” to change poses twice, in response to the questions - What happened before this image? What happened after this image? Use the three sets of images to form a short story sequence. The facilitator may also include thought tracking here.
3. The facilitator asks the participants: How would you change the image? What impact would these changes have? Participants who are not in the frame change it, or replace the “statues” and look at the impact on the story.
4. Use the image as the stimulus for a role play or a short, devised piece.

My Notes/My Reflections



Keeper of the Keys



Whole group



10 minutes



Standing in a circle

Description

This activity requires participants to listen actively, collaborate and work as a team.

Method

- Invite the group to stand in a circle with a chair in the middle.
- The facilitator chooses a participant to be the “keeper of the keys” and invites them to sit on the chair in the middle of the circle.
- The facilitator places a set of keys under the chair and asks them to place a blindfold on as the “keeper of the keys”.
- Everyone else in the circle must try to sneak forward to attempt to take the set of keys from under the chair without the “keeper” hearing them.
- Participants work together in their attempts to steal the keys.
- If the “keeper” hears someone trying to take the keys, the “keeper” points to where that person is. If caught, that person must return to the outside of the circle and start again.
- Keep playing the activity until someone has successfully taken the keys to the outside of the circle.
- The “keeper” then removes the blindfold and gets three guesses to see who has the keys.

Materials required



Keys



Blindfold

My Notes/My Reflections



Look Up, Look Down



Whole group



5 minutes



Standing in circle

Description

This game requires participants to listen actively, focus, take turns and develop group awareness.

Method

- Participants stand in a circle. The facilitator introduces the game and explains that it is a circle game in which there are two simple actions, to look up and look down.
- Participants begin by looking down. When the facilitator says: “Look up!” all participants look directly at a person opposite, or to the right or left of them.
- Each time participants look up, they must look in a different direction (left, right, or opposite).
- If two participants make eye contact because they are looking directly at each other, they are both out and must sit down.
- The game continues with the facilitator alternating between “look up” and “look down” instructions until everyone is out and sitting down.

My Notes/My Reflections



Anyone Who...?



Whole group



10 minutes



Seated in circle

Description

This game supports active listening, turn-taking and collaborating, helping to build group cohesion.

Method

- All participants, including the facilitator, are seated in a circle. The facilitator removes one chair and stands in the middle of the circle.
- The facilitator explains that the aim of the game is for the participant in the middle to get back to a seat in the circle.
- To do this, they have to say something true about themselves, that may also be true about other participants in the circle.
- The facilitator starts the game by saying something true about themselves for example: “Anyone who...has a cat?” “Anyone who hates broccoli?”
- Participants who share the same fact or viewpoint must move to a different seat in the circle.
- As one chair is missing, there will always be one participant left standing in the middle, who continues with another “anyone who” question.
- The game continues to allow as many participants as possible to be in the middle.

My Notes/My Reflections



Chairs



Pairs



Group



15-25 minutes



Chairs

Description

This activity supports participants to use imaginary settings to focus on gesture, spatial awareness and movement. It requires the use of chairs to help create a story.

Equipment required



Method

- Participants sit together in chairs, side by side.
- The facilitator asks the participants to choose a setting for where they are seated, aim for a variety of settings within the group.
- The facilitator gives the participants time to create a still image of themselves in their chosen setting. For example, a setting could be on a roller coaster, the participants might put their arms in the air and show an excited or fearful expression on their faces.
- Using a countdown, the facilitator calls on all participants to “freeze” at the same time.
- The facilitator calls on all participants to “activate” the image with movement and sound.
- Participants form groups of four, two pairs facing each other. One pair shares their still image of the chosen setting. The other pair must guess the setting. This is repeated for the other pair.
- Each pair “activates” their image with sound and movement.
- Repeat the process as a group of four choosing a new setting and to show the whole group.

Extension

The facilitator asks participants to create a short scene using the chairs as central to the story created. Participants may present their scene to the whole group.

My Notes/My Reflections



Spot the Difference!



Pairs



Group



10- 15 minutes



Open space

Description

Spot the Difference is a visual awareness and gestures activity. It requires participants to focus, make observations and to “read” and interpret physical images.

Method

In Pairs

- Participant A strikes a pose, participant B observes and turns around.
- Participant A makes 3 subtle changes to their pose. Participant B turns back around and identifies the changes.
- Participant A and participant B swap roles and repeat.

In Fours

- Participants form groups of four.
- Two participants pose (pair A), the other two (pair B) observe, then turn around.
- Pair A make 3 changes. Pair B identify the changes. Swap roles and repeat.

Still Image

- As a four, create a new still image to present to the whole group.
- The facilitator asks the audience “What could this image represent?”
- The audience discusses the possible meanings to interpret the image.

