

DIGITAL ACTIVITY BOOKLET

THEATRE GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

FOR STUDENTS BY STUDENTS



NEW JERSEY
JUNIOR THESPIANSSM

AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

WRITTEN BY NJ JUNIOR STATE THESPIAN OFFICERS

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A JSTO Series Book.

Theatre Games and Activities for Middle School Teachers and Students.

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ICE BREAKERS/WARM UPS:

I like people who...

of students: Minimum: 5 students, but the more the merrier!

Time: About 30 seconds per round.

Difficulty: Easy

Instructions: Everyone gets in a circle with one person standing in the middle. The person in the middle says something they like/dislike or have/don't have and whoever can agree with the statement leaves the circle and tries to get into an empty spot.

The person who can't find a spot goes in the middle and the cycle repeats. This game works better with chairs. You set the chairs up in a circle and the person who doesn't have a chair is in the center.

Goal: Get to know each other!

Students will learn facts about other players and get to know each other. This is an icebreaker activity.



ICE BREAKERS/WARM UPS:

Splat

of students: At least 10 but more are always welcome.

Time: 10 min

Difficulty: Easy



Instructions: Everyone makes a circle with one person standing in the middle. The people creating the circle learn the names of the people that are standing to the right and the left of them. After everyone knows who they are standing next to, the person in the middle begins to walk around in the circle. The middle person then randomly stops in front of someone and begins to say, “1,2,3, Splat!!” While the middle person is saying this, the person on the outside has to try and say the names of the two people on their side before the middle person says “Splat!” If the person on the outside fails to say the two names before the middle person says “Splat!”, then the person on the outside goes into the middle and the previous middle person takes their spot. This cycle continues.

Goal: The goal of this activity is for students to get to know their peers. This activity is a fun way to help students get to know the names of everyone that they are interacting with.

Students will learn how to get to know their peers and learn their peer’s names in this fun icebreaker!

ICE BREAKERS/WARM UPS:

Zip Zap Zop

of students: 6-8

Time: 10 - 20 mins

Difficulty: Easy



Instructions: Set the students up into a circle and pick one person to start. That person will look at someone and say zip. The person that was looked at will pick another person and say zap. Then that person will pick someone else and say zop. One very important part of this game is when you look at someone and say zip, zap, or zop you have to use your hands to send them your energy. Take one hand and using all of your fingers, point at the person. Now take your other hand and slide it across your first hand sending your energy to them. The game will continue until someone messes up the order, hesitates, or does not make eye contact. People will get out until you have one winner.

Goal: Kids will become more comfortable with each other after this little ice breaker.

Students will learn how to focus their energy, make eye contact, and work together to keep a rhythm going.

ICE BREAKERS/WARM UPS:

One Word at a Time

of students: 2 or above

Time: 5 min - 10 min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Instructions: Children are given a prompt and they have to make a story. Each kid stands in a circle and makes the story, word by word, one by one. If someone makes a mistake, you have to start over.

Goal: This will help kids work together because they must make a story that makes sense.

Students will learn how to help students with their improv and stage presence skills.



ICE BREAKERS/WARM UPS

You

of students: At least 10

Time: 5 - 10 min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Instructions: Everyone starts in a circle. It is very quiet and the only word you can say is, "YOU." One person will make eye contact with someone across the circle, and say the word "YOU". So, if the word is passed on to you, make eye contact with someone new and say "YOU."

Goal: Eye contact without laughing.

Students will learn how to make eye contact with laughing. This will help on stage when you are doing a scene.

IMPROV:

Movie Trailer

of students: 6 per group

Time: 30 min

Difficulty: Hard

Instructions: “Movie Trailer” is a fun improv game in which students are separated into groups and have 5-10 minutes to create a movie trailer. The person leading the activity can give each group a topic which the students will have to include in the trailer and base their story off of it.

Goal: To come up with a movie trailer with your given topic.

Students will learn how to think quick and come up with ideas fast.

IMPROV:

Situational Improv

of students: 4 or more

Time: Depends on the players

Difficulty: Easy — Medium

Instructions: 2 - 3 kids are on stage and given a situation. As they play it out, people watching can then change the ideas that were provided.



Goal: learn more improv skills

Students will learn stage presence and lets them show personality on stage.

IMPROV:

Broken Idol

of students: 10 - 15

Time: 25-30 mins

Difficulty: Medium - Intermediate

Instructions: This improv game is all about creating personalities and creating your own character with their own personalities. In this game, there are three judges who have to create their own crazy personalities. Then there are groups of contestants. The contestants have to improvise a performance with optional props. This game is supposed to be fun, so contestants performances should be creative and funny!



