



Chris Stubbs
Classmate Books

Drama Works!

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DRAMA WORKS!

A handbook for educational drama

Chris Stubbs

Classmate Books

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Introduction: A Structure for Drama

A teacher in any subject who is planning a series of lessons with a new class is likely to ask some very basic questions like these:

Who?

Which group of students are being taught?
What do they already know?
What can they already do?
Have I taken them before?
What ideas and experiences will both students, and teacher, bring to the lesson?

What?

What is the main idea of the lesson?
What skills and concepts are the students going to learn?
What information or knowledge will they need?
Where are they going to find it?

Why?

Why is it valuable for them to learn these ideas?
Will they think these ideas are valuable?
How will we know if the ideas were valuable for these students, at this time?

When?

What time of day is the lesson to take place?
What have the students been doing beforehand?
How long is the work to last?
How does the work build on what they have already done?

Where?

What space is available for the lesson to take place?
How does the space need to be set up?
How is the space going to be used?

How?

What equipment is needed?
How will the students know what to do?
How will the students be organised?
What is the teacher's role at any point in the lesson?
What tasks will students be asked to do?
In what order will these tasks be done?

These questions might broadly be grouped under three areas:

- The Players (Who?)
- The Lesson Content (What? Why?)
- Classroom management and control (When? Where? How?)

Drama challenges the teacher in each of these three areas, so that the answers to the questions may present uncertainties and apprehensions on the part of both the teacher, and the students.

In a conventional classroom, for example, the roles of teacher and students are generally clearly defined. There may be individual variations in how some students and teachers perceive each other, but classroom roles are usually relatively standard. Indeed, schools tend to encourage this standardisation overtly by agreement on such issues as behaviour and dress codes:

- Don't swear
- Don't eat in the classroom
- Tuck your shirt in,
- Don't wear jewellery

In drama lessons, the roles of the players, and particularly that of the teacher, can fluctuate more widely, presenting an opportunity for the teacher to adopt a much greater variety of teaching strategies, but also asking questions about the control and security the teacher feels while running the lesson.

Similarly, the content of the lesson is much more negotiable between students and teacher in a drama lesson. The lesson depends upon all the players believing in what is taking place, at least to the extent that they are willing participants. You cannot force anyone to do drama. It is probably equally impossible to force students to do any subject properly if the truth is told, but in the drama lesson there is no hiding place for reluctant players. This presents further problems and potential pitfalls for the teacher:

- What if the students reject my ideas?
- What if I can't find a way to include their ideas?
- What if they just don't want to take part?

Finally, classroom management in drama places greater demands upon the teacher since students must be allowed to move around the space and to talk freely to each other. How can the teacher retain control in these circumstances, and ensure that students remain actively occupied on the agreed task?

- How should the space be organised?
- What resources will be needed?
- What should the participants do at various stages during the lesson?

A certain level of apprehension is therefore quite natural for the inexperienced teacher of drama, and for the experienced teacher meeting a new class, because of the insecurities created by the challenges in these three areas.

The Players

Simply by regarding both teacher and students as “players” creates a difference. The “them and us” attitude of the stereotyped classroom disappears beneath the recognition of a common purpose, to produce drama works. This is not to say that conflicts will never exist; conflict is the essence of drama after all. But the teacher can become one member of a “cast” who are all engaged upon a single task, for which the responsibility is shared. Therefore, as well as being able to adopt a variety of different roles, (which will be discussed shortly), the teacher alone does not bear total responsibility for the work which is produced. It is worth bringing this idea to the students’ notice. If the work succeeds, everyone gets a pat on the back. If it fails, it is not necessarily only the teacher’s fault. All the players are in this together, to sink or swim.

The Teacher: Changing roles

Having said this, the teacher obviously does have the main role to play, and bears most responsibility for the success of the work. As with all teaching, there is a variety of roles which can be chosen for different purposes at some time during each lesson. Drama is perhaps different in that the range of roles is greater, and the level of “equality” between teacher and taught can vary. For example, when the teacher is taking part in a role-play with a group of students, there is no real difference in status since all are equal members of that particular cast. The roles of teacher / taught can be totally reversed in fact, as when one of my students attempted to teach me to tap dance. She learned a great deal about the frustrations of teaching on that occasion. Drama is possibly unique in providing opportunities for fluctuating roles and classroom democracy of this kind.

This is not to ignore the teacher’s first and foremost role, as the **Responsible adult**, the person in charge. There is no avoiding the need to be firmly in control of everything that happens in the drama room at all times, and to have a set of management strategies which will allow all students to take part safely in the lesson, without interference from any other of their peers. However chaotic things may appear to an outsider coming into the drama lesson, the key test is whether the teacher can immediately bring all activity to a halt whenever necessary, and to establish complete attention from the whole of the class. This is an absolute must.

Other roles which the teacher might adopt are suggested in this list below, ranked in order of “authority”:

- **Chairperson.** Discussion, both of a general nature relevant to the work, and of its specific aspects, will form a significant part of any drama lesson. In this role it is important to establish the primary rule that only one person can be heard at any time, and to ensure that as many different contributions as possible can be made. Have a clear idea where the discussion should lead, but be prepared to follow unexpected tangents which might prove fruitful. It is useful to have worked out a series of questions to be put to the group before the lesson takes place. With older students, offer the role to others willing to take it on.
- **Instructor.** This role is crucial to the success of the lesson. If you cannot explain clearly and effectively what you want the students to do, they will become puzzled, frustrated and quickly go off task. Many of your instructions are likely to be verbal. Keep them short. Number them. Check that the whole group has heard and

understood them. Ask a student to repeat them back to you. Don't allow anyone to begin until you are really sure they are ready.

- **Demonstrator.** Be prepared to do yourself anything you ask the class to do. Demonstrating a particular skill, exercise, or task simplifies giving instructions since the students will have seen an example of what they have to do.
- **Director.** Some might argue that this is a role to be avoided, since if handled in one style (as in Hitchcock's famous "All actors are cattle") it implies telling students what to do and how to do it, and relieves them of the necessity to work things out for themselves. Part of your job nevertheless is to help students to improve their work; making some positive suggestions to show how this might be done has validity. As with most of these roles, it is a question of finding the right level of intervention.
- **Assessor.** At some stage it will be necessary to formally evaluate the work students have produced, particularly on examination courses. A clear set of criteria and a manageable system is required. Assessment should record what is successful about the work, and to make positive suggestions for improvement where appropriate.
- **Negotiator.** Probably the most important role in many ways, requiring endless skills of diplomacy and invention in order to find compromises between opposing ideas and conflicting personalities. Make sure that all positions and ideas are stated clearly and calmly. Look for areas of agreement, and try to find ways in which opposing ideas could be incorporated, or the problem side-stepped.
- **Group member .** Be willing to contribute to groups discussions, but try not to dominate proceedings, which is always a temptation to be resisted. Decide when to adopt negotiator role if necessary.
- **Role player .** Be prepared to fit into groups and roles at the drop of a hat whenever required. However, unless having a particular purpose, for example adopting a role as the focus of the whole class, avoid offers to play main parts; make group members take these on themselves. One problem; how do you keep a keen eye on what is happening in the rest of the room, when concentrating on a role yourself? Don't allow any one group to monopolise your attention. Keep on the move as far as possible.
- **Observer, member of audience.** Be prepared to stand back and just look at what is going on without making any intervention at all. Make a mental note of what is going on to discuss later. Enjoy the work in progress, and feel a sense of satisfaction in that you helped to bring it to life.
- **Storymaker.** You will need a fertile imagination and a hoarder's instinct to store ideas for narratives and situations that you can conjure up at the drop of a hat like a magician's rabbit. Keep a notebook, and write things down. Be prepared to beg, borrow or blatantly steal ideas from newspapers, films, books, plays, overheard conversations, anything in fact that falls short of bugging people's telephones.

Further specific guidance relevant to these roles is covered in the **Classroom management** section.

The Students: Getting to know the class

Most drama lessons take place once a week, with a varying amount of time being allocated on the timetable. This can make getting to know the class something of a problem. Establishing a good working relationship with a class is the key to successful teaching, the foundation upon which everything else depends. Anything which helps this to take place as quickly as possible is to be encouraged. Here are some suggestions:

- **Departmental records.**

Successful formal records contain information that is useful, and accessible. Nobody has time to wade through entire folders containing lengthy narrative-style blow by blow descriptions of each student's progress to date. Brief but clear summaries of work which has been covered, and a system of recording each student's progress in defined skill areas are likely to be more beneficial. Collecting together schemes of work in an agreed standard format, and devising a departmental recording system are initially time-consuming but ultimately time-saving tasks. While doing these tasks, many issues concerning the aims of drama are bound to be raised, helping to clarify these purposes for all those involved.

- **Learning names.**

This sounds so obvious as to be unworthy of mention. Not knowing a student's name after several lessons can become at best embarrassing, and at worst a bit of an insult. Students are rightly sensitive about their names; make a conscious effort to know them as soon as possible, and use whatever means you can to assist this. Invest in some card and safety pins, and ask each student to make a personalised badge which they wear for the first few lessons. Then turn it into a game against yourself, and try to go round the circle naming each student in turn. Make sure they know and can spell your name too.

A good "ice-breaker" which helps to identify names works like this. Stand the group in a large circle. The first player, (usually yourself), moves into the centre with a flourish, a bow, like a model or a cool dude, in any extravagant way you like, and introduces their name clearly and confidently. The rest of the group then move likewise into the centre, imitating the movements, the name, and the expression of the first player as closely as they can. Go right round the circle until everyone has introduced themselves. A good way of overcoming initial embarrassments, and a very good indicator of personalities. The introverts and extroverts are clear immediately.

- **Interests.**

Finding out students' interests is a tremendous potential resource. Nothing breeds like success, so find out as early as you can what your students do best. Dancers, musicians, artists, gymnasts, computer boffs, martial artists, - there will be opportunities to make use of most if not all interests and talents at some point in the course.

Ask students to design a personal coat of arms, a shield containing four of their favourite interests or leisure activities, which can either be used as a wall display, or as the cover for a drama folder.

A memory game which helps to make the whole class aware of each others' interests works like this. Seat the class in a circle. In turn, each member states their name, and three interests they enjoy. Once everybody, including yourself, has done so, individuals are challenged to repeat the name and interests of the challenger. The challenge is then passed on, either by pointing at a new member, or by throwing a ball or bean bag to them. (*To* them, not *at* them!).

- **Discussions.**

Drama which draws upon students' own personal experiences can provide great motivation when shared through formal discussion. However, some areas of experience are likely to be sensitive. Don't attempt to persuade students to talk about themselves to the rest of the group if they are reluctant to do so. Everybody has their right to silence. Be prepared to talk about your own experiences, and to answer frankly, since you will certainly be asked frank questions. If you don't wish to answer, explain why. You have your right to silence too.

- **Talking informally.**

Make and take opportunities students offer to talk informally to you. They will entrust you with all kinds of information about themselves. This trust implies confidences and responsibilities which may create dilemmas. For example, suppose a student confides in you that they smoke. How would you react? And would you react in the same way if they told you they were smoking dope? How confidential should these talks remain, and are you ever justified in revealing them to others?

- **Journals.**

One means of formalising, but keeping private, the collecting of experiences is to ask students to write a journal on a regular basis. The purpose of the journal needs to be clearly explained so that it does not simply become another writing task designed to fill up a homework slot. Students should have complete editorial control over its content, and can allow it to be read, or not, as they wish. Think about it from their point of view. If you were to write a journal of your own, what would it contain, and who would you let read it?

The importance of the relationship between teacher and students cannot be overstressed. Ted Wragg compiled this list of pupils' views about their teachers which seems to summarise things exactly:

Children prefer teachers who:

- are slightly strict, but not over-severe or permissive
- are fair in their use of rewards and punishments
- treat them as individuals
- are interesting and provide a variety of stimulating work
- are friendly and good humoured but not sarcastic
- explain things clearly

If you follow this advice, you will not go far wrong.

Lesson Content

The content of the drama lesson is considered here in two areas: **Skills** and **Ideas**. This is an artificial separation, since ideas are put into practice by means of skills; without an idea, there can be no skill shown. Thinking about them separately is useful however, in much the same way that a musician might practise skills such as scales separately from performing an actual piece of music. Improvising music depends upon a thorough knowledge of its structure, and having the skills to perform it. Drama is likely to benefit from a similar conceptual understanding reinforced by practical skills in order to put this into practice.

