Beginning Drama

Curriculum Guide

Objectives: SWBAT

- develop self-awareness through observation and partner feedback
- understand and execute physical warm-ups to develop relaxation, body coordination, and flexibility
- pantomime techniques to create the illusion of concreted objects and to create a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end
- understand and execute vocal warm-ups to develop breath control, range, and flexibility, as well as to expand his or her ability to interpret dramatic literature vocally
- understand and use improvisational skills for character creation and exploration, storyline development, and spontaneity
- understand the historical, social, cultural, and creative aspects of storytelling
- use and define appropriate theatre vocabulary, including vocal production and interpretation, pantomime, and improvisation
- demonstrate an understanding of journaling with regards to acting exercises and creative development

Unit 1—Acting

Acting: Exploration (Exercises 1-10)

An artist may work with paint or clay. A musician may play a piano or a drum. As an actor, your instrument of expression is yourself—your body and your voice. A playwright gives a character a situation and words to speak, but you give life to the character with movement and speech. To play a variety of characters different from yourself, you need to explore your instrument and train it to be as versatile as possible.

Acting: Pantomime (Exercises 11, 12, 13)

Pantomime is acting without words by using facial expressions and gestures, expressive movements of the body or limbs. The term is used to cover several different types of movement:

- Any movement that tells the audience something significant or meaningful about a character
- Movement that tells a story through silent action alone
- Movement that portrays an activity without using the actual objects involved in the activity

For successful stage pantomime, you need to use your facial expressions and body movements to communicate your reactions—physical and emotional—to characters, events, objects, and environments.

To create the illusion of using imaginary objects, you need to portray their specific physical characteristics. Pay special attention to consistency—in spatial relationships and the shape of objects.

Strive to give your pantomimed actions and stories a beginning, middle, and end.

Used onstage, pantomime creates varied theatrical effects. In the final scene of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*, the Von Trapp family escapes the Nazis by walking across the mountains from Austria to Switzerland. Creating realistic mountains onstage would be bulky and too expensive for a scene that lasts a few minutes; a backdrop and pantomime can do the trick. Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, set in turn of the century small town America, includes many pantomimed scenes of daily life—cooking, sharing a soda, pumping water, delivering newspapers, and so on. Actual items could easily be used for these scenes, but Wilder specified pantomime. The effect achieved is an appropriate quality of universality and fluid transitions between scenes that shift quickly across time and space.

Acting: Voice

As an actor, your voice is a crucial element in your performance. First, it must be heard by everyone in the audience; not only because some of your lines contain information necessary to their understanding of the plot, but because audiences justifiably become annoyed when they have to strain to hear any actor. Second, it must convey the kind of character you are playing. Third, it must convey what your character thinks and feels about the events that are taking place. Just as you train your body to gain strength, flexibility, and endurance, you can train your voice to gain these same qualities.

Diaphragmatic Breathing (Exercise 14)

Proper breathing is as essential for a stage voice as proper posture is for stage movement. For effective use of your voice as an actor, you need to learn diaphragmatic breathing. Your diaphragm is the connective muscle and tissue between your abdominal and chest cavities. In diaphragmatic breathing, your diaphragm contracts when you inhale, causing your abdomen to expand. This forces your rib cage to expand as well, enlarging the chest cavity. Air rushes in through your mouth or nose, down your windpipe, or trachea, and into your lungs. When you exhale, the process is reversed: your diaphragm expands and your abdomen and rib cage contract, forcing air out of your lungs.

Diaphragmatic breathing makes full use of the power of your diaphragm in the breathing process. It increases your air capacity and improves your breath control. Such control is vital for exhaling slowly and steadily, which allows you to sustain your breath longer and use your voice more efficiently.

Making and Shaping Sounds (Exercises 15, 16, 17)

The air that supplies you with essential oxygen as you breathe also carries the sound of your voice. You inhale air through your nose or mouth, down your windpipe, or trachea, and into your lungs. When you exhale, air moves up your trachea to your voicebox, or larynx, which contains your vocal folds. When air moves through your vocal folds, they vibrate. Those vibrations are heard as sound. When you speak or

sing you affect the sound by making constant adjustments to the shape of your vocal folds and the speed of the exhaled air.

The sound is further shaped in your mouth and throat. Vowels are open, sustained sounds. They make your voice audible, able to be heard. They are formed by the resonators—the hard and soft palates, throat, and sinuses. The openness and flexibility of your resonators affect your voice's resonance, a quality caused by vibration. Resonance enriches vocal tone.

Consonants are stopped or shaped sounds. They are formed by the articulators—your jaw, lips, tongue, teeth, and soft palate. Your skill at using both consonants and vowels affects your articulation, the clear and precise pronunciation of words.

Projection (Exercises 18 & 19)

If you use your normal conversational level of speaking onstage, no one will be able to hear you except your fellow actors. Actors need to project their voices. To project your voice is to use it in such a way that it fills the performing space so that every member of the audience can hear and understand you. Merely increasing the volume of your speaking may not be sufficient. Shouting is not projecting. You need to focus your voice to a particular spot and to speak clearly with sustained control. Diaphragmatic breathing is important in projection.

Sometimes your character must speak in a very low voice or even a whisper. In the stage whisper, you use a lot of air but little volume, and your consonants come through more clearly than your vowels. If you are practiced in projection, the audience will still be able to understand you, even though you are whispering.

Expression (Exercises 20, 21, 22)

You need to speak loudly and clearly onstage, but you also need to speak with expression. This means using variety in your voice to express your changing thoughts and emotions. This variety in speech is called inflection, and it can come through changes in these elements:

- Pitch—how high or how low your voice is
- Volume—how loud or soft your voice is
- Tempo—how fast or slowly you speak
- Phrasing—how you divide your speeches into smaller parts, adding pauses to create emphasis and a rhythmic pattern of sounds and silences
- Quality—whether your voice is shrill, nasal, raspy, breathy, booming, and so on

Inflection can go far toward changing meaning or emotional content in a speech. Consider, for example, the far different meanings conveyed by the same speech with different words emphasized:

I can't tell you not to go.

I ***can't*** tell you not to go.

I can't ***tell*** you not to go.

I can't tell ***you*** not to go.

I can't tell you ***not*** to go.

I can't tell you not to ***go***.

Improvisation

In theatre, to improvise means to speak or to act without a script, or the text of a play. In improvisation, or improve, you must create speeches and actions immediately and without preparation. This requires spontaneity, imagination, and the ability to use past personal experiences. When you are working with a partner or a group, it also requires that you pay close attention to what your fellow actors are saying and doing and respond accordingly; cooperative flexibility is vital for improvisation.

Improvising a Sketch (Exercises 23-25)

Actors use theatrical improvisation in several ways. One is to work with others to create a sketch, skit, or short play. Often the particulars of the sketch—the characters, place, conflict, and theme—will be chosen at random or assigned to you just before you begin. You must make decisions about your character within seconds: Who are you? Why are you here? How do you feel? Do you have any special physical characteristics or gestures? What does your voice sound like? What do you want? You may not know who the other characters are until they begin speaking. Whatever your character does or says next should be in direct response to the other characters. Never deny what they present; work with them, not against them.

Even though you have no script, it's still possible to give form to an improvised sketch. You can work together to determine a beginning, middle, and end. Try to establish the place and the characters' relationships as soon as possible. Then steer your character toward your goal or toward the end of the sketch. At the same time, the other characters will steer toward their goals or toward potential endings that you may know nothing about. Of course, your character can influence the other characters as much as they influence you.

Improvising a Character

Another way to use improvisation is in character development. While studying a script or in the early stages of rehearsal, you can imagine your character in different situations and improvise speeches and actions that are consistent with your character. This helps you get to know your character better may give you ideas for vocal inflections or gestures that you can use in the scripted scenes. Skill in improvising can also come to your rescue when you are onstage with an actor who has forgotten his or her lines. In such situations, you need to **ad-lib**, another term for improvising conversation or action.

Storytelling (Exercise #26)

Storytelling, in which one or more people tell stories to others, is often accompanied with dramatic movement and voice; thus, it can be considered the earliest form of acting. It has been around since the days of the cave dwellers whose wall paintings may have helped illustrate their stories. Myths, folktales, and legends probably evolved from those ancient stories. In some cultures storytelling is still used to transmit news and information to the whole village or to impart values from one generation to the next.

Modern storytelling and theatre have much in common. Both grew out of the impetus to share human experiences. To achieve that goal, both imitate those experiences in the dramatic presentation of a story to an audience. Like the storyteller, the playwright and screenwriter may use traditional or novel themes and characters to reinforce or challenge accepted ideas.

One major difference between the traditions of storytelling and theatre is that storytellers generally tell a story, punctuating it with the imitation of character voices and gestures, while actors generally show a story, supplying explanation when necessary.

Storytelling is characterized by the following elements:

- Storytellers acknowledge the presence of their listeners and interact with them, even changing their stories during the telling to get a desired response
- Storytellers may take on many characters but usually don't stay in one character throughout the telling of a story
- Stories told may involve many interwoven plots, span many years, and take more than one session to finish

While some forms of theatre do contain these elements, the difference is a matter of degree.

The storytelling tradition is alive and well today. Professional storytellers perform at schools, community gatherings, and national storytelling festivals. Storytelling is a skill that most successful comedians, salespeople, motivational speakers, and religious leaders share, and its techniques can be seen daily in plays, movies, and television.

Unit 2—Acting

Acting: Preparation

If you are new to theatre, acting may appear easy, but creating a believable character is hard work. You need to tap into the best of your physical, intellectual, and emotional resources. The payoff for your preparation comes when you and the audience connect in a performance.

The Characterization Process. Whether you are creating a wholly new character or portraying a scripted character in a play, the characterization process is essentially the same. That process is a combination of making observations, drawing upon your experience, and tapping into your imagination. Through these actions you come to understand a character and seek to express that character through the use of your body and your voice.

Observation. Observing other people and the world around you provides an endless source of inspiration for characterization. Become a sponge, absorbing all you encounter. Take notes and make sketches in a notebook. Store your impressions in your memory too, where you can call upon them for future reference.

Use all your senses. To be thorough, effective observer, you must use all your senses and notice the details as well as the big picture: the still silhouette of a bird perched on a wire over a busy intersection; the persistent hissing of an old radiator in a corner of your grandmother's cozy house; the warm, buttery crunch of popcorn in the in the magical atmosphere of the movie theatre.

Take another look. Look at new things and re-examine what is familiar. Go window shopping at stores that carry items you have never really looked at before. Sketch or describe in detail items that you use every day, such as your toothbrush or your pillow. Look at things differently by altering your normal routines and habits—take a new route, start at a different time, try walking instead of riding, go outside in all kinds of weather.

Become a people watcher. Wherever you go, listen to the way people talk, watch how they move and interact with others, and reflect upon what they might be thinking. Study their faces and facial expressions. Note the way they wear their hair and the manner in which they dress. Speculate on where they live, what they do for a living, and what their attitudes are on various subjects.

(Exercises 1-3, Unit 2)

Experience

As an actor, you should collect a variety of life experiences. You can then use these experiences as a resource to create interesting characters. To broaden your scope of experience, challenge yourself with the following activities: (all of the following are outside the classroom research activities)

- Go to events that you ordinarily wouldn't attend
- Talk to people you have never talked to before

- Get to know people who are very different from you in age, background, or outlook
- Leave your neighborhood and see how other people live
- Do something alone and away from your normal group of friends at least once a week
- Spend 20 minutes a day reading a newspaper
- Watch television shows about foreign countries or historical figures
- Watch a wide variety of movies, including those you wouldn't normally watch
- Read as many plays as you can
- Read novels with interesting, detailed characterizations

What you learn from broadening your scope of experience can also be used to interpret characters that live within the framework of plays. For example, if you are cast as a character in *The Music Man* by Meredith Wilson, you will better understand the desires and frustrations of the characters in that musical if you have played an instrument or seen a marching band. Awareness of the challenges faced by those with sight and hearing impairments will help you understand the struggles and triumphs of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan in William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker*.

Sense Memory

The way a character reacts to an object or setting reveals something about the character. As an actor, you will frequently need to ask yourself, "What can my character see, hear, taste, smell, or touch in this situation? How should my character react to what I sense?" A script provides some of this information, but you may have to determine if the object or setting is familiar or unfamiliar to your character, pleasant or unpleasant, and so on. You may also need to fill in the gaps that the set does not provide; that is, although you may be able to interact with props and scenery and react to lighting and sound, you will have to rely on your sense memory to supply any missing sensory stimuli that can't be reproduced onstage.

Your **sense memory** is your memory of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures. Using sense memory, you can mentally transport yourself to a different situation so that you can act as though you were genuinely there. It's a tool that helps you define a character in a certain situation.

To access and apply your sense memory, ask yourself questions such as the following:

Using Sense Memory

- Have I ever been in a situation like this or one similar to it?
- What did I see, hear, smell, taste, and touch during that experience?
- How did I react to what I sense and what specific actions did I take?
- How can I recall those reactions, and which of those actions can I use to portray my character effectively in this situation?

Emotional Memory

Emotions are basic building blocks for characterization. Through empathy (emotional indentification) with your character, you gain understanding of that character. You can do this by using **emotional memory**, the technique of calling upon memories of your own emotions to understand the emotions of a character. Remember, however, that you can't stop at understanding your character's emotions; you must be able to express them clearly with your body and your voice. Only by expressing your character's emotions can you also gain the empathy of the audience, which makes your character more interesting to them.

To generate and express the emotions of your character in a situation, ask yourself questions such as the following:

Using Emotional Memory

- Have I ever experienced emotions like those my character is experiencing?
- What was my circumstances?
- What did I feel?
- What specific actions did I take?
- How can I recall those emotions in this situation, and which of those actions can I use to portray my character effectively in this situation?

Action-Generated Emotion

The technique of emotional memory is an "inside-out" approach to expressing emotions. You can also employ an "outside-in" approach to generate emotions in yourself that will help you express your character's emotions, you can sometimes generate those emotions in yourself. The approach is most effective when you can apply actions you have actually observed in people experiencing the target emotion.

To apply the technique of using action to generate emotion, ask yourself some of the following questions:

Using Action to Generate Emotion (Exercise 4—Unit 2)

- Have I ever seen a person acting as if he or she were experiencing the emotions my character is experiencing?
- What is that person's circumstance?
- What specific actions did that person take?
- Which of those actions can I use to portray my character effectively in this situation?

Then perform the actions and ask yourself the following question:

- Did performing these actions make me experience the emotions my character is experiencing?

Imagination (Exercises 5 & 6—Unit 2)

Onstage your imagination helps you create another reality for yourself. Your are speaking the words and performing the actions of someone you have never met, someone who lives I a place that may or may not exist. Your mind must often fill in the details to make the scene genuine to you and your audience.

Your imagination is like a muscle; the more you exercise it, the more effective it becomes.

Motivation and Behavior

The behavior of an actor onstage should never be arbitrary. Whether you are a character in an improvisation or a scripted play, your character needs a motivation, or clear reason, to do or say anything. Your motivation determines you objectives, your goals or intentions. A character generally has an overall objective as well as objectives for each scene. The objectives may be outlined in a script, may be supplied by a, or may come from your understanding of your character.

In many situations, there is something that stands between you and the achievement of your goal, something that is preventing you from meeting your objective. This is known as an obstacle. Obstacles create the conflict in a story. Characters generally develop a strategy to overcome an obstacle. The outcome of a conflict is the result of action taken by the characters to overcome their obstacles and achieve their objectives. The consequences of the outcome are known as the stakes.

- Motivation: why am I doing what I am doing?
- Objective: what do I want to do?
- Obstacle: who or what is preventing me from doing it?
- Strategy: what am I going to do about it?
- Action: How am I going to do this?
- Stakes: what do I stand to gain or lose?
- Outcome: what is the result of my actions?

See supplemental scripts: Odysseus and the Cyclops

After reviewing the script…

Here is how you might break down the scene:

- Motivation—we are in danger of being eaten alive
- Objective—Escape from the cave
- Obstacles—The Cyclops; the stone blocking the cave entrance
- Strategy—Disable the Cyclops
- Action—Drug and blind the Cyclops
- Stakes—Freedom or horrible death

- Outcome—Successfully crippled the Cyclops, improving our chances of escape

Creating Specific Characters

You are now ready to begin working with specific characters in a script. You will need to develop your character from a script using the skills you have just learned, plus some new ones.

Background and Status Quo

Your background influences what you do, what you think about things, and how you express your emotions. Very often, present behavior is determined by events of the past. Determining your character's background and status quo (present circumstances) will affect how you develop your character onstage. Some information is provided in your script; for example, what the playwright says about you, what you say about yourself, and what other characters say about you. Some information must be contributed by you from your observations, experience, and imagination. Imagine that you are your character and answer questions such as those in the list (See character questions, etc.)

Character Movement

The manner in which your character moves is one of the most important aspects of characterization. Entire characters have been built around a characteristic gesture, or master gesture. Most characters lead with the parts of their bodies that reflect their nature. This is known as a leading center. A sensual character might lead with her hips or shoulders; a nosy character may lead with his nose. Before determining a master gesture or leading center, however, consult the script. Find out what the playwright says about your character's body and the way you move as well as what your character and other characters say about your character's body. Then ask yourself the questions such as those from the list (See character questions—Character movement)

Character Voice

Approach developing your character's voice using the same methods you have used for developing the rest of the role. First look in the script for answers to questions such as "What does the playwright say about my voice?" and "What do I or other characters say about it?" Then ask yourself questions such as those from the list. (See character questions—Character Voice)

Motivation and Behavior

You may have noticed that several of the questions posed for determining your status quo are the same questions you can use to determine your motivation and behavior. This is because your status quo—and your background—will influence your motivation and behavior throughout a play. You will need to determine your objectives, obstacles, strategies, actions, stakes, and outcome for each scene in which your character appears. Write them in the margins of your script or in your notebook so you can refer to them in rehearsal.

Subtext

People do not always say what they mean. Information that is implied but not stated by a character is the subtext. The subtext may be thoughts or actions of a character that do not express the same meaning as the spoken words. The subtext may also reveal how a character's background influences that character's thoughts and actions.

You can use what you have concluded to be your character's subtext to determine your actions and emotional responses to what other characters say. Sometimes your character's reaction to another character's line is set up to reveal the subtest of that line. The playwright knows that at times the audience needs a clear indication of the subtext to understand the meaning of the play.

Thus, by "reading between the lines" you can discover the subtext that impacts the action of a scene. Make notes in your script about subtext—especially when it differs dramatically from what is written in the script.

Revisit the script for Odysseus and the Cyclops. You analyzed Odysseus's motivation and behavior in this scene earlier. This time, look at the possible subtext for Odysseus and the Cyclops and how an actor's actions and inflections can reveal a character's subtext. (See Supplemental scripts—Odysseus and Cyclops—Subtext)

Stage Movement Basics

Once you have developed a character, you need to be able to move your character effectively around the performance space. Movements onstage consists of a few basic actions: entering, exiting, standing, sitting, reclining, gesturing, turning, stopping, and crossing—or moving from one place to another.

To master the craft of acting and, ultimately, to connect with the audience, you need to learn some guidelines for stage movement. Keep in mind that these are only guidelines; your director or the needs of your character may require you to ignore them.

Body Positions

As you prepare for work onstage, you will come to realize the importance of how your body is positioned in relations to the audience. This is especially challenging on a proscenium stage, where a specific terminology is used to identify conventional body positions.

Insert body positions image here

Opening to an Audience (Exercise 7, Unit 2)

In any performance space, you should try to keep your face and the front of your body visible to the audience as much as possible. This is called opening to the audience. On arena and thrust stages, the challenge is to shift your position frequently so that you are occasionally open to everyone in the audience. To keep open on a proscenium stage, you can follow the conventions that follow.

Keeping Open On A Proscenium stage

- Sitting: If you are sitting in profile, keep open by using the one-quarter position, especially if you are delivering lines.
- Standing: Use the full front, one-quarter right, or one-quarter left position.
- Gesturing or handling a prop: While gesturing or handling a prop, use your upstage hand.
- Turning: Turn in the direction of your downstage hand.
- Moving right or left: Move right by leading with your right foot. Move left by leading with your left foot.
- Crossing: Make crosses upstage in an upstage arc. Make crosses downstage in a downstage arc. Make crosses directly across the stage in a slight upstage arc.
- Entering: Enter the stage leading with your upstage foot.
- Entering or exiting through doorways: Open a door with your upstage hand. As you go through the doorway, pull the door behind you and switch hands, closing it with your other hand.

Insert Crossing on a proscenium stage image here

Dominant Stage Areas and Positions

Awareness of your position relative to other actors onstage is just as important as awareness of your position relative to the audience. The most dominant positions onstage are usually those that are the most open, such as full front. Certain stage areas also have dominance: center and downstage positions are strongest. A character framed by a doorway, window, or archway is also in a dominant position, as are those who are positioned at a higher level than others. When you are playing a scene, be conscious of what your position implies about your importance in the scene and about your relationship with the other actors.

Sharing the Stage Focus (Exercise 8, unit 2)

One position commonly used for brief scenes between two actors onstage is the shared position in which one actor mirrors another actor's body position—usually at a one-quarter position. Both actors should be about the same distance from the audience, not one upstage of the other. When one actor is upstage of another on a proscenium stage, it is called upstaging. Upstaging forces the downstage actor to turn away from the audience to communicate with the upstage actor.

In terms of stage movement, the focus is the intended point of interest onstage. Directors coach actors in their line delivery and movement based in part on the knowledge that the audience takes its cues for focus from the actors. An actor in a dominant position or one who is moving or talking is generally the

focus. By following the conventions described here, you can avoid stealing the focus of a scene, which is also called upstage.

Maintaining The Focus

- Upstaging: Unless directed to do so, don't upstage yourself or another actor
- Talking and Moving: Give your concentrated attention to actors who are talking or moving. Don't move when important lines, especially punchlines, are being spoken—whether by you or other actors
- Sitting: When you go to a sitting position from a standing position, don't look directly at the chair before you sit down; feel for it with the back of your leg, then sit. If you look at the chair, so will the audience
- Crossing: On a proscenium stage, cross upstage of seated actors, cross downstage of standing actors
- Eye Contact: Avoid making eye contact with the audience unless you are directed to by the script or the director. This draws attention to the audience. Keep your head up and your eyes focused on a plane just above the audience's heads (usually about your eye level). Don't focus on the ceiling or floor.

Posture and Poise

You should already be making an effort to sit, stand, and move with good posture. If you have a tendency to slouch or to stand too stiffly, work on changing that habit. Unless such a posture is required to create a specific character, keep your posture straight, but natural, with your weight evenly distributed over both feet.

Naturalness is important as you move. You should strive to appear natural in a movement of your character while maintaining an easy control of your balance. This quality of control, or poise, can be achieved by learning how to shift your weights smoothly and easily as you move. The following guidelines can help you achieve poise in two common stage movements.

Maintaining Poise

- Rising: To rise from a seated position, place one foot slightly ahead of the other and push off with your back foot, keeping your weight on that foot as you rise. Lead with your chest, inhaling as you rise. This will put you in a steady, balanced position and will also ready you for movement or speaking.
- Stopping and turning back on a cross: Count the steps you need to make the cross, arranging it so your last step on the cross is an on your upstage foot. Pivot on the ball of your upstage foot and turn back, keeping your weight on that foot.

Auditions

Now that you understand the basics of creating a character and are familiar with basic stage movements, you are ready to audition for a role, or part, in a play. To be cast, or chosen, for a role, you need to audition to demonstrate your talents. An audition is like an interview; it gives you a chance to meet the person doing the hiring, leave an impression of yourself, and show a sample of your work. A good audition is extremely important. You can't give a great performance if you don't get a role.

Audition Preparation

Make sure you know the time and location of the audition. Sometimes it's necessary to arrange in advance for a specific date and time with the auditors, those conducting the auditions. Usually, the director, and perhaps the assistant director, are conducting the auditions. For musical auditions, the musical director is one of the auditors.

If you can find out what play you are auditioning for, read it in advance. You should bring a resume of your theatre experience and a photograph of yourself to the audition; get these items ready and put them where you will remember them.

Plan to wear shoes in which you can move comfortably (no high heels, platforms, or floppy sandals), clothing that is comfortable (but not sloppy), and a style and color that is flattering to you (but not outrageous or distracting). If you are called back for a second or third audition, make sure to wear the same clothing so that the auditors can remember you more easily.

Go through your warm-up ritual before you audition.

Monologues

There are generally two ways an audition is handled. The actor performs two contrasting monologues or the actor reads from the actual script.

A monologue is a story, speech, or scene performed by one actor alone. The purpose of performing two monologues at an audition is to show the range of your acting abilities. You may therefore want to choose one comedic and one tragic role. Or, you may want to show contrast in other ways, through a difference in the characters' social status, time period, age, or personality. Some auditions notices specify the types or time periods for characters.

In choosing material for you monologues, your sources may include plays, novels, or short stories. Choose monologues that work for you. The suggestions outlined here may help you make your selections.

Choosing Your Monologue

- Find a character that interests or intrigues you
- Try to find a character that is within your age range—2 or 3 years younger than you and no more than 10 years older

- It's easier to choose a segment where there is only one character speaking in addition to your character
- Choose a segment that can stand alone
- Find a segment that presents a variety of emotions and climactic moment to grab the auditor's attention
- Look for an unusual monologue that has not been done very often. You may as your teacher for advice.

Whether you use a play or other fictional work, you will likely have to rearrange the scene you have chosen to contain only the lines of your character. Leave out the lines of others, but make a note owere their replies would be. You will need to imagine that they respond to you nonverbally.

Analyzing Your Monologue

Before learning and rehearsing your monologue, it's helpful to read the entire play or work from which it's taken. Then apply the movement, voice, improvisation, and character development techniques you have learned to analyze and rehearse your monologue.

It might be helpful to break down your monologue into beats, the smaller sections of a scene that usually come at points where a character shifts moods or emotions or changes the topic. Think about how you should orchestrate these beats to build your scene to an effective climax.

You will also need to consider what movements, gestures, or words make up the bridges, or transitions, between your beats careful attention to smooth transitions between beats is necessary to prevent a choppy performance; your aim should be a seamless scene with appropriate rhythm and pacing and an apparent, logical sequence of ideas. The use of beats and transitions is not for monologues alone. Breaking down entire scenes with multiple characters in a dialogue is often helpful to better understand and express the distinct parts of a scene.

Performing Your Monologue

When performing your monologue, don't spend a lot of time looking at the imaginary character. Use the techniques of pantomime to place the character in a specific spot and imagine him or her to be a certain height or moving in a certain way. Be consistent: when you look at the character, look at that same spot.

Imagine the total environment of the situation. Use the entire space allotted to you; don't remain rooted in one spot. Remember that this is a dynamic exchange between two characters, even if one of them is not speaking.

