

One Crazy Night

# Drama Workshop

Inspire students to...

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



Bringing Robinswood High Interest Series to life



Once Crazy Night

# Drama Workshop

Sue Marshall



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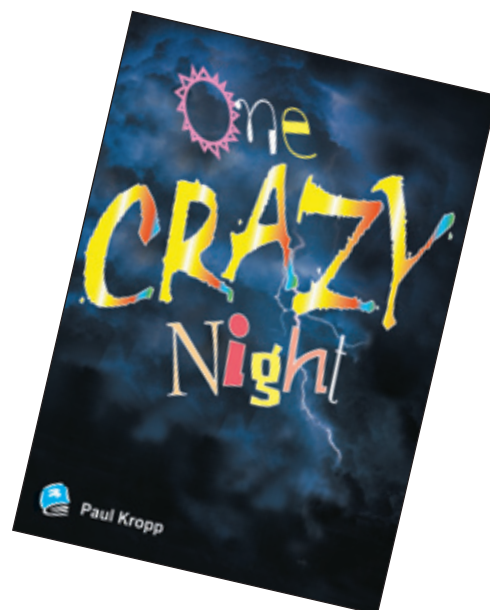


  
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# Section One

## 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.

*One Crazy Night* is from the Teenage Series. (Content Age 11 to 16 years, Reading Age 8 to 9 years, AR Level 4, AR Quiz 214862.)

### 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, *One Crazy Night*.

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!

## One Crazy Night – the Novel

This story involves very different characters who are trapped together during a storm in the retail shop section of a petrol station. It is a comedy in which a multitude of unfortunate dramatic events occur but where, in true comedic form, everything works out fine in the end! As a Drama Workshop, it lends itself well to character study and to a feel for situation drama and comedy.

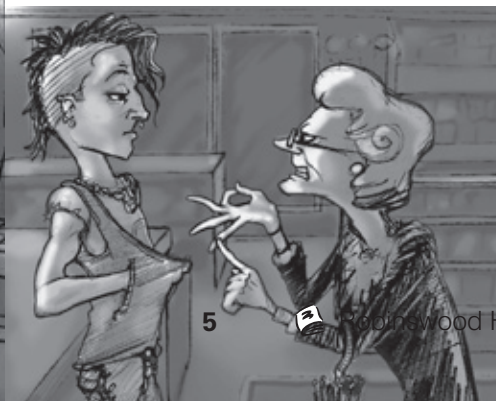
In the Workshop, we will first look individually at some of the characters. Once we have established some character identities, we will then create a scene with all of them in a storm. The characters we are going to explore are a 'Protective Mother', a 'Very Strict Teacher', a 'Pregnant Woman', a 'Punk', a 'Cool Macho Dude', a 'Grumpy Boss' and a 'Shop Assistant'. We will look at one or two improvisations per character but, of course, the students can create a variety of Scenarios from their own ideas.

It is a good idea to warm up the Group with some Games, Group Objects and Freeze Frames such as Fruit-Bowl, Wink Murder.



One Crazy Night

One  
CRAZY  
Night



## 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

## One Crazy Night - The Workshop Scenarios



### A short synopsis of the novel

#### Chapter 1 A Dark and Stormy Night

Todd is a small town high school kid who works at the local service station, Corso's Italian Deli and Gas. His boss, Mr Corso, warns Todd that if he catches him on the phone once more he will fire him. Mr Corso bugs Todd about being babied by his mother. He leaves for a card game. Todd's girlfriend Julie calls twice and his mum brings him soup. As Todd gets off the phone, Mrs Plotnik, the meanest teacher ever, comes in. Outside, a storm is gathering.

#### Chapter 2 Mean as Ever

Mrs Plotnik never gets Todd's name correct (a running gag in the story) and refers to him as Ted. She attempts to get cash from the ATM machine but it 'eats' her card. Todd tries to keep her calm while getting the card back. Mrs Plotnik accuses him of trying to steal her money and threatens to get him fired. Julie calls Todd again but gets cut off. Elaine, eight months pregnant, enters.

