

Ghost House

# Drama Workshop

Inspire students to...

...imagine  
experience  
feel  
become  
empathise  
enjoy...  
...and then  
read..



Bringing Robinswood High Interest Series to life





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# Section One

## Introduction and Background



### Background Aims

There are two principal aims to the Drama Workshops which complement the Robinswood High Interest novels. The first is to generate an initial awareness of the background to each of the High Interest novels through the emotional engagement of members of the Class or Reading Group. The second is to establish, as a consequence, the desire amongst all the participants – especially those least likely to read any book at all – to *voluntarily* pick up the novel, to open it and to start reading! The sheer paciness, relevance and style of the stories by Paul Kropp, and fellow authors of the High Interest novels, will normally result in the reader completing the book!

The Workshops have been prepared using elements of the story, with characterisations which reflect the actual characters in the story but without necessarily establishing precise or defining personalities. It is through the awakening of the participants' imagination, feeling and empathy in experiencing the possible circumstances around the story that the desire to engage in reading the story itself is created.

There are many features used in the editing of the High Interest novels themselves which encourage most readers to finish a novel once started. Details about the novels can be found on the Robinswood website but teachers will be pleased to note that all the titles in the High Interest Series are included in the Accelerated Reader Programme. There are, at present, two High Interest Series from Robinswood, the Primary Series and the Teenage Series.

*Avalanche* is from the Teenage Series. (*Content Age 11 to 16 years, Reading Age 8 to 9 years, AR Level 4.1, AR Quiz 214784.*)

### Drama in Literacy

There are many benefits in using drama for improving literacy for all students.

Drama can be used to gain an 'experience' of a story. It can assist in understanding the context and content of a book, through time and place, and by having empathy with the characters and their situations. It can increase the range of language activities dealing with interpretation and meaning. It can be used to encourage and stimulate a wide range of activities, drawing on the students' desire to imitate and to use their own imaginative resources.

Drama can encourage students to experiment through questioning, challenging and persuading. Students can develop their speaking and listening skills through the use of role play, giving them opportunities to explore situations 'as if' real.

Games, mime, and improvisations can encourage collaboration, negotiation, and exploration of personal feelings, helping students to respond to new situations. This can help students perceive the world from another perspective – and to learn from others. Improvisations can help the students to explore literature and to gain insight into moral and social issues through 'experiencing' the characters and their situations.

These downloadable Workshops from Robinswood will hopefully give teachers a supportive framework around which they can plan their literacy activities and so, in turn, will inspire students to want to read the books! They are also ideal for Teaching Assistants, especially where working with small groups.

The Workshops themselves should give the students pleasure and interest through engagement in the various activities. Once they engage, and enjoy the process, you can start to challenge them and make demands on the 'form' of their improvisations, pooling more of their own ideas. Protection from criticism or judgement is important, though, so that they are free from inhibition, or can reduce this over time. Significant work should be acknowledged. Give them very small challenges at first. You are awakening the self-spectator, essentially through the enjoyment of 'play'.

This can sometimes be rather noisy or chaotic but it does have a purpose!

## **"I Don't Do Drama: I Teach Literacy!"**

The High Interest Workshops include a number of Scenarios selected from each of the High Interest novels. This Workshop concerns the Teenage Series novel, *Ghost House*.

There are various techniques that can be used in running a drama workshop. Even if the teacher has little experience of using drama in the classroom as a formal 'Workshop', many of the skills involved will already be utilised in general teaching practice or in classroom management. Bearing in mind the objective of this series of Workshops – to encourage the voluntary desire to read a novel – it is not the Workshop standard itself which is critical, but the outcome: emotional engagement in an imaginary situation which inspires all group members, especially those least attracted to reading, to get themselves into a book.

It is up to individual teachers to decide how they wish to use the drama techniques outlined below, or how they explore the Scenarios. This will depend on their own confidence, the ability of the Group and, consequently, the most appropriate way to create that inspiration.



## **Basic Drama Workshop Techniques**

### ***Improvisation***

This is not as difficult as it sounds! You are asking the students to make it up – to improvise – as they go along, once you have 'set' the scene, the plot or the situation. If you have a very inhibited Group, ask them to mime the situation first of all, before they add any words. Alternatively, they could start by making 'pictures' of the scene through the use of 'freeze-frames'.