Drama as a natural activity

Drama is a natural activity which people engage in throughout their lives. The role of play in the learning of children helps their development in these areas:

- Language skills
- Social development
- Practical skills
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- The imitation of adult behaviour

Through play, children rehearse their eventual entry into the adult world. Though adults do not engage in “play” in the same manner as young children, at any time during their day they adopt differing roles according to the situation in which they find themselves. We like to believe in a consistent idea of “self”, and to a large extent the traits of personality which make up the image we have of ourselves are generally observable. However the “self” which adopts an authority stance in the classroom behaves in a different way from the “self” which relaxes with a well-earned drink at the end of the day. The situation defines the role we adopt, the ways in which we behave, and the things we say.

Throughout the day, and to a large extent unconsciously, people adopt different patterns of behaviour, different roles, depending upon who they are with, where they are, and what is happening. The social rules by which these situations are governed have been learned through experience, beginning with childhood play, and thereafter in “real” situations occurring in the course of people’s lives.

What distinguishes children’s “play” from adult “role-switching” is that the former is unashamedly a pretence, whereas the latter is considered to be “real”. This may not adequately describe the difference however. A window-glazing salesperson making promotional phone-calls consciously adopts a particular manner of speaking and tone of voice. The situation for the salesperson is “real” in the sense that this is how they earn a living, but it is a role they consciously adopt for a particular purpose. It is a conscious pretence. The real distinction between adult behaviour and childhood play lies in the absorption, the belief in their play, that children have. When this belief is broken, the game ends, and a new one may begin. The child makes no distinction between pretence and reality because it has not developed sufficient self-consciousness to do so.

What are the implications of this for educational drama? Firstly, that everyone can do it, since it is closely related to the ways in which we behave throughout our normal lives. And secondly, that it requires a willingness to believe in the situation which is being played. Drama has to be “played for real”. On most occasions, this will be a conscious belief: “I know I am playing a role”. At its best, it may approach the absorption of children completely captivated by their play.

Drama Skills: The Four C's

A willingness to believe in the drama, to go along with the situation is central to its success, and there are skills which can be taught to assist this “absorbed playing” to take place. These can be grouped under four main areas, each beginning with the letter C, providing a useful mnemonic for both students and teachers. The Four C's are:

- **Concentration**
- **Control**
- **Co-operation**
- **Communication**

They form a loose hierarchy in their order listed above. Concentration is the foundation, since without it control of movement and voice is likely to be impossible. An individual in control of him or herself has the potential to co-operate fully with others, and to communicate ideas through drama. A breakdown at any point in the hierarchy will cause the work to stumble. It should be stressed to students that drama is a mental activity before it becomes a physical one. Think, then do. And that the success of the work is both an individual, and a group responsibility.

The **Four C's** require further definition before they become a real practical help. Instructing a student to concentrate, or to co-operate with others in a group is useful in a general sense, but both instructions lack precision. These questions need to be answered:

- How do you concentrate? What do you have to do?
- How do you control your body and voice?
- What do you say to a student who protests “I *am* co-operating! It's the others who aren't!”

Each skill area needs to be examined more closely, and broken down into its component parts.

Concentration

Being able to concentrate involves focusing all your attention upon a particular task. When students find the work sufficiently stimulating, this may seem to happen of its own accord, as if by magic.

However, it is the teacher's task to bring this about every lesson, remembering that drama is only one port of call for students who carry round with them all the other highs and lows of the day along with their baggage. While it may be easy to dump coats and bags outside the drama room, some of these other things are going to be dragged inside, and on occasions may have to be dealt with openly before the lesson can effectively begin. Disputes, grievances, excitements may need to be aired (and “solved” as far as possible) before work can get under way.

On most occasions however, establishing routines to gain concentration at the very start of the lesson is likely to be all that is required. When you concentrate you:

- Think (about the task in hand, ignoring all other distractions)
- Listen (to yourself and to others)
- Look (at what those you are working with are doing)
- Touch (only those things which are important for the work)

This disciplining of your senses allows you to:

- Remember (what has happened or been said previously)
- Anticipate (what might happen or be said next)

Routines to assist concentration

One way of establishing concentration at the beginning of a lesson is to ask students to lie on their backs, or to sit, in a space of their own with their eyes closed. This might be accompanied by some suitably relaxing music. Ask students to run through in their minds the work they produced in the last lesson, or give a simple idea connected to a new piece of work to focus upon. "Think about a time you've been angry".

The routine may create some self-consciousness at first, but even this helps to establish a key point. If you are concerned how others are looking at you, you cannot be focused on the task in hand. And if the whole class have their eyes closed, no one can see, or touch, anyone else. Insist on the value of the routine, and enjoy several minutes peace and quiet at the start of the lesson. Ending a lesson with a similar session may be useful, particularly if a high level of activity and excitement has been generated.

During the lesson itself, there will be moments when "thinking time" is useful. Students sit in their own space, or within the class circle, in order to produce an idea to be used in the next activity. This might include:

- Picturing a movement in your mind's eye before beginning a piece of mime
- Remembering three things from your own experience relevant to the work to contribute to a discussion
- Deciding on the first words you are going to say to begin a piece of improvisation
- Running through in your mind the opening lines to a script, hearing how they should be said

Closing eyes, and not touching anyone or anything else, are key elements in these routines, since they shut out physical distractions, and help to focus thoughts on the work in hand.

Games to teach concentration

Games are useful in drama lessons provided that they actually teach something, and are not just used at random. Teaching points should be drawn out carefully in discussion after the activity has taken place. There are a number of games which can be introduced to make concentration skills explicit, and which can be referred back to during subsequent work to reinforce evaluation of its success.

Distracting games

The object of these games is to attempt to make the person “on” lose their concentration:

1. The person “on” has to count to as high a number as possible while one or more opponents attempt to make them lose count. Vary this by using times tables or reciting the words of a nursery rhyme or tongue twister.
2. **“Sausages”**. The opponents ask a series of questions to which the person “on” must only answer “sausages” (or any other strange word of your choice). Any laughter or breaking of a dead pan expression and the person “on” loses.
3. **“Gurning”**. The person “on” has to keep a dead pan expression while opponents pull as wildly grotesque faces as possible. Laugh and you lose.

The main teaching point of these games is to emphasise how the mind has to be focused on the task in hand, and all other distractions have to be shut out. Try playing the reciting games with your eyes closed, or focusing attention upon a spot on the wall, looking past your distracters. Do these sensory disciplines help?

Observation and listening games

There are many games which help to develop alertness of eye and ear. Some perennial favourites include:

- 1 **Chinese whispers**. Who hasn’t played this one. The players sit in a circle. Give the first player a message written on a slip of paper. Make the message as obscure as you like. The message is then passed around the circle, being whispered from one player to the next. Compare the final message with the original. Pass several messages around the circle at the same time to make it more difficult and to keep everyone involved.
- 2 **Pirate’s treasure**. A good game for young children of all ages. Sit the players in a fairly tight circle. The pirate sits blindfolded in the middle armed with a sword. (A rolled up newspaper or similar. Sponge pipe lagging is quite good.) The treasure (e.g. a bunch of keys or something noisy when moved) is placed immediately in front of the pirate. Nominate players to steal the treasure, but only once they have successfully completed a whole lap of the circle around the pirate. If the pirate hears them moving, and clobbers them with the sword, another player makes an attempt. If the player successfully steals the treasure, they take over as pirate. To develop the control skills required by the players, give them ankle bracelets made from heavy chain, or large noisy boots to wear. This works best on a hard floor.
- 3 **Blindfold sword-fight**. A variation on Pirate’s Treasure in which two blindfolded contestants attempt to sword-fight within an arena formed by a circle of the rest of the group. The first contestant to land a blow wins, and continues until defeated. Make sure the swords are harmless; even a rolled up newspaper can hurt. Sponge is best. Again, make use of things which make noise when the contestants move to add a need for greater control.

As well as teaching listening skills, and disciplining the rest of the group who need to remain perfectly quiet so that the smallest of noises can be heard, test the class’ powers of observation to draw out the different strategies players used, especially when they have seen several contests. How do new contestants anticipate the strategy employed

by the “champion”, or do they? Did the champion change strategy in different games?

4. **Wink Murder.** This game never fails. There are several slightly different versions; here is one set of rules. The players sit on the floor in a circle with their eyes closed. Walk around the circle; touch one person lightly on the shoulder as you pass. This person is the murderer. Make a couple of laps of the circle if you like to throw players off the scent. Ask the players to open their eyes, and nominate a detective. The murderer has to kill victims by winking at them. Victims die horribly, and should stay dead (a good control exercise in itself). The detective has three guesses at the identity of the murderer. Keep a tally of the number of victims and find the overall winner. This game is excellent for demonstrating how atmosphere and tension can be built up by allowing space and silence for things to happen.

Listening and observation skills are central to all of these games, and links to control skills can readily be made.

Memory games

Memory games are particularly good for establishing concentration, and for making direct links with improvisation skills:

- 4 **Shopping list.** A simple memory game suitable for younger children. Seat the class in a circle. The first player begins “I went to the shops and bought...” naming anything that comes into their head. The second person continues by naming the first article, and adding one to the list. The aim is to go right around the circle with everyone adding to the list, and making no mistakes. If anything is left off the list, a new list begins.
- 2 **Follow my leader.** A memory game which is also a good physical warm up activity. The players stand in a circle. The first player moves into the centre of the circle, and demonstrates a simple movement, hop, skip, jump, goal celebration or whatever. The rest of the players imitate the movement. The second player adds a movement to the first. The players then imitate both movements in order. This continues until everyone in the circle has contributed a movement, or the players have collapsed. The “leader” numbers off the movements so that the whole circle performs them in unison.
- 3 **Yes / No interlude.** A well known game made famous on a TV quiz show. The person “on” has to survive a barrage of questions without saying yes or no, or nodding / shaking the head, for a set time, usually a minute. To prevent stonewalling, add a rule which prevents the repetition of any word or phrase. Demonstrate the game in a circle at first, and then play matches in pairs, or threes.
- 4 **Fuzz Buzz.** The players stand in a circle. The object of the game is to number around the circle, substituting Fuzz for any number which can be divided by three, and Buzz for numbers divided by five. (Fifteen therefore becomes Fuzz Buzz). An incorrect number, or undue hesitation results in a forfeit, firstly by going down on to one knee, then two knees, then an elbow, both elbows, and eventually forehead touching the floor. As soon as a player reaches this point (known as “Napper”) the game finishes. To prevent the game from lasting too long, make it a rule that once a “life” has been lost it cannot be recovered by a subsequent correct answer.

These games demonstrate all of the necessary concentration skills, so that teaching points about the importance of thinking carefully about the task, listening to and looking

at others can easily be made. Successful strategies for winning the games involve remembering what has gone before and anticipating what to say or do when your turn comes. Improvisation depends upon exactly these skills, listening to others to pick up clues, and quickly planning ahead where the situation might develop to next.

Control

Since drama is a physical and a spoken activity, it is apparent that the two main elements to be controlled are the body and the voice.

Control of the body may be further defined in terms of the awareness of:

- Use of space
- Precision, speed, strength, touch of any movement
- Facial expression
- Co-ordination with other people's movements

I would advise teachers to begin drama work with any group by introducing some movement and mime activities. Drama is "a thing done" first and foremost, rather than "a thing said". Words can get in the way at first, become too dominant, and cause the work to stutter. Physical activity seems to breed confidence and enjoyment. Even when improvising situations, my first advice to students is to "do something" to begin the scene, rather than necessarily saying something.

An enjoyable warm up activity which can be used to teach awareness of space, and control of quick physical movement, is the **Fruitbowl** game:

1. Sit the group on chairs in a wide circle, with one fewer chair than there are group members (including yourself).
2. Label each member of the circle in turn with the name of a fruit, Apple, Banana, Orange, Pear.
3. When the person "on" calls the name of a fruit, all those people have to change chairs, and cannot return immediately to the chair they have left.
4. The person "on" attempts to gain a chair, and leave another player in the middle.
5. If a player calls "Fruitbowl" all players have to change chairs. Fruitbowl cannot be called twice running.