Reading from the Script

Read the entire play if the script is available to you before the audition. You may be auditioning for one part, but the auditors may ask you to read for others; therefore, you have to know the plot and the relationships of the characters.

If the script is unavailable to you before the audition, you will be auditioning with what is called a cold reading. When you arrive and the script is handed to you, always ask permission to read the material to yourself first before reading it aloud. Try to determine the objectives of your character in the scene. If other characters are involved, determine their relationship to your character and plan how to interact with them.

When reading for the auditors, concentrate on your character's objectives and interact with other characters in the scene. Don't bury your face in the script. The auditors would rather see your face, you interpretations, and your relationship with other characters than have a perfect word-for-word reading. Remember to communicate and project

Audition Etiquette

- Make sure you are better than on time: try to arrive 15 minutes early
- Bring a pen or pencil to fill out the audition forms
- Remember that you are being evaluated from the moment you enter the audition area. Be confident, courteous, relaxed, and pleasant
- Say your name clearly and positively for the auditors
- Listen carefully to any instructions the auditors may give. This is important information, which you should try your best to incorporate
- If there is only one light source, ask the auditors if they can see you. If not, move into the light according to their instruction
- Don't make apologies for yourself and don't ask inappropriate questions after an audition, such as "Did you like me?" or "When do you think you'll make a decision about the casting?"
- Don't limit your thinking and precast yourself for any one particular role. Be willing to accept any role offered you

Callbacks

If the auditors liked your audition, you may be asked to return. This is called a callback. Sometimes casting requires more than one callback. You will generally either receive notice of a callback by phone or as a posting at a central posting spot in the theatre.

At a callback, you may be asked to read various parts from the script or to engage in creative exercises that tell the auditors more about your talents. You may have brief personal interview with the director, so be prepared to speak about yourself and elaborate upon your experience.

If you don't receive notice for a callback, you can assume you didn't get the part. This is one of the most frustrating aspects of being an actor. Everyone—from professional to beginner—wants to know why he or she wasn't cast. Usually, you will never find out. Casting is a very subjective job and highly dependent on the chemistry of the entire production. If you have behaved professionally and given an audition to the best of your abilities, the auditors were simply looking for someone of a different type than you. Keep trying. Eventually they will want someone just like you.

Unit 3—Acting

Acting: Performance

Rehearsals are where a play starts to come alive. Beginning with a careful analysis of the script, actors build an understanding of their characters, gradually becoming fluent in the words and actions with which they will express these people onstage. Rehearsals are also the ensemble portion of the creative process: director, actors, and crews coordinate their efforts so that everyone supports and complements each other. The result is a successful performance on opening night.

Working with a Script

One of the most exciting experiences for an actor is being cast for a show. If the script was available before your audition you may have already read it at least once. The director may have suggested you look carefully at a particular role for the callbacks, or you may have read for several roles at the callback. Now you know which role you will play. The fun—and the work—has just begun.

That work begins with the script. The script isn't just a series of lines to be memorized; it's one of your most important resources as an actor, and it's the final authority and basis for all character choices you make. If you approach it creatively from a variety of angles, the script can help you build your characterization and deepen your experience of the play.

Script analysis should begin immediately, even before formal rehearsals start, and it will continue throughout the rehearsal process. The following is a sequential approach you can take to the process of script analysis. Because a large part of your script analysis involves studying your character's objectives and obstacles, you may wish to review the information on motivation and behavior.

Preliminary Analysis

Once you have the script, read it all the way through—without stopping, if possible. Now read the entire play again, this time aloud to yourself. Reading aloud lets you hear your character speak and may spark insights into both the play and your character that you can't get by reading silently. As you read, note your impressions in your notes.

When you have finished your second reading, review the questions posed here to formalize your responses for this preliminary analysis. Begin by answering factual questions from your perspective as a reader.

- What happens in the play?
- When and where does the action of the play occur?
- What are the period manners and customs of the play?
- What are my character's dominant attributes and attitudes?
- What images come to mind when I think of my character?

By way of example, imagine that you are cast as the legendary Sherlock Holmes in an adaptation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story, "The Final Problem." In this story, Holmes faces his arch foe, the criminal mastermind Professor Moriarty. Here is an example of how you might answer these questions:

The Final Problem, adaptation of a story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

What happens in the play?

Sherlock Holmes asks his old friend Dr. Watson to help him escape from the criminal mastermind Professor Moriarty, who is trying to kill Holmes because Holmes has arranged for his arrest. Moriarty eludes the police and follows Holmes and Watson throughout Europe. Holmes finally confronts Moriarty atop a mountain waterfall. Holmes succeeds in ridding the world of Moriarty but apparently gets himself killed in the process.

When and where does the action of the play occur?

In 1891 in the London home of Dr. Watson; later, on a train; and finally, in the Swiss Alps

What are the period manners and customs of the play?

Formal upper-class British; very polite and distant

What are my character's dominant attributes and attitudes?

Extremely intelligent, perceptive, and analytical. Concise in his choice of words. Conceited, sarcastic, and frank. Cares about ridding society of Moriarty, mostly as a cherry on top of his brilliant career.

What images come to mind when I think of my character?

Typical image of checkered deer-stalker cap, high-collared caped coat, pipe, and magnifying glass. Uptight English gentleman with his nose in the air, sniffing, or looking down his nose at others. A prowling, aloof cat.

Now move on to ask yourself more internal questions, answering as your character would:

- What thoughts, feelings, and images come to mind as I go through the action of the story?
- What is my overall objective?
- What obstacles stand in the way of achieving this objective?
- What actions do take to overcome these obstacles?
- What are the stakes?
- What is the outcome of my actions?

Here is an example of how you might answer these questions, as your character, Sherlock Holmes:

What thoughts, feelings, and images come to mind as I go through the action of the story?

I feel drained and nervous as I tell Watson about Moriarty trying to kill me. The room is dark, except for the reading lamp. Later on the train, I feel satisfied that we have eluded Moriarty and amused that I fooled Watson with my disguise as an old Italian priest. I see landscapes and cities as we travel through Europe to Switzerland. I feel nervous, but not fearful. I am annoyed when I hear that Moriarty slipped through the grasp of the London police. I hear roaring and see the blackness of the rocks and whiteness of the mist at the waterfall where I meet Moriarty.

What is my overall objective?

I must rid society of the world's greatest criminal, Moriarty, proving that my intelligence used for good can overcome his intelligence used for evil.

What obstacles stand in the way of achieving this objective?

- The evil professor Moriarty and his criminal mind. He is my equal, brilliant and resourceful. He has a personal vendetta against me and is aided by his extensive criminal network.
- Myself and my fears: fear of failure and humiliation, fear of death, fear for my friend's life.
- The environment—it always contains the potential for harm, especially with Moriarty around.

What actions do I take to overcome these obstacles?

- With Dr. Watson's assistance, I sneak out of London, and then travel through Europe, using my observation skills to stay one step ahead of Moriarty.
- I reassure myself—and Watson—that if Moriarty finds me I will not let him escape, even if it causes my death. I repeatedly state that eliminating Moriarty would be my crowning achievement.
- I keep a constant lookout for dangers that Moriarty could arrange in my environment.

What are the stakes?

Capture the elusive Moriarty and end my career at its peak, or die by his hand, leaving him to survive and continue his criminal career.

What is the outcome of my actions?

I succeed in ridding the world of Moriarty and maintain my self-respect, but apparently die in so doing.

By applying an approach such as this to guide your analysis, you will greatly increase your knowledge of your character and the play.

Character Analysis

One of the great creative challenges—and pleasures—in acting is building your character. In developing your characterization, you will make a variety of decisions; these decisions must all be grounded in your

script. Carefully analyzed the script to determine how the dialogue and actions of your character and other characters reveal aspects of your character. You might employ the following technique in doing this analysis.

Draw three columns on a page, heading the first, "What the Playwright Says About Me"; the second, "What I Say About Myself"; and the third, "What Other Characters Say About Me." If you are portraying an historic character, you might add a fourth column, "Facts About My Character". Fill in the appropriate information about your character in each column.

Scene-by-Scene Analysis

The essence of theatre is in the action that drives the stories. Interpreting a character in the playwright's story onstage in a way that will hold the attention of the audience is the basic job of the actor. To understand the story your script tells, you must analyze the play by breaking it down into its working parts, into scenes, or even beats.

Begin by asking yourself the questions that determine your status quo in a play. These same questions can be applied on a scene-by-scene basis. Then ask yourself the following questions, which address the subtext of your dialogue and actions and any transformations your character may undergo in the scene. You might write your responses to these questions in the margins of your script or into your notebook.

(See Subtext and Transformation questions in the Questions section)

The Background of the Play

Another dimension of the script that you should explore in your analysis is the literary background and historical context of the play. If your director doesn't discuss the background of the play with you, or if you want more information, do some homework on your own. You can begin by answering questions such as these:

- Why did the dramatist write the play?
- What is the theme of the play?
- What is the genre and style of the play?
- What was daily life like during the time period of the play? What did people eat? What music did they listen to? What was their clothing like?
- What cultural, political, social, and scientific events were happening at the time?
- What was occurring in the rest of the world?
- What do pictures or paintings of people from that time and place reveal?

Acting Styles

Theatrical style may be classified into two broad types, each reflecting a particular kind of relationship between the actors and the audience. In the presentational style, actors look at the audience and speak to them directly. They may share things with the audience that other characters aren't supposed to know (as the Stage Mgr. does in Thornton Wilder's Our Town). In the representational style, actors are supposed to be living real lives that the audience is observing. The actors don't acknowledge the presence of the audience. The representational style employs the concept of the fourth wall, in imaginary wall between the actors and the audience; through this "wall" the audience witnesses the actions of the play.

Another defining characteristic of theatrical style is the degree of exaggeration employed by the actors. Today actors in most plays try to give the impression of complete realism. Earlier in theatre history, actors exaggerated their vocal inflections, eye movements, facial expressions, and physical gestures. At its most extreme, this kind of acting resulted in a declamatory or oratorical style, with broad, conventional gesture and movements to represent emotions (such as anger and love) and actions (such as to threaten or search), and vocal style designed not only to emphasize important words and ideas but to wring the emotional potential from a speech.

Yet another factor that impacts on theatrical style is genre. Following are some of the principal theatrical genres, with their specific characteristics as they apply to acting styles.

Farce (Exercise 1, Unit 3)

One of the most characteristic types of farce is the commedia dell'arte, a professional form of theatrical improvisation that developed in Italy in the 1500's. Commedia dell'arte farces are based on standard plot outlines or scenarios, featuring established, or stock, comic characters such as elderly husbands and young wives, gullible master and tricky servants, young lovers and overprotective fathers. Commedia performers are often masked and exhibit energetic, sometimes acrobatic, physical activity, which constitutes much of the humor in farce.

Comedy of Manners

Balancing satire and flattery, the comedy of manners deals with the vices and follies of the upper class. Plot feature social competition of witty characters whose depth comes from intelligence, not emotion. Characters speak rapidly and with exaggerated vocal variety. Unlike the physical comedy of farce, the humor lies in the quick and witty exchange of dialogue. Characters in a comedy of manners are generally graceful and constrained in their movements, which largely consist of curtsies, bows, and so on. Hand and facial gestures are especially important, as is the use of the complex language of fans.

Shakespearean Tragedy (Exercise 2, Unit 3)

Many of Shakespeare's plays are tragedies. Tragic characters generally have more grace and majesty than comic characters. They move, think, and act more deliberately and slowly. Their pace and rhythm

are steady and consistent. Tragic characters deal seriously with love, faith, virtue, ambition, mortality, and other basic human issues.

The most salient feature of Shakespeare's writing is its rich complexity. To perform his plays, you must thoroughly understand what the characters are saying. Study the footnotes. Research unfamiliar words or phrases. To better grasp the meaning of particular speeches, paraphrase them in modern English. Don't be intimidated by the unrhymed verse characteristic of Shakespeare's dialogue. Particularly at first, read it as though it were prose, without pausing at the end of a line unless directed to by punctuation. Even late, when you introduce his poetic rhythms into your delivery, avoid doing so in a heavy-handed way.

Realistic Drama (Exercise 3, Unit 3) Note: This one will take more time for students to develop their styles

During most of the 1800's, the Romantic movement influenced drama, poetry, painting, music and the other arts. Romanticism in drama emphasized heroism and sentiment, extraordinary characters and melodramatic plots. Actors used large, overly dramatic, and symbolic gestures and postures. In the second half of the century, a counter movement, know as realism, began to develop. Romantic dramatists had depicted the remote and exotic; in contrast, realists sought to create the appearance of ordinary reality in theatrical works. In the extreme, naturalistic form of this style, props and set are very detailed and elaborate in an attempt to actually re-create the environment of the play. Actors attempt to become their characters. Barely modified physical contact between characters may be used for stage fights or love scenes. Most directors and playwrights, however, choose a more representational version of realism. Since a play is performed on a stage in front of an audience, it's difficult to present every minute detail of real life. Set designers, therefore, try to convey an illusion or impression of the environment of the play. Actors are aware they are performing. They may use their own thoughts and experiences to evoke emotions and carry out the actions of their characters onstage.

The Rehearsal Process

School productions usually rehearse for six to eight weeks—and longer for musicals. The four week rehearsal period typical of professional companies is possible because the actors can spend an entire work day rehearsing. Progress depends on all cast members carrying out their responsibilities on time and with their best effort. The production schedule (which includes rehearsals) is typically put together by the director and given to cast and crews.

Rehearsal Etiquette

Time allotted for rehearsals is precious and should not be wasted in waiting for someone to arrive or in settling petty disputes caused by rude behavior. By following the guidelines below, you can help ensure that time is used wisely and that everyone involved is treated with respect.

- Be on time

- Clear any potential schedule conflicts with the director at the beginning of the rehearsal process so that adjustments can be made to the schedule.
- Make sure your parents or guardians know your rehearsal schedule. Let them know when there might be a late night.
- If you have a question about whether or not you are required at a certain rehearsal, ask!
- Work outside of rehearsal, researching, analyzing, and developing your character. Memorize your lines on time. Come prepared for your scenes.
- Take the initiative to find rehearsal props and clothing that will prepare you for moving around in your costume.
- Be an attentive audience member while others are performing.
- Be courteous, responsible, and pleasant.

Read-Through

Some directors prefer to begin rehearsals by doing improvisations. Others begin by going over the background of the play and their vision for this production. Many directors begin the rehearsal process with a formal read-through in which the entire cast sits down together and reads aloud their parts from the beginning to the end of the play. During the read-through, listen closely to everyone's various voices and interpretations of other. How does it differ from your personal first-time reading the play?

Marking a Script

Your initial impressions will change as rehearsals progress and you deepen your understanding of the script, your character, the play, and its background. To prepare for rehearsals, you should clearly mark your script, indicating all of your lines. If your script is one you have purchased, the best method is to use a highlighter; with a rented script, use only pencil. For the highlighter method, use two different colored highlighters. Use one color to indicate your speaking lines by marking your character's name. Use the second to mark your cue lines. A cue line is the final line of another character's speech that signals the time for our character's next speech.

Taking Direction

Developing a positive working relationship with your director can make your experience in the show much more rewarding. Good communication and a positive attitude will help immensely. Bring a pencil and your script to every rehearsal. Take notes while the director is talking about the play. If you are not clear about what the director wants or what a particular comment means, ask for clarification as soon as you can. If you have a problem or complaint, speak privately with the director before or after rehearsal. Check with the director before making any changes (like a haircut or shaving) to your personal

appearance. Remember to be patient; a director has many responsibilities, and sometimes you may have to wait.

Don't give direction to other actors. It's not your job. If you have a suggestion, discuss it privately with the director.

One of the most rewarding aspects of acting is exploration and expansion of your capabilities, so don't be afraid to make a mistake, look foolish, or try something totally new.

Director's Terminology

Like other disciplines, theatre is filled with jargon and terminology. Understanding what a director is saying to you is vital, so you should learn the meaning of some of the common director's terms and turns-of-phrase, such these:

If the Director says….	It means….
• You are topping the line.	You are delivering a line with more volume than the actor delivering the cue line
• Pick up your cues	Take less time to speak a line after being given a cue line.
• You are dropping lines.	You are losing projection at the ends of your sentences or speeches.
• Open up.	Turn more toward the audience
• You are stepping on laughs.	You are not allowing enough time for audience laughter to subside before delivering lines.

Blocking Rehearsals

One of the first tasks of rehearsals is to block the play. The director has usually done preliminary blocking, but it's during blocking rehearsals that these plans are physically worked out onstage. Note in your scripts all blocking and direction that affects you. In addition to the abbreviations for the stage areas, you can use blocking symbols to write blocking notes.

SR=stage right; SL=stage left; C=Center; USR=up stage right; USL=up stage left= UC= up center; DSR=down stage right; DSL=downstage left; DC=down center; AUD R=audience right; AUD L=audience left; AUD C=audience center (AUD is only used when entrances/exits go through the audience/house); X = exit; Ent = enter; Cir = circle; Arc = arc; US=upstage; DS=downstage. These should be fairly self-explanatory.

Crowd Scenes (Exercise 4, Unit 3)

When you are in a scene with many people, there are certain actions you can do to make the scene more believable and to help maintain the focus. Listen and react to what the main characters are saying, especially to specific words or sentences that affect you. If your reaction is talking to your neighbor, make sure what you say relates to the action.

If you are part of a crowd in the background and not involved in the major action, pantomime your conversations. Don't upstage characters who have focus by making big gestures or attracting too much attention in any other way.

As a crowd member, you may not have a character name; make one up. Create a background for yourself. Determine why you are in the crowd and what you want. Decide how you feel about the other characters in the scene, especially the main characters. Remain involved in the scene by listening and reacting as your character.

Memorization

Most directors prefer that you do not begin rehearsals with your lines already memorized. The concern is that you may develop a pattern or rhythm that differs from the director's idea or you may sound emotionally flat because you learned your lines in a block without fully understanding their meaning. Therefore, typically during the first two weeks of rehearsals, actors rehearse on book; that is, they read their lines from the script. Only after you have memorized your lines, and can go off book, or rehearse without a script, will you be able to speak and move with sufficient freedom to fully realize your character.

Once the rehearsal process is underway, there will be memorization deadlines. This means you almost never have to memorize all your lines at once, but in increments as the rehearsal schedule dictates.

Memorization Techniques

Actors usually develop a unique memorization method for themselves. You might try to memorize your lines and blocking movements together. It often helps to have someone read lines opposite you. Another strategy is to tape-record your cues and lines and then listen and practice with the tape.

Using an offstage reader is an especially useful technique that will help you memorize your lines with your blocking. From offstage, have another actor (or the stage manager) read each line of your dialogue. You then repeat it, while doing your blocking onstage for that line. You may ask the offstage reader to combine some lines and break up longer patches of dialogue and monologues into beats to make this process faster and smoother.

Rehearsal Spaces

Many theatres have rehearsal spaces where actors and directors work out preliminary blocking and character development before moving into the performance space. The stage manager or assistant

director may tape the outline of the ground plan or significant spots on the ground plan onto the floor in this rehearsal space. This is known as spiking the set; the tape marks are called spikes. The spike tape is usually white or glow-in-the-dark so actors can see it even under dim lighting. Set pieces similar to those that will be used in the play are often arranged into a makeshift set so actors can get used to working around real furniture.

At some point, actors move onto the actual set. There, scenes are played again and again until the words of the script become fully fleshed-out theatre in action.

Working Rehearsals

After memorizing your lines, a second phase of rehearsals and character-building begins. Throughout this stage, you should continue to employ the script-analysis techniques mentioned earlier as well as the guidelines for creating specific character. In working rehearsals, you will be working through every scene to develop motivation for the blocking that has been established, to increase your insight into your character's behavior and relationships, and to pinpoint your character's objectives, all of which are vital to internal character development. It will be helpful to review motivation and subtext topics/questions.

External factors will also contribute to building your character. Externals are tangible objects or sensory stimuli that affect your characterization from the outside in. They may affect how you move, how you carry yourself, and how you physically react to other characters and your environment. This, in turn, may affect some of your character decisions, may create new obstacles, or may become part of your character's plan to overcome obstacles.

Costumes

Costumes can have a significant affect on an actor's movement; for example, for women unaccustomed to wearing long skirts or men unaccustomed to formal wear. Unusual clothing items, such as capes, bustles, or hats, may influence your posture and gestures. Shoes, too, have a big impact on how you move onstage. Practice rehearsing while wearing clothing as similar to your costume as possible. You may make some different choice for your character.

Makeup

Think about your makeup early in the rehearsal process. You may be able to utilize your makeup to create a defining gesture, such as a man who fools with his mustache when he lies or a woman who bats her very long eyelashes when she's flirting. Like costumes, some makeup may require getting used to, especially wigs and facial hair pieces.

Stage Business (Exercises 5 & 6, Unit 3)

Some of your time onstage may be occupied by stage business, specific movements, often employing props, costumes, and makeup that strengthen the personality of the character. Inventing ways for your character to use stage business can contribute new dimensions to your character. For instance, a man

who normally carries an umbrella may use it as a sword if provoked into a fight. Work on your stage business in rehearsals and make each piece of business as creative as possible. Allow your business to become and extension of your own body to express your character's personality.

Polishing Rehearsals

During the last few weeks of rehearsals, the actors have polished their movements on stage, delivery of lines, and interpretations of their characters. Up to this point, the director has stopped scenes when necessary and corrected blocking and line delivery. Now, unless there are major problems, these polishing rehearsals proceed without interruption. This is also the period during which technical elements of the production (scenery, props, lighting, sound, costumes, and makeup) are integrated. This is also known as tech rehearsal.

Dress Rehearsals

The dress rehearsal occurs a day or two before the scheduled opening night performance. Complete with all technical elements, the play will be run from beginning to end. It's just like opening night without the audience. You should try to make your performance as polished and prepared as possible while dealing with the stress and chaos around you. Dress rehearsals are for the express purpose of finding out where any remaining weaknesses are and then taking measures to correct them.

The Performance

Finally, it's opening night. Most actors feel nervous as well as excited. The key is to stay focused on preparing for the performance. Warm up as usual to prepare your body and your voice. Before the audience arrives, you might walk across the set in character. You will probably have a rush of adrenaline —use it to give you energy.

Backstage

Arrive early to warm up, get into your costume and apply your makeup, and make sure your props are in place and your costume pieces are ready for any costume changes. Use the time to move emotionally from the "real world" to the world of the play.

Before and during the performance don't interfere with the work of the backstage crews; they may be moving large set pieces or furniture around and need space. They also need to be able to communicate with each other about technical cues.

Once the performance is underway, keep dressing rooms quiet. Stereos, visitors, and loud voices are unnecessary distractions. You need this time to concentrate. While waiting in the wings, pay attention to what is happening onstage so that you won't miss your entrance cues. The stage manager is prepared to answer any questions about cues and is the person you should approach for any emergencies.

Don’t interact with the audience before or during the show unless it’s part of the script or the director’s concept. Your challenge during the show is to create the illusion of someone other than yourself; don’t destroy that illusion before the show even begins.

After each performance, make sure you hang up your costumes, put away all your props, and tidy up your makeup area.

Performance Checklist

Create a personal performance checklist to avoid becoming complacent as you become more comfortable with the show. The reminders you include can be both general (“Don’t swallow ends of sentences—ever!” or “Keep up energy level after intermission”) and specific (“Most important scene in show—act II, scene i" or “Don’t forget props—watch in pocket, act I, scene iii”). You might want to attach your performance checklist to your script and post a copy of it in your dressing room next to your makeup area.

Onstage

Really listen to other characters onstage—and respond with motivated words and actions.

Be careful not to change the speed of your performance by slowing down or rushing. Remember that your job is to tell the story of the play. If something goes wrong onstage, fix it while staying focused and in character. If you need to improvise, do so. Finally, don’t despair; even if you make a mistake, the show will go on.

Acting means constant performance, constant work. Onstage, perform your character in each moment of the play. Say each line as if you were saying it for the first time. Before making an entrance, imagine where you are coming form, what you were just doing, who you were just speaking with, and why you entered.

Curtain Call

This is the opportunity for the entire company to be recognized for the work they have done. The director will stage and rehearse the curtain call at one of the final dress rehearsals. Actors should take their bows quickly, gracefully, and with a smile. Generally, actors do not applaud onstage unless the production is a musical and the conductor is introduced.

It takes many people to create a finished performance. Actors get their thank-yous form the audience. Share the appreciation with the whole cast. Thank your director and crew members either in person or in writing.

Unit 4—Acting

Acting: Specialization

The show closes. The challenge of crafting your performance as an actor is, for the moment, behind you. Where do you go from here? There are many acting specialties that can offer you fascinating new challenges, including Reader's Theatre, movement specialties, such as mime and stage combat; voice specialties, such as dialects and accents; mask work; musical theatre; acting in film and TV; and multimedia and performance art.

Reader's Theatre—In Reader's Theatre, two or more actors create a performance by reading a script based on a literary work. Many types of literature are used as the basis for a Reader's Theatre script, including plays, fiction, poetry, letter, diaries, journals, and biographies. Scripts may be adapted from a short work of literature or form an excerpt of a longer work.

See the appendix for guidelines in Adapting Reader's Theatre.

Acting in Reader's Theatre

Acting in a Reader's Theatre performance has several basic characteristics in common with acting in a play: script analysis and character development are required; vocal interpretations is critical; and the ability to work creatively and flexibly as part of an ensemble is important.

While Reader's Theatre can be performed in a variety of ways, there are certain conventions. Generally, actors perform seated on chairs or stools arranged in a way that suggests the characters' relationships to one another. If there is a narrator, he or she will probably be positioned to the side. Most often the entire case will remain onstage throughout the performance, although sometimes a director may want an actor to enter or exit or change places to reflect a change in character relationships.

Auditions

In many cases, a Reader's Theatre production is organized by a group of people interested in presenting a literary work, and there are typically no auditions. Occasionally, there may be forma auditions as for a play. Other times there may be informal auditions in which the director has actors read parts of the script individually or works with small groups of actors, rotating readers in certain parts. In any case, you should know the story and the characters' relationships well, so you might want to read the literary work on which the script is based.

The Rehearsal Process

Rehearsals for a Reader's Theatre performance are basically a series of read-throughs. During your initial reading of a Reader's Theatre Script, become familiar with the basic elements of plot, character, setting, and theme. Then reread, analyzing the characters and their interactions. Rehearsal schedules will vary with the length of the script: A script about the length of a one-act play might involve 20 to 25

hours of rehearsals. You may have your part memorized by the time of the first performance, but you should continue to read or pretend to read from your script for the performance.

Movement

Your director may incorporate some limited blocking for your Reader's Theatre performance, but in general, you will stay in a seated position, full-front or one-quarter. You may use some gestures, but they should be those that you can do with a script in your hand and of a type your character would normally do while seated.