#### Chapter 3 "What Are You Staring At?"

Elaine tries to calm Mrs Plotnik down when she threatens to call the police. Elaine suggests unplugging the machine to get the card back. Unfortunately, this melts the card and makes her even angrier. When the storm hits, the lights go out in the store and all over town. Mrs Plotnik blames Todd. As the rain and lightening become worse, a punk from out-of-town enters.

#### Chapter 4 The Storm and the Flood

The four characters are virtually trapped in the store. Elaine is concerned that if she goes into labour she will not be able to get to the hospital. Todd offers to drive her using back roads but Mrs Plotnik says she would not trust Todd with anything after what he did to her classroom. She describes how Todd flooded the classroom. Elaine announces she is married to Jimmy Branson, who once bullied Todd. The punk reaches into his pocket and aims something at Todd, demanding money and cigarettes.

#### Chapter 5 Hold the Holdup

Mrs Plotnik makes fun of the punk, his grammar and the hold-up. Elaine tries calmly to convince the punk to stop. Todd fills a box with cigarettes. His mum calls his mobile but he's cut short when the punk motions his finger threateningly across his neck. He takes Todd's phone, but drops it, smashing it. A regular customer nicknamed Rambo comes in, a big, strong guy who senses something is wrong. The punk threatens Rambo, who falls to his knees,

begging not to be shot.

#### Chapter 6 Let's Roll!

The punk reveals that he needs money to get to Florida. Rambo informs him that his car is probably flooded and won't be going anywhere. The punk gets upset and Todd tackles him to the ground. Elaine searches for the gun in his pockets but finds nothing. The robbery was all a hoax. While the group is discussing how to help the punk, Elaine goes into labour.

#### Chapter 7 Baby Todd

Todd tries to call for help but the phone lines are down and his mobile is smashed. Mrs Plotnik sets up a delivery table on the freezer. With everyone's assistance, she helps Elaine deliver a healthy baby boy. The sight of this makes Rambo faint. Elaine decides to name her baby after Todd. Just then, a stranger, dressed in yellow, bursts into the store asking to use the toilet.

#### Chapter 8 The Power and the Glory

The new arrival is the drain engineer from the water company who desperately needs to use the store's toilet. While he's back there, the toilet begins to overflow but luckily Todd is able to fix it. In return for using the toilet, the newcomer fixes the power. Mrs Plotnik gets her card back from the ATM. As the engineer leaves the store, Mr Corso comes in. He's very angry about the awful mess the store is in.

#### Chapter 9 Mr Corso is Not Amused

Todd tries to explain the awful mess to Mr Corso but Mr Corso does not listen to him. Instead, he fires Todd. Mrs Plotnik comes to Todd's rescue and suggests that Todd should get a raise for being so brave. Todd himself is very proud of his actions.

#### Chapter 10 No More Chicken Soup

Everyone decides to forget about the punk's attempted robbery. Rambo helps the punk get on his way to Florida with money collected at the church. Elaine makes Rambo godfather of the baby. Todd gets a raise and a new mobile phone. His mother swears she will never bring him chicken soup ever again. Mrs Plotnik becomes a bit nicer and even calls Todd a hero.

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Setting:</b>     | This could be in a number of locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- a house.</li><li>- a shop.</li><li>- a school.</li><li>- a hospital.</li></ul> |
| <b>Props:</b>       | None.  |
| <b>Characters:</b>  | 'Friends' and / or 'Family Members'.   |
| <b>Preparation:</b> | Tell the Group they are going to create a scene from everyday life using one of the above settings. Divide the Group into pairs or small groups.               |

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|----------------|--|
| <b>Action:</b> | <p>Ask the students to choose a setting and to demonstrate this location by doing simple actions that are relevant to that setting. Once they have warmed up and are starting to create a viable scene, 'Freeze' them with a drumbeat.</p> <p>Now tell them that a storm is coming which will create heavy flash floods. Activate them with a further drumbeat... Go! Once they have added in this new information sufficiently, 'Freeze' them again.</p> <p>Next tell them that the electricity has gone off and that it is suddenly dark. Activate them once again with a drumbeat and let them create their own scenes.</p> <p>This activity can be extended by allowing the groups to re-enact what they have done already, but this time using a different setting.</p> |
| <b>To End:</b> | When the improvisations become repetitive or over-exaggerated draw the action to a close. Allow the groups or pairs to demonstrate their improvisations to the whole Group.  |

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**Setting:** A park.