My Notes/My Reflections

Reference: Adapted from Poulter, C., *Playing the Game: A Drama Workshop Guide*, Macmillan, 2018.



Elephant, Palm Tree, Car



Whole group



5 - 10 minutes



Standing in a circle

Description

This game supports active listening, turn-taking and quick reactions, helping to build group cohesion.

Method

- All participants stand in a circle.
- The facilitator invites one participant to stand in the middle. This participant will point to someone in the circle and call out one of the following: “Elephant”, “Palm Tree” or “Car”.
- The participant pointed to and the two participants on either side must quickly form the object called out.

Elephant - The participant pointed to forms an elephant’s trunk by extending their arms straight in front, crossing at the wrists. The participants on either side form the elephant’s ears with their arms and make an elephant sound.

Palm Tree - The participant pointed to raises their arms above their head in a 'Y' shape with fingers spread. The participants on either side do the same but lean outward, away from the middle participant, while all make a wind sound.

Car - The participant pointed to holds an imaginary steering wheel. The participant on either side become the wheels, and all make an engine noise.

Extension

Include a variety of objects such as jelly, rabbit, boat, and invite participants to come up with their own ideas on how they might use sound and movement to form these items.

My Notes/My Reflections



Walk the Space



Individual



Group



10 minutes



Open space

Description

This activity may help participants warm up and develop spatial and group awareness. It can be used to support participants to focus, use their imagination and experiment with physical movement.

Method

- Participants are invited to walk in the space.
- As they walk, they should try to cover the space, making sure that they are evenly spread across the floor.
- The participants should be aware of everyone in the space but should avoid making physical contact and speaking to each other.
- As the participants move around the space, they are given different instructions to follow such as: “walk at a gentle pace”, “speed up”, “slow down”, “change height levels”, such as “walk low”, “walk high”.
- The facilitator continues to give instructions and to adjust the movement, asking the participants to move with feeling, for example sad, happy, angry.
- The facilitator may ask participants to observe how the different feelings change how they are moving in the space.
- The facilitator then asks participants to imagine to move through different spaces such as: moving through clouds, moving through mud, walking in outer space, through feathers, through honey, through snow etc.
- As the participants are walking the facilitator can ask them to think about what it feels like and how our bodies move in these contexts.

Extension

1. Walk the space as different animals.
2. Walk the space to music.
3. Walk the space to make shapes.
4. Walk the space to form groups based on the colours participants are wearing.
5. Reflect on the activity: walk, stop and share insights with another participant.



Offering and Accepting



Pairs



Individual



Whole group



15 minutes



Standing in circle

Description

In this activity participants work in pairs to offer and accept an imaginary gift, supporting the development of improvisation skills.

Method

- The activity begins with the whole group seated in a circle.
- The facilitator asks two participants to step into the middle - one as participant A and the other as participant B.
- The facilitator provides instructions as follows:
 - Step 1: A offers B an imaginary gift without revealing what it is.
 - Step 2: B accepts the gift and states what they believe it is.
 - Step 3: A adds an extra detail, describing the gift further.
- The two participants try this out, and then swap roles, with B offering the gift and A accepting.
- After this, all participants form two lines facing each other, with one line as A and the other as B.
- The facilitator invites participants to continue offering and accepting gifts to their opposite counterpart, ensuring that each has a chance to play both roles.

Extension

The facilitator invites participants to share their brief conversations to the whole group when they are in the two lines. The facilitator may ask a participant from the A line to offer a gift to one of the Bs opposite and encourage participants to develop their conversations further. This may continue as they build an improvised scene together. Participants may develop alternative “offers” and ideas as they develop more confidence and skills in improvisation.

My Notes/My Reflections



Spectrum of Difference



Group



5-15 minutes



Open space



Stand in straight line

Description

This activity supports participants to explore the range of opinions and preferences in the group. It allows participants to reflect on the personal experiences or values that contribute to their responses.

Method

- The facilitator invites participants to place themselves on an imaginary line across the middle of the space. At each end there are two named alternatives shared by the facilitator.
- If participants are exploring their preferences for film genres, for example, the two alternatives may be Romantic Comedy at one end and Horror at the opposite end.
- Participants indicate their preference or opinion of the two alternatives through their choice of position on the line. Participants place themselves closer to one side or the other depending on their chosen preferences. A neutral position is in the middle of the line.
- The facilitator introduces more alternatives as the activity progresses, depending on the topic being explored, and participants will be encouraged to discuss and reflect on how their personal experiences may have influenced their responses.

My Notes/My Reflections

Reference: Jonothan Neelands and Tony Goode, *Structuring Drama Work: A Handbook of Available Forms in Theatre and Drama*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