The game generates a great deal of quick movement and scrambling to chairs, and so it must be played with control. Remove any players who are unduly rough immediately from the game. At its conclusion emphasise the main teaching points: the need to be aware of other people, to control one's own movements, and the awareness of space which is the main strategy for playing the game. Even the players in the sin-bin help to make the point; there is no place for disregard of other people's safety in drama.

The **Movement and Mime** materials contain ideas which can be used to illustrate and develop physical control. These might be categorised under the headings:

- Freezing
- Synchronisation
- Mirroring and imitation
- Slow motion

The importance of the **Freeze command** is developed in the **Classroom Management** section. While a most useful method of classroom control, the use of freezing a movement at an exact moment can be employed as a dramatic device in work such as tableaux. See the ideas **Statues** and **Window Dressing** in the movement section of the materials.

With younger children the game **What time is it, Mr Wolf?** can be used to introduce the idea:

1. The person "on", Mr Wolf, stands with their back to the rest of the class, who gradually try to approach.
2. If the wolf turns and sees anyone moving, these players return to the start.
3. A successful player touches the wolf, and takes over the role.

Synchronisation can be developed through moving to music. Simple dance or disco routines are both effective and popular, and can provide the opportunity for one or more of the group to instruct the others, and yourself.

One of the first things to establish is the simple ability to walk in time to a piece of music:

1. Prepare a track with a variety of different types and styles of music suitable for walking speed.
2. Each piece of music should only last for about a minute at most; aim for a good range, from James Bond to funky catwalk.
3. Divide the class into two halves, on either side of the space.
4. Give each member of both halves a letter, A to D.
5. In turn, both sets of A walk across the space, greet each other appropriately, and move on to the opposite side.
6. The Bs then follow, and so on.
7. The players have to be ready to change their movements whenever the music does.

A routine I call **Clown dancing**, since I was introduced to it by a circus skills group, works like this.

1. Sort the class out into partners, with one large partner, and one smaller.
2. The smaller partner takes their shoes off.
3. Both partners face each other, and place their hands on each others shoulders.
4. The smaller partner then stands on top of the larger partner's feet so that their own feet do not touch the floor.
5. The aim is then for the pair to move in time together.
6. The smaller partner must not touch the floor at any time.
7. Develop this into races or "dance" routines to music.
8. Key elements are timing and balance.

See **Clown dancing** in the materials for more detailed instructions to give to students. The balances described in **At the Circus** develop this work on physical control with a partner.

Mirroring and **imitation** take this one stage further, since movements have to be synchronised with a partner, and in the case of mirroring have to be performed with the opposite arm or leg. To develop a routine requires both partners to work out a numbered series of movements which have to be performed at the same speed, making use of cues, either provided by music, or by "counting in your head". See **Me and my Shadow** and **Saturday Night Fever** for further ideas to use.

Slow motion is a particularly useful technique since it requires students to think about movements in detail, and to exaggerate them in performance. This in turn demands greater physical control and strength than doing the same action at normal speed. Again, there is a need to remember the sequence of movements, and to make sure that they can be repeated. See **Slow motion sports** in the materials.

Slow motion fights are an important first step to introducing stage-fighting of any kind, so that this can be performed safely, with all participants knowing exactly what moves are to be made. A whole fight scene can be created with pairs performing individual fight sequences in a "loop", repeating for example six fight movements several times. Sword fights can be constructed in the same way, making use of a limited number of thrusts and slashes, with imaginary swords.

Control of **facial expression** can also be emphasised through slow motion activities, since expressions of distress, anger, or jubilation all appear much larger than life when performed at slow speed. Show the class the slow motion race sequence from "Chariots of Fire", or action replays from TV, to draw attention to facial expressions.

Inappropriate facial expression is one of the commonest weaknesses in many students' work, but one which can easily be corrected. Draw attention to good examples of expression, as well as commenting upon characters who react to death threats with large jovial smiles.

Control of the **voice** is concerned foremost with its volume. Too much volume in the drama room is unproductive, since it makes it difficult for groups to hear each other unless they too raise their voices, leading to a cycle of increased noise. Expression, much of which depends upon subtlety of inflection, is also difficult to vary against a background of noise.

A quick exercise to demonstrate how unproductive too much volume can be works like this:

1. Have two sets of pairs of phrases written on separate slips of paper, so that when given out, each student will have a partner somewhere in the room with the matching phrase. The object is for each student to find their partner.
2. Begin by asking everybody to shout out their phrase at the tops of their voices. (Warm them up with some other phrases which everyone shouts together first, so that the volume is really at its top pitch). Very few, if any of the pairs will be able to find their partner.
3. Repeat the exercise with the second set of phrases (and therefore different partners), but this time get everyone to whisper their phrase as quietly as possible.
4. Very gradually increase the volume until everyone has found their partner.

Follow up the exercise by asking the class what seems to the class to be the ideal volume? Refer back to the exercise whenever noise in the room becomes excessive.

Silence can often be more effective than words. In improvisation, limit the number of words each player can say to single figures, and then ask them to develop a situation which clearly identifies a relationship.

An exercise to demonstrate the importance of **expression** makes use of opening lines which can be delivered with different tones of voice. For example, take a simple opening line such as:

"Where've you been?"

Ask students in pairs to improvise the scene which follows if the line is said with a variety of different expressions, angry, suspicious, bored, distraught, nosy. Ask the students to practise saying the line with different expressions first, and then see how different the development of the scene can be, depending upon the expression used.

Co-operation

Most, if not all, of the exercises suggested above to develop control also incorporate a large degree of co-operation between partners, and can be used to illustrate its importance. This element of physical co-operation is a necessary first stage before some other aspects of "how to co-operate" can be tackled. Co-operation includes these elements:

- Trusting the people you are working with
- Recognising that each member of the group has a part to play, an individual responsibility, for the group's work to be successful.
- Overcoming personal feelings which might hinder the success of the group.
- Solving problems collectively.
- Having clear guidelines on how to reach decisions

Trust exercises demonstrate how all members of a group need to feel secure in their reliance upon others, again using a physical context to demonstrate this. These sort of exercises are well documented elsewhere, so a single well known example will suffice here:

1. Ask the students to form into groups of three.
2. One, "the rocker" stands facing one "catcher". The other catcher stands immediately behind the "rocker". The catchers should not be too far away.
3. The "rocker" closes their eyes, and keeping the body straight, falls forward, pivoting from the ankles.
4. The catcher halts the fall, and gently pushes the rocker backwards to be caught by the second catcher.
5. Eventually the rocker should be swayed backwards and forwards until a gentle rhythm has been established.

As with all these exercises, the main teaching points should be drawn out in discussion afterwards, using a series of questions such as these to establish the importance of trust in other, non-physical situations:

- How did it feel to be the "rocker"?
- Were you confident your partners would catch you?
- How did it feel to trust them?
- What do we mean by "trust"?
- Would you trust them in other situations, like coming up with a solution to a problem for example?

- Would you accept they might be right, even if you disagreed with them at first?
- Would you be prepared to follow through their ideas for the work, even if you thought your ideas were better?

You might wish to follow this through with discussion about how you the teacher might show trust for them, and how they would respond; for example:

- If I had to go out of the room for a minute to deal with something, could I trust you to carry on working safely with each other?
- If I allowed you to practice a piece of work in a separate place, would you get on with it or would you be tempted to just muck about?

A final key point to be illustrated by any examples where catchers deliberately allow the rocker to fall:

- Once trust has been broken, how easy is it to mend it, or even, is it possible for this to happen?

It is possible to illustrate the interdependency of the whole group by the use of an exercise called **Magic circle**:

1. Ask the class to find a partner of about the same height and weight.
2. Then ask these pairs to find other pairs of a similar size, or as close in size as is possible.
3. Use these groups to form a circle so that at one side there are the largest students, and at the other are the smallest.
4. Move the circle close together, with everyone facing in the same direction.
5. The object of the exercise is then for everyone, on a given command, to lower themselves gently until they are sitting on the knees of the person behind them.
6. If it is successful, everyone is both sitting and supporting at the same time.
7. The circle is magic because it seems impossible for this to happen, and yet it can providing that the circle is unbroken.

If this exercise fails, there are still many positive things which can emerge from discussing why it failed. For example:

- Was it simply because of poor physical control? Can this be corrected if we have another attempt?
- Was it because of self-consciousness, or embarrassment, for example where a boy has to sit on a girl's knee, or vice versa? (A common cause!) How might this be corrected?
- Did someone deliberately sabotage the circle? If so, why? What should happen if someone deliberately sabotages other pieces of work?

So if the first attempt is unsuccessful, return to the exercise at a later date, when you feel the group may be ready to tackle it. When it finally works, it is an excellent device for creating whole group co-operation, and good fun as well.

One of the next obstacles to overcome is to persuade students to work positively with anyone else in the group. With younger students, a first step is to persuade boys and

girls to work together in mixed groups. For some students this presents no problem, but for others it can create some embarrassment and stress, particularly if the relationship between the roles they are playing is meant to be close. "I'm not playing his wife!" might be a typical response to a request to form a family group.

A strategy which might be successful here is to make the relationship seem less close. "You're a husband and wife, but you don't get on, so you don't say much to each other", for example, or to change the husband / wife relationship to brother-in-law and wife. Ultimately, it is not possible to force a student to play a role in which they are unhappy. With encouragement, and by showing gradually that roles which appear threatening at first are not really so, most students can be persuaded to experiment with a range of characters, though some may take longer than others to do so.

A strategy which can be used to deliberately mix groups, and to encourage students to work with others, is to issue letters (or names of fruits, as in **Fruitbowl** above) to students as they sit in the circle. Then ask the A's to work as a group, the B's as another and so on up to as many groups as you require, usually five or six in standard sized classes. Make the first tasks you use with this strategy short, very non-threatening, and easy to perform. Non-physical activities are probably best at first, particularly as the groups are very likely to be of mixed gender. Use the strategy fairly regularly, and as confidence gradually grows, make the tasks more demanding.

Problem solving is at the heart of much work in drama. The main responsibility of the teacher in this area is to ensure that when problems are set, they are clearly stated, so that students know exactly what it is they have to solve. Where problems arise in the course of the work, help students to clarify what the issues are, and to break problems down into manageable chunks.

A physical activity which can be used to illustrate approaches to problem solving, especially with younger students, is called **Make a monster**:

- The problem to be set to the group is to make a monster by using their bodies as its various parts.
- The restrictions are that the monster should have one less point of contact with the floor than there are members in the group, and that it should be able to move at least six "steps".
- With regard to the first restriction, a foot or a hand is considered as a single point of contact. At least one member of the group therefore has to be totally supported by the rest, who equally need to support each other in order not to exceed the points of contact restriction.
- There is therefore a need to decide if, in a group of say five, with a permitted four points of contact, four of the group hop, supporting the fifth member, or if two hop, one walks, and two are supported.
- The groups should not be given this help before attempting the task however, since these kind of decisions are exactly what problem-solving activities are designed to create.

Importantly, once the task has been attempted, it is necessary to discuss how various groups went about solving the problem, so that some suggested strategies for doing so can be reached. Ask groups to explain what they did, and compare their accounts with things that you have observed.

Some points of discussion which should be raised are as follows:

- What did you do first? Did you just “do” it, or did you talk about it?
- If you just “did” it, how did you know what to do?
- If you talked about it, did you collect a number of suggestions, and think about them, or did you just accept the first suggestion and try it out?
- Who decided which suggestion to use?
- Did you break the problem down into its two parts (Points of contact, movement)?
- Did you see that the two parts of the problem needed to be connected?
- When did you realise that one or more of the group couldn’t touch the floor?
- Did you consider who should do what in the group, for example who should be supporters and who should be carried?
- Which parts of the problem could be solved by thinking and talking, and which were best tackled by “doing”, for example finding ways to bind the structure together?

