

IMPROVISATIONS

Things to ask audience to use for improv starts:

- Face on the screen saver
- Something you didn't get on birthday
- Home Shopping Network – something you can buy
- Home Shopping Network – something you can't buy
- Unusual item in your attic/garage/bedroom/kitchen, etc.
- Any sport
- Unusual/exotic location (be specific)
- An animal
- Something on your parents/grandparent closet shelf
- Popular toy
- Commercial product you might use outside
- Household chores
- Unlikely name for a Broadway musical

Alphabet Game

- 3 players
- A & B must start of each sentence in alpha order.
- Player C can say anything, but after C says something
- A must follow with next consecutive letter

Backward and Forward

- 2 players start
- audience gives a topic
- Caller calls “switch”
- Players must then reverse the scene using the exact dialogue, but in reverse. . . . when the caller yells “switch” again the scene moves forward and must use the exact dialogue and then continue to improvise when they get to the point in the scene where it had been reversed, etc.

Bad News

- 6 players
- 1 player leaves the room
- 5 players decide on “bad news” to tell absent player
- 1st player comes back in – sits in chair
- in line, 1st of 5 players sits by 1st player and begins to break the news.
- **RULES**
 1. Can never say any part of the news even after player has correctly guessed some of it.
 2. If either player laugh, the line player goes to end of line and next player tries to break news.
- **GAME OVER WHEN NEWS CORRECTLY GUESSED.**

Circle Story

- Students stand in a circle
- Each student may contribute one word each as you go around the circle
- The group is trying to create a story (beginning, middle, end) Give protagonist a name, work together to establish a conflict
- May not use “I” or “and”
- May use “period” to indicate the end of a sentence. Then give the first word of the next sentence.

Discovery

- In groups of 3 brainstorm important discoveries, then present 1 in frozen tableau (include in mime several seconds preceding tableau)
- THEN improvise dialogue in scene!
- SIMPLE GUIDELINES:
- Who is in scene
- What is relationship
- Where does scene take place
- Main point?
- Main conflict?
- Beginning, middle, end

VARIATION: reporter, talk show, press conference

Doors

- 2 doors, 2 people behind, 3rd person knocks
- selling something
- try to get in or make the sale
- if can't gain entry or make the sale knock on next door
- keep replacing people behind doors until someone lets in 3rd player or the sale is made

Dr. Know-It-All

- 3 players
- Link arms – all full front – find off-stage focus point (robot-like)
- Audience asks question
- Players answer one word each to make a full answer.
- A player may put in punctuation as needed (comma, period, etc.)

Emotion Switch

- 8 players in a line:
- audience gives emotions or state of beings
- teacher writes emotions or state of beings
- audience gives an active sport
- 8 players silently play the sport
- teacher calls “freeze” and gives a new emotion
- (ie you’re giddy soccer players)

Part 2:

- 2 person scene
- Where are they? Location.
- 1st time – both switch w/ same emotions
- 2nd time – people have different emotions

Experts

- 3 players
- audience: give animal/ give sport (ie beaver bowling)
- Each expert explains how new sport is played
- Ask audience to bring up an issue/controversy surrounding sport
- Each expert speaks

Famous People

- 5 players
- 1 host
- 3 panelists
- 1 famous person, this player decides what they’re famous for, must be in a positive way
- panelists may ask questions until they get a no
- 3 rounds, then panelists try to guess what the person is famous for

Foreign Movie

- 4 players
- Audience gives movie title (never before seen movie)
- 2 players speak gibberish & act out movie
- 2 players speak sub-titles

Four Scripts

- 5 players
- audience gives occupation of moving player & location 4 players have scripts and must use lines from their designated script
- 1 player moves from person to person improvising dialogue

Fractured Fairy Tales

- 3 ways to fracture a tale
- Audience gives a fairy tale
- Introduce a new character into an old tale – audience give new character
- Change the ending – audience gives an object or place different from original and incorporates into new ending
- Visit fairy tale ten years later

Generic product

- Product name
- Package
- Target audience
- Slogan
- Jingle

Growing-Shrinking Story

- 4 players
- Audience gives an action
- 1st player begins monologue while building scene around the action
- 2nd player enters and changes the scene
- 3rd player enters (2nd player must motivate exit)
- 4th player enters and changes the scene
- THEN reverse

Guaranteed Ovation

- 3 players
- each steps out to do a gesture – changes to make action bigger each time
- audience applauds – gives standing ovation each time - progressively bigger

Hesitation

- 2 players
- Audience gives type of business
- When either player hesitates the audience supplies word for the actor who then continues.