### ***Freeze-Frames and Freeze!***

A freeze-frame is where, generally, a smaller group (but don't exclude larger groups!) build a 'picture' or a 'photograph' of a particular scene or situation. Each group can choose which part of a scene to create for themselves, or you can provide them with a 'story-board' consisting of a number of freeze-frames which they portray in sequence. The 'story-board' approach will help them advance into improvisation if they have already demonstrated that they find it difficult to know where or how to start an improvisation.

A freeze-frame is not quite the same as when you ask, during an improvisation, for the group to 'freeze'. A freeze is simply a cessation of continuing action during an improvisation, whereas a freeze-frame is more consciously developed as a specific but motionless 'picture'. The end-result, of course, will appear very similar! However, the degree of conscious construction of the picture will be different.

### ***Mime***

Mime is an excellent dramatic form to engage the student. It is helpful to give them an 'activity' to mime which they can develop, such as putting up a tent, making a campfire, etc., which would be relevant to this specific story. Alternatively, if the student or students remain inhibited – perhaps they don't know how to put up a tent! – ask them to mime an activity with which they are familiar first. Once they are confident with an activity, you can ask them to add speech – first as themselves, and then taking on a different character.

### ***Thought-Tracking***

This is a very good way of getting students to think about a specific situation, of what particular 'characters' in a scene may themselves be thinking or doing. You will need to split the group first. Thought-tracking can be carried out most simply from a freeze-frame, but you can also ask part of a group to thought-track where you have asked the rest of the group to carry out an improvisation and to 'freeze' at a particular moment.

When the freeze-frame – or freeze – is in place with part of the group, you ask the other part of the group to consider what each character is thinking. Ask them, before speaking, and when they have an idea of what a character might be thinking, to go up to that character, place a hand on the character's shoulder, and describe the possible interpretation. See if they are right – ask the character in the freeze or freeze-frame to describe themselves what they were thinking!

This is an excellent way for them to 'observe' gesture and facial expression and the way the freeze-frame shows the relationship between the characters taking part. It also encourages the group to become more expressive as their confidence in the Workshop techniques develops.





## **Timing - the 'Appropriate Moment'**

An improvisation can be fast or slow, long or short – it is up to you, your own time-frame, and your judgement of how an improvisation is progressing. However, there is often an 'appropriate moment', when the scene seems to be coming to an end. This is not necessarily when it is quiet: they do not have to talk all the time to create a scene! It is when you discern that the participants become repetitive, or lose concentration – just as they might in the classroom, when you know that it's time to 'move on'! At that moment it is good to either inject a new activity, idea or character, etc., to freeze the scene for further thought-tracking, or to end that scene altogether.

## **Using the Scenarios**

The Scenarios used in these Workshops are derived from the situations in the novel. They are not, however, specific scenes which require to be 'acted out', they merely represent the circumstances in which the characters find themselves through the story.

The members of the group are therefore experiencing the situations in which the story takes place, but they are very largely imagining themselves in those situations rather than portraying the characters from the book. Again, the whole aim is to establish in their minds the desire to find out what actually happens in the story itself – to get into the book, to get reading!

For any particular group, the Workshops may therefore be used in different ways to achieve this aim. It may be more appropriate for one group to work quickly through all the Scenarios in the Workshop before reading the book. For others, starting to read the story might begin much earlier – after just a few, or even just one, Scenario. It may be that you do not need all the

Scenarios. They are a tool for you to adapt to your particular circumstances, with that sole ultimate aim: to inspire everyone in the group to get reading!

