

The Crash

Drama Workshop

Inspire students to...

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



Bringing Robinswood High Interest Series to life



The Crash

Drama Workshop

Sue Marshall



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Contents

Section One

Introduction and Background



Background Aims



Drama in Literacy



"I Don't Do Drama – I Teach Literacy!"

Basic Drama Workshop Techniques



Using the Scenarios

Warm-up Games

The Crash – the Novel

About the Author of the Workshops

Section Two

The Crash – The Workshop Scenarios



Short Synopsis of the Novel

The Scenarios

Section Three

Warm-up Games



Introduction

Games

High Interest Drama Workshops




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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 Primary Series novel, *The Crash*.

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!

The Crash - the Novel

This is an exciting book in its own right - and it can make a very exciting experience as a Drama Workshop. It is set in winter, in snow and ice. There is an accident on a school bus. There's a fire! And there's a snowstorm! There is a farmhouse without electricity, which is very dark! They are saved! So there are many scenarios that you can choose to build upon.

The main characters all play in a basketball team. So we have chosen - as the first Scenario - a warm-up that includes basketball. Part of the story takes place in a very dark farmhouse, so possible warm-up games can incorporate blindfold games such as 'The Keys Game', or listening and seeing games like 'Grandmother's Footsteps'. It is important to give the pupils time to engage together. So, to warm their imaginations and focus as well, your Group should experience some warm-up mimes. Some ideas are given in Scenario 1.

The Workshop provides six Scenarios 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. The Workshop can be carried out using the Scenarios sequentially. Alternatively, you may choose to select scenes which you feel will help you to bring the story alive for your particular Group at that moment.



THE CRASH



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

The Crash - The Workshop Scenarios



A short synopsis of the novel

CHAPTER 1 The Wheels on the Bus

Rory, Ben, Lerch, and Craig wait for the school bus after a lost basketball game. The old yellow bus slides across the school car park. Mrs Davin (known as 'Mrs D') the driver says there is a big storm forecast and the roads are already icy. The snow comes down hard and the windows get fogged up. Suddenly, everything goes crazy.

(Vocabulary: doughnut, as in a skid on an icy road; sploosh, sound of a bus travelling through slush; windshield wipers.)

CHAPTER 2 Over the Edge

The bus slides all over the road and everyone is thrown around. It smashes over the guard rail, tips sideways, and slides down a hill. When it stops, Ben is cut and bleeding but conscious. Mrs D is bleeding but not moving. Craig gets bandages for them. He says they must wait for someone to find them. The others say it could be morning before they're found but that Ben and Mrs D need medical help right away. Then Rory smells fuel in the bus.

(Vocabulary: dashboard.)

CHAPTER 3 Up in Flames

The only way out is the emergency exit at the back. Craig pulls Ben out while Lerch pulls Mrs D. Rory brings the fire extinguisher. When they're all out, Rory goes back for his coat. While inside, the front end bursts into flame. The others yell at Rory to get out as the fire reaches the back. At last, Rory jumps out of the bus.

(Vocabulary: emergency, fire extinguisher, blizzard.)

CHAPTER 4 What the...?

The fire goes out after ten minutes but Craig is confident they will be found. Lerch refuses to do nothing so climbs the hill to the road. However, it's too slippery and steep so he doesn't make it. Ben wakes up and tries to walk but can't as his leg is broken. They get worried when Ben coughs up blood. Craig realises they need to find help. They do 'rock, paper, scissors' to see who goes or stays. Craig and Rory set out for help.

CHAPTER 5 Into the Storm

Ben and Lerch try to keep Mrs D warm. Rory had seen a light in the distance. They know they're not dressed for such strong wind, but keep going. It's dark and they're hungry and thirsty. Rory thinks he has hypothermia because he is shaking so much. He falls down and says he doesn't want to get up, just sleep. Craig knows that he's in serious trouble. He pretends he can see a house up ahead.

(Vocabulary: swirled.)

CHAPTER 6 Fire in the Darkness

They find an abandoned farm house and break in. There is nobody there to help but the house protects them from the wind. Rory lies down to sleep while Craig makes a fire. Craig spots a cheap lighter somebody left there. He finds some newspapers and wood and starts a fire. He calls to Rory, who doesn't answer. He goes to look for him, but he has gone.

CHAPTER 7 Now What?

Craig makes a torch to search the house. He must find someone to help, so gets dressed to head out into the storm again. He makes a hat from a sweater and stuffs newspapers in his clothes for extra padding. He decides to check upstairs before leaving. Then he hears a noise and footsteps. He sees a dark shape like a monster. After a moment of tension, the 'monster' asks if Craig is trying to burn his house down.

CHAPTER 8 Who's the Hero?