Establishing these teaching points is vital; the exercise loses much of its validity and usefulness without doing so. Set the group a follow up task, to come up with an acronym which is useful for students to remember how to solve problems. Something like:

Talk about the problem

Accept ideas from everyone

Choose which to use

Try it out

If it doesn’t work

Choose another

An important element in group problem solving is formalising a method of reaching decisions. Teachers are used to attending meetings and so may take for granted many of the formalities which students have to be introduced to. In particular, these include:

- Organising roles such as chairperson and note-taker in the group
- Deciding on a means of recording ideas, as notes, or spidergrams for example
- Deciding on ways of making decisions, reaching a consensus, or taking votes for example
- Deciding what to do in the case of disagreements, for example, being prepared to try out a number of different solutions to see which works

Deciding upon these formalising strategies might be the first problem a group is asked to solve. If each group is asked to report back to the whole class on their ideas, some of these strategies are immediately imposed:

- A Spokesperson needs to volunteer to do so.
- If no-one is willing, how do you decide who will?
- How will they remember what to say?

The need for someone to act as scribe is clear. Solving this problem helps to clarify ways of tackling others.

Co-operation is a key area in drama, and one that is not necessarily formally taught or practised in many other parts of the curriculum where for the majority of the time students are engaged upon individual activities. Do not be surprised when students fail

to co-operate therefore, since they have probably had little instruction, and few opportunities to do so. Work on it as a key area; remind students that ultimately they have to learn to be co-operative themselves. You cannot do it for them. They are responsible for their success when working with others. And success is much more rewarding than failure.

Communication

“Communication” is at the centre of work in drama, requiring what might be considered as aesthetic skills, those associated with creating, shaping and performing a piece of work. There are four main modes of communication, of which three are considered in this book:

- Mime
- (Dance)
- Improvisation
- Script

For purposes of clarity, each of these three modes has been treated separately in the accompanying materials. Though this is an arbitrary separation, since the three modes are interconnected, it is useful to work in this way at least some of the time so that differences between them can be highlighted. Moreover, the three modes share common aims in communicating as students attempt to:

- Create (and sustain) a character in role
- Use space
- Present the work to an audience
- Give the work shape and form

Mime

Mime allows players to create something out of nothing, demonstrating the magic of the dramatic illusion in perhaps its clearest form. Other people, objects or animals are brought to life by the player using movement to act as if they really were there. The trick is to convince others watching of this illusion. A piece of work such as **Walking the dog**, in which the player creates the illusion of having a dog on the end of an imaginary lead, illustrates how this can occur. The player must visualise how a real dog behaves, and the physical effect this has upon its master. Its success lies in the amount of detail the player can bring to the movement, and in the control, the accuracy with which it is performed.

Though this can obviously be illustrated by observation of work in progress, a useful exercise to demonstrate the point is called **What’s my job?**:

- The group sit in a circle to form the acting space.
- Ask them to close their eyes, and to think of a job that requires fairly strenuous physical activity. Get them to picture the job in their mind’s eye, the different movements which are involved, the tools or equipment which are used, and how these are handled.
- When this stage is complete, nominate one player to begin to mime their job, and to continue to do so in a kind of loop. This means that having completed the

actions of the mime, they begin again.

- Nominate a second player to join the first. The second player must perform the mime of a job which could take place in the same location as the first, but is in some significant way different.
- For example, on a building site (an obvious choice) the first player could collect and lay bricks, while the second player mixes cement and wheels it in a barrow to the bricklayer.
- Ask further players to join the mime, each adding a new job, until it becomes difficult to do so. All players continue to perform their mime until told to stop.

This exercise provides a good focus for answering the question “What makes a good piece of mime?” since the additional players have to recognise the job initiated by the first player if they are to join in. Where they are uncertain, and join in incorrectly, not only makes for good fun, but brings attention upon the success of the first piece of mime. Actions have to be deliberate, clear and large, especially when small movements are required. Demonstrate this by inviting the players to think of a job which requires fairly small movements, and repeat the exercise. Threading needles, putting worms on fish-hooks, mending a watch, performing micro-surgery will add new challenges to the players, and clearly illustrate how mime must be performed to work successfully. As previously discussed in the section on **Control**, the use of slow motion is a valuable technique which requires players to consider action in detail, and to break sequences down into their component parts.

Mime is also an effective means of creating a character. “Begin with the walk” is good advice, and **Doorways** invites students to do just that:

1. Arrange the group into a circle, and ask two volunteers to become a doorway by standing opposite each other with one arm outstretched, the “doors” which swing closed when a player passes through.
2. Prepare a list of characters beforehand, and have these written or printed on slips of paper. The list might include such characters as:

• A superhero	• A spy
• An angry neighbour	• A cowboy
• An alien	• A robot
• A model	• A Kung-fu expert
• A teenager coming home late	• A young lover
• A ghost buster	• A policeman
• A sailor	• A drunk
3. Nominate players in turn to take a slip, and then simply to approach, enter and close the door behind them in a manner suggested by their character type.
4. The group tries to identify what was on the slip for each player; the more successful the mime, the easier this will be to do.

Emphasise the main teaching point of the exercise, which is to show how movement can be used to suggest character, and suggest a routine for using with any character they portray.

Ask for suggestions, and agree upon a list of, say, five movements to practise when preparing any character. For example:

- Walking into a room
- Drinking a cup of tea
- Paying for something they've bought (Cash, cheque, credit card? Pocket, purse, wallet?)
- Eating a meal
- Washing hands and face

Once students have grasped how situations and characters can be developed through movement alone, it becomes possible to develop these features into short narratives or sketches. Many of the materials in the Movement section suggest ideas to do this, and can be used as written, or presented as examples for students to modify.

Sound effects and music are invaluable in this process since they not only provide cues as to when actions occur, but also can suggest the rhythm of the movements themselves, and help players co-ordinate their actions. **Saturday Night** is a good example of a simple early piece of movement which works well when making use of music.

Editing together sound effects and music into a **Movie Sound Track** takes this once stage further, and is particularly suited to horror / ghost / fantasy or sci-fi work. Use an audio editing program to combine music and sounds into a sound track. Try to make the sound track build to a climax towards the end. This task could be undertaken by the students themselves. The finished sound tracks could be presented to other groups or pairs as a challenge.

The importance of movement and mime as a pre-requisite to any form of drama cannot be over-stressed. It is the essence of "a thing done", and therefore at the centre of all drama work.

Improvisation

When improvising, players have to think of two things at the same time, continually updating answers to these questions:

- What situation is going on here?
- Where can it go next?

The players have to listen carefully to what each of them is saying, take in the implications of this, and quickly think of ways to move the situation on. It is easy to understand why some students find this difficult, and why some improvisations can stumble to a halt.

This is probably one of the first points to stress to students. Improvisation is not meant to be a "finished" piece of work, but should be considered as more of an exploratory stage. If it works, brilliant. If it doesn't, try to work out why, and have another attempt.

One of the first skills to establish is the ability to think quickly, and to keep the thing moving. **Topics** is a game which illustrates this idea:

1. On a series of cards, write down a wide range of topics, from *Movie stars* to *Flavours of ice-cream*.
2. Begin with two players, and give them a topic at random.
3. Each player has to add an example which fits the topic, without pausing.
4. The first player to dry up or pause too long, loses.
5. The winner accepts another challenge, and the game continues.

Two teaching points need to be brought out from the game. The first is obviously the need to think quickly. The second is to illustrate how the game is lost when a topic becomes exhausted, and is too difficult to continue. A change of topic allows new scope and fresh ideas. Within an improvisation therefore, if it appears to be running into a blind alley, a slight alteration in topic can help to provide new impetus to a scene, and is a useful strategy for players to deliberately employ.

In the **Improvisation** materials, **My Dad's better than your Dad, Passing the Buck**, and **Rabbit, Rabbit** are further exercises which can be used to acquire skills in developing a particular topic in order to out-manoeuvre another player.

Games which involve placing some kind of restraint upon the players can teach students the importance of thinking quickly, as in these examples:

- **Alphabet soup:** Give the players a starting topic (selling a vacuum cleaner, making a complaint), and require each player to begin each sentence of dialogue with the next letter of the alphabet in sequence. The first player begins with A, the second with B and so on. Penalise pauses, and hold a competition to see which pair gets furthest down the alphabet.
- **Word limit:** Get the players to move quickly around the room in time to some music. Call out a number, and they must quickly form into groups of that number. Repeat this several times, and finish with groups of up to five. Number the players in each group one to five. Give each group in turn a topic, and ask them to improvise a short scene in which each player can only use sentences which contain the number of words they have been allocated. Player number three for example, can only use three words in each line of dialogue.

The **improvisation circle** is one of the best methods to use with students who are relatively inexperienced. Ask players to number round the circle, and then nominate them to take part simply by calling out their number to ensure a good mix of partners. Give the first of a pair an **Opening line** which they deliver to their partner in order to develop the scene. This stretches the players' abilities to latch on to a situation very quickly. They need to decide at once who is speaking, when and where they are, and what is happening. Take for example:

"What time of night do you call this? Where've you been until now?"

The most obvious situation is that this is a parent who has been waiting up for a son or daughter to return home late at night. Alternatively, it might be a wife waiting up for an errant husband, a boyfriend waiting outside a cinema for his girl, or even a pair of thieves waiting to burgle a house. Discussing possible alternatives after exploring opening lines in this way helps to show students how to broaden the scope of their work by considering different situations and characters. Place an embargo on the most obvious situations, and use the opening line again.

The questions which define these situations ("Who? When? Where? What? Why?") will be considered more fully in the **Content** section of this introduction. They are obviously an important feature of the teaching points which need to be brought out.

Games or exercises in which the players "compete" can give an unfortunate impression of improvisation as having winners and losers, whereas both (or more) players need to co-operate in order to bring the scene to a successful conclusion. The most noticeable side-effect of this is when one player "blocks" the other by deliberately ignoring possibilities to develop a scene, and by offering no possibilities. Some work must be done to remedy this effect in order to demonstrate that the successful outcome of improvisation is the responsibility of all the participants.

For example, a variety of opening line situations can be employed, some of which are confrontational, as in **Accusations** and **Complaints** while others require **Persuasion** or **Concern**. Set up situations in which the outcome has to be one of agreement, even if there is conflict at reaching this. One player wishes to borrow something valuable from the other, and uses as many arguments as possible to do so. The other player is to resist the persuasion, but eventually must agree to lend the item. Both players are therefore in conflict for the majority of the scene, but must reach mutual agreement at its conclusion.

Another strategy is to demonstrate that it is possible to improvise a scene in which only one player of the pair speaks. The "blocking" then becomes a deliberate ploy, the player's role in fact. "Interrogation" scenes are very suitable to this technique. The speaking player attempts to find out the truth in a situation, which the silent player is reluctant to tell. This reluctance could be due to a number of causes, insolence, fear, unwillingness to betray friends or confidences, and is demonstrated by means of body language rather than words. This requires considerable skill on the part of the speaking role, and is probably best taken on by the teacher, with an inexperienced group, in order to demonstrate the points made about "blocking" above.

Though it has been said that conflict is the essence of drama, in some scenes it is not necessary at all, particularly when the purpose of the speaking is to establish characters and their relationship, rather than to develop the action. Previous histories of relationships can be built up in this way, as in an exercise such as **Memories** for example. The players are given only minimal information (such as an opening line) and have to build up a series of mutual memories about joint experiences. Both players are engaged upon "building" these memories without the attendant feeling of "knocking down" an opponent which may occur in confrontational scenes. Paradoxically of course, as has been suggested above, the exploration of conflict is actually a building process also, though to inexperienced players it may not appear to be so.

A useful strategy to stretch the skills of more experienced players, is to conceal some information from some of the participants. This requires separate instructions being given to each player, which they must not reveal to the others. A simple example of this might be the situation of a husband and wife who return home after a day's work. He has bought a car from a colleague on the spur of the moment, having had to make a quick decision. She has been made redundant from her job. Both are looking for an opportunity to break their news to the other. Neither knows the other's news before the scene starts.

Airplane in the improvisation materials is a whole group piece of work in which each member has different instructions given to them on their role card. This also requires players to sustain their roles throughout the whole work, which can last for some considerable time, and presents them with a challenge to remain in character.

The skills involved in improvisation to create character are obviously those connected with the use of voice. Some suggestions about control of the voice, particularly its volume, have already been made. Further aspects of the use of the voice to consider include its **emotional charge**, and its **social characteristics**.