Voice

As an actor in a Reader's Theatre ensemble, you will express your character primarily through what you say and how you say it. Understand thoroughly what you are saying and use vocal inflection creatively—not only to convey the meaning of your words to the audience but to keep them interested and entertained. Since you will be reading from a script, take special care to project out rather than down at your script.

Focus

In general, you will focus front but speak and react—with facial expressions and limited gestures—as though you are interacting fact to face with the other actors. If you don't have a part in a particular scene, listen but don't react, and do nothing to detract from the focus of the scene; even shifting in your chair can be distracting. You shouldn't make eye contact with the audience unless your director requests you to do so. If you are playing a narrator, however, you should make eye-contact with the audience whenever it's possible to look up form the script, directing one or two lines to a different audience member each time.

(Exercise 1—Unit 4)

Movement Specialties

There are three basic types of movement onstage: movement from place to place, gestures, and stage business. Actors use these basic types of movement to craft expressive action onstage. Actors develop the style and repertoire of their movements by drawing on a variety of sources.

The actor's most basic source is careful observation of other people in everyday activities. In performing the realistic drama that remains the dominant form of contemporary theatre, observation is probably the most valuable resource for actors in developing movement. Actors also study styles of movement in various theatre traditions—such as commedia dell'arte and Kabuki—and adapt some of their conventions of movement.

Another important source form which actors derive inspiration for movement onstage is there experience of movement as interpreted by other arts anf forms of entertainment. Allowing other arts to influence your work as an actor will help make your performance more creative and interesting. Both

visual and non-theatre performing arts can provide inspiration for expressing your character through movement. You can enrich your repertoire of stage movement by examining postures and gestures in paintings and sculptures; observing circus performers, dancers, and puppets; watching athletes in action; and listening to music, which can suggest emotion, rhythm, and pacing. Attention to movement in all of these cultural activities can broaden your sense of artistic style and provide new choices for you as an actor.

Styles of Movement

Movement styles fall into two general categories—realistic and stylized. Literal realistic movement is the imitation of the natural actions people perform every day: talking on the phone, eating a meal, walking up stairs, and so on. Sometimes ordinary actions are endowed with an added significance by making them bigger and broader n scope. This enlarged, stylized movement is still realistic and easily recognizable, but more overtly dramatic. An actor employing this stylized movement makes every gesture as if it were very important.

Stylized movement may also be used to create certain effects. For example, mechanistic, synchronized movements by a group of actors might suggest the tedium of factory work. The quick, fluttery movements of the gossiping women in Meredith Wilson's musical The Music Man as they sing "Pick-a-Little, Talk-a-Little" imparts the fitting impression of a flock of hens.

Another form of stylizations is symbolic movement, in which a conventional gesture is made to stand for something else, such as an emotion or a more complex physical activity. A symbolic gesture is stripped of most of the detail of realistic action and retains only a few of the larger or crucial elements of movement. For example, thrusting out your chest my symbolize aggression or dominance, and looking at your waist as if checking the time on a wristwatch may symbolize impatience.

The style of a production determines the style of the actors' movement. Realistic drama would generally require literal realistic movement. A melodrama or farce might call for enlarged realistic or other stylized movement. Symbolic movement might be employed in specialized situations, such as in a dream sequence or in mime.

(Exercises 2, 3, 4—Unit 4)

Mime

The modern tradition of mime, based on the technique of pantomime, is an abstract art form employing exaggerated, conventionalized gestures to express ideas rather than to represent actions. The formal art of mime emerged in the early 1800's when Jean-Baptiste Gaspard Deburau began the process of refining the commedia dell'arte slapstick style of pantomime. Come credit him with the creation of Pierrot character, the wistful lover.

Today's most famous mime, Marcel Marceau, was inspired by the great silent film comedians Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. He developed a character called Bip, who has a personality similar to Pierrot's. Because of Marceau, the art of mime has become more popular. Marceau has stated that he

feels mime has become popular because it has no language barriers and because it's so simple that it can be performed anywhere.

Mimes never use words (though some employ sounds). They generally wear whiteface makeup (white foundation with accentuated eyes and mouth) and eccentric clothing and work on a bare stage with few props. Even if you don't ever perform mime, its lessons can prove valuable tools. Using your body and gestures to communicate without words is an excellent discipline. Because mime often involves the creation of an original story, an actor who performs it develops a strong sense of narrative. In addition, since mime is typically a solo performance, an actor who does mime becomes more confident and independent.

View Film—Mime in Action (?)—stopping regularly for notes and practice.

Stage Combat will not be discussed. We may revisit some basic slaps/punches/chokes if time permits

Voice Specialties

Each person's way of speaking is distinctive and contributes to expressing his or her personality. Altering your articulation, pronunciation, inflection, and projection can contribute to creating a unique-sounding character. Some actors have more vocal flexibility than others. Actors known for their vocal variety and flexibility include Mandy Patinkin, Meryl Streep, Robin William, John Leguizamo, and Tracey Ullman.

Dialect and Accent

You can often tell where a person is form by their speech. The regions of the United States each leave a distinctive mark on the speech of a person raised there. Similarly, the ways in which English is spoken by people from the various regions of England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Canada, Australia, the West Indies, and elsewhere display different grammatical structures, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and pronunciation. The term dialect is applied to all of the language features peculiar to the speech of a particular region. The term accent refers specifically to the sound qualities of the speech of a region.

In his play *Riders to the Sea*, Irish playwright John Millington Synge renders the speech of the peasants of the West of Ireland, which show dialectical features:

Maurya (a little defiantly)—I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping.

The use of after to indicate the past tense of the verb see is characteristic of Irish dialect, as is the deletion of the auxiliary verb was with the participles riding and galloping. In using dialect, playwrights often attempt to render grammatical features, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions; they less often attempt to express accents systematically. Early in his play *Pygmalion,* George Bernard Shaw attempts to do this by phonetically rendering a lower-class London flower-girl's Cockney accent:

The Flower Girl (picking up her scattered flowers and replacing them in the basket)—There menners f' yer! Te-oo banches o voylets trod into the mad.

Shaw almost immediately gives up this effort, observing that his attempt to represent her accent would not be understood outside London. Playwrights writing in dialect may write out words phonetically as Shaw attempted or explain how to pronounce certain key words. In general, however, the sound qualities of a character's speech are left to the actor's research and interpretation.

Books on dialects and accents are available, but it's usually best to learn by listening to a native speaker in person or on audiotapes or other recordings. To mimic an accent, first listen to the accent, trying to develop an ear for sound substitutions (such as the long i for the long a in the Cockney accent), variations in pronunciation, and the melody and inflection patterns of speech.

When performing, it's not necessary for you to make all the sound substitutions of an accent. In fact, you may sound like a caricature if you do. What is important is to get the style or flavor of the sound and then perform it consistently.

Most directors don't want an accent during auditions. During the first few rehearsals, even if you have a good ear, don't consciously us an accent. Develop it on your own time. Practice with your everyday speech when talking with friends and family. Privately, experiment with your lines using your accent. Later in the rehearsal process when you have a better understanding of your character, you can make strategic accent choices.

(Exercise 5—Unit 4)

Consider watching Film—My Fair Lady

Masks

Masks have been part of the theatre experience since the earliest days. The pair of smiling and frowning masks is a symbol of the thespian, or actor, a term rooted in the belief that Thespis, an ancient Greek poet, was the originator of the role of the actor. Greek masks accentuated facial features and expressed basic emotions, as do masks used in the theatre traditions of China and Japan. Masks worn by the commedia dell'arte characters expressed a specific character and were an integral part of the stock character costume. (Traditionally, only young lover characters did not wear masks.) Masks can thus be used to convey basic emotions and express specific characters.

Depending on the style of the mask, the presence created by the masked actor may be mysterious, commanding, sorrowful, or outrageously funny. Depending on how they are constructed, masks can change under different lighting or when tilted at different angles to provide a range of expression rivaling the human face.

A masked actor presents a character through the use of the mask; as such, if you use masks you will likely be performing in a presentational style. Realistic Elizabethan and Renaissance period plays, however, may feature actors wearing masks at a costume ball or dance party. Such masked balls do not make use of the power of the mask except to exploit its use for disguise, mystery, or flirtation.

Masks have been used in a wide range of productions for various purposes. They have been used with particular effect in farce because they lend themselves to the creation of exaggerated and physical characters and in tragedy because they can be very expressive of high emotion. Masks may be used to distinguish roles in a play: a chorus may wear identical masks; major character may wear certain masks to highlight or indicate their importance. Masks are often used symbolically—a masked actor's face is hidden, which may symbolize detachment; a non-detailed, or neutral, mask may symbolize anonymity of individuality may be represented by an abstract mask.

Masks can also be used effectively to present an ethnic identity in a play that calls for such distinctions. Jean Genet's The Blacks featured black actors wearing white masks to present—in a concrete way—issues of power and race relations. Masks can serve equally well to create characters in such a way that casting can be race- and gender-blind. If you find yourself vying for a role in a masked production, you could be cast for any part because the mask itself is a dominant part of the character; the race or gender of the actor may not matter.

Exploring Masks

The power and magic of masks can be experienced with simple or complex masks, half masks (covering the top half of the fact) or full masks (covering the entire face). Often, just trying on a mask and taking a look in the mirror will provide instant inspiration for a character. (The word person comes from persona, the Latin word for an actor's mask.)

Far from limiting you as an actor, masks can inspire you to be more conscious of your body and voice in the creation of a character. Keep these points in mind while working with masks:

- Study a mask before you put it on; each has a personality and mood. Imagine who the mask might be if it were a character. Then put it on and see how the character emerges as you add voice and movement.
- Think of the mask as a character rather than a costume or prop. Don't fidget with it; let it lead you.
- Continue to make facial expressions under your mask, which will help you to animate the mask.
- Particularly with full masks, work on articulation and projection, which can be difficult because nose and mouth holes are not usually very large. (You might want to limit your use of full masks to pantomime or work that does not involve much speech.)
- Stay open to the audience when wearing a mask; try not to let them see any part of your face under the mask.

(Exercise 6 & 7—Unit 4) Extra Credit (?)

Musical Theatre

Musical theatre is a type of entertainment containing music, songs, and, usually, dance. While various types of musical theatre, such as opera and operetta, had long been popular in Europe, the modern musical comedy is a characteristically American theatrical form. In the 1920's and 1930's, American composers such as Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, and Irving Berlin wrote popular songs that were incorporated into light comedy plots or musical reviews with choruses of dancers. In 1927, Kern's *Showboat* indicated a new direction in musical theatre by touching on more serious subject matter and by closely weaving songs and dances into the action. It was not until 1943, however, when Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II created *Oklahoma!* That a musical play fully integrated a story with dialogue, songs, and dance. Musical theatre was changed forever.

Musicals are typically more elaborately staged than other plays. They have orchestral music, songs, and big dance numbers. They are usually very visually exciting with complex sets, costumes, and sometimes special effects. Because of this complexity, there are more people involved in the production of a musical than are required by other plays.

Acting in Musicals

In addition to working with a director, actors may also work with a music director and a choreographer. As an actor in a musical, you may be a principal, an actor who has one of the major roles, or a member of the chorus. You must be able to work with a large cast, sing parts in an ensemble, and handle a large number of scene and costume changes.

Dance

In the original production of Oklahoma! Agnes De Mille served as the choreographer, the artist who designs dances for the stage. De Mille worked with the writers and directors to create dance numbers that enhanced the story and tapped into the psychological world of the characters. Through dance, a new dimension of characterization opened up.

In a musical, there are solo dance numbers and ensemble dance numbers. Sometimes, there is a separate ballet sequence. The whole cast is usually involved in a production number, a large-scale performance within a musical show, usually combining both song and dance. Musical theatre choreography may use techniques and steps form modern dance, jazz, tap, and street dance.

Whether you are a principal or a member of the chorus, you should learn to communicate and build your character through dance.

Song

In musicals, songs are used to heighten the emotion and dramatic climax of scenes. Solos may replace monologues; a duet may be central to a love-scene. Group numbers may serve the function of choruses in Greek drama or Kabuki.

For an actor in a musical, the ability to bring a character to life through song is critical. Learning to express emotion and to project a distinct song is critical. Learning to express emotion and to project a distinct character through your interpretation of song is what distinguishes you as an actor who sings. The music director or a singing teacher can help you develop your vocal range and projection and sing on pitch and with emotion. He or she can also help you interpret a song with a unique perspective and approach.

Beginning Drama—Activities Section 1

Choose two (must be different topics)

Group Pantomime—begin by yourself with a tiny, imaginary ball that you can casually toss and catch. Find a partner and throw the little ball back and forth. Have fun playing together. Gradually, the ball increases in size and weight, and it gets harder to throw and catch. Eventually it's too heavy for just two people to throw. Call in other people to help. Eventually, your group gets the ball to move, but then you can't stop it! The ball becomes dangerous—like a truck rolling toward you.

Attic Trunk Pantomime—Use pantomime to create this situation: You discover a heavy trunk in a dusty attic and pull it out to the center of the floor. It's an old trunk with a rusty lock, and it's difficult to open. (Do you need to break the lock open?) When you get it open, pull out an old piece of clothing—a jacket, a skirt, a hat, a shawl—and try it on. (Is it musty? Is it soft or rough?) Find a jar with a wide mouth and screw the cap off. (Are the contents sweet, sour, or smelly?) Find an old watch, an expensive ring, or another piece of jewelry. Find an old photo album. What else can you find? When you have thoroughly investigated everything in the trunk, put it all back inside, close the lid, and push the trunk away.

Story Pantomime—work by yourself or with others to tell a story without using words. It should have a beginning, middle, and end with specific character and actions. Rehearse together, then perform your story pantomime for the class. Here are some situations that you might develop into stories:

- Searching for something lost in a messy bedroom
- Going for a ride with a reckless driver on a winding mountain road
- Making a bungee jump from a bridge over a raging river
- Checking out at a grocery store and realizing you have lost your money
- Recognizing a childhood friend on a subway train
- Trying on clothing you can't afford in a high-priced boutique
- Getting annoyed with people in front of you in a movie theatre

Improvising Scenes—Work with a partner to improvise a scene based on one of the following situations or on a situation of your own creation. Try to include a beginning, middle, and end.

- You were taking care of your friend's cat at your house, but it has disappeared. Our friend comes to pick it up
- Your mom reluctantly lets you borrow her car to celebrate getting your license. You break the side mirror pulling the car into the garage. Your mother discovers the damage.
- You confront a classmate in the library who has been spreading nasty rumors about you. You must do it quietly without getting thrown out of the library

Place and Character Improvisation—As a class write a variety of places on one set of cards (for example, "a zoo") and a variety of people on another set of cards (for example, "a car salesman"). With a partner, draw one place card and two character cards and improvise a scene based on your choices.

Prop-Prompts Improvisation—Gather together a variety of everyday objects—a hammer, a hubcap, panty hose, a mop, a fork, and so on. With a partner, choose an object as your prop and perform a quick improvisation with it—no more than 30 seconds. Use the object in the way it was intended or use it for another purpose entirely, essentially making it another object. Keep choosing until you have used all the objects, or let other pairs do a prop improvisation. Strive to give each improvisation a beginning, middle, and end.

Tall Tale Contest—A tall tale is a humorous story that uses realistic detail and a literal, straight-faced manner to tell about extravagantly impossible happenings. Create a tall tale to explain why you were once late for class or to explain some other event. Make it as outrageous and detailed as you can. Join your classmates in a tall tale contest, with the audience determining whose tale was the tallest.

Around the Campfire—Have everyone sit in a circle around an imaginary campfire in the center. If possible, dim the lights. Take turns telling scary stories. Tell your story as if it happened to you. Use a different voice for each character and feel free to gesture or to move around to illustrate a point. Include vocal sound effects for added interest. Work for an emotional response—fright—from your listeners.

Warped Fairy Tales—Choose a traditional folk tale or fairy tale and think of ways to "warp" it, like reversing the gender of the characters, changing the ending, or making the good guys bad and the bad guys good. For example, you might begin your story like this: "Once upon a time there was a beautiful little troll…" or "This is the story of the three little wolves…" Practice telling your story out loud, using a different voice for each character. Tell your story to the class and watch their reactions.

Beginning Drama—Activities Section 2

Choose two (must be different topics)

Express Your New Experiences—Follow one of the suggestions for broadening your experience (see exercises 1-3, Unit 2 & revisit your notes on Broadening Your Experience, Sense Memory). Write about this experience in your notebook. Use that information to perform a short scene that presents the difficulties and enjoyments of trying something new. Use props and enlist the assistance of your classmates, if necessary (no more than 3 persons per group), or pantomime your interactions with objects, settings, and people. Give your scene a beginning, middle, and end. You should have a final copy of your original script or a copy of the scene from which your script is borrowed.

Senses & Emotions Improvisations—As a class, write on one set of cards a variety of settings that have a range of sensory stimuli (for example, a rainforest or a zoo) and on another set of variety of emotions (for example, elation, sadness). With a partner, select one setting card and two emotion cards and improvise a scene based on your choices. Discuss why your characters may be feeling the emotions you have drawn and try to create a simple story to guide your improvisations. Use sense memory and emotional memory to help you express the emotions of your characters in your situation.

Create a Country—Work with a small group (3-5 people) to create an imaginary country. Give it a name and list its characteristics—government, economic power, natural resources, terrain, climate, social classes, cultural pastimes, and customs. Think about the inhabitants of this imaginary nation and develop several characters from various levels of society. Perform a few improvisations with these characters, working through scenes that present various aspects of the country you created. Work with another group to create interactions among characters from different countries.

Round-Table Discussion—Working with a small group (5-6), select various characters from history or literature. Try to include as wide a variety of types and periods as possible; for example Pablo Picasso, Bart Simpson, Captain Jack Sparrow, William Shakespeare, King Arthur, President Reagan, Lady Gaga. Have each member of your group choose one character. Imagine how that character might relate to the others. What might each have in common with another? What questions might they ask each other? What topics would they discuss? Then improvise a round-table discussion in which all participate.

For examples of Round-Table Discussion, you can view Best of SNL sketches featuring Phil Hartman as Frank Sinatra

Analyzing Behavior—work with a small group (4-5) to choose a familiar scene from a fairy tale, favorite movie, or novel. Assign characters. Analyze your character's behavior in the scene, breaking it down into motivation, objective, obstacle, strategy, action, stakes, and outcome. Perform your scene keeping these analysis in mind. How do they affect the way you present your characters?

Using Models—Use a familiar person, such as one of our parents or siblings, or a famous person, such as a politician or actor, to create a character. Build from what you know of that person's background, movement, and voice. Work on perfecting your character's physical characteristics. Avoid exaggerating

unless you are trying to create a caricature of that person. Then, working with another actor, invent a situation involving your character and a character created by your partner. Establish your character's status quo in that situation and do a short improvisation between the two characters.

For examples of Using Models, view SNL sketches of Will Ferrell as George W. Bush, or Tina Fey as Sarah Palin.

Stealing the Scene—With one or two other actors, perform a scene for your classmates in which you intentionally violate all of the guidelines for maintaining the focus of a scene (see your notes on Focus). You can make it subtle or obvious, but don't tell you audience what you are doing. Then ask yourself for their response to your scene and see how distracted they were by the lack of appropriate focus.

Beats and Transitions—Choose a scene from a play to break into beats and transitions. It can be a monologue or dialogue between one or more characters. If you choose a scene with multiple actors, work with other actors, each of you taking a part. Determine the beats and transitions for the entire scene. You might transcribe the scene and mark it, using brackets to enclose each beat and an arc to indicate transitions. When you have done this, act out the scene, employing your understanding of the beats and transitions within it. Then, in your notes, respond to the value of this method for analyzing and expressing the dynamic shifts of a scene.

Beginning Drama—Activities Section 3

Choose two (must be different topics)

Character Biography—Choose a one-act play featuring a character that interests you. Beginning with the information provided by you analysis of the script, create a brief biography for this character. When you have exhausted the script, you may invent facts about the character that are not specifically given by the playwright in order to complete your biography. Your invented details, however, should be consistent with the character as developed by the playwright. Include your script analysis notes.

Basic information:
1-2 pages, typed
12 pt. font
Times New Roman or Calibri
Standard MLA formatting, citing, heading
Do not include a cover page!

Researching Background—Select a period of history that interests you. Using library research, choose a play depicting (not necessarily from) that period. When you have selected a play, research the playwright, critical commentary, and the performance history as well as provide some script analysis notes.

Basic information:
2+ pages, typed
12 pt. font
Times New Roman or Calibri
Standard MLA formatting, citing, heading
Do not include a cover page!

Tragic Hero/Heroine—Learn a monologue of a tragic hero or heroine from a Shakespearean play. Be sure that you thoroughly grasp the meaning of the lines before you begin working on our delivery of the verse. Use clues provided in the script to realize your character physically. Present your monologue to a partner for feedback. Finally, present your monologue to the class.

Incorporating Stage Business—Read a play and determine how you might incorporate stage business for a character. Try out your stage business and see how it works. Present a short scene in which you demonstrate stage business for your character.

This may be done with a partner—both actors must have stage business and equal dialogue

Hot Seat—Read a play and analyze your character, as well as the background of the play. Ask members of your class, or a small group, to fire questions at you regarding your character. You must answer each question from your "hot seat" in character. These questions can range from concrete ("What is your favorite food?") to more conceptual and introspective ("What do you think life is all about?"). You

should be familiar enough with the script and your character to improvise answers; some of your answers will come directly from the script; for others, you will need your imagination.

Submit any notes you took on character analysis.

Beginning Drama—Activities Section 4

Choose two (must be different topics)

Read a Scene—Working with two other actors, choose a scene form a play to do as a Reader's Theatre performance. If you can't find a scene that is long enough, you may adapt it by recombining portions of the script for your performance. Follow the guidelines in Writing & Theatre (see special appendix online/or from teacher). Analyze the script and characters together, recording your comments/experiences in your notebook. Before performing, practice reading with articulation, projection, and inflection, and focusing front when you are not reading. Use a narrator to explain the play and how the scene fits into the plot.

Examples are available—see Duff

Consider using fairytales/fables as a source for your original piece.

Read a Duet—Write or adapt a Reader's Theatre piece with a partner that highlights the relationship between two people. Consider a series of letters or phone calls, or a dialogue during a long walk, a lunch, or an interview. When you perform your piece, you may sit side by side or engage in limited blocking that can be accomplished with scripts in hand. Present your piece to the class.

Miming a Sequence of Emotions—Select several emotions—for example, love, jealousy, and remorse—and devise a simple narrative in which a character successively experiences each of these emotions. Create a mime performance based on this narrative and present it in class. Take notes on the challenges of expressing emotions via silent, stylized movements.

The Lonely Road—In The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Samuel Taylor Coleridge describes a terrified traveler: "Like one, that on a lonesome road/Doth walk in fear and dread,/And having once turned round walks on,/And no more turns his head;/Because he knows, a frightful friend/Doth close behind him tread." Mime this situation, adapting the mime walk to suggest the movements of someone who is very frightened. Adapt the mime walk to express other emotions, such as joy, sorrow, and frustration. Use stylized facial expressions that convey these emotions as well.

Extra Credit—with no more than four other actors, create a Reader's Theatre piece to accompany a full mime interpretation of the entire poem. Choosing to do this will relieve you of your 2nd obligation in this section. Keep in mind, it is a long poem! You may incorporate masks as well.

Martial Arts Expert—Mime this situation, developing a humorous character: You are a pompous expert in martial arts. You bow arrogantly to your invisible opponent and assume a stance. Go through a range of defensive and offensive movements—slash the air with your arms and legs, turn and spin. Suddenly, you feel you are going to sneeze. You struggle to maintain your concentration as the tickle in your nose grows stronger. Finally, you can no longer contain it and you sneeze explosively. Your opponent knocks you to the floor. You rise to your feet with wounded dignity and bow to the victor.

Masked Monologue—Read a Greek play while envisioning the actors using masks. Take notes on the play in your notebook; you might also include sketches of how you envision the characters in their masks. Then choose a monologue from the play. Using simple materials, create a mask and present the monologue to the class. You should do some research and make your mask similar to those used in ancient Greece.

Creating a Dance Number—Working with a group (7-9) of students, select a song you like and then devise a dance number based on it. First imagine a story into which your dance number might naturally fit, the setting for the number, and the principals who perform it. Consider getting help from the dance teacher in working out the choreography. You may also borrow dance steps you see in musicals on T.V. or in film and adapt them for your number. Perform you song/dance to the class with your written information about your "show idea".

Unit 1—Exercises

Exercise 1—Partner Observation

With a partner, take turns observing each other. Make notes, draw sketches, and talk about your observations. Begin by making generalizations observations about your partner's body type: height, shape, and special features (short legs, long fingers, broad shoulders, and so on). Be frank but sensitive.

Next, look at the way your partner stands and sits. Observe the position of the head, shoulders, arms, hands, torso, legs, and feet. Note any tension in the body.

Now look at your partner's walk: the pace (fast, slow, or medium), stride (long short, or medium), footfall (heavy or light), swing of the arms, movement of the head and shoulders, and angle of the torso.

Then observe and describe the shape of your partner's face and its features. Also note your partner's hair and hairstyle.

Finally, have your partner talk to you about the following: a happy event, a boring chore, something surprising, and something aggravating. Observe and describe your partner's facial expressions and any other expressive body movements. Also listen to and describe your partner's voice while discussing each topic.

Exercise 2—Personal Reflection

Make the following observations about yourself in your Drama notebook: What are my most interesting qualities? What things am I best at? What things am I worst at? What situations upset me? What situations rarely upset me that often upset others? What do people say about me that I agree with? What do people say about me that I disagree with? Why do I want to be involved in theatre? Which well-known actor seems to be most like me? Why? Which well-known actor do I admire most? Why?

Focusing: Breathing, warm-up, stretching

Exercise 3—Breathing

Stand erect with your feet shoulder-width apart. Inhale deeply through your nose as you count slowly to 4. Feel your chest expand as the air fills your lungs. Now exhale through your mouth as you count slowly to 4. Feel your chest relax as the air is expelled from your lungs. Don't let your shoulders move up and down. Repeat several times.

Next, lift your arms as you inhale to form an arch overhead where your fingertips touch. As you exhale, lower your arms back to your sides. Repeat 4 times.

Finally, inhale and form an arch again, but this time tilt your head back, stretching your chin up. As you exhale, bring your head forward to look at the floor. Repeat 4 times.

Exercise 4—Breathing with Resistance

Repeat the breathing pattern of the previous exercise, but this time when you exhale and tilt your head forward, open your hands as wide as possible with your palms facing out.

Pressing your palms out, bring your arms down to your sides. With your palms parallel to the floor, press down as if you were trying to push something through the floor. At the same time, bend your knees slightly. Your arms should be rigid as if some force is pushing them up as your pushing them down.

Notice how this movement affects your air flow. You may need to exhale in short burst instead of the 4-count steady flow. Repeat 4 times.