Rory had gone to get help from the real farmhouse that he saw out of the window. The farmer returned to find Craig. Minutes later, Craig and Rory are given a warm bed and soup by the farmer. The police go to help the others. Ben has a broken leg, broken ribs, and a cut which needs stitches. His basketball season is over. Mrs D spends a few days in hospital but is fine. The boys' basketball team has a really bad season without Ben and continues to be wary of 'away' games.

Setting: A basketball court - (no details needed for this exercise).

Props: None.

Characters: None.

Preparation: First Part of the Scenario: *Warm-up Ball Games*

Tell the Group to imagine they are in a basketball court. They are going to do some 'training' - passing, bouncing and throwing an imaginary ball.

Second Part of the Scenario: *Basketball Match*

After their 'training' they will play an imaginary game of basketball.

Action:

Start in pairs, and build up to groups of four, then six and finally to two halves of the Class or Group (depending on total numbers, of course!) which will represent two basketball teams at a basketball match.

In the smaller groups, initially in pairs, begin by throwing an imaginary ball one to the other. Next, ask them to bounce the ball to each other. Finally, get them to travel up and down the room, all the while throwing the imaginary ball one to the other and then, subsequently, both throwing and bouncing the ball to each other. Once they have mastered this - increase the size of the groups until you have two teams.

Keep them in two teams and, in a line and in slow motion, ask each team to pass a ball along the line and back in mime. Then ask them to imagine a goal at each end. Ask them to spread out as if in a basketball court and to mime, again in slow motion, passing to each other until it reaches the goal where the end person shoots at the goal. You can show them how to pass a ball in mime by bouncing it on the ground like basketball players (whereas before they travelled in straight lines) and then pass it on by throwing it to a new player.

Then you can play an imaginary 'basketball' game: throwing, passing catching, shooting. But keep the action in slow motion mime for several goes, until they gain spatial awareness. When you think they are ready, see if they can speed it up to make it look like a normal game of basketball, but don't let them take sides yet.

When they have really mastered playing in their own team, they can try to mime playing a game against the opposite team. They will find this quite hard - you will have to be the referee!

This Scenario is an absorbing introduction to the book *The Crash*. It could be used before reading the beginning of the book. Alternatively, it could be used as a warm-up for other Scenarios if you want to create a slightly longer Workshop.

To End: (No particular ending required as you are in control.)

Setting:	A Playground or Park in Winter.
Props:	A few chairs.
Characters:	'Schoolchildren'. Some 'old people'. Some 'people walking dogs'. A 'park-keeper'.
Preparation:	<p>Tell them that they are going to go to the park (or park playground) and that it is very cold, snowy and icy.</p> <p>Ask them to imagine whereabouts in the room the park is. Tell them to spread out in the room to establish their own space.</p>

Action:	<p>Start the action by telling them to get dressed individually for the park nearby - remembering that it is extremely cold, it's been snowing and it's icy!</p> <p>Now they have to go on their individual journeys to the park. It's dangerous - and, before they can even get out of their front door, they have to dig the snow away!</p> <p>Get them to remember what it's like to walk on ice, break ice puddles, walk through deep snow, take a dog out in snow, etc.</p> <p>On a signal from you, they can begin to mime other activities, such as having a snowball fight, building a snowman, sledging down the imaginary slopes, etc. The 'park-keeper' can try to control the 'schoolchildren' especially if there are any 'old people' trying to walk themselves or with their dogs nearby.</p>
To End:	When the creativity begins to wane, or the Group becomes too repetitive, draw the improvisation to a close.

Setting:	A school bus or coach. The roads are covered in snow and ice.
Props:	Some chairs.
Characters:	'Basketball players' - members of a basketball team. A few 'Rescuers'.
Preparation:	Arrange the chairs as if they were seats on a bus or coach. Tell the Group that they are about to set off home so they must sit - either on chairs or on the floor. Remind them that when you shout 'Freeze' they have to stop speech and movement immediately and hold the position they're in at the moment you shout.

Action:	<p>In these three stages, make sure you keep the drama alive by helping them to start a scene with a few words or actions as necessary.</p> <p>Ask the 'players' to chat and talk as they would normally do on a school bus going home. Talk about school, a match, TV, etc.</p> <p>Once this has become vibrant and natural, 'Freeze' the action. Tell them that the bus has skidded on ice and nearly all of them are injured. Ask them to mime the accident in slow motion, and in total silence. What we are aiming to achieve here is for the Group to experience the contrast in both noise, the loud chatterings prior to the crash followed by a complete lack of noise, and in movement, relatively little movement whilst seated followed by the explosive movement of falling, rolling, being thrown out of their seats, etc.</p> <p>Now send in the 'rescuers' to help the passengers, still in silence and slow motion. Tell them that they need to get all the passengers out of the bus. When this has been achieved ask them to 'Freeze' again.</p> <p>Move the improvisation to another stage by telling them that a fire has broken out on the bus - and it is critical that everyone is helped out of it - and that it is urgent that they organise help. Allow them to both speak and mime at normal speed.</p>
To End:	Draw this improvisation to an end when creativity wanes or actions become repetitive. You could calm them from a possibly frenetic scene by getting the Group to return to their individual homes by trudging through the snow - whilst the snow storm continues.