## **Warm-up Games**

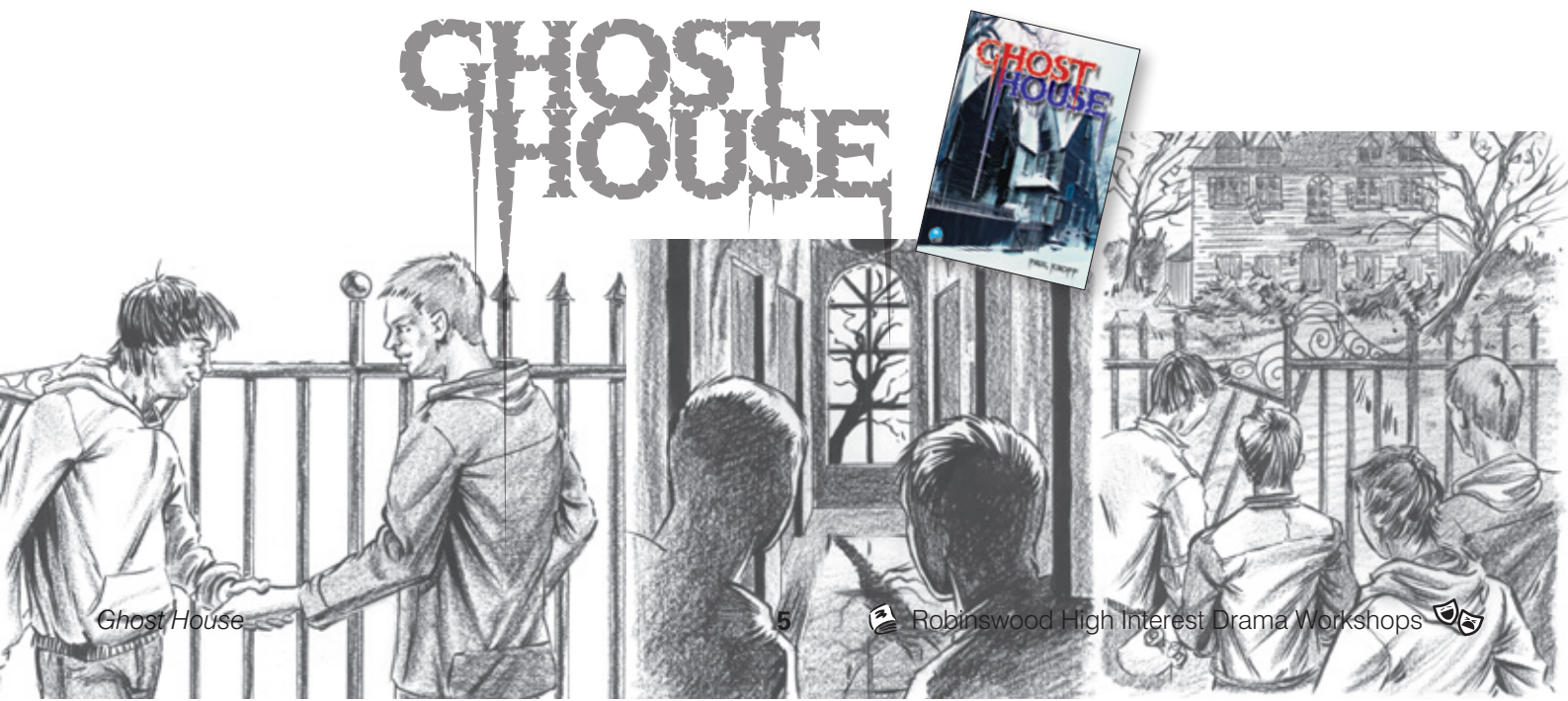
Sometimes, it is helpful to initiate the use of drama with games to 'warm up' the students. This is totally discretionary, entirely up to you! But we have included a number of traditional warm-up games at the end of this book which may be helpful – if needed!

## **Ghost House – the Novel**

This story is full of tension and atmosphere. It plays with shadows and the dark, with fear and pretence. It has very strong visual effects and is good for creating a set which can be tailored to the individual imagination.

Ghost House as a story is more reliant on tension, fear and anxiety than many other novels in the High Interest Series which feature more immediate action. It is good, therefore, to warm up both physically and mentally in the Workshop Scenarios with a number of games and activities which focus the mind and create tension for the subsequent scenes. The Scenarios are designed to enable tension to be created particularly through a contrast of 'mood'.

The Workshop can be carried out using the Scenarios sequentially. Alternatively, you may choose to select Scenarios which you feel will help you to bring the story alive for your particular group at that moment. The Workshop for Ghost House provides four Scenarios most of which have been prepared using situations in the story but not the story itself. So the complete story - and its conclusion - can only be gained by reading the novel.



## About the Author of the Workshops

Sue Marshall was born in London and grew up in Hampshire. She won a Scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where she studied Acting as a Performer. Shortly after leaving College, and following some rather diverse opportunities, she became a drama teacher in both a Theatre School and a Girls' Independent School in the South East of England. Here, she quickly discovered just how inspirational drama teaching could be – both creatively and as an educational tool.

Sue then taught at the Mountview Theatre School in London and went on to take a Theatre Studies degree. She was still drawn to performing and continued to enjoy working in Radio and TV as well becoming a Stage Manager and Assistant Director in professional theatre. When the family moved North, she became Head of Drama Department in a West Midlands Comprehensive School.