Exercise 5—Standing Alignment

Stand erect with your feet shoulder-width apart. Breathe normally, but deeply. Imagine a heavy weight is attached by a string to the top of your head, gradually pulling your head forward and down. Allow the rest of your body to follow your head and curve over, as if the vertebrae that form your spine were spilling over one by one.

Keep your legs straight and your arms relaxed and dangling. When you can't go any further, bend your knees slightly. Try to go a little further whenever you exhale. Shake your head lightly from side to side to release any tension.

After a minute or so, begin reversing the movement. Start from the base of your spine, feeling each vertebrae, one by one, return to its place. Keep your knees slightly bend until you are in an upright position. Bring your head up slowly. Repeat 2 times. Afterward, lightly shake out your body.

Exercise 6—Lying Alignment

Lie on your back on the floor, legs together. Then slowly peel yourself up from the floor—head first, then shoulders, then torso—and fold yourself over the top of your legs as far as you can go. Hold the position for a few moments, breathing evenly in through your nose and out through your mouth. You may gently grip your ankles or calves, but don't pull. Keep your head bowed against your legs. Recover by slowly rolling back down along your spine to your head. Repeat 2 times.

Next, turn over onto your stomach, placing your palms under your shoulders with your elbows close to your ribs. Rest your forehead on the floor. Lift your head, followed by your body, away from the floor by straightening your arms. Press your shoulders down. Your back is now in an arch. Tip your

head back and look up, breathing evenly in through your nose and out through your mouth. Don't drop your head back. Tilt it back slowly, stretching your chin up.

Finally, bring your had back and lower your body, beginning with your pelvis and continuing until your chin rests on your hands again. Repeat 2 times.

Exercise 7—Isolation

To isolate means to set apart or detach. In isolation exercises your move an individual part of your body without moving the rest of your body. This teaches you to control all part of your body.

These exercises should be done slowly and smoothly. They should not hurt; if you feel pain, don't force the movement any further.

Music with a steady beat will be helpful for these exercises. Each movement takes 1 count

Head—Tilt your head forward and back for 8 counts. Be careful to tilt your head back slowly, stretching your chin up. Turn right and left for 8 counts. Tilt from side to side for 8 counts, keeping your shoulders level. Slowly circle to the right all the way around for 8 counts. Then circle to the left all the way around for 8 counts.

Neck—With your arms overhead and your palms together framing your face, move your head from side to side for 4 counts and then circle it around for 4 counts, like an "Egyptian head". Thrust your chin out and up and then return to normal (the "chicken neck") for 4 counts.

Shoulders—With your arms relaxed at your sides, lift both shoulders up towards your ears and then press them down for 16 counts. Push your shoulders forward and then pull them back and around for 16 counts. Bounce your shoulders for 8 counts. Finally, shimmy for 16 counts (quickly alternate right and left shoulders forward as you bend up and down at the waist). Begin slowly and build speed.

Arms—With your right arm, draw a big circle in the air to your right for 8 counts. Now do the same with your left arm to your left side. Then bend your knees as you swing both arms forward and around for 8 counts, straightening your legs when your arms return to your sides. Do the same, swinging your arms backward.

Ribs—Keeping your shoulders in place, move your rib cage from side to side for 16 counts and forward and back for 16 counts. Move your rib cage in a square formation, forward to right to back to left for 4 times for 16. Do the same I the opposite direction.

Other Body Parts—Pretend you are working a hulu-hoop with your hips. Circle your ankles and your wrists. Wiggle each of your fingers alone and in combinations. Make these movements slowly to a steady beat.

Exercise 8—Basic Stretching

Stand with you feet wide apart and slightly pointed out. Reach your right hand toward the ceiling. At the same time, bend your right knee so that your body weight shifts to the right side. Increase the resistance by reaching with your left hand for the floor. Shift your weight to the left side, straightening your right leg and bending your left knee. At the same time, switch arms, reaching up with your left arm and down with your right. Repeat rhythmically for 16 to 32 counts.

Do the exercise again, stretching your arms straight out to the side rather than up. Repeat for 16 counts.

Vary the exercise once more. This time, reach your right hand across your body toward your left foot. Then reach your left hand across your body toward your right foot. Repeat for 16 counts.

Finally, lightly shake out your body.

Exercise 9—Fold-and-Lunge Stretching

Stand with your feet wide apart and slightly pointed out. Bend over to grab your ankles or calves, or place your hands on the floor. Remain folded over, breathing evenly in through your nose and out through your mouth. Bend your knees and then straighten your legs. Repeat. Now spread your legs apart a little wider but stay folded over. Shift your weight from right to left in your hips. You will feel the stretch in the backs of your legs. Repeat for 16-24 counts.

Next, turn to your right and take a lunging position with your right knee bent and your weight on your right foot. Make sure your right knee is behind your toes, not over or in front of them. Put your hands on the floor on either side of your right foot. Your left foot is extended behind your, toes flexed under, with your left knee off the floor. Feel the stretch.

Now, rest your left knee on the floor and stretch by straightening your back. Place your hands on top of your right thigh and push your weight forward. Return your hands to the floor and straighten both of your legs, keeping your body centered over your right leg. Remain facing right, but shift your weight back so that it's distributed between both your legs. Feel the stretch.

Finally, try to flatten your spine by pressing your chest lengthwise along your right leg. You may lift your head to increase the stretch. Repeat 2 to 4 times. Reverse the exercise by lunging forward on your left leg and stretching your right leg back. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

After your last lunge, move your body back to your centered, folded-over position. Bend your knees into a crouch and bounce very gently. Place your hands on the floor and slowly straighten your legs. Bounce and straighten a few more times. Now, from the folded position, walk your hands out a few inches, then a few more, and a few more until you are in a bridge position. Lift and lower your heels 8 times. Walk your feet up to your hands and roll up slowly through your spine. Shake out.

Exercise 10—Space Exploration

Working in a small ensemble of five to seven people, walk around in the space, using the entire area. Periodically, change your direction and pace; avoid colliding with each other. Take big or little steps, but keep up your energy and keep moving. Breath evenly, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Think about where you might be going—to catch a bus, cash a check, visit a friend, get to class.

Now become aware of the other people in the room. Where might they be going? Follow someone. Be aware of who is behind you or beside you. Move faster. Weave in and out.

On a cue from the teacher, freeze your movement. Observe the still photograph your ensemble has become. Then on another cue, start to move backward. Without looking, sense who is near or behind you.

Next, try moving in slow motion. Notice how this changes your energy. Try to move in a crouch and on tip-toe. Can you stay balanced? Can you leap in slow motion?

Finally, try:

moving in fast-forward,

Leap, collapse, roll on the floor

Freeze in some dramatic pose,

Move and relate to others in the space,

See if you can interact with them using only movement,

Become someone's mirror or someone's shadow.

Exercise 11—Floating Ball

Take a tiny imaginary ball out of your pocket. It's a magic ball that floats in space. Place it in the palm of your hand and raise it to shoulder-height in front of you. Remove your palm from below it, leaving it floating in space just where you left it. Circle around it, admiring it from every angle. Take it out of the air and put it back into your pocket.

Exercise 12—Throw and Catch

Assemble the class into a large circle. As they face the center, explain that they are going to "toss" a ball to other members of the class. They will have to announce the name of the recipient and then determine how big/small & heavy/light their "object" is. They can shape it into any shape. The "catcher" must react to the size and weight of the object when they catch it. Each "catcher" becomes a "thrower" and can revise the shape, size and weight of the "object" when they toss to another class member. Everyone should have a chance to "catch" & "throw" the object.

Exercise 13—Moving a TV

Imagine you are in your room. You just got a new TV. Open the box and take it out, lifting with your body. Show expression of effort on your face. Place it in a spot in your room and plug it in. Step back and look at it. Fiddle with the reception. Change channels. Decide to move it. Unplug it and pick it up. Repeat the moving process several times before you finally decide on a spot and watch TV. Be careful to keep the shape of the TV and plug constant. Watch the cord and the antennae. Make the story—and each action—have a beginning, middle, and end.

Exercise 14—Diaphragmatic Breathing

Lie on the floor. Place a book on your stomach. Let your back widen as you relax in this position. Breathe deeply. The book should rise and fall as your abdomen moves in and out with the movement of your diaphragm

Now, repeat the exercise first sitting and then standing, putting your hands on your stomach instead of your book. You should be able to feel your hands move in and out if you are breathing form your diaphragm. Be sure to keep your shoulders level

Exercise 15—Voice warm-ups

Before you begin to work on your voice, you need to warm up your face and upper-body.

Facial Stretch:

Pinch your face in toward the center: your eyes should be squeezed shut, your lips puckered, and your eyebrows pushed down. Hold for 3 counts. Then open up your face: lift your eyebrows, open your eyes wide, drop your jaw and open your mouth. You'll look like a very surprised person. Hold for 3 counts. Repeat several times.

Now, stick out your tongue out as far as you can. Roll it. Then flick it. Vocalize the syllable la. Find as many variations on that sound as you can make with your tongue. For instance, you can make trills or rolls. Next, repeat the vocalizing, but change your face. Try twisting it to one side or opening your moth really wide. How do these expressions affect your sound.

If you feel any stress or tension in your face, lightly massage your jaws, cheeks, and temples.

Exercise 16—Vowels

Stand or sit upright, with proper posture. Inhale and drop your jaw as far as you can. As you exhale, vocalize a prolonged *aaahh*. The sound should be placed low and in the back of your throat, and you should feel vibrations from the sound. Place one hand on your throat and the other on your chest to feel the resonance there.

Repeat this exercise using the vowel sounds in make, deep, go, room, and join. The sounds in make and deep are placed toward the front of your mouth; you may feel the vibration in your teeth and face. The sound in go and room are placed midway between the front of your mouth and the back of your throat.

The vowel sound in join is called a diphthong, which means it's made up of two vowel sounds. It begins with an oh and ends with an ee. The back of your throat and the front of your mouth are both used to make this sound.

Vocalize the following syllable. Do the first group with a bouncing, laughing pattern. For each group, hold the last sound of each set until you run out of air.

Teacher: You may want to make a large chart of the following so that the entire class can use the same sheet and you won't have to have them copy anything nor will you have to provide a handout.

1. He he he he
   Ho ho ho ho
   Ha ha ha ha
   Hi hi hi hi
   Hoo hoo hoo hoo

2. Me me me me
   Mo mo mo mo
   Moo moo moo moo

Exercise 17—Consonants

Tongue twisters can help you master consonant sounds. Practice reading these aloud in a firm voice. Then try reading them faster and faster, still articulating them clearly. You can create your own for all the consonant sounds.

- The big black bug bled bad blood on the barn floor.
- Burnt toast, toy boats
- Aluminum, linoleum, chrysanthemum, geranium
- The sick sixth sheik's sixth sheep's sick
- I can think of six thin things and of six thick things, too.

Exercise 18—Projecting to the Back Wall

Standing in a large room or theatre space, visually choose a spot on the back wall. Get into comfortable position, take a deep breath, and project just the vowels of your name to that spot on the wall. Then project your whole name.

Lift your arms over your head and try the exercise again. You should notice that your sound is louder because you have more air power. The increase comes when your ribs are expanded, making

more room for air in your lungs. Your objective is to achieve this increase from a normal position through diaphragmatic breathing.

Exercise 19—Long-Distant Poetry

Standing in a large room or theatre space, choose a point midway between you and the back of the room. Using diaphragmatic breathing, project your voice to that point. Speak nursery rhymes, lines of poetry, or song lyrics that you may know. After practicing several times, ask a partner to sit in that spot and give you an evaluation of how well you are projecting.

Exercise 20—Changing Inflection

Practice saying a few simple sentences or a brief speech from a play using variety in pitch, volume, tempo, phrasing, and vocal quality. Try emphasizing different words. How does the meaning or emotional content change with each change of inflection?

Exercise 21—Nonsense Conversation

With a partner, have a gibberish conversation. Use the inflection of your nonsense words to express and convey your meaning to each other. If you can't think of words to use, simply repeat a syllable, such as *la*.

Exercise 22—Character Voices

Find a short poem or nursery rhyme. Read or speak it using various voices, such as that of a young child, a very old person, a whiny person, a laughing person, a whispering person, a raspy-voiced person, a nervous person, etc.

Supplement to #22—See Voice Over Hand-Out

Exercise 23—Liar, Liar

Work with a partner in the following improvisation game: Begin an action, for example, stomping your foot. Your partner asks you, "What are you doing?" You lie, saying, for example, "I'm swimming upstream." Your partner must then pretend to do this. Now it's your turn to ask, "What are you doing?" Your partner must lie, saying, for example, "I'm talking on the phone," which you must then do, and the game goes on…

Exercise 24—Police and Suspect

Work with a partner to present the following improvisation: One of you is a police officer asking questions to a burglary suspect. The suspect was caught inside the mayor's house with a bag of valuables. The suspect must answer the officer's questions without admitting to the crime. The police officer must ask clever questions to trip up the suspect. Both of you must listen carefully ad work with each other.

Exercise 25—Customer Service

Working with a group of five to seven people, improvise a busy customer service desk at a large department store five minutes before closing time. Appoint one person as store manager, one as a clerk, and the rest as customers. Each customer should determine the product they are returning or inquiring about. Work toward the goal to get out of the store with what you need before closing time. You have five minutes.

Supplement to #'s 21-25—See class text *Improvisation Starters.*

Exercise 26—Family Stories

Family gatherings are common places for telling stories. Think of a story about someone in your family that is often told at such gatherings. As a class, share these stories. Listen to the way your classmates explain the background of the story, describe the characters and the actions, and conclude the story. Which stories were the most interesting? Why?

Unit 2—Exercises

Exercise 1—Character Resources in Nature

Using your observations of nature, create a character that embodies one of the four elements : earth, air, fire, or water. Work with other actors to create a series of interactions among the element characters; for example, fire falls in love with water. Try the same thing with different types of weather, ecosystems, and seasons.

Exercise 2—Object Characterization

Study a chair. Look at its texture and color. Is it old or new? Sit in it. Is it comfortable? Imagine the chair as character. Now try to be like the chair, taking on characteristics such as "old and wooden" or "soft and welcoming." Then do the same with other common objects. Be a basketball, round and bouncy. Be a stapler, quick and efficient. Use the characteristics you discover in the objects to create new characters.

Exercise 3—Expressive Faces

Find a photo of an expressive face. In front of a mirror, work on mimicking the expression of that face. What sort of character or characters do you see developing? Try this exercise with various faces. See how many characters you can begin to create, starting from a facial expression alone.

Exercise 4—Sense, Empathize, and Express

Imagine that you are acting in a scene in which you are lost in the woods. You are supposed to feel fear of dying and sadness at the thought of never again seeing those you love. Employ the techniques of sense memory and emotional memory to express the situation and emotions of your character. If you have no similar experiences to draw upon for the emotional memory technique, or if you are having difficulty feeling the emotions, try using actions to generate them.

Exercise 5—The Letter

Work with a partner for this exercise. Each of you should write a brief letter and put it in a sealed envelope with your partner's name on the outside. It could be a love letter, a "Dear John" letter, an announcement of a birth or death, a threat, and so on. Next, create a set with a table and chair. Place your letter on the table. Have your partner enter, approach the table, pick up the letter, and read it, reacting to the contents both mentally and physically as fully as possible. Assess your partner's reaction and performance. Now switch roles and read your partner's letter.

Exercise 6—Famous People in Common Situations

Imagine how a famous person from the past would act in a common situation of today: Cleopatra unable to find her favorite ice-cream at the supermarket, Shakespeare stuck in a traffic jam. Perform an

improvisation showing how the know characteristics of these famous people would be revealed in these new situations. Then reverse the exercise, transplanting a famous person of today into a common situation of the past: Jackie Chan trying to put on a suit of armor in medieval Europe, Lady Gaga herding unruly cattle on a ranch in the Old West.

Exercise 7—Keeping Open

Given your stage space, work with a small group (3-4 people) to practice keeping open while moving onstage. One member of the group should sit in the audience and give directions for stage movement for each actor, such as "enter stage right; cross downstage center while shaking your fist; stop in one-quarter left position; turn right; cross upstage right". Each actor should respond to the directions by applying the guidelines for keeping open. Take turns giving and responding to directions. Work through various combinations of movements until you thoroughly understand the conventions and their importance for the stage.

Exercise 8—Focus and Poise

Practice focus and poise by performing this scene as if you were on a proscenium stage. Get help for the sound effects from two classmates. Begin by sitting in a chair, reading a book; focus on the book. You hear a knocking at the door across the room; focus on the door as you set aside you book. Rise and cross to answer the door. Before reaching the door, you hear the phone ring in another room. Stop and turn, focusing on the ringing phone. Should you answer the door or the phone? Suddenly, both the knocking and the ringing stop. Return to your chair, sit down, and take up your book to read again.

You can modify these actions as you like.

Unit 3—Exercises

Exercise 1—Physical Comedy

In one classic physical comedy routine—memorably done by the Marx Brothers in their film Duck Soup —two actors pretend to be the mirror image of the other. Work in groups of three on this routine. Two of you can perform while the third observes and provides feedback on how well you succeed in creating the illusion of a mirror. Alternate until each of you has had a chance to perform and observe.

Exercise 2—Paraphrasing Shakespeare

Paraphrase this famous speech by the character Macbeth from Shakespeare's play of the same name:

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
>
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
>
> To the last syllable of recorded time,
>
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
>
> The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!
>
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
>
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
>
> And then is heard of no more. It is a tale
>
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
>
> Signifying nothing.

Now read the lines again and discuss how paraphrasing enhanced your understanding of the meaning of the words.

Exercise 3—Romance and Realism

Work with a partner to improvise two scenes, both based on the same situation with the same basic characters. Do one scene in a Romantic acting style and the other in a realistic style. Present the Romantic style seriously; if not, it might become farce. Discuss the effect of the different styles with your audience. Why do you think most plays use realism?

Exercise 4—In the Crowd

In small groups (4-6), improvise a two-minute scene with one or tow major characters who engage in conversation while a small crowd listens and discusses among themselves in the background. Follow the

guidelines to maintain the focus of the scene. Be sure to establish the topic of your crowd's discussion, which should relate to the situation.

It may help to develop the location/setting first so that all actors can actively engage in the stage business. Some ideas for setting might be:

- At a coffee shop
- In line at the grocery store
- The gym
- In jail
- A dance club/prom
- A sporting event

Exercise 5—Prop Business

Experiment with communicating personality with a prop from your theatre stock or an item in the classroom or arrange to bring one from home. Practice expressing different emotions or character traits by, for instance, bowing with a fan, walking with a cane, tipping your hat, fiddling with a ring, opening a letter, or using a handkerchief. Work with another actor to express characters through stage business. Then, do a brief improvisation involving both your characters using the stage business you have developed.

Note: Students are encouraged to bring an item from home so that they can practice it outside of class.

Exercise 6—Stage Business in Situations

As a class, write a variety of people on one set of cards (for example, "nurse", "police officer", "the Pope"), and a variety of attributes on another set of cards (for example, "shy", "mysterious", "charming"), and a variety of situations on a third set of cards (for example, "you just won the lottery", "your family pet has died", "you got bit by a mosquito"). With your partner, draw one card from each pile. Create stage business for your chosen character in your chosen situation that expresses your chosen attribute for that character. Improvise a solo scene based on your choices. Have your partner critique your scene. Then do the same for your partner. Finally, each will present to the class.

Unit 4—Exercises

Exercise 1—Dramatic Monologue

Working with another student, select a dramatic monologue, a poem in which the speaker addresses someone whose replies are not part of the poem. Work together on character analysis and development. Perform a reading of the poem, with your partner as your audience, and then switch roles. After a few rounds, you will perform for the class.

Some famous dramatic monologues are Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses," and Ezra Pound's "The River-Merchant's Wife." There are plenty others. Do some research to find one you like.

Exercise 2—The Wave

Experiment with a simple gesture—a wave of your hand that says hello or goodbye. Your way may very depending on whom you are waving to—a close friend, an acquaintance, a small child. Invent four very different waves that might be performed by four different characters. Use a variety of movement styles. Determine not only who your character is but to whom your character is waving. Then experiment with other types of waves—the wave that means "No!" or "Over here" or "Go away" or "Yeah, whatever you say." How does the basic movement change depending on your character, what you are saying with your wave, whom you are waving to, and the movement style you employ?

Exercise 3—Movement Styles

Using a literal realistic style, perform a common activity, such as writing with a pen or hitting a baseball. Repeat and enlarge the movement. Now, stylize the movement with a flourish or exaggerated slowness or speed. Finally, transform the movement into a symbolic gesture, stripped down to its essence. Perform these variations in movement for the class. See if they can categorize each movement correctly.

Exercise 4—Symbolic Gestures

Brainstorm with a partner to come up with a variety of symbolic gestures, such as holding your fist in the air to symbolize unity and power. Then pantomime a short scene in which you use these symbolic gestures to communicate ideas. How does the use of symbolic gestures affect the overall style of the scene? Perform your scene for the class, then discuss how the symbolic gestures affected their understanding of the scene.

Exercise 5—Dialect Readings

Read dialect passages aloud form plays such as George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* or *Major Barbara* or John Millington Synge's *Riders to the Sea* or *Playboy of the Western World.* Perform them for the class as either a monologue or a scene.

Exercise 6—Experimenting with Masks* **(Extra Credit)**

You will need a mirror; seeing the mask on your face is necessary to help you find a character in the mask. If you can work with a half mask, play with your lower face and your neck to see how it affects the mask and inspires various characters. If you can work with a full mask, experiment with body movement to animate the mask. For added complexity, incorporate changes in lighting to see the effects on the masks.

Students may need to purchase/build their own masks and practice this at home. To receive credit, bring mask to class and "show" a character sketch (half-mask) or a pantomime sketch (full-mask)

Exercise 7—Masked Improvisation **(may be extra-credit due to lack of materials—see above)**

For this exercise use masks from your stock or make simple masks. Even masks you make in a few minutes can be effective: use construction paper or cardboard; color them if you wish and secure them around your head with a section of rubber band attached to each side of the mask. With a partner, perform an improvisation of your choosing using masks. How is the performance affected? How are your vision and voice affected by the mask? Ask the audience to comment on the effect of the mask.

Projects Unit 1

Telling a Story

Assignment: In a small group, perform a story using movement and narration.

Product: Performance that tells a story

Purpose: To communicate effectively through narration, body position, and movement

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Develop cooperation skills within your group
- Choose a story suited to your audience
- Determine the story events you need to perform
- Discover unique ways of using position and movement
- Help develop a narration
- Perform your story in a way that is understandable and enjoyable to your audience

Creating:

Develop your story. As an ensemble, choose a story. It may be a short story from a literature anthology, a fairy tale, a movie, a television show, or a story compiled from shared experiences. A good story should have a sequence of events: a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Analyze your story. Work together to do the following:

1. Identify the characters in the story
2. Establish where the story take place
3. Itemize what events take place
4. Determine the order in which the events take place

Plan the narration. Decide who is telling the story. You have several choices here: You can use an unnamed narrator. You can share the narration among several narrators. You can have one of the characters in the story tell about the events, or several characters in the story can take turns telling about events.

The storyteller or tellers may work from notes, but don't write out the whole story for someone to read. Rather, rehearse the story enough times so that the storytellers know it by heart. The idea is for each storyteller to use his or her own words, not words from a book or words that have been otherwise written down.

Create the movement. While the storytellers are talking to the audience, the rest of the ensemble will pantomime the action. You can have one person act the main character, or you can share the main

character among several actors. Experiment with actors playing non-human characters and scenery; for example; what could you do with your bodies to suggest trees, a mountain, a fence, a river, an automobile? What characteristics do you need to play a dog, a bear, a snake, a bird? What about using actors to play fear, greed, happiness?

At the same time, experiment with your voices to create sound effects like wind, rain, forest animals, a city street. You could use a familiar song as background music by humming or singing it with one syllable, such as ah or la.

Rehearse the story. Your ensemble should rehearse the story with all its elements—narration, movement, and sound and lightening effects—until everyone is comfortable with his or her part and with the overall effect. Try to use your entire performance space imaginatively, creating different levels and shapes. Think about movement variations such as stops or freezes, fast-forward, slow motion, changes in direction, and changes in focus (in which one or more actors move while the others stay frozen). You might consider beginning and ending your story with actors frozen in movement as if in a picture (tableau).

Performing

At the end of the unit, you will need to be ready to perform your story in front of the class. Plan in advance how you will take your places to begin your performance. Pay attention to the type of stage on which you'll be working: entrances/exits, proximity to the audience, lighting, etc. How you show the ending (think exits). Keep your focus on the story to be told, whether you are playing a narrator, a main character, or a tree.

Animal Pantomime

Assignment: Create a pantomime story based on the exploration of animal movement.

Product: Performance of a pantomime story featuring an animal character

Purpose: To expand movement capabilities, increase observation skills, and use them to develop an animal character

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Imagine the animal's behavior in different situations
- Develop a story about the animal with a beginning, middle, and end
- Use pantomime to perform your story for the class
- Identify and imitate the animal's movements

Creating

Choose an animal. Think of a specific animal that you like or that particularly interests you. Ask yourself questions about the animal, such as the following:

- What species or animal family does it belong to?
- What is its anatomical structure?
- How does it move?
- Where does it live?
- What does it like to eat?
- How does it get its food?
- How does it protect itself?
- What are its predators?
- What kinds of sounds does it make?
- What reactions does it display that seem like human emotions?
- How does it stay clean?
- Does it travel in a group or alone?

Develop your movements. Find a space on the floor, and from a relaxed position, begin to assume the characteristics of the animal you have chosen. Think about how old your animal is Are you just learning to walk or fly? Are you near the end of your life? Do you have a family? Then find an activity for your animal. Are you hunting for food? Performing a mating ritual? Protecting your young? Taking a swim or bath? Relaxing after a meal? Define your animal in this way through its traits and movements.

If you have the opportunity, observe your animal in some of its daily routines. You may study a household pet, a zoo animal, an animal in the wild, or a film of wildlife in its native habitat. Watch your animal walk, stretch, lie down, and eat. As you watch, try to copy its movements.

Once you have defined your animal and its activity, introduce a conflict. Are you being chased? Is there a fire? Is the weather bad or food scarce? Are you lost or in danger? Is there another animal threatening you? Are you ill or wounded? Find a way to end or escape your conflict.

Performing

Refine and develop your story to make it interesting and believable. Give it a title. Think about how you want your audience to feel as they watch your story. Rehearse your pantomime until you are comfortable with it and confident that you have thoroughly explored your animal and its movements. Finally, perform your pantomime for the class. You might use recorded music or sounds to accompany your performance.

Improvisation & Tableau

Assignment: In a small group, create a tableau to represent a picture and develop an improvisation based on the situation depicted in the picture.

