

I Didn't Do It!

Drama Workshop

Inspire students to...

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



Bringing Robinswood High Interest Series to life



I Didn't Do It!

Drama Workshop

Sue Marshall



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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, *I Didn't Do It!*

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!

I Didn't Do It! - the Novel

This story emphasises the differences between children who have grown up together and those that come into a group from a different background. The main character in this story comes from the country where he is an established member of the community - in this case, a farming community. He moves to a city school where he encounters and experiences the consequences of different attitudes and values.

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.

It is important to give the group warm-up games, and enliven their imaginations through drama exercises in order to get them prepared for improvising. Possible suitable games might include: 'Fruit-Bowl', 'Starboard and Port-side', 'Fishes in the Sea', 'Grandmother's Footsteps'.



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

I Didn't Do It! - The Workshop Scenarios



A short synopsis of the novel

CHAPTER 1 New Kid

Tom Foster has just moved to a new school in the city and already the other kids are giving him a hard time and calling him 'Farmer'. Suddenly, Tom gets called down to the office where Mr Loney, the Principal, accuses him of doing something to the walls in the washroom. Tom doesn't know what Mr Loney is talking about.

CHAPTER 2 Poison and Paint

When Tom gets back to his classroom, his teacher is furious and the other students are sitting in stunned silence. The class hamster is dead and Mr T believes someone has poisoned him. Some of the kids are blaming Tom, saying that he also used spray paint on the washroom walls. When Tom opens his locker, a can of spray paint falls out.

CHAPTER 3 I Didn't Do It

The school calls Tom's mum to pick him up. Tom insists he has been set up. Why would he paint the words 'Farmer Freaks' in the girls' washroom? Tom's mum tells him he needs to work harder on adjusting to the move.

CHAPTER 4 Loner?

Even though Mr T announces that the hamster died of natural causes, the kids are even meaner to Tom than before. Tom feels sick to his stomach when they dissect worms during science class, and excuses himself to go to the washroom. As soon as he returns, the fire alarm rings. This time it's a real fire!

CHAPTER 5 Fire!

Everyone evacuates the school and watches the fire trucks arrive. Minutes later, the fire fighters come out with a smouldering trash can. Someone had lit some paper. Once again, Tom is blamed because he was in the washroom when it happened.

That weekend, Tom is put to work painting over the bright pink walls in his bedroom. Tucked away in a corner he finds a picture of three girls. Two of them he recognises from school; he doesn't know who the third girl is.

CHAPTER 6 "Get Lost, Farm Boy"

Tom discovers that the girl in the photo used to live in his house. Tom's parents bought the house when the previous owners got divorced and had to sell it. He starts to figure things out: Obviously, Marcie and Kenda, the girls from school, blame Tom's family for buying the house from their friend. When Tom confronts them with the picture, they warn him that he's going to wish he had never moved.

CHAPTER 7 Setting the Trap

Tom needs proof that Marcie and Kenda are framing him for the problems at school. Armed with his mother's camera, Tom sets his trap. He feigns illness during class and asks to go to the washroom. But, instead, he hides out in the hall to see if Marcie and Kenda come out as well.

Sure enough, the girls leave class, take out a brown lipstick and start defacing the picture of Mr Loney in the hall. Tom catches them in the act and takes pictures of the whole thing. Mr Loney hears the commotion and calls them all to the office.

CHAPTER 8 Picture Proof!

When Mr Loney sees the pictures, the girls are suspended for two days. Rumours of the pictures start flying around the school, and the other boys are impressed with Tom's cleverness.

Finally, they start to realise he's a decent guy after all.

They invite him to join them in a soccer game.



Setting: A farm - (no details needed for this exercise).
Props: None.
Characters: None.
Preparation: Describe what the students are about to do.

First Part of the Scenario: *Group Objects*

Explain that you will state the name of an object and that they have to decide - in thirty seconds - how they can together represent that object and then do it. Tell them that you will give them a countdown of "5-4-3-2-1-Freeze!" signalling the end of the thirty seconds. On "Freeze!" - they must be absolutely still. Then you will move on to the next object.

Second Part of the Scenario: *Freeze-Frames*

Explain that *Freeze-Frames* are similar to Group Objects but that they now have sixty seconds in which to create a 'picture' or 'photograph' of an activity on a farm. Again, do a countdown to 'Freeze', when they must be absolutely still before you move on to the next *Freeze-Frame*.

Action: *Group Objects*

This is a fantastic way of getting the children to work together co-operatively and to help stimulate their imagination. Don't worry if one child takes the lead, as a bossy child often emerges as a good leader. However, you may have to intervene to assist them to negotiate! Before you start, you may have to show them what you mean by making an object so that they get the idea of what is required.

Divide the group into smaller groups of 4-6 pupils.
 Objects can include:

<i>Tractor</i>	<i>Hay Bale</i>	<i>Donkey</i>	<i>Combine Harvester</i>
<i>Ditch</i>	<i>Pond</i>	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Rake</i>
<i>Barn</i>	<i>Pigsty</i>	<i>Henhouse</i>	<i>etc.</i>

Freeze-Frames

Similar to Group Objects - you are trying to create awareness of an outdoor life - so these activities could include:

<i>Feeding the chickens</i>	<i>Mucking out the stables</i>
<i>Milking the cows</i>	<i>Hay-making</i>
<i>Picking strawberries</i>	<i>Picking apples</i>
<i>Grooming the horses</i>	<i>Playing football</i>
<i>Painting the fences</i>	<i>Hanging out washing</i>
<i>Swimming in the river</i>	<i>etc.</i>

To End: Ring a school bell or say 'Home Time', at the appropriate moment and they can talk about it as they walk home.