Later, she found her own experience – as a mother of three children – led her to an interest

in the Steiner system of education, where she worked for over a dozen years in a variety of positions, culminating in an Advisory role for the Fellowship of these schools.

In 2006, Sue returned to work within theatre at the Birmingham Rep, where she became an Education Officer, giving workshops in the Theatre and in schools all over the City of Birmingham and beyond. Through the Rep, she was also attached to the Family Learning Services where she devised Drama Workshops for literacy and numeracy within both the Primary and Secondary sector. In this capacity she also gave Workshops for parents and teachers to help particularly with literacy skills, and to enable non-specialists to participate and employ dramatic story-telling to enliven the curriculum.

Sue now works full-time as Head of the LAMDA Department in a Girls' Independent School in Warwickshire.

# Section Two

## Ghost House - The Workshop Scenarios



### A short synopsis of the novel

#### CHAPTER 1 The Bet

On their way to school, Tyler McCann, his brother Zach, and their friends Hammy and A.J. pass the old Blackwood Mansion. A.J. says that the house is haunted and that he's seen strange lights there at night. None of his friends believe him. Tyler and Zach make a bet with A.J. – if they can spend one night in the house, A.J. will give each of them \$100. If they chicken out, the brothers will surrender their Mark McGwire baseball.

#### CHAPTER 2 A Dark House

Tyler and Zach agree to spend twelve hours in the Blackwood house. They find the house is old and falling apart. All the furniture is gone and there are mice running around on the main floor. They go up to the first floor. Zach notices that the batteries in his MP3 player have died and that Tyler's flashlight only works erratically.

#### CHAPTER 3 Our Blackwood Hotel

On the top floor of the house, the brothers choose the room they plan to sleep in. They joke about staying in the 'Hotel Blackwood' for the night, but neither Tyler nor Zach is at ease. As they lie down and attempt to get some sleep, Zach hears something downstairs – and it's not a mouse.

#### CHAPTER 4 Noises in the Night

Zach and Tyler are scared – they hear someone slowly climbing the stairs. It sounds as if someone, or something, is dragging a chain. On the first floor, the thing smacks the chain against the walls and doors. The brothers hear the door in the next room being kicked open and fear their room is next. They make a plan for Tyler to hit the person or thing over the head with a flashlight if it opens the door.

#### CHAPTER 5 The First Ghost

The door bursts open but Zach pushes it back into the face of the person on the other side. Tyler starts to run but stops when he realises that Zach isn't behind him. Zach is standing over Hammy. A.J. offered Hammy \$50 to scare Tyler and Zach out of the house. The three boys go into the next room and find a pile of old newspapers. In the room, Zach's MP3 player starts to work again, along with Tyler's flashlight. The headline on the newspaper is 'BLACKWOOD MURDER VERDICT.'

#### CHAPTER 6 A Murder

The article is about the murder of Charles Blackwood by his brother, Andrew. Andrew stabbed his brother sixteen times in the chest with a kitchen knife. The three boys realise that the murder took

place on October 29, 1964, and that this is the anniversary of the murder. To make things worse, Tyler and Zach look exactly like the Blackwood brothers.

#### CHAPTER 7 Enough is Enough

Tyler and Zach decide it's time to call off the bet and get out of the house. They go downstairs but the windows and doors won't open. It seems that they're trapped.

#### CHAPTER 8 The Bells

They go upstairs to see if they can break a window and climb down one of the trees outside. No matter how hard they hit the window or try to prise it open, it won't budge. As they're trying to break the glass they hear a clock chime 11 o'clock, the hour of the Blackwood murder.

#### CHAPTER 9 What Have We Got?

The boys are getting scared. They break a piece of metal off one of the beds and go downstairs to use it as a crowbar. As they try to prise the window open, they feel a presence in the room.

#### CHAPTER 10 Alone

Tyler shines the light on the stairs and the three friends see a shape floating towards them. When Tyler asks the ghost what it wants, it points towards Zach. The boys run. Hammy and Tyler make it to another room but soon realise that Zach is gone. Hammy goes back down the hall to find him and Tyler is left alone.

#### CHAPTER 11 The Knife

Tyler walks down the hall to find his friend and brother. As he's walking, his foot knocks against something – a kitchen knife. Tyler collapses to the floor, crying. From out of the darkness he hears his brother calling him. As Zach walks towards Tyler his foot hits the knife. Tyler hears his brother say, "I don't want to do this," and sees that Zach has picked up the knife. Tyler tries to stop his brother by talking to him, but the power over Zach is too strong. As Zach raises the knife over Tyler's head, he calls out to their dead father.