Product: Performance of a tableau with improvisation

Purpose: To develop insight about how body positions and movement demonstrate character

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Work cooperatively within a small group
- Analyze the situation in a picture
- Develop and portray a character based on the picture
- Create a relationship with other characters
- Improvise words and actions suggested by the situation

Creating

Choose a picture. A technique sometimes used on stage is the **tableau**, a silent and motionless depiction of a scene, often from a picture. Playwright James Lapine and composer Stephen Sondheim based their musical Sunday in the Park with George on the life and work of French painter Georges Seurat (1859-1891). In one scene from the musical the character form a tableau that mirrors Seurat's painting, A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte. What Lapine and Sondheim did was to start with the painting and imagine characters and the situations that could bring them all together at the same time and place, in certain positions.

Work with your group to choose a picture. It may be a famous work of art, a photograph form a magazine or newspaper, a scene form a movie, or a family photograph. The picture you choose must have people in it—at least as many people as are in your group. Choose a picture that has strong visual appeal, will be easy to perform, and will yield an interesting situation for developing an improvisation. As you make your choice, ask questions about the picture and discuss relationships and situations suggested by it.

Plan your tableau. Cast members of your group as character in the picture. If there are more characters in the picture than you have members, make choices about which ones to include. Determine the furniture, costumes, and props you need; keep it as simple as possible so you can set up and take down quickly.

Arrange your bodies in exactly the same positions as those of the characters in your picture. Have someone step of the tableau to check your positions against the picture or ask someone outside your group to do the same. You might also ask someone to take a picture of your group, or if possible, work in front of a large mirror, such as one found in a dance studio.

Develop your improvisation. Your improvisation will start from the tableau. While you are finding your positions in the tableau, begin to develop your improvisation by providing the dramatic details to questions the picture has raised, including the following:

- Who are these characters, and what is their relationship to each other?
- Why did they come together at this time?
- What will happen to these characters from this moment on?

Put your details together to develop a story with a beginning, middle, and end—even though your improvisation may not show the entire story. As an alternate approach, discover the answers to these questions through a preliminary improvisation based on your tableau. Throughout the development of the improve, work on establishing a personality for the character you will portray and keep your character's goal in mind.

Decide next how long you will hold the tableau before beginning the improve and which character will speak first to lead it off. Do your improvisation two or three times. Each time will be somewhat different—that is the nature of improvisation. Your group may discover, however, one line of development or one ending that you prefer over the others. Agree to preserve that for your performance.

Performing

Display your tableau to the audience. Take your places quickly and efficiently. As you perform, pay close attention to what others are saying and doing, and let your speeches and actions be a response to theirs.

Knowing when to end an improvisation can be tricky. If you have decided on an ending, everyone will be working toward it; otherwise, you may need to designate one member of your group to make a decision and to signal the others somehow when to stop.

Projects Unit 2

Open Dialogue with Stage Movement

Assignment: With a partner, improvise, rehearse, and perform an open dialogue scene

Purpose: To improvise using an open-dialogue and to demonstrate stage-sharing techniques

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Work creatively with a partner
- Invent the circumstances of an open dialogue
- Improvise dialogue specific to a character
- Perform a scene that has a beginning, middle, and end
- Express conflict with movement and stage positions
- Stay open and share the stage
- Project lines clearly

Create

Choose Your Dialogue: An open dialogue is a brief scene with given lines that may be interpreted in different ways. Some of the lines you must fill in yourselves. With your partner, choose one of the open dialogues that follow. See also Content-less scenes 1-4

Develop Your Dialogue—Now work together to invent the circumstances of your scene.

- Who are these characters? What are their ages, occupations, and relationships to each other?
- When does the action take place?
- Where does the action take place?
- What are their objectives?
- What are their obstacles?
- What strategies and actions are they taking to overcome their obstacles?
- What are the stakes of not meeting their objectives?

Improvise a scene based on the open dialogue you have selected and the circumstances you have determined. You will need to improvise lines to fill the spaces marked by ellipses (. . .).

Create The Scene—Act out the scene. You may use simple set pieces and props if you wish. Plan where your entrance and exit will be.

Try to convey conflict both in your voice and in your movements. You don't have to resolve the conflict completely, but your scene should have a definite ending—even if it's only that your characters decide on a course of action. As you rehearse, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I keeping my body open?
- Am I sharing the stage with my partner?
- Am I projecting my voice to fill the performance space?
- Are my movements motivated and in character?
- Do all of my lines make logical sense?

Performing—You don't need to memorize you lines exactly, but you should rehearse often enough that you feel secure in them. Before performing, ask someone to watch the scene to see that your dialogue and actions are understandable.

Make sure that you have the props you need and that the stage is set properly before you begin. Perform your scene for the class or for another small group.

Responding—How well have you fulfilled the "need to" section of this project will help you assess you project. You may also ask yourself or your audience the following questions to help you improve:

- Could the audience hear and understand the dialogue?
- Could the audience understand who the characters were?
- Could the audience see all gestures, expressions, and movements?
- Were the actors' movements appropriate to their characters?
- Did the actors share the stage equally?

Adapting the Project:

1. Switch places: If you played Actor A before, now play Actor B. keep the same open dialogue but invent new characters and circumstances; improvise a whole new scene.
2. Work with another team. Write open dialogues for each other and challenge the other team to create a scene from your open dialogue.

Open Dialogue #1:

Actor A: What's going on?

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: Well, it didn't happen.

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: That's a big problem.

Actor B: I know.

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: . . .

Open Dialogue #2

Actor A: I came over as soon as you called.

Actor B: I have some bad news.

Actor A: Tell me.

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: We've got to do something now.

Actor B: What do you suggest?

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: . . .

Open Dialogue #3

Actor A: You'd better come on in.

Actor B: Thanks.

Actor A: What do you want?

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: But I didn't do anything wrong!

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: I'm telling you the truth.

Actor A: We'll see.

Actor B: . . .

Actor A: . . .

Actor B: . . .

Building Characters

Assignment: Develop three distinct characters and perform them in an original scene

Product: An improvised scene with three different characterizations

Purpose: To be able to create distinctive characters

To accomplish this project you will:

- Devise a situation that will accommodated characters of different types
- Create three different physical and vocal characterizations
- Improvise monologues for the three characters
- Demonstrate vocal and physical flexibility in portraying the characters
- Perform a series of actions that have a beginning, middle, and end
- Demonstrate focus by staying in character and control by switching characters smoothly

Creating

Choose your situation—Choose one of the following situations or devise one of your own. It should be a situation in which several different types of people can interact with each other.

- Shopping or clerking a big sale
- Placing or taking a fast food order
- Getting dressed in the locker room for a big game
- Answering the phones or making appointments in a very busy office
- Waiting for an important audition

Develop Your Characters—develop three different characters to ply the same scene in three different ways or to interact with each other in one scene. One characterization may be similar to yourself, but the other two should be very unlike you—and each other. Answer the following questions differently for each of your three characters:

- What is my name?
- What is my background?
- How does my voice sound? What are my vocal characteristics?
- What are my physical characteristics? How do I move?

- What is my dominant character attribute?
- What is my objective in this scene?
- What are my obstacles?

Shape Your Scene—plan a short scene for each character, or plan one scene that includes all three of your characters. If you show them in separate scenes, you might have them react to the same situation, such as a fast food clerk who can't get the orders straight. If you show them in the same scene, you don't need to skip back and forth; you can have one character speak a monologue, and then the second, followed by the third—but they should all interact somehow. Plan to give each character just under two minutes of monologue.

Now improvise movement and lines for your characters. Include an entrance and exit; make clear your objective, obstacles, actions and outcome for each character. You will probably include one or more characters whom the audience can't see or hear. Consider carefully how your characters' reactions can help the audience imagine those other characters. You can use real props if you wish, but your performance may be smoother if you simply pantomime them.

Rehearse Your Scene—rehearse the scene as each different character. Imagine how other characters in the scene (speaking or non-speaking) react differently to your three characterizations. Rehearse until you feel confident that each of your characters is fully developed and that you can maintain each character's distinctive traits throughout your scene(s).

Now plan how you will make the transition from one character to the next. You might move from a freeze to a freeze or you might turn your back on the audience and make your change at that moment. Or, you might add a costume piece, such as a hat or a scarf, and instantly become a new character. Practice these transitions until you can do them smoothly and naturally.

Performing

Before you begin, make sure your performance area is ready and that you have all necessary props and costumes. Announce your scene and briefly explain the situation. As you perform, remain focused and in character throughout your three portrayals. At the end, you will probably want to freeze for a moment to signal that you have finished.

Adapting the Project

Work with a partner to develop three sets of dialogues for six characters; that is, your three characters will actually have other characters with whom they can speak and react. Keep the basic situation the same or nearly the same for the three dialogues.

Delivering a Monologue

Assignment: Perform a two-to-three minute monologue

Product: A Monologue

Purpose: To learn a basic audition and performance skills

To accomplish the project, you will:

- Choose or develop a monologue appropriate to your individual skills
- Analyze the character and situation
- Develop an identifiable character, including voice and movement
- Introduce the scene as needed
- Perform convincingly and with focus

Creating

Choose your monologue—choose a monologue that works for you. You may be able to find one in various books of monologues and scenes for acting practice. You may instead develop a monologue by taking a scene from a favorite play and eliminating other characters' dialogue.

Analyze your scene—first, read the entire play for an understanding of your character and how the scene you have chosen fits into the plot. Analyze your character using the guidelines for creating specific characters (see your notes Creating Specific Characters).

Break down your monologue into beats. It may be helpful to annotate your script with the subtext of each beat.

Rehearse your Monologue—To re-create believable emotions, plan a sequence of movements. Make sure they are specific and help you express appropriate emotions for the scene. Annotate your script with these movements as well. Use the technique of emotional memory or using action to generate emotions if you like.

Including other characters—when performing a monologue in which you are speaking to another character, it's a good idea to visualize that character in one spot and keep him or her there. Do this by glancing at the imaginary character at appropriate times and by directing lines to him or her. Even if you move about the stage, that character's location should probably stay constant.

If another character is supposed to be speaking during your monologue, ask yourself the following questions to determine how you can indicate what he or she is saying:

- How long should I pause to listen?

- Should I look constantly at that character, or glance at him or her occasionally?
- How should I respond with my posture and facial expressions to what that character is saying?

The Climax—if your monologue is well constructed, there will be a climax to your speech, a moment when your character reaches a point of high emotion, makes a major point, or finally communicates what you really want to say. Decide what the climax of your speech is and how you can most effectively build to it.

Memorize your lines exactly and rehearse them until you are comfortable with your characterization and delivery. You might tape-record your rehearsal so that you can get an idea of how well your voice is expressing the thoughts and emotions you want to convey. You can also have someone videotape your rehearsal, so that you can analyze your job of acting.

Performing

Walk into the audition space with confidence. Stop, pause, and look at the audience for a moment. Give your name, the character's name, the name of the play from which the scene was taken, and the playwright's name. Add any background or information the audience may need to understand what's going on. Then take a moment to focus yourself. Imagine the environment of the scene and what the other character has just said to you. Take a breath and begin.

Responding

How well you have fulfilled the "need to" section will help you assess your project. You may also ask yourself or your audience these questions to help you improve:

- Did the audience understand who you were and who the other characters were?
- Could the audience see all gestures, expressions, and movements?
- Were your movements or gestures motivated by subtext and appropriate to your character?
- Did you project and use a variety of vocal inflections throughout?
- Did you communicate the climax effectively?

Adapting the Project—must have teacher's approval

1. Work with other students to perform your monologue as though in a formal audition. Lace a table outside the audition space. Ask one student to sign-in actors and have them fill out audition forms. Bring resumes and be prepared to answer interview questions from the director/producer, who may be played by your teacher or by an experienced actor or director you know in your community.

2. Use your monologue to audition for an actual role in a community theatre, youth theatre, or professional theatre production, or for a scholarship or admittance to a college or university program.

3. Work with a small group to write or adapt a play into a number of monologues. There should be at least three characters disagree or interpret events differently. Have each member of your group take on a character and present your collection of monologues for an audience.

Creating Stage Pictures

Assignment: With a group, create a series of stage pictures that tell a story.

Product: Stage pictures that create a narrative

Purpose: To practice creating stage pictures

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Work cooperatively within a group
- Choose a story or narrative poem
- Analyze the story for main actions
- Plan pictures or tableaus that show each main action
- Develop smooth transitions from one picture to the next
- Present an effective narration
- Develop skill in ensemble work

Creating

Prepare the script—choose a story or narrative poem that has a number of strong, clear actions that would lend themselves to dynamic stage pictures. If you choose a poem, you may be able to use it as if for your narration. If you choose a story, you will need to write a narration or choose sentences from the story to piece together a narration, but wait until you have analyzed the actions.

Analyze the actions—Who are the main characters? What main actions are they involved in throughout? You should be able to identify at least five main actions for an effective project. If your ensemble contains more actors than you have main characters, you can still put those people to good use.

As a group, determine the theme of the story. Brainstorm ideas and images that you can use to tell your story effectively.

Plan your pictures—there are several ways that you can determine which pictures to stage and how to stage them. One member of your ensemble might act as a director and make these decisions. One or more members might sketch compositions of people that illustrate the actions you have chosen, which the ensemble could then copy. Or, you might all experiment together with body arrangements and stage pictures.

Keep in mind the principles of effective stage composition, such as focus, level, and planes.

Complete the pictures—you can use simple props or costume pieces if you wish, but you might find it more convenient to pantomime everything. Consider how you can use your bodies to create animals or inanimate objects, such as a car, a doorway, a tree, a city skyline, or a mountain. You can also use your bodies to create abstract or symbolic shapes, such as fear or puzzlement. These pictures should all be freezes, however, with no movement.

Develop the narration—if your narration needs to be written, do it now. For the narration, consider where the narrator will be during the performance—offstage or visible onstage? You might consider using more than one narrator or having actors who are forming the pictures perform the narration.

Rehearse your story—When you are taking part in a tableau, memorize exactly your position as well as the positions of the actors near you so that you can recreated this picture within seconds. As you rehearse as an ensemble, plan how you will enter and exit the performing area and how you will make transitions between pictures. You might do them in blackouts, but if you do them in view of the audience, they should be carefully rehearsed.

Performing

Before performing, check props, set pieces, and costumes (if any). Introduce the name of the work and its author and explain whatever background is necessary. Then take your place as an ensemble and begin your performance. Concentrate on holding your body position and facial expression as long as necessary to avoid breaking the freeze and spoiling the focus of the scene.

Responding

How well you have fulfilled the "to accomplish this project" section will help assess your project. You may also ask yourself on your audience these questions to help you improve:

- Was the story told clearly through narration and stage pictures?
- Did the narrator or narrators project sufficiently?
- Which were the most effective stage pictures and which were the least effective? Why?
- How well did the ensemble work together?
- Were transitions smooth and unobtrusive?

Adapting the Project

1. Have someone document your work with photographs. Mount them in an album along with the printed narration to create a story told in words and pictures.
2. Repeat the project with a narrative you have written yourselves based on stories in the news today.

3. Experiment telling a different story using two people only. Have two actors share the narration, but keep it as narration—don't turn it into dialogue

Projects Unit 3

Duet Performance

Assignment: With a partner, prepare and perform a brief dramatic scene

Product: A performance of a 5-10 minute dramatic scene

Purpose: To develop skills in creating a character

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Work closely with a partner to create a duet scene
- Choose an 8-12 minute scene appropriate to both of your abilities
- Analyze the script for each character, as well as the action and pacing
- Rehearse, using rehearsal skills, including improvisation
- Communicate your character's emotions through movement, gesture, and voice
- Perform the scene for an audience

Creating:

Choose your scene—With your partner, choose a two character scene form a published play. The scene should be at least 5 minutes long but no more than 10 minutes. The characters in the scene should be appropriate and within your age range (2 or 3 years younger or 10 years older). Look for a scene that is challenging but not beyond what you are prepared for. It should have a definite beginning, middle, and end. You may want to clear your choice with your teacher before beginning work on it.

Analyze The Scene—First read the entire play from which you chose the scene. Picture the action as you read. Working with your partner, discuss these questions:

- What is the plot of the play?
- How does the scene you have chosen fit into the plot?
- Who are your characters?
- What is the setting (time and place) of the play? Of the scene?
- What is the theme of the play?
- What are your characters' objectives in the play? In the scene?
- What are your characters' obstacles in the play? In the scene?

- What actions do your characters take to achieve their objective in this scene?
- What are the stakes?
- What is the outcome of each of your character's actions in this scene?
- How do your characters change during the course of the play?

Blocking Rehearsals—Together with your partner, read your scene aloud. As you read, consider what your characters actually say to each other, how they act and react, and the nature of their subtexts. At this point, you may want to improvise to explore the characters and their relationship.

Start walking through your scene. First agree on a simple ground plan and place the needed furniture within it. Then block the major actions, such as entrances and exits. As you continue to work, break down the scene into beats. Identify each beat by finding the beginning, middle, and end. You can rehearse each beat individually before putting them back together for a seamless whole.

Determine the rising action, climax, and falling action of the scene. Pace the action to build toward the climax.

Work individually on memorizing your lines. When you are ready to go off book, arrange for a classmate to prompt you until you have your lines.

Polishing Rehearsals—Refine and polish your scene, adding or removing actions or gestures to make the scene work better. Decide on what costuming and props you will use for your performance. Perfect any stage business you develop for the scene. Experiment with vocal inflection.

You might perform a preview for other class members. Discuss with your audience what they enjoyed about your performance and what they felt need improvement. In your final rehearsals, use their criticisms and incorporate the changes you feel will strengthen your performance.

Performing:

Before beginning, make sure that your set, props, and costumes are ready. Warm up or go through your preparation ritual. Introduce the scene to your audience briefly. Include the title of the play and the author's name. Then perform, keeping these points in mind:

- Keep your actions direct and motivated
- Stay focused and listen to the other character
- Project and articulate
- Build the scene to its climax

Responding—You may want to ask yourself, your partner, or your audience these questions to help you improve:

- Could the audience see all the action, gestures, and facial expressions critical to the scene?
- Did all the actions, movement, and gestures appear natural, motivated, and in character?
- Did you project and use vocal variety?
- Did you stay in character?
- Did the dialogue sound as if were being spoken for the first time?
- Were the costumes and props appropriate?
- Did you and the audience connect emotionally through the performance?

Adapting the Project

Perform a longer, more complex scene with three or four characters. Follow the same procedure outlined in this project.

Commedia dell'Arte Performance

Assignment: With an ensemble, improvise a commedia dell'Arte performance based on a given scenario, or plot outline

Product: An improvised performance

Purpose: To refine improvisation and ensemble skills

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Form an ensemble and assign parts
- Study together the given scenario
- Develop a ground plan for the performance
- Improvise dialogue, movement, and gestures
- Rehearse an polish the performance
- Perform for an audience

Creating:

Cast your performance—Commedia dell'arte made use of stock characters, basic human types whose names and personalities were the same from lay to play. Form an ensemble of two males and two females and decide who will play each of the following stock commedia characters:

Pantalone—a pompous, middle-aged man

Flaminaia—his daughter, a proper young woman, but with a mind of her own

Orazio—Flaminia's ardent lover—unknown to Pantalone

Franceschina—Pantalon'e bright and sassy maid-servant

Study the Scneario—Commedia dell'arte had no written scripts. Interpreting standard scenarios, actors improvised their dialogue and stage business. As you study this plot outline, think about dialogue, movements, and gestures you could use to bring your character to life.

Scenario:

Flaminia wonders why she hasn't heard from Orazio today. Her father has forbidden her to see any men and plans to arrange her marriage; but she is determined to wed the man of her choosing. Pantalone tells Flaminia that he hope to complete the marriage arrangements in a day or two. Meanwhile she is not to go outdoors or let herself be seen at any window. Franceschina give Flaminia a love letter from

Orazio, which she has smuggled into the house. Delighted, Flaminia reads it and give Franceschina a letter of her own to carry to Orazio.

Pantalone stops Franceschina as she is leaving the house and asks what she is carrying, but she convinces him that Flaminia's letter is nothing. He tells her to be especially watchful while he is out and not to let any men near the house. She readily agrees.

Franceschina meets Orazio in a prearranged place to give him Flaminia's letter. She tells him about the marriage arrangements underway, and Orazio vows to put a stop to them somehow. Together they plot how Orazio will sneak into the house to see Flaminia. Pantalone sees Orazio and tells him that, as neighbors, his family will be invited to Flaminia's wedding. Upset, Orazio almost blurts out the truth, but holds his tongue. Orazio renews his vow to marry Flaminia himself.

Rehearse the Performance—since most of the scenes given involve two people, you can rehearse them that way to start. Improvise appropriate dialogue and stage business. Try to make your dialogue witty and your movements big and broad. This is farce, so have fun with physical humor. If you don't like the effect of a line or movement, go back and try something else. Get suggestions and feedback from your fellow performers about how you can improve a speech or a stage business. Remember your best lines and stage business and incorporate them into the final performance.

As you rehearse, be sure to consider the motivation of your characters and the subtext of their words and actions. This is important for any character development; but in comedy the contrast between what is said and the subtext of those words revealed in action can be very funny.

Commedia dell'arte peformers wore distinctive traditional costumes and masks. Plan what costume pieces you might devise to give your performance an authentic sense of style.

Continue rehearsing until you are comfortable with the whole piece. Commedia dell'arte actors did not re-create every performance anew; they memorized long stretches of dialogue or elaborate stage business that worked particularly well and used them again and again. Some of your speeches may be set by the time you come to perform them.

Performing

Perform your scenario for your classmates. Since your performance should still be improvisational, it's vital that you stay focused. Listen to the other characters and respond to them. Keep up the energy level during the entire performance.

Responding—you may as yourself some of these questions to help you improve:

- Did the audience understand who these characters were and what they were doing?
- Did the audience understand the underlying motivation and subtext for each character?
- Did all actions, movements, and gestures appear natural, motivated, and in character?

- Did all ensemble members project and use vocal variety?
- Did the audience laugh?

Adapting the Project:

1. Continue the scenarios in several more scenes. You will probably want to include a meeting between Flaminia and Orzio, their discovery by Pantalone, their fooling Pantalone into believing that what he saw was not actually a lovers' meeting, and so on. How can you develop the situations so that it gets increasingly complex yet ends with the lovers getting together?
2. There were many more stock characters in commedia dell'arte. Here are two that you can add to those you have already developed to work up multi-character scenes that are more complex in structure:
    - Dottore—a middle-aged man who uses big words and convoluted language
    - Arlecchino/Harlequin—a servant constantly in and out of trouble

Directing a One-Act Play

Assignment: Direct a One-Act Play

Product: A performance of a one-act play

Purpose: Develop and refine directing skills

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Choose and analyze a one-act play
- Develop a production concept
- Design a ground plan
- Conduct auditions and cast the play
- Develop a rehearsal schedule
- Direct rehearsals of the play
- Oversee technical elements of the production
- Perform the play for an audience (class)

Creating:

Choose your play—Select a one-act play that you would like to direct. The play should have at least two characters, but one with three or four will provide a more interesting challenge. Consider if you have the potential actors to cast the show. Consider any special needs you have for sets, props, or costumes, even for a bare-bones theatre class production. Discuss your choice of play with your teacher, and discuss whether you must obtain rights from the publisher.

Analyze Your Play—Read the play several times and analyze it in terms of characters, structure, and technical requirements.

Analyze your theatre space. You may need to perform the play in the classroom, but if possible, perform it on a main stage (this would be old Yolo). Develop a production concept; make sure you consider the style of the play. Draw a ground plan. The set you outline should meet the following objectives:

- It fulfills the technical requirements (number of doors and windows, type of furniture, and so on).
- It provides enough acting areas for you to achieve variety in blocking and stage composition.
- It makes good use of the available theatre space.
- It is artistically interesting.

Create a Director's Promptbook—Prepare a promptbook. Block the show in your promptbook using blocking symbols or your own shorthand. Remember to work in pencil so that you can make changes and corrections. Keep a daily log of your work. Note any problems and how you are dealing with them, discoveries you make during rehearsals, and your communications with actors and technicians.

Cast Your Play—Before your auditions you should have a thorough understanding of the personalities and actions of all the characters in your play, buy try to keep an open mind about their appearances. Hold auditions and cast your show. Distribute copies of the script and rehearsal schedule.

Rehearse Your Play—Following your rehearsal schedule exactly, rehearse the show as you direct the actors in their blocking, characterizations, gestures, and vocal interpretations. A two ore three-week rehearsal schedule should be enough for most one-act plays. Be sure to include memorization deadlines in your schedule.

If possible, have your teacher attend one rehearsal each week to assess your work and perhaps give you some advice. The last tow rehearsal should be dress rehearsals in which you run the complete show without interruptions or directorial input until after the rehearsal.

Provide For Technical Elements—Most plays can be staged without scenery and with folding chairs and boxes for set props. Such bare-bones productions usually have no costumes except for necessary hats and coats and perhaps long skirts for period plays. You may have your actors pantomime all hand props or you may provide simple substitutes. You can ask you actors to help your assemble these costumes and props, but you should be the one who makes certain that the actors have everything they need. During the performance, you can assign responsibility for assembling set pieces, props, and costumes to one or more actors.

Performing—Your play should stand on its own without an introduction on your part, but you may find it necessary to explain to the audience some things that they need to imagine about the set, costumes, or props. During the performance, your responsibility as director is to watch the show closely. Enjoy the work of your actors. Whether or not you take notes is up to you; if there is to be a second performance, you may want to schedule an extra rehearsal to fix any problems.

After the performance, be sure to thank the actors for their work and congratulate them on a job well done.

Responding—How well you have fulfilled the "to accomplish this play" section will help you assess your project. You may also ask yourself, your actors, and your audience the following questions to help you improve:

- Did you complete all your necessary preparatory work before the rehearsal period?
- Did you make competent use of rehearsal time?
- Did you communicate effectively with your actors?
- Did you handle problems successfully?
- Did the actual performance go smoothly?
- Did the play display good directing skills in such things as effective blocking, balanced and interesting stage compositions, appropriate design, and understandable character development?
- Did the play communicate the playwright's message to the audience?

Include your responses in your class notebook.

Adapting the Project—Do a full scale production of your play, complete with sets, props, lighting, sound, costumes, and makeup. One-act plays are seldom done on their own; your play might be performed as part of a festival of one-act plays. You will need to develop a budget for the show and work with technical people on set design and construction, lighting and so on.

Unit 4

Directing a Reader's Theatre Piece

Assignment: Direct an ensemble in a Reader's Theatre presentation

Product: A Reader's Theatre presentation

Purpose: To explore using voice for characterization and sound effects, and using limited movement in a presentation

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Choose a literary work to adapt
- Develop a Reader's Theatre script
- Cast the show and direct the ensemble
- Be creative in solving problems of narration, characterization, movement, and sound effects
- Conduct rehearsals
- Stage the show

Creating:

Choose a Literary Work to Adapt—Almost any piece of writing might be adapted into a Reader's Theatre presentation. Choose one you will enjoy working with, especially one for which you can imagine some creative staging effect. Note that if you present your Reader's Theatre production for any purpose other than a classroom project, you will have to get permission to adapt copyrighted material; therefore, you may wish to use material that is in public domain, that which has no copyright restrictions; see your teacher for suggestions.