Goal: The goal of this activity is for students to use their teamwork and creativity to create crazy characters, and to use their improv skills.

Students will learn how to create personalities for characters, and how to improvise a performance.

IMPROV:

Park Bench

of students: 10 - 15

Time: 25-30 mins

Difficulty: Medium

Instructions: Set up three chairs or a bench. Have one person sit on the right side of the bench and form a line on the other. The person sitting on the bench is an innocent civilian, nothing more, nothing less. The first person in line will try to get the civilian off the bench by scaring them, creeping them out, grossing them out, being annoying, etc. They cannot touch the civilian, but besides that, anything goes. Once the civilian feels they should leave the bench they will make an excuse to leave the bench. They will go to the back of the line and the game will continue this way.



Goal: This will not only help kids with improv but also character creation. It can sometimes be difficult to think of a new idea or character for the bench.

Students will learn how to stop, think on their toes, and collaboration.

IMPROV:

Actor Switch

of students: 3 - 5

Time: 3 - 10 min

Difficulty: Difficult



Instructions: Give the actors a scenario to create characters. A viewer outside of the game shouts “switch” and the actors have to rotate characters.

Goal: Create a well flowing and natural looking scene.

Students will learn how to pay attention to other actors and how to quickly switch between different characters.

SPEECH/VOICE:

Too Loud

of students: 2-5

Time: 3 - 10 min

Difficulty: Easy



Instructions: Begin an improv scene at a regular volume. A viewer of the scene can shout “too loud” at any moment and the actors have to lower the volume of their voice while still getting their emotions across accurately.

Goal: Get all intention and emotion across at a low volume.

Students will learn how to control and manipulate their voice to get their emotions across without volume alone.

SPEECH/VOICE:

One Word Story

of students: 4-20 (it's a very versatile game, you could even play it on a road trip)

Time: 5 mins per story

Difficulty: Medium

Instructions: Everyone sits down in a circle and each person says one word. The words must fit into a story.

Goal: This will help kids work together because they must make a story that makes sense.

Students will learn listening, working together, and storytelling.

SPEECH/VOICE:

Roll Call

of students: This is another very versatile game it could even be played by yourself or with as many people as you want.

Time: 5- 10 mins

Difficulty: Intermediate

Instructions: This activity is very basic, but requires some skill. Students will get in a single file horizontal line. The first person in line will take one step forward. Then they need to say their name in a serious, strong, loud voice and tone. The purpose is to be loud, confident, and to project so everyone in the room can hear you. After the person is done they step back into line, and the next person steps forward and repeats the process until everyone in the line has gone. You can not step back into line if you do not call out your name correctly.

Goal: The goal of this activity was to help people with pronunciation, projection of your voice, and your self-confidence.

Students will learn how to project and have loud, strong, voices. This activity will also teach students to have more confidence and to make themselves heard.



SPEECH/VOICE:

Charades

of students: 2 or more

Time: 2 min rounds

Difficulty: Easy

Instructions: Students have to act out an object or motion and the other person(s) have to guess.

Goal: It helps students with their improv and to develop quick thinking.

Students will learn how to think on your feet and partner work.



SPEECH/VOICE:

This is a What

of students: 10 - 15

Time: 15 - 20 min

Difficulty: Hard

Instructions: How the game works is everyone sits in a circle and has an object. You start off by looking to the person to the right of you and start saying what your object is. For example if I had a marker I would say, “This is a MARKER a what a MARKER a what a MARKER” and then the person to the left of you would say “Oh a MARKER!” and then your object gets passed on and the person to the right of you would give you their object and you would continue the game until you get your object back.

Goal: To project and not get lost in the noise.

Students will learn how to project and say words clearly.

CHARACTER CREATION:

Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur

of students: 10 - 15

Time: 10 - 20 min

Difficulty: Medium

Instructions: In this game, everyone starts off as an egg, that they make by using their arms to make an oval over their head. Everyone then goes around and finds a partner, when they do, they play rock paper scissors. If you win you move up a level, to chicken, or to dinosaur if you are already chicken. If you lose, you go down a level. This keeps repeating until you want the game to end.

Goal: This is just a fun game that kids moving.

Students will learn how to bond with their classmates.

CHARACTER CREATION:

Surprise Guests

of students: at least 2

Time: 5 - 10 min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Instructions: One person hosts the party and the rest guests are given objects. The host has to guess what each one of the characters is.

Goal: Get the host to guess your object or the host guesses the objects.