#### CHAPTER 12 A Scar

Zach and Tyler wake up the next morning and find that they both had a dream with ghosts, Hammy, and a knife. Zach notices that Tyler has a big red spot on his chest that looks like blood. Tyler lifts his shirt; there's a scar in the middle of his chest as though he'd been stabbed with a knife.

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**Setting:** Not necessary for these exercises.

**Props:** None.

**Characters:** None.

**Preparation:** Tell your Group that this part of the Workshop will consist of games and simple improvisations.

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**Action:** *Game 1: Fruit Bowl*

See Section 3 Group 3 for details of 'Fruit Bowl'. This game will get the Group working at speed and physically warmed up. You can add a variation to it by asking the Group to jump, hop, skip, etc., across the circle rather than just running.

*Game 2: Wink Murder*

See Section 3 Group 7 for details of 'Wink Murder'. This game is good for dramatic tension, especially if you give the Group a fast time frame.

*Group Objects*

Another good way to warm up the Group is to give them an object to 'make' together, using objects that are pertinent to the story, for example: a staircase, a chain, a bed, a table, a shoe, etc.

Split your Group or Class into smaller groups and tell them they have thirty seconds to 'make' the shapes together. Give them a countdown at the end of the time: '5,4,3,2,1 - Freeze!'.

*Freeze-Frames*

Using the same smaller groups, give them thirty seconds again - this time to make a group picture, for example: a skateboarding scene, a basketball scene, a football scene, a robbery, a fight, being in a storm, etc.

Ask them to get into a picture by negotiating, making decisions, using each other's ideas and directing each other. Remind them that when you hit the drum and say 'Freeze', they must stand absolutely still.

**To End:** It is useful for the small groups to look at the other 'freeze-frames' as they are fairly certain to be different.

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|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Setting:</b>     | The Group is going to be by a river bank.   |
| <b>Props:</b>       | None.   |
| <b>Characters:</b>  | A small group of 'good friends'.<br>A 'leader' - an individual who is stronger than the others.   |
| <b>Preparation:</b> | Explain to the group that, in this Scenario, they are going to set up a 'dare'. The setting for this is on a river bank where the group are having a party. Tell them that they need to develop a change of 'mood' as a result of 'something' happening - a 'dramatic moment', maybe following an angry exchange, or something being broken.  |
| <hr/>               |   |
| <b>Action:</b>      | <p><i>Mime</i></p> <p>Ask the Group to imagine that they are in a garden or a park by a river. Start the mime by asking the 'good friends' simply to enjoy themselves - behaving as any group might do at a party. They are drinking coke, eating crisps, and so on. They then begin to laugh at each other...</p> <p>Ask the 'leader' to introduce the theme of teasing or taunting each other for fun. Then ask the group to think of some specific dares with which they could challenge each other. This is where the 'mood' can change from fun to fear of danger.</p> <p><i>Freeze-Frames</i></p> <p>Now ask the Group to create the 'dares' in three or four freeze-frames that show the change in mood.</p> <p><i>Improvisation</i></p> <p>Ask the Group to create an improvisation by using the story of the dare in the freeze-frames. This time the Group is able to include dialogue.</p> |
| <b>To End:</b>      | Allow this improvisation time to get going and to see where it goes. Stop it at an appropriate moment when you sense they are running out of ideas.   |
| <hr/>               |   |

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**Setting:** Use various different settings for these improvisations - such as:

In a wood.

In a graveyard.

In a street.

In a bedroom.

**Props:** None.

**Characters:** Small groups of 'school-friends'.

**Preparation:** Split your main Group into smaller groups of two or three. Tell them that they can choose the location for their improvisation but the essence is that, as it gets dark, they are aware that something feels a bit 'spooky'... Remind them to create a change of 'mood' as it gets dark.

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**Action:** Once the individual groups have decided on their settings, ask them to imagine - and discuss - why they are there. Tell them that there could be unusual reasons for them being at that location.

When they have discussed this amongst themselves for a while, tell the groups to 'Freeze'.

Then explain to the groups that, now, something is beginning to happen which makes them feel afraid. They can choose again what is happening but need to improvise what is going on, why they're afraid, and how they show their fear. Tell them you want them to create a scene together where they are afraid because of someone or something that they hear or vaguely see in the dark. They could improvise, for example, around:

- it's getting dark.
- they are lost.
- they hear something frightening.
- they try to escape or get away.

