

DRAMA GAMES WARM UP

Giving Presents

Age: 5 to adult

Players: Whole Group/Pairs

Time: 10-15 minutes

Skills: Mime and movement, Improvisation

This game is all about receiving surprises and about the things we value most.

Instructions:

A fast-moving game in which ideas are generated very quickly. In pairs, mime giving and receiving presents. The person giving the present must not decide what it is. The recipient should mime opening the present and only then say what it is. Don't pre-plan, just decide on the spur of the moment. Whatever it is, be really delighted and grateful – it is just what you have always wanted!

Begin by sitting in a circle and each person should give a present to the person sitting next to them, one at a time, going round the circle so that everyone sees each gift. Once you have demonstrated the game, participants can play in pairs, taking it in turns to give each other a mystery gift. Keep swapping over for a couple of minutes.

Director's Tips

- Afterwards it is fun to go around the circle and find out some of the presents people received
- Keep it moving fast so that players don't have time to plan – this is much more fun!
- Try playing an even faster version where the gift is not wrapped so that the recipient immediately says what it is and thanks the giver

Play Online

You can play this game online if you are using Zoom or other video-conferencing software where students can see and hear each other. If you are playing with the whole class, begin by passing the imaginary gift towards your camera and saying the name of the person you are giving the gift to. That person should hold their hands towards their camera/screen as though they are receiving the gift. You will need to work out an order for students to play the game, so that everyone has a turn. Playing it in pairs in breakout rooms is even more fun as you get to give each other lots of presents!

DRAMA GAMES MAIN ACTIVITY

Hot Seating

Age: 5 to adult

Players: Whole Group/Pairs

Time: 10-15 minutes

Skills: Co-operation, improvisation, communication

What is hot seating?

A character is questioned by the group about his or her background, behaviour and motivation. The method may be used for developing a role in the drama lesson or rehearsals or analysing a play post-performance. Even done without preparation, it is an excellent way of fleshing out a character. Characters may be hot seated individually, in pairs or small groups. The technique is additionally useful for developing questioning skills with the rest of the group.

How do you do hot seating?

The traditional approach is for the pupil playing the character to sit on a chair in front of the group (arranged in a semi-circle), although characters may be hot seated in pairs or groups. It is helpful if the teacher takes on the role of facilitator to guide the questioning in constructive directions. To help students begin you can try hot-seating children in pairs (e.g. a pair of street urchins) or in groups (e.g. environmental protesters, refugees).

If the background of the character is familiar to the pupils, then it may not be necessary for those playing the characters to do much preparation. Although some roles obviously require research you may be surprised at how much detail students can add from their own imaginations. It is important that the rest of the group are primed to ask pertinent questions. Don't get bogged down in facts during hot seating but concentrate on personal feelings and observations instead.

Examples

Characters to hot seat include famous people such as Florence Nightingale, President Kennedy or Tutankhamen as well as ordinary people like a chimney sweep, a Roman soldier or a Saxon farmer. Students can be asked to research historical characters with opposing points of view and then be hot seated by the class as part of a debate.