

theatre company



During the workshop, we used techniques to bring to life extracts from The Vultures' Song. The following activities can be applied to any script/story in the classroom.

Animals

This activity can be used to develop human characters, building on the techniques explored in the workshop.

When looking at a character, think about what traits they have e.g. secretive, shy, stubborn. Is there an animal that matches these? Have a go at moving as this animal. Show others and get them to describe what they see in terms of mannerisms, speed of movement and body language. What can you adapt and use from this physical repertoire to play the character?

Objects in action

This activity can be used to deepen children's understanding of the events surrounding the play or the backstory as well as building a personal connection to the story.

Bring some objects into the classroom (bric-a-brac from a charity shop) and set them up on a table. Select an object each and write a label for it telling of how it was used either before, during or after the story/script you are working on. For example if you were looking at the story of Cinderella, you might have an old shoe, with the label saying: "the last pair of shoes Cinderella wore before leaving for the palace". Use the labelled objects as the basis for further questioning and/or improvisation.

Some quick exercises for performing scripts

Fast forward

Perform the scene at high speed, don't worry about fitting in every word and action, focus instead on performing against the clock. Afterwards reflect on what you included and what you left out. This is a good way of distilling a scene's essential elements.

All quiet!

Play the scene using mime only, try not to mouth the words of the script, instead concentrate on using body language and facial expressions to get the meaning across. Show the scene to someone who is unfamiliar with the material and ask how much they understood. This is a good way of exploring the power of non-verbal communication.

And action...

A fun and challenging game to play during the latter stages of rehearsals. The actors assemble around the acting area. The director calls out a random line from the script. Immediately the cast have to rush to where they should be at that moment (if they can remember) and start playing the scene from that line onwards. Anyone not 'on stage' should leave or stand at the side. As soon as everyone recalls where they should be, the director stops the scene and chooses another line.