Depending on the ability of the groups, they could mime it first then improvise with whispers.

**To End:** When their ideas begin to be less creative or repetitive, bring the improvisations to a close.

You could ask some of the smaller groups to re-do their improvisation for the other groups to watch.

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**Setting:** An old derelict house.

**Props:** A few chairs.

**Characters:** Two 'friends'.

**Preparation:** Ask the Group to split into pairs.  
Tell them that they are going to visit an old derelict house.

**Action:** First, get them to imagine all the things that there might be in an old derelict house.  
When you give the signal, ask them - in their pairs - to explore the house in mime. Tell them to imagine that it is getting darker all the time. After a while, tell them to 'freeze'.

Now ask them to carry out the same actions again, but this time they can speak. This will add to the atmosphere in speech as well as in the physical actions. They could do two scenes, the first in the mood of excitement but then, subsequently, in a different mood.

You can extend these improvisations by getting the Group to imagine they are trapped, for example:

- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| - in a wood.                     | - in a house.                |
| - in a castle.                   | - in a cellar.               |
| - in a theatre.                  | - on a ride in a fairground. |
| - in a cave.                     | - in a tunnel.               |
| - in school at night, locked in. | - in a lift.                 |

The theme of being alone recurs throughout the story of *Ghost House*, so you can extend these improvisations further by asking the Group to experience the same mimes and improvisations, but as if they were on their own. They can use different time frames, for example, 'before, during and after' to explore their improvisations.

**To End:** Discuss and reflect after each improvisation as to what they felt or thought. If the improvisation of a pair - or an individual - has plenty of tension and imagination, ask them to show it to the rest of the Group or class. Now tell them - or remind them - about the book *Ghost House* and encourage them to read it!

# Section Three

## Warm-up Games



### Background Aims

There are many positives in the use of drama, including Warm-up Games, in literacy.

They can:

- establish a relaxed atmosphere in the Class.
- establish a disciplined approach to Drama.
- enable all members of the group to participate.
- establish an atmosphere of trust.
- free individuals from self-consciousness.
- build a relationship with the teacher.
- maintain a 'fun' element in the use of drama.
- maintain and develop group dynamics: group responsibility and self-discipline.
- continue to encourage total participation and concentration.
- maintain, build and develop a relationship of trust and freedom from inhibition with the teacher (teachers can play, too!).
- be used to maintain an ability to 'play'.

Make sure that games are disciplined and that self-control is experienced.

For example, when students have to listen to the centre person in the game 'Fruit-Bowl', establish the rule that the centre person is not allowed to say the fruit until it is quiet. Similarly, in 'Starboard and Port-side', ask them to freeze when they arrive at their destination. Anyone who doesn't has to be 'out'. To balance this discipline, and to make the game fun, *it is important that you enjoy the game yourself!*

This Section includes a range of games that are useful for 'warm-up' for your students. You can use the games which are relevant to your particular year and your particular group. Playing and games are for all age groups!

Don't worry if you repeat games. Students not only enjoy this but, as in formal drama lessons, use of drama techniques works in a spiral or circular pattern. By the time you have come full circle, certain skills will have developed with the students and their work will generally have more depth.

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### 1. Introducing Ourselves

*This is particularly useful where the members of the group are not known to each other.*

Start by standing in a circle.

Each person introduces themselves round the circle.

Ask them to step into the circle when speaking, saying:

“My name is... I am... (shy, tall, nervous, noisy, quiet, etc.).”

Continue (if appropriate) by sitting in the circle.

Ask the students to stand up and step into the circle, when it is their turn, and describe what they like.

“My name is..., and I like... (chocolate, etc.).”

Continue (if appropriate) by standing in the circle, describing their favourite colour.

“My name is..., and my best colour is...”

Get everyone in the circle to repeat what each individual says in the way that they say it.

*It is up to you to judge how many variations to play on ‘introducing ourselves’ before proceeding to another game.*

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### 2. Remembering Each Other’s Names

The students stand in a circle.

Using a bean bag, say your own name, then throw the bean bag to someone else in the circle saying their name, for example:

“Amelia to Harry.”

Now each student is going to exchange places with another member of the circle.

First, tell them to say their own name, then the name of the person they are exchanging with.

Initially, the students will pause to think of each other’s names.

Encourage them to speed it up so that eventually there are no pauses.

Encourage them to learn the new names by asking them, after a while, not to choose people, for example, from their old primary school.