Write Your Script—One quality of Reader's Theatre is that it can combine dialogue, narration, and description, along with bits of poetry, son lyrics, newspaper clippings, letters, and practically any other kind of writing.

Follow the guidelines for creating a Reader's Theatre script (in appendices). These guidelines will help you choose and prepare your source material, but you may first with to analyze it for plot and character development, parts of which may be retained in the adaptation. Make sure your final script has a clear beginning, middle, and end.

To simplify a work, you may drop minor characters; however, since your actors can play more than one role you can use a comparatively small ensemble to play a large number of characters. Work with your ensemble in mind. While some actors might take on a number of characters, you will probably want to save one or two actors to play your main characters and no others. This will save the audience some confusion in following your story. You will also want to appoint a narrator or divide the task of narration among your actors.

For this project, plan on a presentation that runs about 15-20 minutes.

Plan Your Staging—Although the convention of Reader's Theatre holds that actors read from their scripts and don't physically interact, these conventions can be modified. The actors can hold their books or rest them on lecturn or music stands. You can keep your cast seated on stools the whole time. You can have each actor stand to play a character and then sit down. You can have actors meet each other downstage cent to play a brief scene together. You can have them go through limited blocking and use limited gestures. The unbending requirement is that the actors must keep their books on hand at all times.

One Reader's Theatre convention is that actors sharing a scene don't look at each other very often but rather face full-front. If two actors have many lines together, however, you should position them near each other, so that the audience doesn't have to keep looking back and forth from one actor to the other.

Be creative in how you use your ensemble. You might have them provide sound effects or apply stylized vocalizing in which you have them experiment with pitch, tone, tempo, and other vocal qualities for various effects. Consider what you can do within the movement limitations of Reader's Theatre. You might have actors position their bodies to create scenery, such as trees or mountains, or have them employ simple symbolic gestures and movement, many of which can be done with script in hand.

As you plan your staging, annotate your script with your blocking and other notes about interpretation and presentation.

Rehearse Your Ensemble—Cast your show and assemble your actors for a first reading. If necessary, explain the conventions of Reader's Theatre to your cast and review how they will be affected by multiple roles and limited movement. Discuss strategies for distinguishing characters by using different character voices or by using different areas of the stage for different characters.

Although you will have planned most of your major blocking and effects, you can still experiment during rehearsal. Encourage your cast to suggest creative solutions and incorporate them if they are useful. Have the actors annotate their scripts in pencil with blocking and interpretation notes, which they can refer to during the performance if necessary.

Rehearse your actors entrances and exits, and how to sit during scenes in which they have no lines. Usually, actors will continue to follow in their books and direct their attention to those who are in the scene being played.

Although Reader's Theatre looks much more casual than a staged play, it can incorporate some fo the effect of a fully staged production. Be careful to keep these elements minimal and make sure they do not steal the focus from the reading actors. Character costumes, for example, are not very effective for Reader's Theatre, especially if actors must switch roles often. Many directors have the ensemble dress alike in simple clothes to create an ensemble look and one that does not draw undue attention to any one actor.

Performing—Don't introduce your work to the audience. The narrators or characters should tell the audience what they need to know. Let the work tell its own story. If possible, have someone videotape the performance to document your work and that of your ensemble.

Responding—How well you have fulfilled the "to accomplish this project" section will help to assess your project. You may also ask yourself, your ensemble, or your audience these questions to help you improve.

- Did the adaptation tell a clear story with a beginning, a middle, and an end?
- Did the material seem suitable to a Reader's Theatre presentation?

- Did the ensemble work well together?
- Was the focus of the story maintained throughout?
- Were characters sufficiently delineated?
- Was the ensemble used to create special or unusual effects?
- Was the presentation entertaining?

Adapting the Project—

1. Since Reader's Theatre can be created form a variety of literary works, you can follow the procedure here to create any number of presentations. One focus might be a current news event, in which you combine newspaper and news magazine articles, interview transcripts, scripts from television news commentary, and fictional scenes of dialogue to portray someone currently in the public eye.
2. Incorporate multi-media techniques by using actors reading on multiple TV monitors onstage, showing videotape of actors reading on a screen set up onstage, or projecting images of text onto large screens for actors to read.

Making a Mask

Assignment: Create a mask for a specific character in a play or one that can be used in a variety of theatre productions.

Product: A mask that suggests a character

Purpose: To develop skill in creating special costume pieces

To accomplish this project, you will:

- Create a mask using one of several techniques
- Paint and decorate the mask to suggest a character
- Present the mask yourself or have an actor present it

Creating:

A variety of techniques may be sued to create masks. Before creating your mask, however, decide whether you want to create a mask for a specific character in a play or one that can be used in a variety of productions. Also, decide whether you want to create a full or half mask.

Design the Mask—If you want to create a mask for a specific character in a play, choose a play and analyze both the play and the character. Determine what character traits, if any, you want ot emphasize. Keep in mind that the mask will not show any of the actor's expressions, so the expression you create on the mask should be either neutral or flecible enough to show the range of emotions the character experiences. You might decide the the mask will be worn only during certain scenes and, therefore, an intense expression of one kind would be appropriate. For example, if you were designing for Shakespeare's King Lear, you might design the mask to symbolize Lear's madness during the climactic scenes of the play.

If you are designing a character mask that can be used for a variety of productions, you might want to look through magazine or books with pictures from theatre production for inspiration. Or simply let your imagination be your guide.

If you are designing a mask to be used for a particular period or theatrical style, you will need to do some research. Sophocles' Antigone, for example, requires masks that are typical of your women but show the characteristics of tragedy. Masks worn by commedia dell'arte characters had a distinctive style. Draw sketches before you begin and work from your chosen sketch.

Make Your Mask—One process for creating a mask is to make a life mask, using a medium such as plaster bandages. Be sure to follow all safety precautions and to do everything you can to keep the person serving as your model comfortable during this process. You could also form a mask with the same materials on a life-sized artificial head, such as a milliner's dummy.

You can add plaster bandage sculpting or paper mache to change the shape of the face, if desired. If you do, be sure that the mask is completely dry before decorating.

If you choose papier mache as you medium for creating a mask, apply it to an existing mask or artificial head. (Never use papier mache on a human face: it will traumatize the skin.) If you use an existing mask, you might need to put something inside the mask to keep it firm while you are working on it. After your mask is thoroughly try, cut holes for the eyes and mouth, if that is part of your design.

A challenging alternative is to mold a face (human or animal) in clay and apply mask-making material over the clay. This is a difficult though rewarding opportunity. However, to keep costs at a minimum, it is recommended to use the previously mentioned options. Should you choose to go this route, see Mr. Duff or Mr. Jones for further explanation and details about procuring the required materials.

Decorate Your Mask—Before you paint your mask, put it up to your face (or to the face of the actor who will present it for you). You may get some ideas for color from the way the mask looks and the character it suggests. Then paint the mask with a basic color. This may be a skin tone or, if you are doing a more fantastic mask, some other color. Add color to the lips and cheeks, paint the eyebrows, and outline the eyes. You may choose to make your mask abstract and in that case, you can paint it without concern for representing facial features. If you have created an animal mask, use appropriate colors for a realistic or fantastic representation of the animal.

For a human face, you might add a beard or eyebrows of crepe hair. Glue hair on with white glue instead of the spirit gum you would use on skin, or use a hot-glue gun. You can even attach a whole wig to the mask, as the Greeks did. For animal marks, you may add hair, horns, or other features, such as whiskers or fangs.

Line the inside of the mask with fabric or some cushion material to make wearing it more comfortable. If the mask is to be worn attached to the head, punch holes in the edges to attaché elastic or ribbon ties to go around the head just above the ears. If the mask is to be handheld, mount it to a stick of an appropriate length.

Presenting—Present your mask yourself or have an actor wear it—preferably onstage under stage lights and with some costume pieces to suggest the character you have depicted in the mask. It is strongly suggested that you incorporate a monologue that is representative of the mask either in style, historical, etc. Present the mask in a number of different positions and under different lighting conditions; mask can seem to undergo surprising changes of expression under various conditions. Invite your classmates to critique your work and try on your mask.

Responding—How well you have fulfilled the "to complete this project" section will help to assess your project. You may also ask yourself or your classmates these questions to help you improve:

- If the mask was intended to suggest a specific character or animal, does it succeed?
- Is it interesting to watch from different positions?
- Is it well executed—are the molding, painting, and decorating carefully done?
- Is it comfortable and wearable for a period of time?
- Does the wearer have sufficient vision?
- Can the wearer project his/her voice reasonably well?

Adapting the Project—

1. Design masks for all the major characters in a play or for all the chorus members in a play.
2. Follow the same procedures to create a mask that is fantastic or appropriate to a carnival scene.
3. Create a whole head that could be used as a severed head in a play.
4. Incorporate various high-tech lighting effects, such as gobos and colored lights. Combine these with music to create an interesting piece of performance art with your mask.

Vocabulary by Unit & Section

Unit 1—Acting: exploration

articulation, articulators, gesture, improvise, inflection, pantomime, project, resonance, resonators, script

Unit 2—Acting: preparation

beat, cold reading, cross, focus, master gesture, open, shared position, subtext, upstage

Unit 3—Acting: performance

cue line, fourth wall, off book, presentational style, read-through, representational style, scenario, spike, stage business

Unit 4—Acting: specialization

choreographer, mime, musical theatre, principal, production number, Reader's Theatre, stage combat

Adapting Reader's Theatre

In Reader's Theatre, two or more actors create a performance by reading a script based on a literary work. Many types of literature can be used as the basis of a Reader's Theatre script, including plays, fiction, poetry, letters, diaries, journals, and biographies. Entire brief works or excerpts can be used.

Finding a Source

Any literary work can be adapted for Reader's Theatre, but you will make your task easier if you choose one with a limited number of characters and a good mixture of narration, description, and dialogue. The qualities that will make a work of literature successful as Reader's Theatre are basically the same ones that make it compelling to an individual reader: an interesting plot and characters, a theme with broad emotional appeal, and vivid, picturesque language. In addition, you may also want to choose a work that includes a number of likeable characters and has dialogue that serves to sharply distinguish characters.

If you choose to adapt a longer work, such as a novel or biography, you will only be able to present excerpts. It's not practical to do an entire novel as Reader's Theatre. Even a brief one would take hours to perform in its entirety. Decide which scenes best convey the work's essential character.

A practical note: If you present your Reader's Theatre production for any purpose than a classroom project, you will have to get permission to use copyrighted works of literature; therefore you may wish to use material in the public domain (that is, not covered by copyright). Ask you teacher if you have copyright concerns.

Adapting the Work

You initial reading of the work you have chosen to adapt will acquaint you with its basic elements of plot, character, setting, theme, style, and language. Now reread, analyzing in detail the structure of the plot, the nature of the characters and their interactions, the description of the setting, the development of the theme, the overall style of the work, and the texture of the language.

Narration and Description

Decide what narration and description you should retain. Note lines that have to be kept if the audience is to understand the work.

Add narrator lines to bridge gaps, to show time lapses, or to summarize action. If such lines appear in the narration sections of the work, use them; if not, write them.

You can either use a single actor to deliver the narrative and descriptive passages in your source or you can divide these passages among several characters. If the source contains lengthy narration and description, it might help maintain audience attention if you distribute these sections among several actors. Write an introduction for your narrator (or narrators) that identifies the characters, gives needed information about preceding events, and establishes the setting. If the work is told in first person, that character should narrate the introduction.

Characters

To avoid audience confusion, eliminate minor characters and give any of their critical lines to the major characters. In a Reader's Theatre production, actors often take more than one role, including that of the narrator. If actors are sharing narration, it's important that they clearly distinguish the voices they employ in delivering narration from those they use as characters.

Stage Directions

When only a limited amount of revision is being done to the source work, a Reader's Theatre script can be created by simply annotating the margins of the existing text with stage directions. If you are revising more extensively, you will need to create a new script. You can use either a stage play or screenplay format.

from “Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment” by Nathanial Hawthorne

This play concerns an old scientist who possesses water from the legendary Fountain of Youth. He invites three elderly friends to sample the water, with astonishing results.

Characters:

Narrator

Dr. Heidegger

Widow Wycherly

Colonel Killigrew

Mr. Gascoigne

Mr. Medbourne

Wycherly, Killgrew, Gascoigne, Medbourne (gleeful). We are young! We are young!

Narrator. All shouted mirthfully and leaped about the room. The Widow Wycherly tripped up to the doctor’s chair, with mischievous merriment in her face.

Wycherly (coyly). Doctor, you dear old soul, get up and dance with me!

Heidegger (coldly). Pray excuse me. I am old and rheumatic, and my dancing days were over long ago. (He gestures toward the others.) Buy any of these high-spirited gentlemen will be glad of so pretty a partner.

Killigrew (commanding, to Wycherly). Dance with me, Clara!

Gascoigne (competitive, to Killigrew). No, no, I will be her partner!

Medbourne (pleading, to Wycherly). You promised me your hand, fifty years ago!

Narrator. They all gathered around her, each attempting to embrace her. Blushing, panting, struggling, chiding, laughing, her warm breath fanning each of their faces by turns, Widow Wycherly strove to disengage herself, yet still remained in their triple embrace.

Wycherly (breathless, laughing, to Killigrew, Gascoigne, and Medbourne in turn). Colonel, please. . .Mr. Gascoigne, behave. . .Mr. Medburne, release me. . .

Narrator. Never was there a livelier picture of youthful rivalry, with bewitching beauty for the prize. (The lights grow dimmer.) Yet, owing to the duskiness of his chamber, and the antique dresses they still wore, Dr. Heidegger became aware of a strange phenomenon.

Heidegger (with horrified fascination). My tall mirror still reflects the figures of three, old gray, withered grandsires, ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shriveled granddame.

from "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" by Bret Harte

This play concerns a group of undesirables expelled from a mining camp are snowbound in the mountains.

Characters

Narrator 1 (John Oakhurst)

Narrator 2 (The Duchess)

Narrator 3 (Uncle Billy)

Narrator 4 (Mother Shipton)

Narrator 5 (Tom Simson)

Narrator 6 (Piney Woods)

Narrator 1. Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke benumbed and cold.

Narrator 2. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing strongly, brought to his cheek that which caused the blood to leave it—

All (Drawn out and overlapping; not simultaneously). Snow. . .sno—ow. . .sno-o-ow!

Narrator 2. He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no time to lose.

Narrator 5. But turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying—

John Oakhurst. He's gone!

Narrator 4. A suspicion leaped to his brain, and a curse to his lips.

Narrator 3. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered—

John Oakhurst. The mules! That old thief has taken the mules!

Narrator 6. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

Narrator 1. The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers.

Narrator 5. Tom, the Innocent, slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humored, freckled face.

Narrator 6. And Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as sweetly as though attended by angles.

Narrator 1. And Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his mustaches and waited for the dawn.

Narrator 2. It came slowly—

Narrator 4. In a whirling mist of snowflakes—

Narrator 6. That dazzles and confused the eye.

Narrator 3. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed.

Narrator 5. He looked over the valley, and summed up the present and future in two words—

John Oakhurst (grimly). Snowed in!

Questions for Study of a Play

Background Information—

What kind of family did I come from?

How did I interact with my family while I was growing up?

Was it a well-adjusted home life, or were there many conflicts?

Of what social status and how much wealth did my family have?

How have health issues influenced my life?

How intelligent am I and how much education do I have?

What do I do for a living?

How old am I?

What are my religious or spiritual beliefs?

What kind of clothes do I prefer?

Am I an emotionally expressive person?

In what ways to I express my emotions?

How would I describe myself—am I temperamental? Moody? Explosive? Calm? Passive? Quiet? Withdrawn?

What is my sense of humor like?

What is my best trait? My worst trait?

What is my relationship to other characters in the play?

How do I treat other characters?

Status Quo—

Where am I today?

Who is with me?

What am I doing?

What is happening to upset my world?

How does that make me feel?

What do I want to do?

Who or what is preventing me from doing it?

What am I going to do about it?

How am I going to do this?

What do I stand to gain or lose?

Character Movement—

What is my posture like?

How do I walk?

How do I use my hands?

What are my distinctive facial expressions?

Are my gestures large and wide, or small and contained?

Do I have a master gesture?

How subtle are my gestures?

What are the rhythm and tempo of my movements?

Do I have a clear leading center?

Do I enjoy moving?

Do I have any difficulty moving?

How does emotion affect my movements?

How do my movements reveal what I am thinking or feeling, even if my words say something else?

Character Voice—

What are the pitch, rhythm, and tempo of my words and sentences?

Do I enjoy talking?

Do I have any speech problems?

How does emotion affect my speech?

What qualities does my voice have?

How does my voice reveal what I'm thinking or feeling, even if my words say something else?

What words do I emphasize?

Do I speak with an accent?

Preliminary Script Analysis—

What happens in the play?
When and where does the action of the play occur?
What are the period manners and customs of the play?
What are my character's dominant attributes and attitudes?
What images come to mind when I think of my character?

Additional Script Analysis—

What thoughts, feelings, and images come to mind as I go through the action of the story?
What is my overall objective?
What obstacles stand in the way of achieving this objective?
What actions do take to overcome these obstacles?
What are the stakes?
What is the outcome of my actions?

Subtext—
What am I implying by my dialogue and actions?

How does this subtext differ from my spoken words?
How does my background influence my thoughts, words, and actions?
How does my subtext influence my actions and emotional responses to other characters' words and actions?
How does my subtext help the audience understand the meaning of the play?

Transformation—

Do I change during the scene? If so, how?
How do I react to this change?
Does my overall objective change? If so, how?

Background Questions—

Why did the dramatist write the play?

What is the theme of the play?

What is the genre and style of the play?

What was daily life like during the time period of the play? What did people eat? What music did they listen to? What was their clothing like?

What cultural, political, social, and scientific events were happening at the time?

What was occurring in the rest of the world?

What do pictures or paintings of people from that time and place reveal?

Beginning Drama Research Assignments

Unit 1

A. The Storytelling Tradition
B. Sophocles

Unit 2

A. William Shakespeare
B. Moliere

Unit 3

A. Kabuki
B. Anton Chekhov

Unit 4

A. Samuel Beckett
B. August Wilson

Writing a Research Paper

When you are assigned a topic for a research paper, it's important that you identify clearly what you are being asked to do. The following are directives that you will frequently encounter in an assignment for a research paper:

- Analyze: identify the components of something complex
- Compare/Contrast: point out similarities and differences
- Defend: write in favor of an opinion
- Discuss: consider all sides of a question
- Describe: give a picture or account of something
- Define: identify the essential nature of something
- Explain: make something understandable
- Imagine: form an idea or an image

Choosing a Topic

Sometimes you will be allowed to choose your own topic for a research paper. If so, be sure it interests you; your writing will convey that interest to your audience. You might begin by identifying an area of research that interests you and then focusing on a topic:

- If you are interested in acting, you might describe the way different actors have portrayed a famous character, such as Antigone or Hamlet
- If you are interested in directing, you might defend non-traditional casting
- If you are interested in producing, you might explain the economics of organizing a theatre festival
- If you are interested in technical theatre, you might discuss how the set, props, and lighting, as described by Henrik Ibsen in his stage directions for *The Wild Duck*, contribute to the theme of the play
- If you are interested in theatre history, you might define theatre of the absurd

Prewriting

In doing any paper, it's often the planning, rather than the actual writing that takes the most effort. Prewriting included identifying your purpose and audience, developing your topic and thesis, and gathering and organizing your research.

Purpose and Audience

The general purpose of writing is to inform or persuade a reader; the specific purpose is to present a clear point of view about a topic, one that leads to a conclusion, and possibly some desired action. If you paper is an assignment in your theatre course, your audience is your teacher (and possibly your fellow students) and your specific purpose is to fulfill the assignment. If you are writing an article for your local newspaper urging the establishment or support of a community theatre, your audience is your fellow citizen and your specific purpose is to encourage them to be theatergoers.

Developing Your Thesis

Once you have a topic, consider the limits of time (to research and write) and space (the length of your paper). If necessary, limit your topic. For example, a topic such as Shakespeare's The Tempest is certainly too broad; however, the stage history of The Tempest is more manageable. As you research, you may have to further limit the topic, depending on what you find. For example, you might further limit the stage history of The Tempest to the interpretations of the role of Caliban. You may also find you need or want to expand the topic.

Thesis Statement

Your thesis statement informs the reader of your topic and identifies the approach you are going to take. For example, if you were writing about interpretations of the role of Caliban, your thesis statement might read as follows: "in the recent past, interpretations of the role of Caliban in Shakespeare's The Tempest have strongly reflected contemporary attitudes about imperialism and racism." If you are writing on an assigned topic, the assignment itself will supply much of the wording of your thesis statement.

Gathering Information

Before researching using such conventional sources as print and electronic media—microfilm, cassette tapes, videotapes, CD-ROMS, DVD's, the internet—consider more personal methods of research: reflections on your own past experiences and personal knowledge; interviews with other people who have special knowledge about your topic; a survey questionnaire, conducted either by telephone or mail (or email).

Take careful notes during your research period, paraphrasing (or restating) what you have read, seen, and heard. Identify the source of a note with the name and date of the publication or other media.

For direct quotations, use quotation marks and cite the person and source quoted. For personal interview quotations, cite the place and date of the interview.

Organizing Your Notes

If you notes are on separate cards or pieces of paper, and if the subject of each note is identified, you can manually sort them into a logical sequence that will argue, or present, your position coherently and convincingly. If your notes are in your computer, cut and paste them into a cohesive, logical sequence of ideas.

Writing the Paper

Write your first draft quickly, getting your ideas down before you lose them. Don't worry about grammar, spelling, and correctness at this stage. Just put your notes into rough sentence and paragraph form.

The main purpose of your first paragraph is to present your thesis statement. If your teacher is your audience, you can assume background knowledge on your topic; for a general audience, however, you may need to provide more information as context for your thesis statement.

In the succeeding paragraphs, present the substance of your explanation or argument. Generally, each main point you wish to make will be presented in a separate paragraph headed by a topic sentence.

The concluding paragraph ordinarily restates the thesis statement with certain amplifications, or it can summarize or make a final comment. It should not, however, merely repeat the introduction

Revising and Proofreading

Read your first draft aloud, being careful to both see and hear each word. Examine the organization and development of you paper, asking yourself the following questions: Is the thesis statement clearly stated? Is the evidence you offer in support of your thesis statement presented effectively? Does each paragraph refocus the reader's attention on the central points you are making? Finally, proofread you paper correcting any errors in grammas, punctuation, and spelling.

Peer Editing

When you have reached the stage of revising your research paper, a helpful strategy to employ is peer editing. Several different approaches may be taken to peer editing. The simplest way to work with another student as an editing partner. Exchange papers and read each other's work. It's a good idea to review your partner's work twice. The first time read for content, checking to see that the writing is clearly organized and well expressed. The second time, make sure that your partner has used correct grammar, usage, spelling, and mechanics. Write detailed comments to help your partner's revision. These comments should clearly focus on specific things you observe in your patner's writing. Your criticism should be helpful and positive, not sarcastic or rude. Before you return your comments to your partner, read them over to make sure they are clear, specific and constructive. When you get back your paper from your partner, read over his or her comments carefully, asking for clarification if you are unsure what is meant.

Another method of peer editing is to work with other students in an editing group, with each member reading each paper for one specific area of content or form, such as effective transitions or incomplete sentences.

Titling and Bibliography

Once the paper is finished, you may consider adding a title page(optional). The best titles are simple and brief and express and clearly what your essay is about. Along with the title include you name of the course and the teacher. At the end of the paper include a bibliography, a list of all the sources of information you have used in researching your paper. Make sure to use the correct bibliographic format for each type of source (magazine, book, play, website, etc.)

Supplemental Scripts

Imagine you are portraying the character of Odysseus in an adaptation of the Odyssey. You play the scene in which Odysseus and his men are trapped in the cave of the Cyclops Polyphemus. A large stone that only the Cyclops can move blocks the entrance. Odysseus offers very strong wine to the Cyclops as the one-eyed monster feasts on one after another of Odysseus's men.

Odysseus and the Cyclops

Odysseus (offering a goatskin full of wine to the Cyclops). Cyclops, would you like something to wash down your food?

Cyclops (takes the wineskin and drinks from it). Mmmm! I like you, Greek! I'm going to do you a favor. What's your name?

Odysseus—My name is Nobody.

Cyclops (takes another huge gulp from the wineskin, then laughs). Nobody, because you shared this delicious drink with me, I'm going to eat you last! (continues drinking and laughing; laughter dies out, and he falls asleep, snoring)

Odysseus (whispering to his men). Quick! Have you heated up the stake in the fire? Bring it here. (stabs the Cyclops in his eye with the stake)

Cyclops (wakes screaming in pain). Aaaaaah! (tears the stake from his eye and gropes wildly about the cave) Help! I'm blinded! Help!

Other Cyclopses (offstage; on the other side of the boulder blocking the cave entrance). What is wrong, Polyphemus? Who is hurting you?

Cyclops (yelling). It's Nobody!

Other Cyclopses—Well then, quiet down, in the name of Zeus!

Odysseus and the Cyclops--Subtext

[square brackets] = Actor's action and inflection can reveal subtext

Underlined = possible subtext for Odysseus and Cyclops

(Parenthesis) = typical/basic action of character

Odysseus [forces a smile over pained expression] (offering a goatskin full of wine to the Cyclops). Cyclops, would you like something to wash down your food? You man-eating best! I'm only giving you this wine to pretend that I'm your friend. The wine is very strong and we hope it will put you to sleep so we can blind you. [looks away from Cyclops eating; upset, but tries to maintain composure]

Cyclops (takes the wineskin and drinks from it). Mmmm! [smacks lips, wet with blood and wine, very loudly] Look at me enjoying my feast of your men. I like you, Greek! You silly fool! Do you think you can win me over? [Nods at Odysseus with approval] I'm going to do you a favor. I'm only pretending to like you so I can humiliate you with my "favor." [grins broadly] What's your name? I'm pretending to care about you so I can find out more about you.

Odysseus—[bows low as if grateful] My name is Nobody. I use a false and silly name that I know your are too stupid to question, and which may come in handy for my plan.

Cyclops (takes another huge gulp from the wineskin, then laughs). Nobody, because you shared this delicious drink with me, I'm going to eat you last! Oh, I'm so clever! I never had any intention of sparing your life. My cruel joke amuses me. [laughs hideously; ignores Odysseus; absorbed in drinking] (continues drinking and laughing; laughter dies out, and he falls asleep, snoring) I'm not worried about the Greeks escaping.