Using a variety of opening lines which suggest a different emotional timbre for the situation has already been mentioned. The way the voice is used in a situation which defines an argument is much different from a situation where concern is explored. Notice also that at this point, when discussing the skills required to create character using the voice, the focus is not upon *what* is said, but *how* it is said. (The ideas and information which need to be considered to create a character will be discussed in the **Ideas** section of this introduction). *How* something is said to show the emotion of the speaker depends upon these features:

- Volume
- Pace
- Tone

Each emotion might be described by means of these three features. Anger is therefore most obviously high in volume, fast in pace, and harsh in tone. Concern is quiet in volume, slow in pace, often with pauses, and soft in tone. However, what about suppressed anger when someone is making a deliberate attempt to control their emotion, or that cold anger which carries with it an ice-cold threat? Similarly concern might be expressed very emotionally, for example a distraught parent at the end of their tether with a child.

An exercise which can be used to explore the many different ways in which the emotions of a character can be suggested works like this. Prepare cards which show emotions:

Anger	Anxiety	Annoyance	Boredom
Concern	Disgust	Distress	Envy
Ecstasy	Embarrassment	Excitement	Fear
Gratitude	Hate	Happiness	Irony
Insolence	Irritation	Jealousy	Kindness
Lethargy	Madness	Nervousness	Obstinacy
Passion	Pleasure	Sarcasm	Stubbornness
Tension	Tenderness	Urgency	Worry

Match the emotional range to the experience of the players. Inexperienced players therefore use cards which define the most obvious emotions, so that more than one card with the same emotion may be needed.

Then prepare a second pack containing cards on which are written a variety of objects from Motor Car to Prawn Cocktail; anything can be used. The players work in pairs (or threes) and choose at random two emotion cards, and one object card. They then have to improvise two short scenes which centre around the same object, but have different emotional charge. When these scenes are presented to others, ask the audience to define the characters' use of voice in terms of Volume, Pace and Tone, providing them with a simple chart if you wish on which to do so:

Pair One: Excitement

Volume	High	✓
	Low	
Pace	Fast	✓
	Slow	
Tone	Harsh	✓
	Soft	

Discussing these observations will help players to distinguish the wide range of options open to them when developing the emotional aspects of their character, and the often fine distinctions noticeable between a range of emotions.

The social characteristics of the voice depend upon **accent** and **dialect**. Accent indicates social status, whereas dialect indicates regional differences. A simple exercise to indicate the former is to set up a series of conflict situations in which one character is "posh" and the other is "common", as shown on the table which follows:

Posh

Neighbour
Doctor
Customer
Train passenger
Diner
Customer in hair salon
Tourist
Motorist
Teacher

Common

Neighbour
Patient
Shop-assistant
Ticket collector
Waiter / Waitress
Hairdresser
Tramp / Beggar
Motorist
Student

Conflict

A pet which is a nuisance
Fee for treatment
Refund for damaged goods
Lost ticket
A fly in the soup
Hair falling out
Request for money
The last parking place
Swearing in class

If possible, record some of the improvisations, and then ask students to focus very carefully upon the differences in the way the characters talk. Writing short transcriptions of extracts *exactly as they are said* is also useful so that attention can be drawn to the correctness and to the sound of the language, particularly the subtle differences in the length of vowel sounds, and the precision of consonants. Naturally, attitudes towards accents will provide plenty of scope for discussion.

Once accent has been established as a means of indicating social status, the notion of dialect can be introduced. Listening to examples of different dialects as audio recordings, or from television programmes, and attempting to imitate them, is the only real way of acquiring a range of dialects with which to create characters, and even then probably only at a fairly obvious stereotypical level.

Examining attitudes towards different dialects can reveal the stereotypes associated with each region, and suggest some possibilities for character building. One method of doing this is as follows. Collect 12 photographs of people from newspapers or magazines which show a range of social and ethnic features. Copy these so that each group of four students has one set each containing the same pictures. Prepare sets of cards which label each of the following dialects:

Ask students to match the dialect cards with the photographs, and then provide them with a sheet containing a series of questions such as these, which they should answer for each of the photographs, and record on paper:

Birmingham	Newcastle	Liverpool
London: East End	Home Counties	Yorkshire
Manchester	Scotland	Wales
South West	East Anglia	Northern Ireland

- Do you think this person would do well on mastermind?
- Would you lend this person money?
- Would you get into an argument with this person?
- Would you like to live next door to this person?
- Could this person tell you a good joke?
- What job do you think this person does?

The questions are intended to draw attention to features of personality such as intelligence, honesty, aggressiveness, sociability, sense of humour. When all the groups have completed the exercise, the results can be compared. Even though the photographs provide most of the “clues” on which the answers are based, associating each picture with a regional dialect indicates the attitudes which underlie these stereotypes. Comedy shows in particular provide a useful source of material to examine this further. Furthermore, within each dialect there may be a range of accents which will be recognisable by those who live in that region, but likely to be missed by a less trained ear from outside.

Finally, a word about the relationship between movement, and dialogue. It is noticeable that even when players have spent considerable time successfully developing work in movement alone, as soon as they are invited to improvise their own dialogue, the words immediately dominate the whole scene, and the use of movement becomes restricted. It is easy to understand why this is so, given the difficulty that improvisation may present.

To counteract this, refocus attention upon the movement in a scene, by setting up situations in which a short piece of movement is required before the dialogue begins.

Take the “**What time of night do you call this?**” example discussed previously, where the parent is awaiting a teenage child. Require the parent to produce a short piece of mime which shows their anxiety before the teenager returns. The teenager similarly prepares a piece of mime showing how to enter a house quietly without (hopefully) being heard or seen. These mimes not only indicate the situation without a word being spoken, but also help to develop the tension in the scene to the point where the dialogue starts. Keep reminding the players that actions speak louder than words.

Script

I personally consider script to be the most difficult of the three modes of drama being considered here, although at first glance it may seem to be the most straightforward. After all, a script is a “complete” thing isn’t it, so that no “inventing” is necessary, the words are down there in black and white. However, if you consider that a script bears the same relationship to a piece of drama, as a recipe bears to a meal, it becomes easier to identify some of the problems which might occur during the “cooking”. These difficulties might be listed as follows:

- Some students may have difficulty reading a script, particularly with the fluency required to bring it to life.
- The words in the dialogue are someone else’s notion of how the characters might speak, and may be beyond the scope of a particular player.
- The situation in a script is not immediately apparent. The players may not understand what is required of them until the whole of a scene has been grasped.
- Stage directions may indicate roughly where and when people move, but give little or no indication of other means of non-verbal communication.
- Script requires considerable memory skills, both for movement and dialogue.

When beginning work with script it makes sense to keep it short at first, and gradually build confidence. A bridge between improvisation work and script can be made by the use of **smuggled lines**. On slips of paper, write a number of somewhat strange sounding lines:

- I went on holiday to Egypt and fell off a camel
- Remember that windy day last week? Well I was blown right over the fence!
- I found a front door key in a loaf of bread.

Have enough lines for each member of the group, and a few spares. In pairs, ask the players to invent a conversation into which they “smuggle” the line so that it can not be detected by the rest of the group as audience. The players therefore have each to invent a context which explains the strange line, and makes it appear natural. A common strategy is for players to include equally bizarre ideas of their own as decoys, which all adds to the invention and enjoyment.

A development of this is to present each pair with six lines of dialogue which must be used somewhere in an improvised scene, though not necessarily consecutively. The lines should give some indication of a situation, but be sufficiently open ended to allow the players to include them in a number of ways:

1. That’s what you always say. It’s never your own fault.
2. There’s no need to turn this into an argument.
3. How can you possibly say that after all I’ve done for you.
4. Money, money, money. That’s all you think about.
5. Oh please! Spare me the sermon!
6. But I saw you. With my own eyes!

Move from single lines of dialogue, to consecutive “chunks” which might appear at the start, middle or end of a scene. Ask students to write short pieces of script for other

players to use, and if they deliberately make them too bizarre or difficult, make them to use them themselves. Adapt short pieces of dialogue from prose, use snippets from plays, look through comic strips, magazines, newspapers, transcribe extracts of dialogue from films or television. A store of useful material can be built up fairly rapidly. The “chunk” provides information and clues about the situation which can be developed through improvisation.

A further useful step is to demonstrate how the same set of words can be interpreted in a completely different way, simply by altering the expression with which they are said, or by the body language which accompanies them. **The Way You Say It** provides an example of the first in the script section of the materials. To demonstrate how body language can completely supersede the words, ask a (confident) boy and girl to play a scene in which they talk only about the weather, but in which he gradually draws closer to her, and isobars are the last thing on his mind.

Monologues allow players to develop skills independently, particularly their ability to relate to an audience, rather than to other players. A monologue can be used as a device for a character to “think aloud” in a somewhat artificial way, in which case the audience eavesdrops on the character’s thought processes. Alternatively a character may acknowledge the audience as a kind of sympathetic listener to whom they openly relate their “story”, or even be drawn into the action by being made to assume an imaginary role. In the materials, **In a bit of a pickle** provides an example of the first “eaves dropping” situation, **Moll** draws the audience in to hear her story, while **Working the crowd** treats the audience as the customers around a market stall. Students can usefully write and perform their own monologues, especially as “additions” to improvised situations, when a character has the opportunity to account for their actions and to develop our understanding of their motivation. A further useful device is for a “narrator” (though this is an inaccurate word) to comment on the thoughts of the characters in a scene directly to the audience, making them aware of the gap between what might actually be said, and what is thought.

An obvious method to interpret a script includes the following stages:

1. Read through the script (in sections if it is lengthy) several times, in order to gain a clear understanding of the situation, and the characters. Where and when is it taking place, what is going on, who is involved?
2. Read through short extracts in the script in order to explore different types of expression. What are the characters feeling at this point, and how would they speak?
3. Block in movements for each character, using stage directions as the preliminary source of clues, and then consider what else they might do, or where they might move in order to support the dialogue at each point.
4. Improvise a version of the scene without using scripts, but keeping to the same general structure of the text.

Each character should memorise their own dialogue, their movements, and the important cues provided by other players. Identify stages in the text where the script takes a different direction, or introduces a change of subject, since these are important moments, and if forgotten may cause the scene to founder.

Using space

Effective use of space is vital when considering how drama communicates since it is a live, three-dimensional form. An empty space can become whatever, wherever and whenever the players wish. The creation of this illusion does not depend upon filling the space with a great deal of paraphernalia, in fact the opposite is generally the case. Only add to the space those things which are essential for a particular effect; keep the space uncluttered and simple.

The definition of entrances indicates at once what kind of a space this is. Consider where the players might enter and leave a scene which is set in:

- Open moorland
- An alleyway
- A sitting room
- A palace

The moorland has few if any restrictions, and leaves the characters open to the elements. If the alleyway has a single way in and out, this immediately establishes its confinement, and introduces a sense of unease, of threat so that it may be necessary during the course of a scene for characters to discover alternative exits, by climbing over a fence, for example. The size, shape and number of entrances to the sitting room determines the kind of house the action is taking place in, which in turn indicates the social class and culture forming the background to the scene. The positioning of the entrances in a palace indicate the formality, the symmetry of the place, and help establish the rituals of entering and leaving.

It can be difficult for characters to enter or leave a scene, as in the example of the alleyway above. The difficulty may be a physical one, such as a prisoner attempting to escape from his cell, or a teenager arriving home late attempting to climb in through a window. Alternatively, other characters may block the entrance for some reason, denying the player access or exit, for example a bouncer at a night-club, the doorman of a posh hotel, a teacher in a classroom, a guard at the castle gate. In these cases the entrance becomes an important aspect in defining the situation which is taking place between the characters.

For these reasons, it is important that all players are clear what the space is, and where the entrances are, as a pre-requisite to any scene, since these define the boundaries of the action.

The use of different levels adds the third dimension to creating this sense of place. Here also, the players should be aware of the possibilities in the use of levels. The classic example of this is the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* where the lovers are both physically separated, and kept apart by the families' feud. Moreover, a character on a higher level can:

- Demonstrate power and superiority (a judge's bench)
- Talk or show themselves to those below (a platform or stage)
- Observe those below, without being seen
- Hide, escape, or protect themselves from those below

And of course, a fall from this position of superiority can reinforce a similar fall in status for a character. Levels are perhaps not so easy to make use of as entrances, since there has to be some actual way of constructing them easily with blocks of some kind, but skilled use of levels can add a whole new range of dynamics to a scene.