Setting:	A large farmhouse kitchen.
Props:	A table - with lots of fruit and vegetables (real or imaginary).
Characters:	A 'child'. His / her 'friend'. Child's 'mother'. Child's 'father'.
Preparation:	Tell the group(s) that it is very early morning. They are going to set a scene of life on a working farm.

Action:	Divide your Group into smaller groups of 4 (if necessary just 3) pupils. Ask the 'child' and his / her 'friend' to be peeling or washing potatoes. They are getting ready to go to the shops. They're talking about going to school: they like school... Ask the 'mother' or 'father' to clean all the surfaces and the floor. Then send 'father' or 'mother' in as if he / she has been outside. Tell him / her they have been up late helping with the new calves. It's very cold.
To End:	After they have done this scene, ask them to imagine what the 'children', the 'mother' and the 'father' are doing an hour later. Each smaller group can then improvise this scenario in turn.

Setting:	The farmhouse.
Props:	Not vital - but table, chairs, etc, can be used.
Characters:	The family ('mother', 'father', 'child').
Preparation:	Tell them that it is moving day - they are leaving the farm for a new home in the city. So they are packing up all their personal belongings and furniture.

Action:	<p>Use different rooms in the house to pack different types of belongings.</p> <p>Use mime in the first instance - this helps the atmosphere.</p> <p>In pairs, get them to carry the heavy objects (sofas, chairs, etc.) on to the lorry.</p> <p>Once they appear to have packed and put it all on the lorry ask them to 'Freeze' and sit down.</p> <p>Tell them it is a very sad day for the children who are leaving all their friends. Choose two children to be the ones who are leaving and ask the others to think of a gift they would like to give them as a leaving present.</p> <p>Sit them all in a circle. Each child has to come into the centre of the circle and show their gift in mime, what it does, or how to use it. The others have to guess what it is. Then they say goodbye to their friends.</p>
To End:	Reflect with the group how they felt to be moving and how it felt for their friends.

Setting:	A Shopping Mall.
Props:	Chairs or benches.
Characters:	A number of 'schoolchildren'. A 'newcomer' child.
Preparation:	Tell the group that they are going to represent 'city kids'. They are going to 'act out' - or improvise - meeting up and 'hanging out' on a few benches in the Mall. Some of them will be listening to music or texting. Some will be eating junk food - burgers or pizza, etc. Some of the girls might be using hand mirrors to put on make-up.

Action:	Ask them to enter the scene in pairs and threes as if they are meeting up. Tell them they need to decide which film to go and see in the cinema. Ask the 'newcomer' to join the group - but he / she is to be the last one to arrive there. The 'newcomer' has come from a farming community a long way off, and he / she has never been to the cinema.
To End:	End the improvisation at an 'appropriate moment' - when your pupils start to become repetitive or the creative content of their activity begins to diminish. Change the 'newcomer' and run through the improvisation again.

Setting: School Dining Room.

Props: Chairs.

Characters: A number of 'schoolchildren'.
A 'newcomer'.

Preparation: Ask the regular 'schoolchildren' to put the chairs in rows as if around a dining table.

Action: Tell the regular 'schoolchildren' to queue for their food, and then take a seat at the dining table together and talk to each other as they might normally.

Tell the 'newcomer' to join the end of the queue, and then take a seat at the dining table - but on their own.

Ask the regular 'schoolchildren' to taunt and tease the 'newcomer' whilst they eat.

To End: Reflect afterwards with the group what it felt like first to be in the big group and then to be the isolated 'newcomer'.

Setting:	The toilets or 'rest room' and also a classroom.
Props:	Chairs.
Characters:	Two or three 'friends' from the class. A 'newcomer'. A 'teacher'. All others of the group to make up the 'class'.
Preparation:	Divide the room into two areas. Put chairs in rows as if in a classroom on one side.

Action:	<p>Tell the small group of 'friends' to plan an act of vandalism in the toilets, such as writing graffiti with spray-paint, lipstick, chalk, etc. They can mime and / or talk whilst doing this but they must complete it within two minutes, using the space without chairs.</p> <p>After two minutes, you beat a drum (or something similar) and the setting changes to the classroom. All the 'schoolchildren', including the small group, that make up the 'class' sit on the chairs, with the 'teacher' standing in front of them.</p> <p>The 'teacher' wants to know who did the vandalism, and asks the 'class' for information.</p> <p>The 'teacher' accuses the 'newcomer'.</p>
To End:	<p>'Freeze' the group at an appropriate moment, such as when they become repetitive or concentration is waning.</p> <p>Begin the improvisation again with different children taking the roles of the 'vandal' group, the 'newcomer' and the 'teacher'.</p> <p>Finally, you can suggest that the group should read - or finish reading - the original novel: <i>I Didn't Do It!</i></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.