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### 3. Prisoner

*This is particularly useful where the members of the group do know each other.*

Get into pairs.

One sits on a chair (the prisoner), one stands behind it (the guard).

Leave one chair empty, but with a person standing behind (teacher, if even numbers).

The guards must stand at one arm’s length, with their arms down, and the prisoners must sit upright in their chairs.

The person standing behind the empty chair calls the name of one of those sitting.

The person whose name is called must get out of their chair without their ‘guard’ touching them.

Half way through the game change prisoners and guards.

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**1. Two Minute Autobiography**

Get the students into pairs.

Person A tells Person B about himself or herself for two minutes.

Reverse, with Person B reciprocating to Person A.

Person A then tells the group as much as he or she can about Person B.

Person B then does likewise.

*Change partners each time this game is played, gradually working through the class.*

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**2. If I Weren't Me**

Stand or sit in a circle.

Each person in turn says:

"If I weren't me, I'd like to be..., because..."

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**1. 'Fruit-Bowl'**

The group members sit on chairs in a circle.

Name a fruit for each student.

One member stands in the middle and calls out the name of one of the fruits.

The 'fruit' called out changes place with the person in the middle.

Or the one in the middle can call out two (or more) fruit names.

The fruits called out change place with each other.

Or the one in the middle calls out 'fruit-bowl' – meaning everybody.

Everybody changes places, with the middle person trying to get a chair.

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**2. Variation on 'Fruit-Bowl'**

The class sits in a circle in silence with a member standing in the middle.

The aim is to catch someone else's eye and change places, just as in 'Fruit-Bowl'.

They are 'out' if they signal through gesture or talk in order to attract attention.

They are also 'out' if they bump into each other.

Alternate the movement in this game by 'hopping', 'skipping', 'shuffling-on-your-bottom', etc., across the circle rather than running.

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### 3. 'Starboard and Port-side'

The room is a ship.

The right side is 'starboard', the left side is 'port-side', the centre is 'mid-ships'.

"Captain's coming" is standing to attention (freeze).

"Sharks in the water" is off the ground.

"Scrub the decks" is kneeling on the floor.

The teacher stands on a chair to the side of mid-ships.

Start with everyone in the middle.

When you shout the command, the students run to the appropriate position.

Last one is 'out' and they join you.

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### 4. 'Clumps'

*This game should only be played when the class has a good social sense.*

Call out a number.

The students have to group themselves in that number.

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### 5. Fishes in the Sea

Play this game in a circle of chairs facing outwards.

Each member of the group is given the name of a fish, e.g., herring, cod, mackerel and plaice. (The names are given in rotation, e.g., every fourth person is a cod.)

Call out the name of a fish.

On command, the students with that fish name run round the outside of the circle and back to their place.

The last person back to their own chair is 'out'.

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### 6. Grandmother's Footsteps

All the students stand in a line across the back of the room.

One student is Grandmother, and faces the wall at the other end the room.

When Grandmother turns her back, the other students run towards her.

When she turns they freeze.

Whoever Grandmother sees as the last to freeze has to go back to the beginning.

The aim is to be first to touch Grandmother and then take her place.

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### 7. Variation on 'Starboard and Port-side'

Use 'North', 'South', 'East' and 'West', indeed all the points of the Compass (such as 'South-West, even 'South-South-West', etc.).

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**1. Blindfold**

Students get into pairs.

One of each pair is blindfolded.

The other then leads the blindfolded partner round the room by holding their hand.

Then they lead by just walking beside their partner and giving them instructions.

Partners swap over.

**2. Leaning Back**

Students get into pairs, one behind the other, but both facing the front of the room.

The student behind puts their hands on their partner's back.

Now the partner in front gently leans backwards as far as is possible without falling.

**1. Group Objects**

Divide the group into small groups of 4 - 6 students.

Ask them to make an object, using only themselves, in two minutes.

The objects could be:

|                   |             |             |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| a car             | a tree      | a castle    |
| a helicopter      | a pot plant | a cathedral |
| a washing machine | a snake     | a table     |
| a boat            | a house     | a sofa      |

Now give them 30 seconds to do this (time limits galvanise speedy thinking and action!).

Give them a count-down, i.e., "5, 4, 3, 2, 1", and then ask them to "freeze!".

*Prepare your own list of different objects so that you could go through this exercise each session. This game is not only one which they enjoy, it also works on many levels of group inter-action and it is non-competitive. You could also choose objects which occur in the story.*

## 2. Warming up the Voice: The Group 'Yell'!

The students stand in a circle.