Furniture and props provide the final elements in this consideration of the use of space, and here again, less is better than more. Only make use of furniture or props which are absolutely essential. For example, the use of a table to indicate the authority of one character interviewing another is valid since it physically separates them, whereas the need for an actual television in a scene where a family is viewing probably isn't, provided the players agree where the TV is, and glue their gaze in that direction accordingly.

There is generally even less need for props. Most things can be conjured up out of thin air by skilful use of mime. In the **Jack and the Beanstalk** materials for example, it is much more effective to collectively imagine the stalk, and to react accordingly, than to produce a wispy prop which would never convince anyone.

Once the actual physical properties of the scene have been purposefully established, the key to the use of space depends upon the positioning of the characters within a scene in order to indicate the relationship between them. The elements to consider here are:

- Awareness
- Closeness
- Movement
- Status

Characters might be unaware of each other (a burglar hiding in a room), deliberately ignoring each other (family members after a quarrel), or intensely aware of the other person (boy sees girl sees boy across a disco floor). Similarly their closeness might indicate intimacy at one end of the scale, or a threat at the other.

Movement shows the emotional state of a character, or the need to hurry. The agitation of a moving character can form an interesting contrast with the stillness of another, showing how each is perceiving the situation in differing ways. Status, and the ideas of power, authority and control which accompany it, can be shown by the physical level of each character, for example when one character is standing, and the other is sitting. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the standing character has the advantage. Take for example, a student standing in front of a Headteacher who is sitting behind a desk.

All these aspects of the use of space are best explored in the course of work in progress, by inviting players to change any of these elements in a scene, and being aware of the differences this makes.

Presenting work to an audience

There is no substitute for presenting a piece of work to a real audience since this will understandably increase the players' concentration. Most often the audience is likely to be other students in the same group. On these occasions, the audience can show its co-operation with the players by the concentration with which they watch the work, and by their supportive suggestions and evaluations afterwards. A simple technique is to ask the members of the audience for three things they liked about the piece, and one suggestion on how it might be improved. Negative comments should not be accepted.

Elementary stagecraft skills require that the players should be both seen and heard. Experiment with different arrangements of audience and players, both in the round, and face on, and discuss the relative advantages or drawbacks to either setup. If performed fully in the round, for example, at some point in a scene the players will have their backs to some part of the audience, whereas a prime disadvantage of performing face on is the somewhat unnatural "side on" positions players may adopt in order always to be seen. Similarly, players can be shown whether they are being heard by the simple expedient of asking the members of the audience to raise a hand if ever the dialogue becomes inaudible.

Presenting a piece to an invited audience other than their peers offers students the opportunity to consider the suitability of the content of the drama, its length, and the language which should be used. Children's theatre is an obvious example (see **Jack and the Beanstalk**). If a well known story is chosen, emphasis is placed upon dramatising the narrative rather than inventing it, in language appropriate to young children, providing also some clear opportunities to invite audience participation of the traditional "he's behind you!" type.

This skill in relating to an audience is important, and places emphasis upon a key element to establish, the **Focus** of a scene. Sometimes, it does not matter if there is no real focus in the work. Take a beach scene in which players have been asked to produce small pieces of movement showing holidaymakers enjoying themselves. As in real life, this can be a fairly haphazard arrangement. However, if attention needs to be drawn to a particular piece of action in the scene, the rescue of a bather for example, then the focus of the scene should shift towards that event, and all the players should contribute towards it, even if only as spectating bystanders. Focus becomes more obviously important when performing to an audience, since they can rarely concentrate fully on more than one thing at a time. At its worst, misunderstanding of the importance of focus is shown by players who deliberately upstage the action of others, or who "play for laughs" to an audience when this is detrimental to the whole piece. Some might say this is a reason to avoid performing drama to an audience, if it encourages this type of "showing off". Personally, I do not see how students can learn *not* to do this, if they never have the opportunity to learn how it can hinder the success of a piece.

A final consideration of the value of performing to an audience is that it invites students to think about the composition of their scenes, in a pictorial sense. How does it look on stage? What is the relation of one player to another? This reinforces consideration of the use of space described above, so that drama becomes a kind of moving sculpture to the eye, as well as a story to the ear. One method of demonstrating this is to make use of tableaux or "slide show" pieces. In a group of four or five, the players invent a simple

story which might be told in pictures. Wedding photographs, holiday snaps, day trips, or comic strip stories about super-heroes, sports or romance magazines. One of the group acts as narrator, while the rest of the group “freeze” into the frames of the story, changing each picture together upon a given cue. Freezing the action in this way forces the players to consider the composition of each frame, so that its meaning can best be understood by the audience. The players become a kind of human storyboard of the action.

Giving the work shape and form

Many of the issues concerning the use of space, and presenting work to an audience, will require students to consider the ways in which an exploratory piece can be turned into a piece of “polished” work. Here are some other simple guidelines to follow:

- Begin with something which will grab an audience’s attention, but is not the most dramatic moment of the piece. Save this for later, the climax of the work.
- Make sure that there is sufficient exposition so that characters, relationships and situations are clearly defined.
- Avoid repetition, particularly in the dialogue. If it doesn’t move the scene on, or introduce something new, then leave it out. Practise this by limiting the number of lines a character can say, or the time a scene can take.
- Decide when each character enters or leaves the scene, remembering that all the players do not have to be involved at the start, nor remain until the finish. Illustrate this, by working on scenes which by necessity require characters to enter at different stages. For example, late at night two anxious parents await their teenage daughter, who tries to sneak quietly back into the house with her boyfriend.

And finally....

With regard to this look at how skills might be highlighted and practised, it is worthwhile remembering that the final end of learning a skill is to use it for a good purpose. These activities should enhance the work the students take part in; indeed work can frequently develop from them. At all times, try to ensure that learning points are clearly established (and revised) between games, exercises and activities, and the ideas that your students are exploring in their work. It is to these ideas, the second element of our lesson content, that our attention can now turn.

Ideas: All the W's

Defining situations

Journalists have a very simple system for defining how to write a story based on “all the W’s”:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?

Analyse any story in a newspaper, and it is clear that most articles follow this order because it has a simple logic: “Begin with the most obvious information first, then explain how the pieces fit together”. No story can take place without these five elements, so they provide a useful place to start, and an easy list of pointers for students to pick up on.

Who?: Characters

The skills required to invent and present a character have already been mentioned. Our concern here is with the ideas, the information which is needed to flesh out a character so that there is a background history which helps to define where this person is coming from in both a social and a personal sense.

Defining a character

An activity which helps students draw up a list of the things which it may be helpful to know about a character works like this:

- Prepare a number of A4 size labels, each of which has written on it the name of a well known character, from television, music, sport, literature or history.
- These can range from Napoleon to Little Red Riding Hood, but should be characters with whom your students will be familiar.
- There should be one character label for each student, as these are to be attached (with cellotape) to their backs.
- It is important that the name on the label is not seen by the student who receives it since the activity works by means of trying to discover who you are.
- When all the labels are attached (and you may wish to ask the students to prepare a label for yourself), the rules of the game are explained as follows.
- Each player is to find out who they are by asking questions of the other players which can only be answered with a Yes or a No. This is most important (since otherwise the obvious question to ask would be “Who am I?”).

The questions will probably include some obvious ones such as:

- Am I female?
- Am I young?
- Am I rich?
- Am I still alive?
- Do I live in this country?

These questions lead to further “sub-questions” which narrow down the search from a Yes answer:

- Am I older than fifteen?
- Am I a millionaire?
- Did I live 500 years ago?
- Do I live in this town?

As the search for the identity continues, the questions are likely to become more specific:

- Am I a singer?
- Am I a popular singer?
- Have I got a single in the charts at the moment?
- Do I sing with a group?

When the game has run its course and everyone knows their identity, it is important that the teaching points it produces are clearly defined. In groups, ask the players to make a list of the questions which were asked, and to classify the questions together under suitable headings. These lists can then be brought to a whole class discussion where a composite list is made. The intention is to produce a series of parameters which help to define characters, and will probably be something like this:

- Age
- Sex
- Social class / Wealth
- Job
- Clothes
- Success / Talents
- Family
- Good points
- Weaknesses

The game therefore helps students to see the information which we use in everyday situations in order to “get to know” someone, and which can be transferred to the invention of their own characters. A useful follow up exercise might be to ask students to produce a wall chart which presents these ideas, and which when displayed, is a continual reminder of their importance.

There are numerous follow-up activities which can be built into the development of character until they become an expected part of the procedure. **Hot seating** is one of the most popular of these:

- Working in groups of up to four, each player takes the hot seat in turn.
- The other players bombard the hot seater in turn with any question which comes into their head.
- The hot seater answers in role without pausing, or giving a great deal of thought to the response.
- At the end of two or three minutes, the hot seat changes, and the next player has their turn.
- At the end of the session, the players discuss the answers they made, deciding which answers to keep as part of their character’s personality, and which to discard.

Gossip is a similar device, though on this occasion, the other players talk about the character in focus, building up a previous history of the person, with the added attraction that they are also establishing a series of attitudes at the same time. When the gossipers have had their say for a minute or so, allow the character (who has obviously been listening) to join into the discussion, and to challenge the things which have been said. This begins exploration of **conflict** and **relationships** which will be discussed in the next section.

Role cards can be used to provide information about a character, and to indicate the situation in which they find themselves. It is probably best to restrict the information on the card so that it is not overwhelming, providing starting points rather than being a description of a finished character to which the player must adhere. Invite the students to make up their own role cards when they have explored their characters using hot seating or similar techniques.

Photographs, pictures and **cartoons** are fertile sources of starting places, as are **costumes** and **props**:

- Prepare a large box containing enough pictures, items of clothing or props so that there is at least one for each player.
- Sit the whole group in a circle, and invite each player in turn to take a dip into the box and to choose an item, preferably without being able to see what they are getting.
- Use a series of questions to explore who might be shown in the picture, or might wear or use the item.

The answers the whole group comes up with defines the nature of the character the player must present. This can lead in some imaginative directions, for example if a boy emerges from the dip with a handbag it not only produces the obvious fun, but can be pursued further:

- Why would a boy have a handbag in his possession?
- Whose is it?
- Has he stolen it? Found it?
- What if someone thinks he's stolen it, when he hasn't?

Here, the exploration has moved on from simply trying to define a character towards developing the situation itself, and this is what we turn our attention to next.

What and Why? : Sparks, conflicts and relationships

Dramatic conflict

Classical ideas about drama focus upon a central conflict between two characters (or groups of characters) the protagonist, and the antagonist. This is still a very useful concept, since the problem inherent in any situation can readily be described in these terms, helping to provide a clear focus upon "What is this scene about?". The reasons behind the situation, the "Why did this happen?", are obviously inextricably linked.

The actions and reactions of the characters are governed by the relationships between them, and their attitudes towards the conflict, in its most basic sense as a kind of "Whose

side are they on?”. “What?” and “Why?” are therefore the central questions towards defining a situation, and the govern both the action and the relationships of the characters.

An example will help to make this clearer. The first step is to identify what the conflict in a situation actually is. Consider the action of Romeo and Juliet:

- This play has a very obvious conflict between the two houses, the Montagues and the Capulets.
- However, this is not the real conflict, the dramatic conflict in the play, as is shown by the fact that Shakespeare does not tell us anything about the cause of the feud, nor seem interested in doing so.
- The real conflict is between those who wish to perpetuate the feud, and those who wish it to end.
- The protagonists include Romeo, Juliet, the Prince, Friar Lawrence and Benvolio.
- The antagonists are Lords / Ladies Montague and Capulet, and Tybalt.
- This leaves an interesting pair whose involvement and attitude fluctuates, Mercutio, and the Nurse.
- The key incident in the play is the death of Tybalt, since at this point, Romeo (briefly) joins the antagonists, creating a dilemma for Juliet in the mixture of her emotions.
- The death of the lovers resolves the dramatic conflict by bringing an end to the feud, its cause.