Setting:	A wood.
Props:	(None)
Characters:	'Schoolchildren'.
Preparation:	<p>Tell the Group that they are going for a walk into a wood. After a while, they will realise that they are lost. It will then become darker - with no street or any other lighting at all. And then it starts snowing - so it will be cold and wet as well.</p> <p><i>One of the reasons for this improvisation is to allow them to express a contrast in mood. Ask them, therefore, to show a definite change of mood from pleasure, to anxiety, to fear through the phases - the scenes - they will be doing. Help them to build the atmosphere by suggesting details, such as:</i></p> <p>1) <i>'You've found a bird's nest.', 'Look at the flowers', 'Make a den'.</i></p> <p>2) <i>'Which path should you take?', 'It's getting dark.'</i></p> <p>3) <i>'It's beginning to snow.', 'I can't see the path.', 'I must find some shelter'.</i></p>
Action:	<p>The 'schoolchildren' carry this improvisation out largely individually.</p> <p>Tell them first, therefore, to take an individual space in the room and to start an ordinary walk into a pleasant wood. After a while, ask them to 'Freeze'.</p> <p>Tell them to carry on walking although they now realise that they don't know where they are or which way to go to get home. After a while, tell them to 'Freeze' again.</p> <p>Now tell them that it's become completely dark - and it's beginning to snow. So they must really try to imagine or work out the route they took to where they are now and to try to find their way back after thinking about the route.</p>
To End:	Bring this improvisation to an end when the Group appear to be losing some concentration or focus.

Setting:	An old derelict house.
Props:	A few chairs.
Characters:	The members of the 'basketball team'.
Preparation:	Tell them that they are going to visit a derelict house in the woods. Describe to them some of the aspects that would be quite likely in a derelict house, such as broken windows, furniture all over the place, etc.

Activity:	Ask the pupils to sit down wherever they like within the house. They can sit on chairs or on the floor. Tell them to shut their eyes - or they can use blindfolds - and then to get up and explore the house as if they are in the dark. Blindfolds can be really helpful for this exercise!
To End:	When you feel it is appropriate, tell them to sit down. Ask them to open their eyes or take off the blindfolds. Reflect with them how it felt to be in this abandoned place. Ask them to describe how they thought it looked. What did they think was there?

Setting:	Divide the room into two separate areas. One end of the room will represent a derelict house. The other end will be a warm, homely, cosy house.
Props:	A few chairs.
Characters:	The members of the 'basketball team'. 'Rescuers'.
Preparation:	Tell the 'basketball team' members that they will have been trapped in a derelict house. It is cold, damp and very dark. However, they are about to be rescued - but they must follow the instructions of their 'rescuer'.

Activity:	<p>Ask all the members of the Group to get into pairs. Tell one of each pair to go to the derelict house and the other to go to the warm house.</p> <p>Tell the pupils in the derelict house - the 'basketball team' - to curl up in a ball on the floor. They must then close their eyes - and keep them shut throughout. Ask the rescuers in the warm house to go quietly through the wood to the derelict house and then lead their partner on a journey back through the woods in silence, to the warm, cosy room.</p> <p>Once they are all in their warm location, tell them to 'Freeze' the action, but the 'basketball team' members' eyes must stay shut.</p> <p>Tell the 'basketball team' that they can now open their eyes and that they can help the 'rescuer' to build a fire in the main room fireplace. They will have to fetch wood in from outside. They could chop wood, too. You could also suggest to them that they could share or even cook some food together. Whilst they carry out these actions, ask them to talk to each other about getting lost, and what it was like to be 'rescued'.</p> <p>If there is time, swap the roles of the two individuals around and repeat the improvisation.</p>
To End:	<p>Ask the Group to get into a circle and reflect on all their experiences in the set of improvisations you have carried out with them based on the story: <i>The Crash</i>.</p> <p>Tell them they can discover what happened to similar characters to them by reading the original story in the book!</p>

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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..."

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.

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.

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.

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'.

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.

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.).

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.

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!

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.

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!

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!

3. Variation on 'Chinese Whispers'

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

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.

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.

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!)

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!

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.

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.

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.