**Props:** None.

**Characters:** A 'Protective Mother'.  
A 'Son' or 'Daughter'.  
A 'Friend' or 'Friends' of the 'Son' or 'Daughter'.

**Preparation:** Divide the Group into small groups. Tell these groups that they are in a park. Allow them to choose the season and the time of day.

**Action:** *Improvisation*

The 'Son' or 'Daughter' is in the park enjoying themselves playing football - or any other game - with a 'Friend' or 'Friends'.

The 'Mother' comes into the park and interrupts their enjoyment by being over-protective, for example by:

- bringing a scarf and hat, and insisting that, as it's getting cold, they need to put these on to keep warm.
- bringing a pack of sandwiches, telling them that they have to eat their lunch - now!
- coming to tell them that it is probably going to rain and so they need to come home straight away - before they get wet!

*Activity*

This part of the Scenario explores the 'Mother' in different situations and allows the students to empathise with this character and explore why she may be protective.

Ask the students to consider, in pairs, the list of settings below. Ask them to brainstorm ideas about what the 'Protective Mother' could experience in these locations. Ask the students to think about what dangerous things could happen and how the 'Mother' may react.

- A river.
- A hospital.
- A train station.
- A high rise flat.
- A motorway.

**To End:** When the pairs or groups have finished brainstorming, ask the groups to share their thoughts.

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## Improvisation 1

**Setting:** A classroom.

**Props:** Desks and chairs.

**Characters:** A 'Teacher'.  
Some 'Students'.

**Preparation:** Tell the Group that they are going to recreate a 'classroom'. Choose one member of the Group to be the 'Teacher' and tell the rest of the Group that they will be the 'Students', sitting in rows in front of the 'Teacher'.

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**Action:** Ask the 'Teacher' to improvise collecting in the homework and the 'Students' to misbehave by talking too much, and generally misbehaving. Tell the 'Teacher' that he / she must try to control the class.

The 'Teacher' then has to set tasks and punishments for those who won't stop talking or who have not done their homework.

Finally, tell the Group that there will now be an argument or showdown with the 'Teacher' but that eventually the 'Teacher' will win. (The 'Teacher' will need to select one or two 'Students' with whom to have this confrontation.)

**To End:** *Reflection and Discussion*

Sitting in a circle, ask the students what it felt like to be a 'Student', and then to be the 'Teacher'. Did they 'show' how they felt or did they take on a 'role' because of the situation?

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## Improvisation 2

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|---------------------|--|
| <b>Setting:</b>     | The home of the 'Teacher'.   |
| <b>Props:</b>       | None.  |
| <b>Characters:</b>  | A 'Teacher'.<br>The 'Brother' of the 'Teacher'.  |
| <b>Preparation:</b> | Tell the Group that the 'Teacher' is in his / her kitchen cooking supper and lives alone. The 'Teacher' gets a phone call from the sister-in-law saying that the 'Brother' is very ill and is in hospital. |

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|----------------|--|
| <b>Action:</b> | <p>Ask the students to separate into small groups or pairs and to come up with ideas for an improvisation. The students can decide whether the scene takes place in the hospital or, perhaps, at the home of the 'Brother'. They can make this a serious scene or a funny scene, depending on whether they think the 'Teacher' likes the 'Brother'!</p> <p>Alternatively, the scene could indeed show them together when they were children. Or the students could go further and even explore the biography of the 'Teacher'...</p> |
| <b>To End:</b> | When concentration starts to wane allow the groups to present their improvisations to the Group as a whole.  |

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Improvisation 1

**Setting:** A café.

**Props:** Tables and chairs.

**Characters:** A 'Pregnant Woman'.  
'Friend' or 'Friends' of the 'Pregnant Woman'.  
'Customers'.  
A 'Waiter'.

**Preparation:** Ask all the students to walk round the room as if they were eight months pregnant - it doesn't matter whether they are male or female! If any of them are struggling with this, ask them to imagine they are each carrying a sack of potatoes which is resting on their stomach!