Cycle of choices

At any stage in the play, the effect of the dramatic conflict upon a particular character can be observed, a kind of snapshot of their dilemma. Romeo’s involvement in the action might be described like this:

- At first he is disinterested in the feud due to his infatuation with Rosaline, and therefore is not involved in the dramatic conflict in the play.
- He becomes entangled into events by going to the Capulets’ banquet, both by meeting Juliet, and enraging Tybalt.
- He attempts to disassociate himself from the feud by ignoring Tybalt’s challenge following his own marriage to Juliet, but these peaceful attempts to resolve the conflict are unsuccessful.
- He becomes fatefully embroiled by killing Tybalt out of a sense of grief, guilt, and revenge for Mercutio’s death.
- Following this point, his fate is largely decided by chance, and his reliance upon others, notably Friar Lawrence. After hearing of Juliet’s “death” he chooses to kill himself also.

Conflict presents both the protagonist and antagonist with a dilemma: What to do next? The characters have a number of choices of possible action. What they choose to do become defining moments in the development of their character, and why they choose to do it defines their **motivation**. Their actions inevitably create consequences, which may involve further dilemmas and choices, so that the cycle continues, as illustrated in diagram 1:

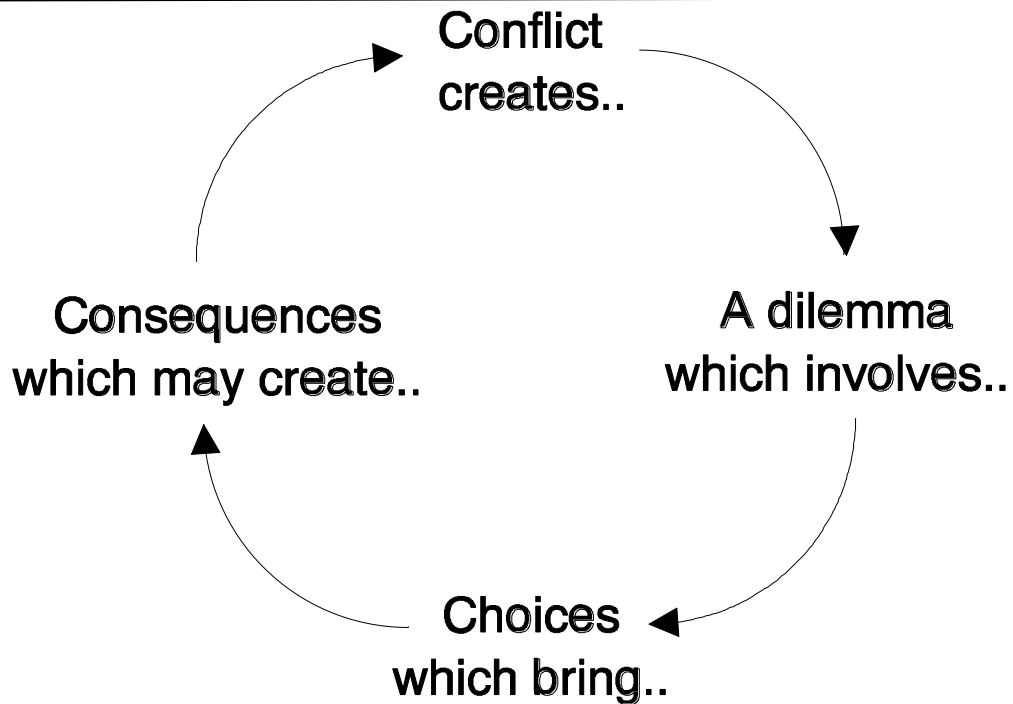


Diagram 1: The cycle of choices

The diagram obviously oversimplifies the total development of the action, since each character has their own cycle of choices which are happening consecutively. Tybalt, Mercutio, Juliet, Friar Lawrence and so on each have their own motivation for acting as they do, and each individual choice eventually adds up to the sum of the whole.

What ifs....

Exploring the possible choices the characters may make offers endless possibilities, not only in defining the situations themselves, but also in considering how a piece of work may best be shaped dramatically. The choice someone might make in real life (for example to do the safe and sensible thing) may not be the best dramatic alternative. If Romeo goes to the banquet, sees Juliet and decides the risk is too great, end of one great story..

Any piece of improvisation can offer a number of different developments of the action, if the characters make alternative choices. Similarly, continuing a story, or a piece of script, through improvisation from a point of significant dilemma not only provides an endless range of material to work with, but also can be a useful means of illuminating the original text.

The alternative choices can be formalised by means of a branching diagram. It is a useful exercise to ask groups to produce such a diagram before attempting to improvise the situations. Some alternatives, especially those which lead nowhere interesting dramatically, can immediately be discarded, while those which offer considerable scope can be explored further. The exercise is probably best suited to material which is not well known, since, as in the case of Romeo and Juliet, the original is likely to hold too much impact over the alternatives.

Sparks

If dramatic conflict provides the tinder of a situation, there is also the need of a spark to ignite it. A good example is provided when Othello asks Desdemona to show him the handkerchief he gave her as a love token. The handkerchief is missing because Iago has asked his wife to steal it in order to place it with Cassio to incriminate him. The conflict (s) at this point in the play are fairly complex, especially as some of the characters, notably Desdemona and Cassio, and of course Othello himself, are not aware of their real nature. The handkerchief becomes the spark which ignites the underlying conflict since it represents in Othello's mind a material sign of his wife's infidelity.

Finding the "spark" is probably the key to opening up a situation for students, and is the best trick to learn when thinking quickly on your feet about how to define a scene, especially when picking up on ideas the students have given you. Consider the difference between these two instructions:

- Make up a scene in which a man suspects his wife is being unfaithful with his best friend.
- Make up a scene in which a man questions his wife about a ring he gave her which he has seen on the finger of his best friend.

The second instruction gives the players something concrete with which to work, something to provide a focus for the scene around which the actual conflict can be explored. It moves the situation from the abstract ("adultery") to the specific ("Where's the ring?"), and provides a starting point from which dialogue can develop. Some other examples might include:

Conflict

- A wife suspects her husband of being a thief. He has already been in prison, but has promised faithfully that he is doing straight. He has no job, and money is very tight.
- A mother is worried that her son is being bullied at school, and that older boys are stealing his dinner money.
- A teenager wants his best friend to borrow his dad's car without his permission in order to drive their girlfriends to a party.

Spark

- The husband arrives home wearing an expensive leather coat. (Object)
- The boy is eating handfuls of biscuits watching TV before his tea. (Action)
- "But I promised the girls we'd take them. We can't let them down!" (Speech)

The spark can be an object, an action, or a snippet of dialogue as shown in the three examples above. A diagram showing how these elements might be presented is shown in diagram 2: Structuring a situation

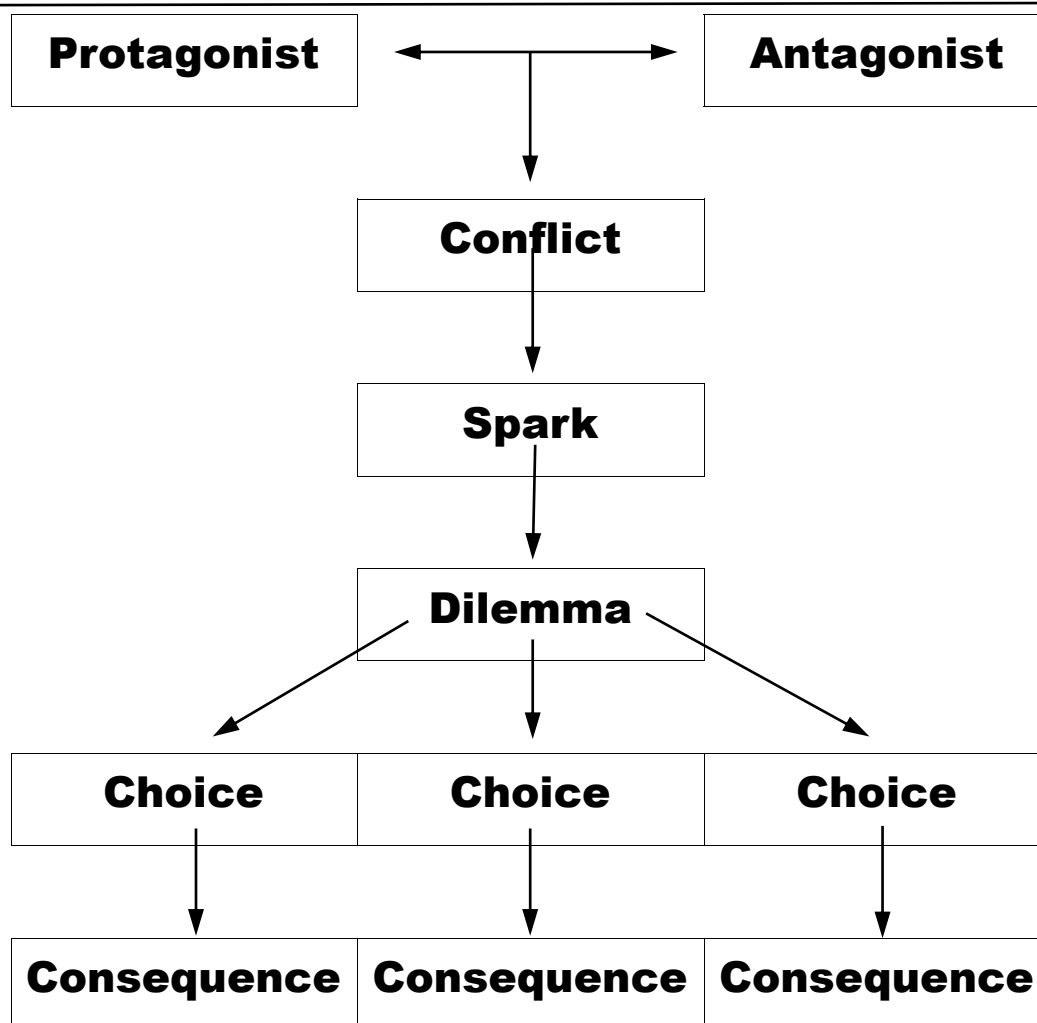


Diagram 2: Structuring a situation

Relationships

Some aspects of the relationships between the characters are defined by the very nature of the characters themselves, as in the obvious case of members of a family, a boss and an employee, a teacher and a student. The nature of the relationship might be defined in terms of the characters':

- Previous history
- Intimacy
- Social status
- Power roles

However, defining relationships in great detail *before* exploring them through drama is frequently unsuccessful and unproductive. Consider this example:

A policeman stops a dishevelled, suspicious character late at night in a dark street.

The relationship between the two might be defined as:

Previous history	None. They are strangers.
Intimacy	Distant. The meeting is governed by the policeman's suspicions and the nature of his job.
Social status	The policeman's status is higher than that of the suspect, since the former upholds the law, whereas the latter may be breaking it.
Power roles	The policeman's power is the greater in a legal sense, though physically he may be weaker.

Now suppose that the suspicious character turns out to be his brother in law who is also a policeman, of superior rank. He is going through a bad patch in his marriage, and is drinking heavily to drown his sorrows. The relationship becomes much more complex:

Previous history	The policeman has always been slightly jealous of his brother in law, and concerned at the way he has treated his sister.
Intimacy	Slightly antagonistic, both on a personal level, and due to the brother in law's superior rank.
Social status	The brother in law is better paid, and lives in a slightly more middle class area. However, at this moment, his status is lower than the policeman, since he is acting in an anti-social way.
Power roles	Finely balanced due to the policeman's dilemma. Should he arrest his brother in law for being drunk? Or help to cover the indiscretion of a superior officer?

Defining relationships is therefore a very complicated business. While the general parameters of the characters might be defined, relationships between them are much more organic. Indeed they are the essence of what is being explored through the drama, and emerge as a result of the dilemmas created by conflict as described previously. Neither characters nor their relationships are "cut in stone", but exist in a state of flux and change. It is often an unexpected action which provides the defining moment for a character, as in Capulet's sudden fury at Juliet's refusal to marry Paris. Up until this moment, he has appeared to be a fairly sensitive, loving parent, as shown by his previous non-committal reply to Paris' request to marry Juliet. When thwarted, he erupts with violent vehemence, both in language and action. His actual relationship with his daughter becomes apparent, and the reasons why the feud between the two families has been perpetuated become easier to understand. The changes in the relationship between Juliet and her father could be "mapped" using the four parameters above at different stages in the play. Remember though that it is the conflict in the situation which has helped to define the relationship and make its true nature clear.