Jeopardy

- 2 players
- Play until one player hesitates, etc. then new player comes in
- Play in two lines or in a circle
- 1st player gives a statement or object (i.e. apple)
- 2nd player must supply question (What did Eve tempt Adam with in the Garden of Eden? - then new statement or object (i.e. celery)
- 1st player must supply question (What is one character in Veggie tales?)

Moving Bodies

- 4 players
- Audience gives 2 character & location (give action type, i.e. surgeons, deep sea divers)
- 2 players talks but can't move
- 2 players have to move the first two players as appropriate for dialogue

Multiple Scenes

- Audience gives a scene scenario – (location, two characters, problem. . .)
- number of players can vary, play the scene
- When the scene is over, audience gives a possible scene that builds on the first scene (i.e. teacher/student - talking in class; student/principal; student/parent)

Oscar Winning Performance

- 3 players
- audience gives a fictional movie title
- each player has a “moment”
- Put time limit
- Establish characters & location
- Character's goals, conflict

Poet's Corner

- Class gives topic
- Player(s) perform(s) poem(s)

Remember Objects

- 1st player enters environment & uses object (pantomimes) then exits
- 2nd player enters, uses 1st object, adds 2nd object
- 3rd player enters, uses 1st & 2nd objects in order given, adds 3rd object
- RULES: object must be used in its normal function when its introduced – after 1st time, function can change.
- Each player may move any object to a new location but object must subsequently be picked up from new location.

Replay

1 minute scenes

three genres – replay the 1 minute scene in three genres:

- Foreign language (German, Spanish, etc.)
- Literary genre (Shakespeare, Chaucer, Hawthorne, Hemingway, etc.)
- Theatre genre (opera, melodrama, slapstick comedy, mystery, history/classic, etc.)
- Television genre (soap opera, western, romance, talk show, cartoon, horror, sports broadcast, infomercial, MTV, American Idol, game show, survivor shows, etc.)

Rhyming

- 2 players
- Audience gives sports activity
- 1st player begins activity, speaks line
- 2nd player must answer & rhyme, then throw back a new line
- 1st player must answer with rhyme, then throw back a new line
- Etc.

Slow Mo

- 4 players
- audience gives a noun & verb . . .
- new sport
- Announcer
- Color commentator: explains the sport, how sport is played, history, players, describes action, may have an instant replay, etc.
- 2 players are sports figures – play clips from game(s)

Stealing a Car

- Must use car name as a pun whenever actor can in a scene about a job.(ie: Little beatles, Ford administration, dodge the issue, ram, my name is Alexis, don't beat around the Bush, he used to wrangle mustangs, my moon is in Taurus, how about you . . .)

Soap Opera

- Audience gives 2 characters & location (i.e., mom/daughter, kitchen)
- Begin with two players who begin a scene which is soap operishly melodramatic
- Teacher calls "switch"
- Another player enters must introduce a new conflict ala soap opera style
- One of the original characters must leave in a motivated manner

Slide Show

- 5-7 players
- 2 players narrate the slide show
- Other players line up on stage to form the "slides"
- Audience gives the location for the trip (could be vacation, field trip . . .)
- 2 players should establish where they are showing their slides, to whom they're showing their slides, and their relationship to each other when they "intro" the slides (i.e. We're delighted to be invited to your garden club to share the slides of our wonderful trip to see the migration of the monarch butterflies. As you know my colleague, Professor Nash, and I received a grant to photograph this phenomenon. . . .)
- Teacher turns off theatre/classroom lights (or if it's not possible to darken the room – have audience shut their eyes.)
- Narrators describe what is going to happen in their first slide (i.e. "our first slide is on the day we hiked to the butterfly meadow and saw the glorious monarchs for the first time)
- While the narrators explain the basics of the slide – the other players arrange themselves into a picture that illustrates the explanation
- Bring lights up or announce eyes open – then narrators tell a little more about the slide
- After a few seconds – narrators announce "The next slide . . . and describe that"
- This continues for 5-6 slides then narrators announce "Our LAST slide . . . and describe it.
- Narrators end the improv with a thanks for coming today, or the end, or whatever they might improve as an ending

What's in the Box

- 1 player (teacher) perhaps with class in a circle - asks "what's in the box" says "no" until s/he gets answer they like, then they continue to ask a question to clarify. (i.e. What's in the box? A dog, no – a television – no, a extra terrestrial – yes! Why is it here on Earth . . . etc)

Play game until satisfied with the answe