Odysseus (whispering to his men). Quick! Have you heated up the stake in the fire? Bring it here. Our lives depend on moving quickly and quietly. [takes stake and climbs carefully to the Cyclops] (stabs the Cyclops in his eye with the stake) Take that you monstrous drunk! Our trick worked, and now we have an advantage over you! [backs up to join men against cave wall] We're not out of danger yet.

Cyclops (wakes screaming in pain). Aaaaaah! (tears the stake from his eye and gropes wildly about the cave) Help! I'm blinded! Help! If I get my hands on those Greeks, I'll rip them limb from limb and gobble them all up at once!

Other Cyclopses (offstage; on the other side of the boulder blocking the cave entrance). [yelling with panic and concern in their voices] What is wrong, Polyphemus? Who is hurting you? Why is he making so much noise? He must be in trouble.

Cyclops (yelling).[unable to find cave opening; stumbling about in pain and panic] It's Nobody! Come here and kill Nobody! I can't find him!

Other Cyclopses—[disgusted]Well then, quiet down, in the name of Zeus! What an idiot! I hope he doesn't disturb us again.

Writing a Play

Aristotle rated drama higher than history because drama expressed the universal; history, the particular. Playwrights do seek to express some essential truth about human beings or the human condition. To achieve that goal, a playwright needs three things—a vision to communicate, a mastery of the craft of playwriting, and a facility with the playwright's basic tools of plot, character, and language.

Vision, Craft, and Tools

A playwright's vision grows out of intuitions, thoughts, convictions, assumptions, perceptions, and emotional sensitivities. These attributes affect selection of plot, characters, and language. This vision is also fed by reacting to the work of other playwrights; if you intend to write plays, you should see and read as many plays as possible.

The craft of playwriting involves mastering the three phases of writing; invention—discovering an idea; planning—finding a plot and suitable characters to move that plot; and expression—writing appropriate dialogue and action that reveals your characters and theme. Mastering this craft also demands that a playwright be willing to rewrite many times.

Invention

The sources of ideas for plays are as different as the playwrights themselves. The origin of Eugene O'Neill's great trilogy, *Mourning Becomes Electra* can be traced to spring of 1936, when he made the following notation in his diary: "Modern psychological drama using one of the old legend plots of Greek tragedy for its basic theme." Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, set during the Salem witch trials of the 1690's, was a response to Senator Joseph McCarthy's anticommunist witch hunt in the early 1950's. Tennessee Williams' memory play *The Glass Menagerie* is autobiographical. You may want to consider keeping some of the following ideas in your journal.

- Sketches of unusual people
- Provocative lines from overheard conversations
- Topics about which you have strong feelings or opinions

- Folk tales or fairy tales that could be retold or updated
- Events in history
- Current newspaper or magazine stories
- Incidents from your own life

If you have strong feelings about crime, for example, you might be drawn to a newspaper story about a young girl accused of a terrible murder. You might ask yourself a series of "What if—" questions that might generate a number of ideas for a play:

- What if she really didn't do it?
- If she did do it, why did she?
- What if this was just one in a series of murders?
- What if she had not been caught? What kind of adult would she become?

Planning

Most scripts grow out of two elements: the through line—the major action of the play—and the conflict. In a mystery story, for example, a detective's effort to solve the crime is the through line; the conflict is the struggle between the detective's efforts to solve the crime and the criminal's efforts to escape detection. In L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, the through line is Dorothy's journey to the Wizard who will enable her to get back to Kansas; the conflict is provided by the Wicked Witch.

There are four general types of dramatic conflict. The main character in a play can be in conflict (1) with another person; (2) with him or herself; (3) with society; (4) with the forces of nature or fate. Conflict can be physical, but onstage it is usually more interesting if it is personal, moral, or social.

The action of most plays is organized into major divisions called acts, which are subdivided into scenes. Each scene deals with a significant crisis or confrontation. The scene is the basic structural element of a play. Before you begin you to write, outline the scenes to be included. One method of outlining is to write the central action of each scene on a 3x5 card. Spread the cards out on the floor or pin them to a board. Look for scenes you can cut or put in a different order. Once your arrangement satisfies you, write a first draft.

Grabbing the Audience

Begin your play with a hook. A hook is something in the script—an action, a line of dialogue, a piece of stage business, an actor's reaction—that grabs the audience's interest. For example, if a man is to be fired, don't begin by showing this man acting incompetently. Instead, as a hook, you might start with the boss saying, "We've decided to let you go." Then quickly provide exposition, material that establishes the situation, introduces the characters, and provides any necessary background information on events that occurred before the opening of the play.

Structuring the Action

The movement of a well-crafted plot begins with an inciting incident, the catalyst for the play's action. The inciting incident may take the form of an idea or action on the part of the main character. The rising action of a play consists of a series of complications and discoveries that create conflict. The rising action makes up the middle portions of the play. Each of the scenes that make up the rising action also needs a hook, plus an ending that makes the audience want to keep watching. Scenes are separated and linked by transitions, verbal or visual connections or bridges. For example, scene v might begin with an alarm clock ringing or the sun rising.

The climax is the turning point in the plot when everything comes to an emotional crest. The falling action is the series of events following the climax. The ending or denouement is the resolution of the conflicts that made up the rising action. If it's plausible and inevitable, an ending can be happy or unhappy.

Creating Characters

Characters advance the action of a play. The basic action of your play, the through line, already dictates a certain cast of characters. The action of *The Wizard of Oz*, for example, requires at least Dorothy, the Wizard, and the Wicked Witch.

Kinds of Characters—your chief characters will be the protagonist, the central character, and the antagonist, the character with whom the protagonist struggles in the dramatic conflict. These characters are usually the most complex and, thus, the most fully developed.

Characters other than the protagonist and antagonist are known as secondary characters. One of these might be a foil, a character whose personality and (sometimes) physical appearance contrast with and thus accentuate those of the protagonist. Dialogue between the foil and the protagonist enables you to convey realistically a protagonist's thoughts or plans. Some minor characters, such as a bellboy or maid, my be functionaries; that is, what they do is more important than who they are like. You must decide the degree to which each character should be distinctive.

As you begin to shape your principal characters, you will need to develop each one's background, what has happened to him or her in the past, and status quo, or present circumstances. Some questions to help you in developing the background and status quo of your characters appear in the "Questions" section. Some of these questions address the motivation and behavior of a character, which are a reflection of a character's strategies to overcome obstacles to achieve particular objectives, or goals. As you develop the words and actions of each character, consider the character's overall motivation in each scene. Also consider how you might reveal the subtext of the character's words and actions, what is implied but not spoken.

Expression

Theatre language is not the same as everyday conversation. Because it both shapes the action and expresses each character's thoughts, attitudes, and intentions, theatre language must be selective and controlled. Furthermore, in an actor's gestures or pauses theatre language can even be nonverbal.

In Shakespeare's time almost all theatre language was rhythmic, poetic, and relied heavily on elaborate imager. By the 1800's, most playwrights had abandoned poetry for prose, particularly prose that revealed a character's class and education. Today, film and TV writers continue to write realistic dialogue. You own personality as well as requirements of you plot and characters will affect your style.

Writing Dialogue

Although the language you use will be as much a reflection of the characters in your play as your style, there are some truisms about writing dialogue

Fitting Dialogue to Character—As you develop the background and status quo of your characters, you should already begin to think about the manner in which one speaks. An excited teenager, for example, might speak in fragments; a middle-aged trial lawyer, in long complex sentences. Don't give lines filled with sophisticated or mythological allusions to an uneducated character—unless you are aiming for a comic effect. Look in your. Search your memory for authentic words or habits of speech that make a character really come alive for your audience.

Understanding Time and Place—Fit the dialogue to the historical period and geography. If your play is set in the 1920's, don't use slang expressions from a later period. If you lay is set in England, don't use words or expressions typical of Americans.

Controlling the Pacing—Have an ear for the pacing of a scene. Some scenes need to move quickly; others can move at a more leisurely pace. Short speeches or interrupted lines tend to quicken a scene; lengthy speeches slow it down.

Writing in a Straight Line—Avoid "byways." The expression "by the way" is usually the prelude to a digression, a drifting away from the main point of the scene. If the digression is important, introduce it earlier or later; otherwise you will lose your flow—and possibly you audience

Stepping on Laughs—Space funny lines appropriately. Beginning comic writers often "kill" the laugh form one line by following it too quickly with another funny line. Give your audience time to laugh and recover from laughing.

Formatting a Play

Plays vary in format, but there are some constants. As you read plays, pay attention to similarities and differences in the way playwrights format their plays.

Character and Dialogue

Before a play begins, the entire cast of characters is presented. This may take the form of a list of names only or may be supplemented with brief information about the characters, such as the ier ages physical types,

In the body of the play, when a character speaks, the character's name is given, usually in capital letters, and is followed by a period or colon.

Act and Scene Designations

Each act and scene is identified and numbered before it begins, often centered and in capital letters. Most plays number acts and scenes using Roman numerals. Usually the scene designation is followed by a description of the setting. A playwright may go into detail about how the set should be arranged or may only indicated furnishings necessary for the actions of the scene. This description may be set up as a stage direction.

Stage Directions

Throughout a play, a playwright includes stage directions, which are indications to the director and actors about a variety of aspects of the play—generally, information on characters, how the play should proceed, how it should look, and commentary about intended mood or effects. More specifically, stage directions might include the following:

- Descriptions of the setting or set, including lighting and sound effects
- Descriptions of a character, including physical type, costume, vocal tone, and attitude
- Notes on gestures or facial expressions
- Stage movements (including entrances, exits, and other blocking)
- Focus of vocal delivery (that is, to whom the line is delivered)

In a stage play, the stage directions appear in italics and in parentheses. Stage directions that explain entrances and exits and effects related to the set, such as dimming of lights, are often centered and appear on separate lines between the dialogue. Stage directions relating to specific characters, particularly delivery of lines or movements, are set in parentheses following the character's name. In

the format of most plays, the character's name is typically set in capital letters (or small capital letters) in the stage directions whenever it appears.

Prologue and Epilogue

Some plays include a prologue. A prologue is a type of introduction. It may be a monologue by a major character or a commentary by a chorus. The prologue hints at or provokes audience interest in the events and themes of the play that will follow. An epilogue is a concluding speech and therefore follows the final action of the play. As such, an epilogue may review the play's action and highlight important events and themes. The epilogue may also include information about what happens to characters after the action of the play ends. Popular in the 1600's and 1700's, prologues and epilogues disappeared in the mid-1800's and are rarely used in later plays.

Drama Academic Vocabulary Test 1

ID B

Word Bank: cue, ensemble, gesture, motivation, critique, conflict, collaboration, context, characterization, character, articulation.

1.) Without _____, stories and plays would be bland. _____(same word) adds excitement and purpose to a play.
2.) The ensemble must use effective _____ and work together on stage and in rehearsals.
3.) The director will give each actor specific _____(s), so they know when and where to exit and enter the stage.
4.) The _____ was successful and the show was entertaining and captivating for the audience.
5.) _____ is extremely important on stage. Everyone needs to hear and understand the characters lines.
6.) If you are cast in a show, you need to read and research the play's _____ in order to fully prepare for your role.
7.) On stage, each _____ has a specific motivation for moving. Using stage directions and cues helps bring the _____(same word) to life.
8.) Her frantic arm _____ made it clear that her character was angry with the other characters on stage.
9.) It takes a while to completely understand _____. There are a lot of different elements to becoming a different personality on the stage
10.) Positive and successful actors use _____ from the audience and directors to become better in their field.
11.) When becoming a character, you must understand their _____ and reasons for behavior. The better you understand your character, the more believable you will be.

Pantomime/ "From Ritual to Theatre" Quiz

ID B

Pantomime

1.) The difference between pantomime and traditional acting is?

_____

_____

_____

2.) What specific structure do pantomime stories have?

_____

_____

_____

3.) How do pantomime actors portray specific items without using them?

_____

_____

_____

4.) What is the purpose of gestures in pantomime?

_____

_____

_____

"From Ritual to Theatre"

1.) How did Thespyus originally perform his plays for different villages?

_____

_____

_____

2.) Were plays originally done indoors or outdoors?

_____

3.) Who was not allowed to participate in Ancient Greek theatre?

_____

4.) Why were masks used in Greek theatre?

_____

Believe in Acting

Objective: To demonstrate that acting is believing, the ability to respond truthfully in a fictitious situation

Activity: Instruct students to do the following:

1. Ask students to define the term "acting" in their own words. Give the students the definition as found in the objective
2. Is it "real" or is it "phony"?
    A. ("Phony") Ask a student to look for an imaginary paper clip on the floor. Tell him/her to overact—to be "phony".
    B. ("Real") Show a paper clip to the same student and then ask him/her to turn around as you tell him/her that you are going to hide the paper clip somewhere. Tell the student s/he has 30 seconds to find it. Now tell him to be believable ("real") as s/he tries to find it. Hide the paper clip in your pocket. After the time limit, show the paper clip to the student. Although the paper clip was not there the second time, s/he should have "believed" it was. Acting is "believing."
    C. Ask each student to describe the changes they saw between the "real" and "phony" scenes.
    D. Have each student do the following "real" activity with at least one of the imaginary objects. Try to find a(n):

Rubber band	pencil
Bottle cap	contact lens
Earring	coin
Ring	string
Love letter	eraser
Wallet/billfold	lunch pass/ticket
Bus ticket	marble
Book	ASB Card/Driver's License

Computer CD	Gold charm
House key	teeth retainer
I-pod	Cell phone
Eye glasses	your BF/GF's class ring
Jacket	Car keys

Coaching Tips: as each student tries to "find" an object, the instructor should stress that each student should be "real" and "believable." Does each student have the same working definition of the term "acting"?

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Objective: To clarify the term "physical action" (a combination of a physical activity and a psychological state of mind) and to provide exercises that allow the execution of such actions

Activity: Explain that it is the actor's inner motivation that forces her to behave in a specific way while doing a physical activity. Ask each student to do at least one of the following "physical actions." Say to the student, "You go to the door and leave the room because. . ."

1. you have been disrupting the class
2. the principal wants to see you about cutting class
3. you must go to the bathroom
4. you just finished a test and did not do well
5. you just finished a test and did great on it
6. you cut your finger and need to get first aid
7. your mother/father called and you must come home immediately
8. there is an earthquake
9. there is a fire in the building
10. a tornado is coming your way
11. it is raining and you must put the windows up in your car
12. you are late for your next class
13. you have an orthodontist appointment
14. you just received a note from your girl/boy friend and s/he wants to break up
15. you just received a note form a gird/boy who want to go out with you
16. you want to get the morning paper
17. you need to get the mail
18. you are going to meet your date
19. your party is about to start and you must go get something you forgot at the store
20. your are late for an athletic event
21. you hear a crash outside of the door
22. you are on crutches and on the way for a check-up at the doctor
23. you just received bad news about a family member
24. it's the last day of school and you have to catch a plane
25. the air-conditioning broke down and the temperature has become unbearable
26. someone is calling for you from outside

Coaching tips: Stress that each scene should have a beginning, a middle and an end. Look for body language and facial expressions in each situation. What unique actions go with each "physical action?" It is important to encourage the student to think of all the circumstances that surround his/her physical movement. What is the relationship that the actor has to those causing his/her inner motivation? Does each student have the same working definition for the term "physical action?"

Work, Work, Work

Objective: To establish and maintain the reality of the scene.

Activity: Explain to the students that it is necessary to react by believing in what is seen or touched. They should then respond based on what the physical activity dictates. This allows them to reveal themselves to the audience as "real" people. The following physical activities must be done in pantomime and without props. The inner motivation for these pantomimes should be revealed by each student as he presents an entrance and exit for the pantomime.

1. Carry a full pail of water across the acting area
2. Clean up your room
3. Pack for a trip
4. Walk the dog
5. Remove gum from the bottom of your shoe
6. Hang a picture
7. Change a light bulb
8. Move two pieces of furniture
9. Water the houseplants
10. Plant a row of seeds in a garden
11. Burn a letter
12. Fix a snack at midnight
13. Locate a book in the library and read it
14. Go to your room to do homework
15. Read a magazine in a dentist's office
16. Have a fight
17. Build a snowman
18. Paint a fence
19. Mow the lawn
20. "Clean-up" after a pet
21. Get ready for school
22. Get ready for a date
23. Sneak in past your curfew
24. Put gas in your car
25. Wash a car
26. Change a baby's diaper

Coaching Tips: Can the audience visualize the location of the scene? Do the objects that are used remain the same size and weight throughout the pantomime? Did the actor use too many or confusing gestures? Stress staying in character. Tell students to emphasize how the physical body responds during their pantomime—the strain of the arms of carrying something heavy or the intensity in the legs when walking a giant dog. Urge students to have a beginning, a middle and an end in each pantomime.

What's Cooking?

Objective: To create a total experience, having a beginning, a middle and an end, by using well-defined pantomimed gestures and movements.

Activity: Before beginning, emphasize the need for specific movements that will give the audience a clue to the subject of each pantomime. For example, the delicate cracking and peeling of eggs. Utilizing specific gestures, pantomime the preparation of the following:

A boiled egg	A peanut butter and jelly sandwich
A coconut	A steak
A banana	Popcorn
An orange	Lemonade
A hamburger	Hot soup
Spaghetti	A bowl of cereal
An ice cream cone	Chocolate chip cookies
A pizza	Hot chocolate with marshmellows
An apple	Caramel apples
Sushi	Nachos
Salad	Corn on the cob
Chow mein	A hot dog
A piece of cake	Ribs

Coaching Tips: Did the size and shape of the objects created by the student seem realistic? Did the material jus "appear" in the process of cooking, or were shelves, doors, utensils and appliances clearly defined? Did the student react to tastes and smells?

Chores

Objective: To perform pantomime with authentic gestures that convey the essence of the assigned chore.

Activities: How do you. . .

1. bring in firewood and stack it?
2. make your bed?
3. decorate your Christmas tree?
4. build a sand castle?
5. wash a window?
6. wash a car?
7. polish your shoes?
8. bake cookies?
9. vacuum a rug?
10. wrap a birthday present?
11. paint a garage?
12. put on makeup?
13. perform a lab experiment?
14. shampoo a dog?
15. mow the lawn?
16. prepare and take out the garbage?
17. clean book shelves?
18. weed the garden?
19. set the table?
20. take dishes out of the dishwasher and put them away?

Coaching Tips: Did the student present detailed, well-executed movements? Was s/he believable? Have students pantomime one or two chores done at home. Emphasize having a beginning, a middle and an end.

Hide and Seek

Objective: To strengthen concentration skills.

Activity: Choose a student to do one of the following pantomimes. After thirty seconds choose another student to enter the activity. Then choose another until several students participate.

1. You have lost (something) in your room, and you are trying to find it. Continue looking for it. Each student gets up to look for something s/he has lost until everyone is up and looking for something in the room.
2. You are in a library looking for a book. Proceed one at a time until everybody is up.
3. You are on a playing field looking for the keys to the car. Two people stop by to help you. Then two more.
4. You are a fisherman at a lake trying to find where the fish are biting. Several more fishermen appear on the same shore.
5. You are a kite-flyer looking for the right spot in a large field to fly your kite. Several more kite-flyers appear as well.
6. You lose a contact lens while shopping in a department store. Several people join in the search.
7. Your favorite aunt loses her hearing aid while dining in a crowded restaurant. Help her find it. Other guests and employees may look too.
8. You realize that you had left your retainer on the lunch table. Now you must go through the trash bin to find it. Several students, teachers and employees join your search.

Coaching Tips: Watch for “copy cats.” Do students do their own thing or do they get lost when others appear on stage? Do the eyes and hands work together as the searcher performs the activity? Do facial expressions reflect concern, worry or anxiety?

Taste the Difference

Objective: To be more aware of the senses.

Activity: Explain that the body is the actor's "instrument" and in order to use it properly it should be "well-tuned." This can be done by sharpening the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Utilizing body actions as well as facial and verbal expressions to demonstrate all of the senses, each student should pick up an imaginary piece of food and slowly bring it to his/her mouth and eat it. Have them eat the following:

An orange	Peanut butter
A grape	A peach
A banana	A grapefruit
A plum	A raisin
A lemon	A strawberry
An onion	A pickle
An apple	An apricot
A pineapple	A brownie
A mango	A tomato
A nectarine	A watermelon
An ice-cream cone	Spaghetti
An avocado	A carrot
Corn on the cob	Hot soup
A sandwich	Pizza
Sushi	Chicken leg
Ribs	Cough syrup

Coaching Tips: Did the student see the food? If you did not believe him/her, ask him/her to look at it and describe it. When the student lifted the item to his/her face, did s/he indicate or really pick it up? There should be a certain tension in his/her finger muscles. When the student took a bite of the food, did s/he really bite into it? How did his/her taste buds respond? If you did not believe him/her, ask him/her to describe the taste of the food as s/he repeats the exercise. Talk about setting the scene: opening the wrapper, getting the food out, cutting and preparing it.

A Sight for Your Eyes

Objective: To sharpen the sense of sight.

Activity: Each student of a group of students watches the same imaginary activity. The student(s) should decide on a beginning, a middle and an end to the activity they are watching. Have them view the following:

A football game	A field hockey game
A basketball game	A ballet
A hockey game	A tennis match
A volleyball game	A track meet
A billiards game	A wrestling match
A chess game	A cross country race
A checkers game	A backgammon game
A video game	Skiing
A soccer game	A boat race
A boxing match	A bowling tournament

Coaching Tips: Was each student believable? If not, have the student describe the action watched. Then have the student repeat it without the verbal description. Was there a beginning, a middle and an end? Discuss how groups behave. There are leaders and followers, numerous discussions within one group and different levels of energy. Did the student use specific behaviors to communicate to the audience what activity he was watching?

The Touch Tells It All

Objective: To sharpen the senses of touch and to strengthen one's concentration

Activity: Emphasizing the sense of touch, a student or several students should respond to the following situations and conditions:

1. Walking slowly into the ocean
2. Passing a twenty-five pound block of ice to one another
3. Sitting on a beach and feeling the breeze on your face
4. Feeling the hot sun during a sunbath
5. Walking barefoot on the beach
6. Walking barefoot on hot desert sand
7. Walking barefoot on snow
8. Trying to walk over a frozen pond with leather shoes
9. Walking on the bottom of the ocean
10. Putting lotion on sunburned arms and face
11. Feeling the temperature become colder and colder every few seconds
12. Feeling the temperature become hotter and hotter every few seconds
13. Putting your hand on a pot that is slowly becoming hotter
14. Putting your hand on something that is slowly become colder
15. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of mud
16. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of jelly
17. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of peanut butter
18. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of jello
19. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of honey
20. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of hot water
21. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of ice-water
22. Slowly sinking into quicksand
23. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of snakes
24. Slowly submerging your body into a tub of cockroaches

Coaching Tips: Is the student specific as to what part of the body is being affected? If not, have the student describe water creeping up the ankles, calves, thighs, waist and eventually to the neck, chin, mouth and head.

Hear Ye, Hear Ye

Objective: To sharpen the sense of hearing

Activity: Imagine the sounds associated with the following objects in specific locations and relate to them:

1. a jet airplane
2. a parade
3. a garbage truck
4. a police car's siren
5. a ringing telephone
6. a television
7. crashing ocean waves
8. a thunderstorm
9. rain on the roof
10. a lawn mower
11. a crowd at a sporting event
12. a bird chirping
13. a barking dog
14. a hooting owl
15. a bus passing by
16. a subway train
17. a typewriter
18. a train
19. an ambulance's siren
20. a radio blaring

Coaching Tips: Was the student really listening? If not, have the student describe the sound and the source of the sound. Did the student concentrate? Was the situation believable?

Smell the Roses

Objective: To sharpen the sense of smell.

Activity: One or more students may participate. They are to concentrate and respond truthfully to the odors associated with the following items:

1. an apple pie baking
2. Thanksgiving turkey
3. burning leaves
4. spilled gasoline
5. perfume
6. pizza
7. cheese
8. a rose
9. hot popcorn
10. rubbing alcohol
11. wet tennis shoes
12. freshly cut grass
13. the inside of a new car
14. roast beef cooking
15. fish
16. a new carpet
17. a skunk
18. hay
19. chocolate
20. chlorine in a swimming pool

Coaching Tip: Was the student believable? If not, ask the student to describe the source of the odor. Use questions such as: What kind of car is it? What kind of chocolate is it? Are you at a fish market? In your home? At the river?

This Is What I Mean

Objective: To strengthen imagination and emotional recall.

Activity: Ask each student to create a believable emotional response to simple actions. For example, if a person sticks a finger in a fire, the finger will burn. However, they must first put the finger in the fire. The finger will get warm. Then the fire will begin to bring pain to the finger. That pain will need an outlet. The person's body will try to compensate for the pain and release the tension by producing tears or a scream. A person may even cry or faint.

Respond to the following:

1. putting your finger into a fire
2. stepping into an icy river
3. touching a live electric wire
4. tasting some hot sauce
5. stepping into a cold shower
6. putting soothing lotion on a sunburn
7. holding a handful of ice cubes
8. standing on a sprained ankle
9. experiencing a headache
10. experiencing a toothache
11. experiencing a leg cramp
12. picking up a hot coal
13. experiencing a sports injury such as tennis elbow

Coaching Tips: Was the effect caused by recreating a personal experience? Did the student put his/her finger in the fire and quickly say "ouch"? The student should not draw attention to the tears or the scream, because that would be indicating an effect or result. Instead, think about the process that produces the desired degree of pain. If you do, the result will take place naturally.

Memory Lane

Objective: To imagine and create a vivid scene, with the emphasis on believability, that supposedly happened in the past.

Activity: Describe a time you. . .

1. were chased by headhunters.
2. meat a creature from outer space.
3. lost your purse/wallet.
4. witnessed a murder.
5. missed your ride to school.
6. came home with a failing report card grade.
7. got stuck in an elevator.
8. were chased by a mad armadillo.
9. fought in a war.
10. saved a drowning child.
11. spied for the FBI.
12. spoke to the U.S. Senate
13. were faced with a charging elephant.
14. were trapped in a telephone booth with a fifteen-foot python.
15. flew a helicopter.
16. accidentally disturbed a hornet's nest.
17. fell overboard while sailing.
18. manned a runaway forklift.
19. were a matador facing a fierce, raging bull.
20. tripped and ell into a deep well.
21. had a fight with your big brother/sister.
22. were pulled over by the CHP.

Coaching Tips: Was the scene real? Did the student rely on words alone? Was the presentation smooth? Talk about storytelling techniques such as having a beginning, a middle and an end, setting the scene, using creative, vivid words and creating suspense.

Imagination Is Funnier

Objective: To strengthen the imagination by being placed in a specific situation.

Activity: As each student to use pantomime or verbal expression to respond to: "You open an imaginary door and unexpectedly see. . ."