Now ask the students to set up a café scene in medium sized groups (four or five people). They can either choose a role themselves, or you can allocate a role to them. Tell the students, before they start, to set a scene where 'something dramatic' happens to the 'Pregnant Woman'. The students should explore how the other characters in the café react!

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**Action:** Start the Scenario with the 'Waiter' serving the 'Customers'. Tell the 'Pregnant Woman' to enter the café. Let her settle in and be served. She can start to chat to her 'Friends' who she has arranged to meet there.

Now let the scene develop so that 'something dramatic' happens, for example:

- she gets stuck in a chair.
- she feels sick.
- she has some labour pains.

Ask the students to improvise how their characters would react.

**To End:** Once the scene has come to an end, allow the groups to perform their Scenarios to the whole Group. Ask the students to consider the importance of the secondary roles or minor characters and what effect they have on the performance of a scene.

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## Improvisation 2

- Setting:** The home of a 'Pregnant Woman'.
- Props:** None.
- Characters:** A 'Pregnant Woman'.  
The 'Husband' of the 'Pregnant Woman'. He has just come out of prison.
- Preparation:** Ask the Group to get into pairs and to create a scene where the 'Pregnant Woman' is afraid of her 'Husband'.
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- Action:** Ask the 'Pregnant Woman' to start making supper. Tell the 'Husband' to be drinking in front of the TV. Something should then happen, such as the football team which the 'Husband' supports losing an important match. This should change the atmosphere of the scene and create a situation where the 'Pregnant Woman' becomes scared of her 'Husband'.
- To End:** When the improvisations start to become repetitive or dragged-out, 'Freeze' them all and allow some of the groups to present their improvisations to the full Group.
-



## Improvisation 1

**Setting:** A music shop.

**Props:** A table for the shop counter.

**Characters:** 'Customers'.  
A 'Shop Assistant'.  
A 'Punk'.

**Preparation:** Ask the students to get into small groups. Get each group to appoint a 'Shop Assistant' and a 'Punk' - the rest of the group being 'Customers'.

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**Action:** Tell the groups to set the scene where the 'Punk' argues with the 'Shop Assistant' who accuses him / her of theft. Ask the group to improvise how their characters might react.

**To End:** When this scene shows signs of becoming exhausted, allow the small groups to present their improvisations in front of the whole Group.

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## Improvisation 2

**Setting:** The bedroom of the 'Punk'.

**Props:** None.

**Characters:** A 'Punk'.  
The 'Mother' or 'Father' of the 'Punk'.

**Preparation:** Ask the students to get into pairs. Tell them to create a conflict between the 'Punk' and his or her 'Mother' or 'Father'.

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**Action:** Tell the 'Punk' to be doing his or her hair or make-up. They are paying close attention to getting ready to go out. The parent comes in and challenges the 'Punk', showing negativity towards their image. Ask the groups to improvise how both characters might react.

**To End:** Stop any of these when you feel they are waning or when the students have naturally ended the scene.

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## Improvisation 1

- Setting:** A youth club.
- Props:** A table.
- Characters:** A 'Macho Cool Dude'.  
'Friends' of the 'Macho Cool Dude'.
- Preparation:** Tell the Group to break into small groups each of which must include a 'Dude'.  
  
Ask the groups to imagine that they are enjoying themselves in a youth club, perhaps with a table tennis or pool table, a soft drinks bar, a karaoke machine, a dance floor...  
  
