

Drama Games Y3-Y6

Understanding of the basic elements of role, voice and movement are important preparatory activities for these drama lesson ideas and are useful for English, Science, History and Kagan based activities.

1. One Word Story

Create a whole-class story in this imaginative drama activity which is for practising individual and group **focus**.

1. Students sit or stand in a circle.
2. Establish who will begin the story and which direction the story will travel (clockwise or anti-clockwise).
3. The first person begins the story by saying a single word e.g. "There".
4. Whoever is next in the circle says another single word that makes sense following the previous word e.g. "was".
5. Continue around the circle, with each person saying a single word with the aim of building a coherent story.

2. Human Knot -Working collaboratively is an important part of Drama as well as being a foundational skill for life. This fun game helps students to build awareness and understanding of group-work and is a great way to introduce the concept of 'ensemble' (a group who work together to create). This fits in well with our **Kagan** strategy too.

1. Break students into small groups (4-6 students per group is a good start).
2. Students form a circle in their group.
3. Walking to the centre with hands outstretched, students each grab two hands (however, it cannot be the person next to them, nor can they grab both hands from the same person).
4. Students 'untie' their human knot, without ever letting go of any hands.
5. When a group has finished untying their knot, the whole group sits down.

Encourage students to work slowly and carefully, with an awareness of how their movements affect others in the knot. Some knots are easy to untie, and others take a lot of communication and negotiation! Increase the complexity of this ensemble building game by asking students to complete it in silence, by making the number of students in each group larger, or by trying to untie a whole class knot!

3. Cadabra! -This is a drama game that works with a concept similar to "Scissors, Paper, Rock". It is fantastic for exploring **role, voice, movement, tension** and **focus**. In "Cadabra!" the three characters and parameters of play are:

- wizards beat knights by casting a magic spell over them
 - giants beat wizards by stomping on them
 - knight slay giants with their magic sword.
- Students enact each character in the following way:**
- wizards step forward with one leg, push both hands forward as if shooting a magic spell through their hands, and shout "!"**Cadabra!**
 - giants stamp their feet and say "Fee! Fi! Fo! Fum!"
 - knights pull an imaginary sword out of their belt and shout "En garde!".

Play "Cadabra!" as a whole group game, following these directions:

1. Split students into two even groups, standing in two parallel lines.
2. Have the groups face towards the centre of the space.
3. The teacher counts down from ten to zero.
4. Each line quickly huddles in a group and decide which of the three characters they will be during this round.
5. By the count of zero students must have returned to their straight line, facing their opponent line.
6. On zero each line enacts their chosen character and the 'winning' line is decided by the above parameters (wizards beat knights, giants beat wizards, knights slay giants).

Play round after round, keeping the pace up and keeping a tally of each team's number of winning rounds. The first team to ten are the winners!

4. Science alternative drama ideas

This game takes elements, concepts, characters or ideas from any topic and create **three** "characters" and parameters that suit. Very useful for assessing science concepts.

For example in Science if you are looking at renewable energies, students could be the sun (standing like a star jump and saying "Ahhhh!", a solar panel (standing stiff like a board and "buzzing") and electricity (arms outstretched towards opponents and saying "zap!"). In this version,

- The sun beats electricity because it is renewable.
- Solar panels beat the sun by capturing its power.
- Electricity beat the solar power by using its power.

5. Zip Zap Zoom

"Zip Zap Zoom" is another great **collaborative** game that teaches **focus**. Students "pass the energy" around a circle, using an action and variety of vocal commands. In the traditional game, students stand in a circle and send the energy around the circle saying either Zip, Zap or Zoom.

- "Zip" sends the energy in a clockwise direction
- "Zap" sends the energy in an anti-clockwise direction
- "Zoom" sends the energy to someone across the circle
- Students cannot do more than one Zap or Zoom in a row (they must be broken up by a Zip)

Every command is done with an action - the easiest being to clap and point to the person the energy is being sent to.

6. Twenty-One

"Twenty-one" is a drama games that get even the most fidgety of students concentrating with laser focus. Sitting in a circle, students attempt to count to 21 in a random order, without two or more people speaking at the same time. One person begins by saying "one", then another person says "two". Continue the group count until you reach twenty-one. If more than one person says a number at the same time, the count begins again.

7. Body Sculpture Olympics

Also known as "10 Second Object", this activity gets students using their bodies to create freeze frames (like a real-life frozen image) that depict an object or a situation. Use this activity to talk about how we can communicate meaning through **movement**.

1. Break students into small groups.
2. Call out an object or scenario (such as the North Pole, peacock, at the beach, washing machine etc.)
3. Count down from ten to zero
4. While you are counting down, students have to create the object, character or situation using their bodies.
5. When you reach zero, shout "Freeze!"
6. Give each group a thumbs up or thumbs down depending on if they have represented the stimulus in a way that makes sense.
7. Continue, keeping the pace up to ensure students are engaged and thinking on their feet!

You can decide on a "scoring" method that feels right for you (such as giving scores out of ten or choosing one winner per round), or you may prefer not to "score" at all, and just use the activity as a confidence and group awareness

8. The Expert -another Kagan type game

This activity is great for older students, using both their prior knowledge of a topic and their imagination. It requires students to use **role, relationship, situation, voice and movement** to create **dramatic meaning**.

1. Break students into small groups (3-4).
2. Allocate a letter to each student within the group (i.e. every group will have a person A, person B etc.).
3. Call out the letter of the person who will be 'The Expert' first.
4. Announce the topic that the Expert specialises in.
5. The Expert must speak with authority about the topic for an agreed amount of time (e.g. 30 or 60 seconds).
6. The teacher counts down from three to begin the time and calls "stop!" when time is up.
7. The teacher then announces which letter/person will go next, and the new topic of expertise.

What makes this game extra fun, is that there is only one rule - the expert can never stop talking, even if they run out of facts well before their time is up. Students should just keep talking, making up anything at all about the topic, no matter how absurd or far-fetched.

Variations:

- Play as a whole class with one Expert up the front.
- Allow the "audience" to ask questions of the Expert to help prompt them if they get stuck.
- Create a panel of Experts, with two or three students in front of the class discussing their topic of expertise.
- Add simple props or costumes such as a coat, glasses, or other items to help students with their 'expert' characterisation.

9. Mirror, Mirror- another Kagan style game

1. Students break into pairs.
2. Allocate, or let students decide who will be A, and who will be B.
3. On the teacher's signal, student A begins to move very slowly.
4. Student B has to copy the movement exactly as if they are the reflection Student A sees in a mirror.
5. Continue for some time, and then swap, having Student B lead Student A.

Encourage students to move slowly, with the aim being that anyone watching the pair wouldn't be able to tell who is leading the movement and who is following.

Variations

- **Role** - Ask Student A to take on a specific role or character. This can be from a familiar text or can be any role from a relevant context, such as a scientist or a construction worker.
- **Situation** - Specify the situation that Student A is in, for example setting up an experiment, or building a new road.
- **Time & Place** - Give students details about a specific time or place in which they are - this will change the actions and movements they enact.
- **Atmosphere** - Explore this more challenging element of drama by providing students with a mood or emotion as a prompt for their movements.

You can add just one of these contextual elements, or multiples - each will support students in the creation of different moments of **dramatic meaning**.