1. a friend
2. an enemy
3. a monster
4. a talking ostrich
5. King Kong
6. Tom Thumb
7. Count Dracula
8. Miss America
9. Frankenstein
10. the President of the United States
11. a clown
12. a giant spider
13. the principal
14. your brother/sister
15. a mummy
16. Mickey Mouse
17. Godzilla
18. Pinocchio
19. Tarzan
20. a singing whale

Coaching Tips: Was the student believable? Have each student describe in detail what was seen. Talk about specific body and facial expressions used in each situation. Were specific movements used?

Games People Play

Objective: To pantomime a physical activity utilizing three or four clearly defined and executed movements.

Activities: Each student should pantomime putting on the uniform for the sport s/he is getting ready to play. Give each student a slip of paper with one of the following sports written on it. Have the class guess the sport pantomimed after they have finished their pantomime.

1. ice skating
2. arm wrestling
3. football
4. baseball
5. golf
6. basketball
7. soccer
8. field hockey
9. wrestling
10. billiards/pool
11. tennis
12. ice hockey
13. boxing
14. volleyball
15. softball
16. bowling
17. skiing
18. shot put
19. pole vaulting
20. cross country running/skiing
21. skateboarding
22. dancing
23. gymnastics
24. yoga
25. jump-rope

Coaching Tips: Does the student focus on one movement at a time? Is s/he clear and specific with each movement? Is there concentration on the physical activity? Is the student easily distracted? Discuss setting the scene, such as getting equipment, warming up and preparing the court. Does it have a beginning, a middle and an end?

Exotic Modes of Transportation

Objective: To strengthen the imagination through pantomime

Activity: Through pantomime, ride on different types of transportation. The pantomime should incorporated three or four specific physical activities that would convey the type of "ride" that is being created. Students can ride on the following:

1. a space capsule
2. turbo boat
3. camel
4. chariot
5. elephant
6. ostrich
7. giant turtle
8. hot air balloon
9. Model-T Ford
10. glider plane
11. skateboard
12. nuclear submarine
13. bobsled
14. hang glider
15. sailfish
16. Indy 500 race car
17. water skis
18. motorcycle
19. kayak/canoe
20. bulldozer

Coaching Tips: Is the student's entire body involved? Were the physical activities specific? Did the student create a sense of movement and believability?

Orchestra Hall

Objective: To develop individual concentration while functioning within an ensemble.

Activity: Select a student to "play" an instrument through pantomime. After all the students "perform," have them all return to the stage and play as a group in a band or an orchestra. Have the following instruments played:

1. a drumset
2. a trombone
3. a piano
4. a trumpet
5. a clarinet
6. a violin
7. a cello
8. a string bass
9. a guitar
10. a harmonica
11. an organ
12. a saxophone
13. a flute
14. a tambourine
15. cymbals
16. bongos
17. a French horn
18. a tuba
19. a triangle
20. kettle drums
21. bag pipes
22. cow bell
23. xylophone/bells

Coaching Tips: 1. The importance of one's own pantomime sills are essential to the effectiveness of the group as a whole. Talk about playing in groups, how to interact with each other, how some don't play at all of the time. 2. Did the student have difficulty changing form a solo performer to an ensemble member? 3. If the ensemble had difficulty "playing" together, choose one student to act as a "conductor." 4. Did the student use the instrument believably? Discuss how to hold the instrument, how to carry it and how to play it.

Who Are You?

Objective: To strengthen the imagination while developing selectivity and a sense of a complete scene.

Activity: Each student will incorporate into a pantomime specific physical activities that are representative of a professional. Each pantomime should have a beginning, a middle and an end. Explain that a professional cowboy could wake up and put on his pants, shirt and boots (the beginning). He then could go to a stream and take a handful of water and wash his face. He could build a fire, then water and feed his horse (the middle)." Then the cowboy could make breakfast, twirl his lasso, saddle his horse and rid off (the end).

Possible Professions:

1. florist
2. surgeon
3. jet pilot
4. accountant
5. ballerina
6. astronaut
7. pizza maker
8. farmer
9. secretary
10. mail carrier
11. waitress/waiter
12. bank teller
13. photographer
14. teacher
15. car salesperson
16. aerobics instructor
17. circus performer
18. chauffeur
19. movie star
20. rock star
21. cowboy
22. gourmet chef
23. gardener
24. runway model
25. dentist

Coaching Tips: Did the improvisation have a beginning, a middle and an end? Did the student's physical activities depict the profession? Was it too general? If so, what could s/he have included to make it more specific?

Where Are You?

Objective: To strengthen imagination and selectivity

Activity: Have each student select one of the places listed below and incorporate specific physical activities in a pantomime to convey that s/he is in that location. The student should plan a beginning, a middle and an end to indicate these locations:

1. in a desert
2. on top of a mountain
3. on a boat
4. on a subway
5. in China
6. in a monastery
7. in a jail
8. in a restaurant
9. in school
10. in a swimming pool
11. underwater
12. in a cave
13. at the bottom of the Grand Canyon
14. on a deserted island
15. in a warehouse
16. in a church
17. at a rock concert
18. at a tennis match
19. on a train
20. on an Indian reservation
21. in a movie theatre
22. in a library
23. in a hospital
24. at a major sporting even

Coaching Tips: Did the student incorporate specific physical activities to determine where s/he was? Was there a beginning, a middle and an end?

Where Do I Work?

Objective: To strengthen imagination by using specific physical activities while doing a pantomime.

Activity: Ask each student to incorporate specific physical activities in a pantomime that convey the place where s/he works. Students can be employed at the following places:

1. a coal mine
2. the stock exchange
3. a jewelry shop
4. a fast food restaurant
5. a pizza parlor
6. a preschool
7. a bakery
8. an auto repair shop
9. a laboratory
10. a computer store
11. a gas station
12. an office
13. a pharmacy
14. a chocolate factory
15. a hospital
16. a barber shop
17. an elegant restaurant
18. a farm a
19. movie theatre
20. a music store
21. a grocery store
22. a car lot

Coaching Tips: Was the pantomime simple and direct? Were the physical activities specific? Could the audience tell where the student worked?

Circus! Circus! Circus!

Objective: To perform a pantomime using broad gestures

Activity: Each student entertains a crowd at a circus. After each student has performed a pantomime individually, create a three-ring circus with three entertainers working at the same time. The circus performers are:

1. high wire artist
2. strong man
3. clown
4. ringmaster
5. lion tamer
6. dog trainer
7. midget
8. knife thrower
9. bareback horse rider
10. trapeze artist
11. elephant trainer
12. seal trainer
13. escape artist
14. chimpanzee trainer
15. sword swallower
16. fire eater

Coaching Tips: Did the students use specific physical activities? Did students give a feeling of excitement to the performance? Were they creative and energetic? Did they enjoy entertaining an audience? How well did the three-ring circus performers maintain their concentration?

Improvisations

What's Happening?

Objective: To combine a sequence of related physical activities that make up a simple physical action/task.

Activity: Incorporate related physical activities while completing simple physical actions/tasks. Make sure students know the reason(s) they are performing the physical activity and make sure there is a beginning, a middle and an end.

For example, if the student chooses to build a campfire, s/he would seek dry grass, twigs and tree branches. He would strike a match to begin a small fire with the dry grass, adding twigs and then larger branches as the wood burns. AS the fire begins to grow, s/he could blow on it or perhaps fan it.

This is a series of related physical activities. S/he wants to accomplish the chore of building a campfire so that s/he can cook his/her food and keep warm. This is his/her action/task. The combination of the physical activity of preparing the campfire and knowing the reason for the activity becomes a simple physical action/task.

1. decorate a Christmas tree
2. dress for the prom
3. dress to play football
4. dress to go hiking
5. fix a car
6. fix a bike
7. clean the house
8. cook a meal
9. go fishing
10. dress for church
11. go to school
12. milk a cow
13. paint the house

14. mow the lawn
15. take out the garbage
16. go shopping
17. go to the movies
18. go to an arcade
19. do homework
20. build a model plane

Coaching Tips: Was there a beginning, a middle and an end? Was the student specific with his/her choice of activities? Have the class try to identify each simple physical action/task, including the reason for the physical activity.

Ask, Plead, Bribe and Threaten

Objective: To think logically, create moment-to-moment reality and deal with elements of conflict in an improvisational situation.

Activity: Two students engage in an improvisation. Student #1 wants something (it's a matter of life and death) from Student #2. Student #2 does not want to give Student #1 anything under any circumstances. Student #1 must ask, plead, bribe and threaten, in that order. An example has been provided. Student exercises to follow.

Example: Student #1 wants Student #2's cap.

To Ask

Student 1: I like your cap

Student 2: Thank you.

Student 1: Where did you get it?

Student 2: It was a birthday present.

Student 1: Can I have it?

Student 2: You should buy one for yourself.

Student 1: I want yours

Student 2: Why?

Student 1: It's already broken in.

Student 2: That's silly. Break in one yourself.

Student 1: Really, I would appreciate it if you would let me have your cap.

Student 2: I'm sorry, I couldn't do a thing like that.

To Plead

Student 1: Please, I really love that cap. I must have. Please, please give it to me.

Student 2: I said no! Leave me alone!

Student 1: Please, I beg you. Look, I'm on my knees. Please give it to me.

Student 2: Get up. You're embarrassing me.

Student 1: Look what do you want for your cap?

Student 2: Nothing.

Student 1: Okay, I'll take if for nothing.

Student 2: Look, leave me alone. You can't have my cap

To Bribe

Student 1: I'll tell what I'll do. I'll fix you up with that cute little blonde over there.

Student 2: I hate her. Besides, she's my sister.

Student 1: Okay, I'll give you ten dollars for the cap.

Student 2: No!

Student 1: Twenty dollars.

Student 2: No!

Student 1: Fifty dollars?

Student 2: No! no!

Student 1: One hundred, two hundred?

Student 2: No, no, no! Get away from me.

To Threaten

Student 1: Look, buddy. I want that cap. Now, I'm going to hit you in the eye, hit you in the mouth, the ears and the nose. In other words, I'm going to shut everything that's open and open everything that's shut. Give me the cap NOW!

Student 2: You're nuts. You've gone crazy. I'm calling the folks in the white coats to put you in the loony bin. You're zonkers!

Student 1: Give me that cap, NOW! I want it NOW! Give it to me!

Student 2: Go away. I'm calling the cops if you don't leave me alone.

Student 1: I don't care. I WANT IT NOW! GIVE IT TO ME!

Student 2: HELP! HELP, POLICE!! HELP, SOMEBODY…POLICE!

Remember: Ask, plead, bribe and threaten…in that order.

1. You are at the entrance to an amusement park and you try to persuade a stranger to give you money to get in.
2. You are at a phone booth and need money to make a phone call.
3. You go to a concert and discover you have lost your tickets. You try to convince the doorman to let you in. You paid cash for the tickets and do not know the seat numbers.
4. You go to a bank to withdraw some money, but you do not have any identification. You try to convince the teller to cash your check, but she does not know you.
5. You try to persuade your parents to let you borrow their car.
6. You are at a store and try to convince the manager to give you a job.
7. You are a newspaper reporter and you try to persuade a secretary to let you see the mayor for an interview.
8. You try to convince your sister/brother to loan you her/his new sweater to wear to a movie this weekend.
9. You try to persuade your parents to allow you to go on a ski trip with friends during the school vacation.
10. You try to convince your parents to allow you to get a part-time job after school.
11. You are at a restaurant and you are disappointed with your steak. Try to persuade the server to bring you another one.
12. You are at a movie theatre, and you try to convince the ticket seller that your deserve the children's discount.
13. You walk out of a department store unintentionally wearing a sweater that hasn't been paid for, and you try to convince the security guard that it was an oversight.
14. You try to persuade your best friend not to run away from home.
15. You try to convince your sister/brother to cover for you while you sneak out of the house to go to a movie.

Coaching Tips: It is important to encourage the students to work for "moment-to-moment" reality. They must listen and talk believably to one another. The students should not be distracted as they work. To move the exercise along, the student may have to be coached "to ask," then "plead," the "bribe" and "threaten." Did they do it in the correct order? Does each student have the same working definition of an improvisation? Did they really want the object of their desire or the goal they were trying to accomplish?

Place, Object and Animal

Objective: To think logically, create moment-to-moment reality and think on one's feet while dealing with elements of conflict in an acting ensemble.

Activity: Select three students. The trio must take a given place, an inanimate object and an animal and incorporate them in an improvisation. Someone wants something (it should be a matter of life and death) from someone else and that someone else does not and will not give it to him. The person who wants it must ask, plead, bribe and threaten, in that order. They have one minute to confer before beginning.

Example: a desert, a whale and a deck of cards

Two of the students could be playing cards in the belly of a whale that is cavorting in the sea. We discover who the passengers are and how they got in such a predicament. Suddenly the whale stops. As the whale's mouth opens, the pair discovers they are on a desert. They are suddenly greeted by a third person. The third person is an Olympic swimmer who needs to get to London for the next Olympics. S/he asks if she can borrow the whale as transportation. S/he is refused. She pleads. She is the only hope for the country. She is again refused, and the two students do not want to be disturbed until they finish their card game. The third person bribes them by offering them money from the state treasury of her country. She is refused as she keeps offering more money. Finally, the Olympic swimmer threatens to call her friend Count Dracula, who will fly in just after sundown to pay them a visit.

Places, Animals and Inanimate Objects

1. a jungle, a polar bear and a baseball
2. the Arctic Circle, a rattlesnake and a paint brush
3. a beach in Florida, a dead gorilla and a can of air freshener
4. a volcano in Mexico, a seal and a flat tire
5. a Texas ranch, an ostrich and a red bow tie
6. a Broadway stage, a kangaroo and a hockey puck
7. a haunted house, a rabbit and a pizza cutter
8. an airline terminal, a skunk and a fountain pen
9. a cave, a shark and a red brick

10. the Grand Canyon, a piranha and a door knob
11. a tree house, an otter and an umbrella
12. the Atlantic Ocean, a grizzly bear and a telephone
13. a rain forest, an armadillo and a watch
14. a volcano, an alligator and a golf club
15. the pyramids of Egypt, an opossum and a typewriter
16. a public restroom, a fox and a violin
17. the Amazon River, a duck and a telescope
18. the Great Wall of China, a parrot and a lawn mower
19. the Empire State Building, a turkey and a grass skirt
20. Yellowstone National Park, a unicorn and a yo-yo

Coaching Tips: Students should be encouraged to think in terms of the senses. It is important that all dialogue be taken seriously, since the elements of the improvisation are humorous. This will help develop a sense of comedy as it strengthens concentration and imagination. Did each student "ask," "plead," "bribe" and "threaten" in that order? Did the ensemble work well together and create a believable improvisation?

Noah's Ark

Objective: To engage two students in an improvisation that contains elements found in a well-written dramatic or comic scene containing conflict.

Activity: Two students engage in an improvisation. Necessary elements of the improvisation: Someone wants something (it should be a matter of life and death) from someone else and that someone else will not and does not give in to him. The person or persons who want the object must ask, plead, bribe and threaten, in that order. An example is provided.

One student should be Noah. The other should portray an animal. The animal then must try to convince Noah to let him aboard the ark. In the improvisation the anima should state why s/he is important and needed in the new world. Animals that can be used are:

An anteater	an elephant	a monkey	a horse
A chicken	a turkey	a rabbit	a dog
A cat	a wolf	a rat	a snake
A ground hog	a squirrel	an eagle	a lion
A lamb	a cow	a bee	a spider
A zebra	a unicorn	a kangaroo	an opossum
A giraffe	a penguin	a lizard	a mosquito
A beaver	a gorilla	a donkey	a bear
A 3-toed-sloth	a rhinoceros	a pig	a frog
A koala bear	a duck		

The improvisation should have a beginning, a middle and an end. It is important that all dialogue be taken seriously, since the elements of the improvisation are humorous. This will help develop a sense of comedy, as it strengthens the actor's concentration and imagination. Did each student "ask," "plead,"

"bribe" and "threaten" in that order? Emphasize that the "threaten" portion should be non-violent. Did the students work well together and create a believable improvisation?

Example: Place and situation have already been established and are common to all.

Noah: Name?

Pig: Pig.

Noah: What can I do for you, Mr. Pig?

Pig: (asking) Can I get on the ark?

Noah: Why should I let you on?

Pig: I can help you in the New World

Noah: How?

Pig: I can eat all your slop. I love slop.

Noah: What else can you do?

Pig: I can multiply if you let me bring my wife.

Noah: What good would that do?

Pig: We could supply food for the whole world. Thing of all the wonderful pork chops you could eat. The New World would have pig's knuckles, ham and ham hocks. Look at this leg. I'm good stock. Very tasty.

Noah: Sorry, I don't eat pork.

Pig: (pleading) Look, I just gotta get to the New World.

Noah: I'm sorry. Please move on.

Pig: No!

Noah: Now, don't be so pig-headed.

Pig: (bribing) I'll give you all the pig iron I own, and I'll throw in tow barrels of slop.

Noah: Will you just move along, Mr. Pig?

Pig: (threatening) If I don't go, no one goes!

Noah: Now you're just being piggish about the whole thing.

Pig: Ill call all my pig friends and their piglets and we'll demonstrated, marching with signs all around your ark.

Noah: I'll call the cops.

Pig: That won't stop us!

Noah: Okay. You convinced me, you big ham. Get aboard!

Theatre Games

Fun and Games

Objective: To get involved with one another so that spontaneous moment-to-moment reality follows.

Activities: Pantomime the following exercises

1. In groups of five or six students, silently act out a machine. Each student becomes part of the whole. You make your machine move. You may make sounds. Let the rest of the class guess what kind of machine your group has become. For example, a tractor would have four students as wheels, perhaps pulling a plow.

Here are the machines from which to choose:

A car	A washing machine	A train
A helicopter	A roller coaster	A merry-go-round
A blender	A sewing machine	An electric can opener
A lawnmower	A Rocket ship	A boat/ship
A submarine	A bicycle	An elevator

2. Divide the students into groups of four for five. Pretend the group is introducing a new television series. Through a series of pantomimes, let the class guess the topics of the following shows:

Here are the show topics from which to choose:

Monsters	Relaxation	Vacations
Sports	Hunting	World News
Animals	Food	History

Game Show

Coaching Tips: Was the theme of the TV program clear? Were the characters that were chosen believable? Did the ensemble work well? Did team members concentrate on their goals? What improvements could be added? After pantomiming, have students add sounds. Are the sounds contributing or distracting from the whole?

TV Commercials

Objective: To interact while working as an ensemble.

Activity: Divide the class into teams of six. Give them the following instructions:

- Each team will present a three-minute commercial. Each team member must take the responsibility for a thirty-second speaking assignment. The team should brainstorm topic that would appeal to them and their audience. They should choose a topic on which they can speak easily.
- The first student will introduce the product by an exciting thirty-second, audience-arousing opening.
- The second student must compose a thirty-second dialogue that informs the audience as to the purpose of the product.
- The third student must give an example or cite a personal experience that tells how successfully the product has been used.
- Having listened carefully to the previous students, the fourth speaker must compare this product to another similar product on the market. However, s/he must explain why this product is superior.
- The fifth speaker is the "product." S/he may pantomime or speak in "character" to fill his/her thirty seconds.
- Finally, speaker six summarizes the highlight of the commercial, or s/he may give a final appeal to the audience. In other words, this is his/her opportunity to sell the product.

Coaching Tips: Did the students understand the responsibility of each of the six speakers? Did each team member aid the group and move the commercial forward to a final conclusion? Did team members listen to each other and appear interested in the product? How close did each student stay to the thirty-second guideline?

TV Commercials

Student Guidelines Hand Out:

- Each team will present a three-minute commercial. Each team member must take the responsibility for a thirty-second speaking assignment. The team should brainstorm topic that would appeal to them and their audience. They should choose a topic on which they can speak easily.
- The first student will introduce the product by an exciting thirty-second, audience-arousing opening.
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- The third student must give an example or cite a personal experience that tells how successfully the product has been used.
- Having listened carefully to the previous students, the fourth speaker must compare this product to another similar product on the market. However, s/he must explain why this product is superior.
- The fifth speaker is the "product." S/he may pantomime or speak in "character" to fill his/her thirty seconds.
- Finally, speaker six summarizes the highlight of the commercial, or s/he may give a final appeal to the audience. In other words, this is his/her opportunity to sell the product.

TV News

Pre-Assign: Watch the evening news for at least 30 minutes prior to beginning this exercise.

Objective: To be engaged in an ensemble acting situation where all must agree on roles, material, direction and point of view.

Activity: Four to six students are assigned to present a TV news show (an anchor man and woman, a movie or theatre critic, a fashion editor, a man on the street, a gourmet chef, two or three commercials, a sports announcer, a Wall Street report, etc.). The students should elect who will play the parts. They can use notes or write it out, but it is best to use improvisation. Some possible settings for the show are as follows:

1. The year 2050
2. outer space
3. Heaven
4. the Stone Age
5. Ancient Greece
6. Transylvania
7. the wild west
8. the North Pole
9. Alice's Wonderland
10. modern times
11. Mother Goose Land
12. Mr. Roger's Neighborhood
13. the 50's
14. the 20's
15. a pirate ship
16. World War II
17. an Indian reservation
18. England
19. the days of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn
20. the land of headhunters

Coaching Tips: The group activity should be believable and the performers should be serious, no matter how ridiculous the news being reported. The audience may laugh, but the performers should never break character. The group should emulate the six o'clock news. See example.

Example of 10 years from today: Each student can use the real names of the other students they know in school and incorporate them in the news as adults. A good athlete may set a new world record in his/her sport. A bright student may be the youngest candidate for the presidency. And actress may be the star of a prime time TV show, etc.

Monologues

The Storyteller

Objective: To create a tale after receiving only a few introductory sentences.

Activity: Give a student one of the "story starter" and ask him/her to "tell it like it was." Allow a few minutes for her/him to get an idea.

The story should be approximately 1-2 minutes in length. Can be more if the student wishes.

1. One day when I was on a camping trip I came upon a cave. I went in and. . .

2. One night it was raining and thundering. I was all alone at home. Then suddenly the front door swung open and. . .

3. Once upon a time a creature from outer space cam and landed on earth just outside my house. I heard a strange sound and suddenly. . .

4. Last night I had the strangest dream. I dreamed that. . .

5. I met some of the most unusual and strange people on my recent trip around the world. The first person I met was. . .

6. I was driving home from a friend's house one late, foggy night when I saw a bright flash. All of the sudden. . .

7. It was early one morning when I awoke to the phone ringing. Oddly, it kept ringing and ringing and ringing. I was curious why the answering machine wasn't picking up when. . .

8. Yesterday in class. . .

9. Last summer my boy/girl friend and I thought it would be fun to go see a psychic. When we entered his/her "reading" room, I felt a strange feeling come over me. After a while. . .

Coaching Tips: Does the tale hold the attention of the audience? Does the student use his/her hands as well as facial expressions to enhance the story? Does the student enjoy using words to entertain the audience? Are there any problems as the student presents the story?

Telephone Time

Objective: To pointedly listen and talk to an individual.

Activity: For each telephone interview, place two chairs back to back. Select two students to engage in a simple conversational improvisation. The conversation must have a beginning (hello), a middle (point of the telephone call) and an end (thank you, good-bye, never call me again, see you soon, nice talking to you, etc.).

1. Complain about merchandise you recently purchased from the store you are calling. You bought a television set that shows the weather report on all channels.

2. Complain to the Better Business Bureau. You recently bought batteries on sale that were advertised to last six hours, and they only lasted fifteen minutes.

3. Complain to a teacher about your son's failing grade in English, history, chemistry, math or P.E.

4. Complain to the newspaper managing editor about your paper which is always missing, thrown on the roof, tossed in the gutter, soggy from the rain or tossed in the shrubs. During the conversation you find out that the delivery boy is the manager's nephew and has a severe brain injury.

5. Complain to the concert ticket manager about the concert tickets that were sent to you for the wrong date, the wrong seating location and the wrong city. The concert is now sold out.

6. You call your best friend and confront him/her with your suspicions that s/he is flirting with your girl/boy friend at school.

7. You call a girl/boy for a date. S/he does not know you very well and has never spoken to you before the phone call.

8. You call a girl/boy you do not know well to invite her/him to a party.

9. You call your friend because you have heard s/he is trying to take your girl/boy friend away.

10. You call you best friend to talk about this great new girl/boy you met over the summer, only to find that s/he is the same one who is now dating your best friend.

11. You call your best friend to tell him/her that you failed math and have to go to summer school and will not be able to join him/her at summer camp.

12. Someone has been expelled from school for stealing money from another student. The expelled student is innocent. You know who stole the money and why. You call your best friend and discuss your problem. Should you tell the principal who stole it, or withhold evidence that could clear an innocent victim?

13. A friend calls you because s/he has missed a history test. She wants you to give her/him the questions so that she can find the answers and make a good grade when she takes the make-up exam. She needs a good grade to pass the course. You are an honor student and believe this is wrong. You want to keep her/his friendship, yet not give her/him the questions.

14. You call a friend to see if you can get invited to a big party that is taking place over the weekend. Your friend knows the person giving the party but does not want you there.

15. You call your best friend to come over and study with you. However, once s/he is there, s/he plans for an older boy/girl to pick her/him up and take her/him to a movie. If his/her parents call, s/he asks you to cover for him/her and tell them a lie. This is against your moral values, yet you do not want to lose his/her friendship.

Coaching Tips: Allow the students to start with "small talk." Are they really listening to what is being said? Is one student really talking to the other? Is the student responding to what s/he hears? Let students construct their own telephone interviews. Did they relate believably to each other? Did the team work well together to a logical conclusion of the interview?

One Liners

Objective: To think quickly while relating with others through improvisation.

Activity: Give an incomplete line to one student. Have the student use the incomplete line to begin an improvisation with one or more students from the class. This line is used as a springboard to stimulate the imagination and begin the dialogue. Lines that can be used are as follows. You may elect to add more lines to this list.

1. All of you stand up. Now I want you to. . .
2. I tell you that it is up to us to help because. . .
3. Don't record on the video because. . .
4. Stop. . .look. . .shhh. Listen, can't you see the. . .
5. I can give you two very good reasons why you should not. . .
6. The plan must work because. . .
7. Peer through the open window. Do you see the. . .
8. I am shocked and saddened to hear such a statement form you because. . .
9. These are the problems in the case. Now it is up to you to discover the other. . .
10. The package was about this wide, about so long and. . .
11. If you continue to talk to me that way, I am going to . . .
12. The guilty man sits here with us, and we know he was the one who. . .
13. We are unable to accept your offer at this time because. . .
14. You, slipping out the back door, and you there sleeping in the back row, if you don't pay attention to me, I am going to. . .
15. Your idea is impossible because. . .
16. We have agreed. Our answer to your request must be a firm "no" because. . .
17. I can have nothing to do with you anymore because. . .

Coaching tips: Stress that the incomplete sentence must be completed as the first line in each impromptu situation. Encourage the students to work together as an ensemble. Tell them to use their imaginations and be believable.