Before improvising the scene, tell the 'Dudes' that they are to do a lot of 'big talk' and that each of them will then pick a fight with another character in their group. However, do not tell the rest of the characters that this is going to occur.
- 
- Action:** Ask the 'Friends' to mime activities in the club without the 'Dude' being present. Once the scene is set, the 'Dude' joins them and the mime can turn into an improvisation using speech. The 'Dude' then starts boasting, for example, about how tough he is, how clever he is, what he's been doing...
- To End:** Allow the groups to perform in front of the whole Group and to explore the other characters' reactions and responses.
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## Improvisation 2

**Setting:** Home of the 'Dude'.

**Props:** None.

**Characters:** The 'Dude'.  
The younger 'Brother' or 'Sister' of the 'Dude'.  
A 'Hamster'! (Yes - a 'Hamster'!)

**Preparation:** Split the Group into pairs or small groups. The younger 'Brother' or 'Sister' is cleaning out the dirty cage of the 'Hamster' in their bedroom or the living room. Although the bravado of the 'Dude' is enormous, he is actually a wuss. He is scared of everything. Even hamsters!

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**Action:** Ask the 'Dude' to enter the room and start giving lots of advice to the younger sibling. The 'Dude' gives the impression that he / she has faced every challenging situation there is and knows everything about everything.

Suddenly, the 'Hamster' escapes! This presents the 'Dude' with a real problem as hamsters are animals that really terrify the 'Dude'.

Ask the students to show the funny side of this situation as far as possible. They should highlight the difference between the big-talking nature of the 'Dude' and the reality of one who is scared of many things, including hamsters!

An extension of this could be that the 'Brother' comes in with a snake, or a dog, or a rat, anything which can help the comedy to develop and to shows that the 'Dude' is really a bit of a wimp!

**To End:** The scene can end when, for example, the 'Brother' catches the 'Hamster' or the 'Dude' runs away. Allow some of the small groups to share their performances with the rest of the class.

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**Setting:** A shop.

**Props:** None.

**Characters:** A 'Grumpy Boss'.  
A 'Shop Assistant'.

**Preparation:** Break the Group into pairs. Ask the students to brainstorm the relationship between the 'Boss' and the 'Assistant'. The students can decide on the type of shop they are in. Tell the students to prepare a scene with these two characters.

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**Action:** *Mime*

Ask the 'Grumpy Boss' and the 'Shop Assistant' to mime everyday life in a shop, for example;

- a morning scene and an evening scene.
- getting the store ready for opening.
- making a display of a product.
- stocking some shelves with product.

Students should try to convey what type of relationship their characters have with each other through the use of mime.

*Improvisation*

Ask the students now to create a scene where the 'Assistant' makes mistakes with money, wrapping merchandise, serving a customer, etc... Ask the students to explore how the characters would react to each other.

**To End:** Allow the improvisations or mimes to come to a natural close. If students have the chance to present their mimes, allow the other members of the Group to guess what the relationship is like between the 'Boss' and the 'Assistant'.

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|---------------------|---|
| <b>Setting:</b>     | The retail section of a service station.  |
| <b>Props:</b>       | A table for a counter.  |
| <b>Characters:</b>  | A 'Protective Mother'.<br>A 'Very Strict Teacher'.<br>A 'Pregnant Woman'.<br>A 'Punk'.<br>A 'Cool Macho Dude'.<br>A 'Grumpy Boss'.<br>A 'Shop Assistant'.   |
| <b>Preparation:</b> | Divide the Group into smaller groups of seven students. Ask each student to take on one of the roles they have been exploring in the earlier Scenarios. There should be one of each character in every group. |

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|----------------|--|
| <b>Action:</b> | <p>Tell the characters to enter the scene one at a time and to begin to interact with other characters. The Scenario could begin with the 'Grumpy Boss' and 'Shop Assistant'.</p> <p>When they are all in the store give them the signal that the stormy weather has escalated and that no-one can leave the store as the road is completely flooded.</p> <p>Ask them to remain 'in character' while they explore their own character's reactions and the interactions with all the other characters...</p> <p>And see what happens!</p> |
| <b>To End:</b> | And now ask them to read the book!   |

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# 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.

---

### 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.

---

**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.

---

**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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