Students will learn how to analyze characteristics and portray them as people.

CHARACTER CREATION:

Dinner Party

of students: 10 -15

Time: 10 min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Instructions: Pick 4-6 people to participate. One person will be the dinner party host and the others will be guests. The guests will go outside and pick characters for each other. The characters could be anything from a famous person (Taylor Swift, George Washington) to a career (plumber, firefighter). Each guest will come in one by one and the host and the audience will have to figure out who each guest is

Goal: For the host, they have to recognize verbal cues and body language. For the guests, it's mastering just the right amount of subtlety to both trick the host and help them figure it out.

Students will learn: Verbal cues, body language, character creation.



CHARACTER CREATION:

Speedy Fairytales

of students: 4 -5 per group

Time: 10 - 15 min

Difficulty: Difficult

Instructions: In this game, students have to use their improv skills to recreate famous fairytales. Once every group gets the fairytale that they are recreating, they will get to meet and discuss their roles and props with their groups for 5 minutes. Then each group will present their fairytale in under 1 minute. Each group will go again, but their fairytale scene has to be completed in under 30 seconds! And for an even more difficult challenge, complete it in 10 seconds! (But that one is really just for fun!)

Goal: The goal of this activity is to use your creativity to figure out a way to keep making the story shorter and shorter, but making sure the important parts of the story aren't cut out. You also have to work with your group to creatively figure out a way to get all of the main character involved with a small cast of only 4 or 5 people.

Students will learn how to improvise on the fly, with a group of people. In this game you don't really have time to talk to your group about how to make the fairytale shorter, you just need to work together and figure it out.



CHARACTER CREATION:

1 - 2 - 3

of students: at least 2

Time: 2 min rounds

Difficulty: Easy

Instructions: The people have to all count 1, 2, 3, in a circle. Whoever says one claps, 2 does nothing, and 3 bends their knees. Gets harder as time progresses.

MOVEMENT/PHYSICAL THEATRE:

Machine

of students: at least 10

Time: 15 - 20 min

Difficulty: Medium



Instructions: This game is all about improvising to create a human machine with your peers. One person will start off the machine by making a movement. This movement should be simple, and something that you are comfortable doing for a long period of time repeatedly. As that person continues repeating their motion, the others watch the motion and try to think of a way to fit themselves into the puzzle and do an action that would make sense next to that person. When someone thinks of another thing to do, they go next to the last person who joined the “machine,” and this process keeps repeating until everyone is in the “human machine” line!

Goal: To create a functioning human machine with your peers by improvising a motion to fit yourself into the machine!

Students will learn how to improvise based on the actions of other actors and will learn to adapt to scenes that are always changing.

MOVEMENT/PHYSICAL THEATRE:

Octopus

of students: 10 - 15

Time: 10 min

Difficulty: Medium

Instructions: So how the game works is the Octopus claps a beat and all of the other people have to jump as many times the Octopus has clapped. Once everyone is done the Octopus will jump the same amount of jumps as everyone else and then try to get people out by tapping them. If you get tapped by the Octopus you sit down, and are now the Octopus tentacles. If anyone jumps near you, you can get them out by tapping them while you are on the floor. For example, if the Octopus clapped a beat that had 5 claps, everyone would jump 5 jumps. After everyone does their 5 jumps, the Octopus will jump and try to tap people out. The last person standing is the winner and the new Octopus.

Goal: To move around and get loose

Students will learn how to move around and have some fun in theatre.

MOVEMENT/PHYSICAL THEATRE:

Monster Maker

of students: at least 2

Time: a minute per monster

Difficulty: Easy

Instructions: Each person goes up and creates one part of a monster at a time. They link up and eventually form a monster.

Goal: Make a monster.

Students will learn how to manipulate their bodies and work together for a final result.



MOVEMENT/PHYSICAL THEATRE:

Freeze

of students: 6 - 8

Time: as long as you want:)

Difficulty: Intermediate

Instructions: Two people will start with a scene that the group requests. Whenever someone wants to they will say freeze cause the actors to freeze in their spots. The person who said freeze will then tap one of the actors and take their exact position. The person who jumped in must make a completely new scene. The game will continue like this for as long as you want.

Goal: Physical positions are very important in this game. The students must take whatever position the actors in and make it something new.

Students will learn: Mental agility, improv, teamwork, movement.



About the Authors:

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Additionally, the JSTO serve as the primary voice and advocate of NJ Junior Thespian students on the NJ Junior Thespian State Board. JSTO are given volunteer hours for their service to the International Thespian Society.

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