They crouch down and take a deep breath.

They all begin to stand up, making the sound "Aah" softly, but getting louder as they stand up.

Finally, on tip-toes and with arms out-stretched, they are yelling.

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## 3. Group Rhythm

Students sit or stand in a circle.

Choose 6 students who can keep a bass rhythm with you.

Clap this bass rhythm, e.g., "1, 2, 3, 4."

Look at one member of the circle who must now add their own rhythm – with feet or hands – which is different to the bass.

Keep adding until all the members have joined in.

You can now conduct it!

Ask them to do it quietly then loudly, fast then slow, etc.

Great fun!

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## 4. Machine

One student stands in the centre and starts a simple movement as part of a 'machine'.

Others join in, co-ordinating movement, until the whole group is working together.

Add sound effects, one at a time, such as clicking tongues or other original sounds.

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## 5. Gibberish Talk

*This game is invaluable as a voice exercise for the development of intonation and vocal expression, especially for older students.*

Announce to the students the title of a small episode, e.g.:

"Buying something in a shop."

Divide the group into pairs.

One partner becomes a customer, the other a shop assistant.

They have to enact this episode by speaking to each other, but using only the letters of the alphabet, no words!

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**1. 'I Went to Market'**

Ask the students to sit in a circle.

Start the game by saying:

"I went to market and in my basket I put a..."

Add a first product, e.g., a tomato, a potato, etc...

First student repeats, adding a further product.

Go round the whole circle with each student repeating the previous list, plus an additional product.

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**2. 'Chinese Whispers'**

Ask the students to sit in a circle.

Whisper a message to the first student.

That student whispers the message to the second student.

Continue until the message has gone right around the circle.

Compare the end message with the one you gave initially!

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**3. Variation on 'Chinese Whispers'**

Do the same as with Chinese Whispers, but with a non-verbal message, by touch only!

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**4. 'Kim's Game'**

Put a number of articles on a tray.

Give the students two minutes to look at the tray.

Out of sight, remove one or more articles from the tray.

Ask the group to name the missing objects.

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**1. 'Pass the Object'**

Ask the students to sit in a circle.

One student (or the teacher) holds an imaginary object.

He or she passes it to his or her neighbour, miming carefully to show size and weight.

Pass the object right round the circle.

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**2. 'Getting the Keys'**

*This is an excellent game for focus and listening skills.*

Sit in a circle with a chair in the middle.

Ask one student to sit in the centre chair and then blind-fold them.

Put a bunch of keys under the chair.

When it is quiet, point to one of the students in the circle and say "Go".

That student has to get up, walk right round the circle and back to touch their chair, and then advance towards the centre to get the keys.

The blind-folded person in the centre has to point to where they think the walking person is. He or she has 5 chances at pointing.

If he or she succeeds at pointing directly at the student, that student is 'out' and goes back to his or her chair.

If the student reaches the keys without being pointed at, that student takes over in the middle.

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**3. Chair in the Middle**

Get the students to sit in a circle.

Put a chair in the middle.

Each student in turn 'uses' the chair as anything but a chair, for example:

a computer

a wheelbarrow

a shopping trolley

a boiled egg

a hat

There is no limit! (But tell them that toilets become boring after a while!)

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**4. Newspaper**

Get the students to stand in a circle.

Have a newspaper in your hand.

Hand the newspaper to the first student who 'uses' it as anything he or she chooses, for example:

a brush  
a trumpet  
a door-mat

Go right round the circle, each student using it as a different object.

Again, there is no limit!

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**5. 'Don't make me laugh'**

Tell the students to get into pairs.

Partner A must try to make Partner B laugh.

Partner B mustn't laugh, or he is 'out'.

Reverse roles after 2 minutes.

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**6. Mirroring**

Ask the pupils to get into pairs.

Partner A is the leader.

Partner B mirrors Partner A's movement, whether it's mime, mood or gesture.

Reverse role at an appropriate moment, e.g., when concentration or ideas start to wane.

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**7. Wink Murder**

Get the students to sit or stand in a circle.

Chose one person as a detective.

The detective goes out of the room.

Everyone remaining closes their eyes.

You go round the circle and touch one person who becomes the 'murderer'.

The detective comes back in.

The murderer proceeds to 'kill' people, by 'winking' at them.

The 'murdered' students 'die' dramatically into the centre of the circle.

The detective has 3 chances to guess who the 'murderer' is.

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