All work in drama is concerned with character and relationships, but these should be seen as distant goals rather than as fully defined starting points. It is possible, and useful, to set up situations to highlight separately the four parameters of relationships indicated above. For example, ask students to mime without any dialogue at all a breakfast scene between a husband and wife who have had an argument the previous evening. The lack of intimacy is immediately apparent in the silence between them, and the abruptness of their actions, passing the toast, pouring the tea, and so on.

Similar situations can highlight the previous history in a relationship, or the social status, or the power role, but only to a certain extent. Do not attempt to burden students with too much information about the relationships. Less is best. Rather, give them a pair of shoes to walk round in to find out how they fit.

Where and When? : The setting

The elements of time and place, **When?** and **Where?** define the **setting** of the piece, and give important clues as to the type of drama which is taking place. Within a few seconds of watching a play or a film an audience is aware of this. Details of scenery, costume, landscape, equipment and paraphernalia immediately give clues to the genre to which it belongs. The genre of the piece has immediate implications for the other elements, Who? What? and Why? Fantasy stories generally employ certain types of character engaged upon particular storylines, often a quest of some kind. Thrillers, science-fiction tales, gritty contemporary naturalism, historical dramas, any genre you wish to define, has its own parameters of character action and theme, the expectations of which are set in motion by its setting.

It is useful to demonstrate to students how our expectations of character and action depend considerably upon the setting. Collect, or if possible edit together on one track, the opening sequences to about eight films, each from a different genre. For example, a western, a fantasy, a thriller, a science-fiction film, a horror(ish!) film, a police story, an historical drama, and a contemporary comedy. The sequences should be seconds rather than minutes in length, since one objective is to illustrate how quickly the audience picks up on a genre. Prepare a matrix which has the films listed 1 to 8 along one axis, and headings such as these along the other.

- Place?
- Time?
- Costume?
- Male characters?
- Female characters?
- Action?
- Props?
- Storyline?

Ask the students to fill in the matrix as quickly as possible after watching each sequence, in pairs at first so that ideas can be matched in whole group discussion. Compare what agreement there is between them. Then ask them to consider what is *not* likely to happen in such a film, or the kind of characters who are unlikely to appear. From this discussion the conventions which underpin genres will quickly appear. This is not to say that such conventions are written in stone, and a useful area to explore is how film-makers, dramatists and storytellers attempt to do so. A common device is to connect the present day with a fantasy world by means of some kind of "gateway", so that "ordinary" characters are faced with very uncommon experiences, and meet extraordinary people (or creatures).

With more experienced students who are aware of the conventions of different genres, it can be good fun to rework a story in the style of a different genre. Fairy stories are good starting places, since the narratives and characters are well known. Some examples might include:

Story

Snow White
Sleeping Beauty
Cinderella
The Emperor's Clothes

Reworked Genre

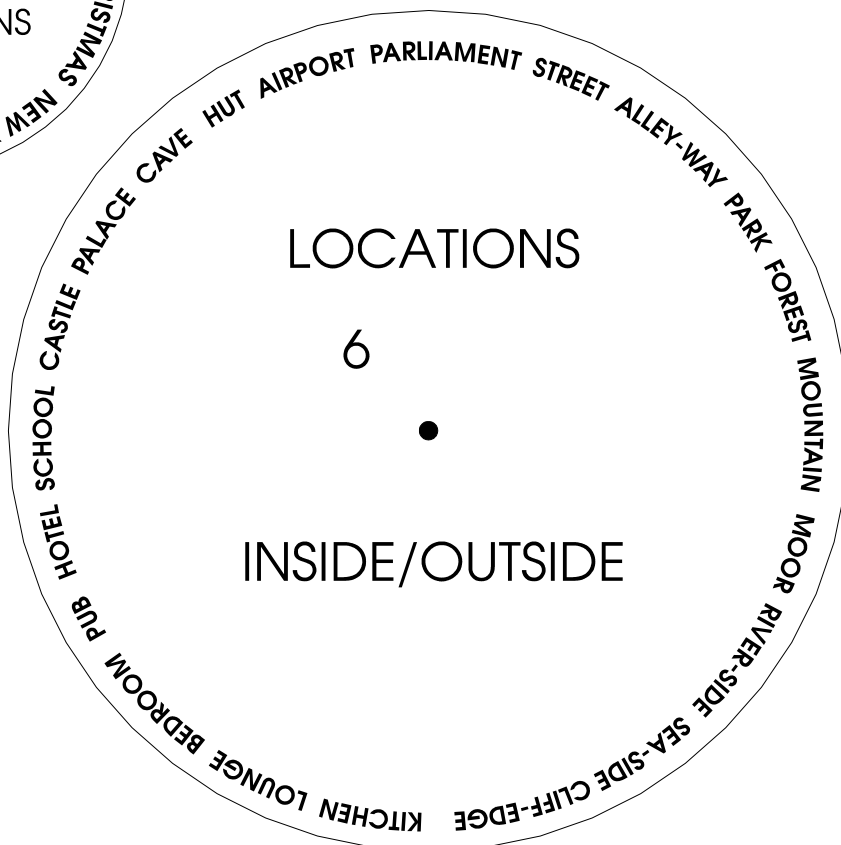
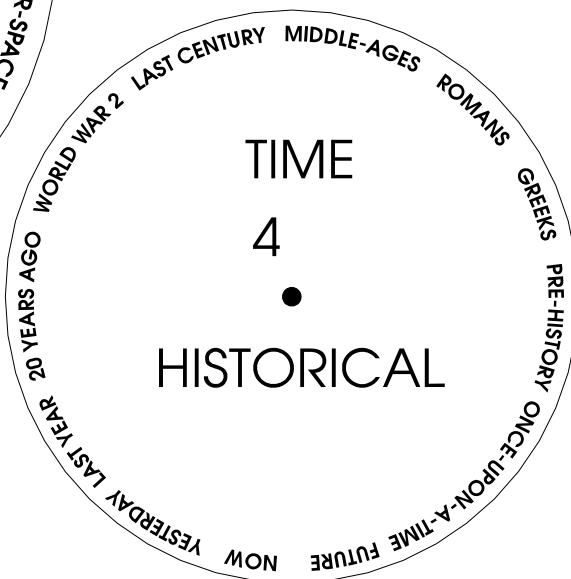
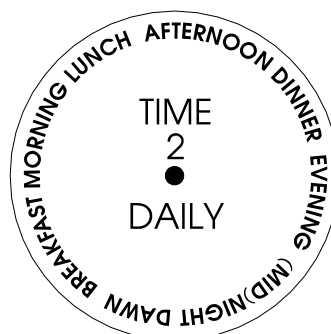
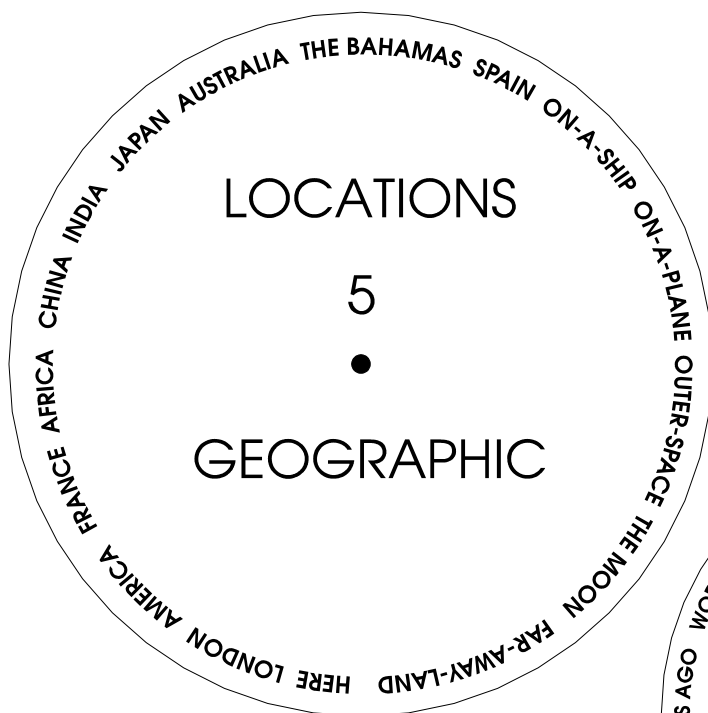
Police series
Spook-thriller (e.g. X-Files).
Social realism / Documentary
Political thriller

The traditional story has to be reworked using the settings, language and characters of the modern genre in order to highlight how this modifies our expectations.

The setting of a piece of drama is defined in terms of location and time. One means of showing students the many possibilities that this creates is to make use of a **Settings Wheel**, the template for which appears on the next page. This is a series of wheels which can be photocopied, and pinned together with a split-fastener so that they revolve.

- The two **Locations wheels** define the place in terms of it being Inside or Outside, and its geographical location. Turning just these two wheels gives a large variety of places where the drama might happen, a forest in a far-away land (fantasy), a kitchen in Australia (a soap), or an alley way in London (thriller).
- The four **Time wheels** define this element in terms of its historical period, its particular occasion, the hour of the day, and the season of the year. It may not be useful to include all six wheels in the definition of a setting, but they demonstrate very clearly the possibilities available.

Most students will opt for the "Here and Now" in their work, so the Settings Wheel can be used to bring them beyond this starting point. Use the wheel to issue a challenge to produce a piece which must not take place in the "here and now". This will automatically also increase the range of characters and situations to which the players have to respond.



SETTINGS WHEEL

Where to start?

At this point, the inexperienced drama teacher is probably saying “This is all very well, but where do I start? What should drama be *about*?” The problem is that drama can be about *anything*. Run through a list of your favourite plays and you will quickly discover this to be the case. There are a multitude of different starting points, and it is your skill as a drama teacher which is needed to structure these into a form that students can enter into and enjoy.

When planning lessons, therefore, try to choose topics which are:

- Accessible to the age and experiences of the group
- Likely to offer interesting conflicts and situations
- Likely to build upon previous work

Events which are in the news, or “hot” in your own school or neighbourhood are likely to engage immediate interest. Be prepared to talk to the group, and listen to what is going on, as suggested in the **Players** section of this introduction. Once you have gained their confidence that the content of your drama lessons is usually “quite good” (a real accolade!), try to move them towards more demanding ground, towards less familiar material that perhaps requires considerable research before they are able to take it on.

Here is a list of possible topics arranged alphabetically. Add to the list as you discover new topics of your own:

Defining conflicts in topics: An anthropological model

Choosing a topic does not necessarily immediately suggest conflict situations which can be developed. Where is the conflict in a topic to be found? One method for finding conflicts is based on an anthropological view of conflict situations. This suggests that humans have a fairly limited number of basic needs, and that disputes are generally concerned with the fulfilment of these at the expense of other people. The most obvious need is for self preservation, to survive direct life threats, a rich vein of dramatic material. Other basic needs include food (and drink), clothing, shelter, territory and sex. All animals have these needs, and people are no exception. Our needs have become more sophisticated as we have evolved, so that the need to work, for example, has developed from our need for food, while the need for material possessions has become an indication of status within the human group. Therefore, three main kinds of dispute can be identified:

- Ownership of the things which satisfy these needs
- The unity or harmony of the group as it seeks to resolve these issues
- The status or power the achievement of these needs gives individuals

A simple matrix can be produced using these ideas, as shown in the example which follows. The matrix can then be used to attempt to define a number of conflict situations which might be developed around a particular topic.

Take, for example, “Going on holiday”. Here’s how the matrix might be helpful to identify some ideas:

Disputes Needs ↓	Ownership (Envy, greed)	Social Unity (Loyalty, conformity co-operation)	Status (Power, prestige, authority)
Obtaining food or drink	The children argue over the last sandwich.	The family argues about who forgot to bring the lunch	The dad wants to leave the family on the beach to go to the pub.
Finding shelter Homes / Lodgings	Two couples argue over a hotel room which is double booked.	The children want to stay in a hotel; the parents want cheaper lodgings.	Two residents argue with the manager about whose room is the better.
Clothes	Two tourists argue over the last souvenir sombrero in the shop.	The family try to persuade their father not to wear shorts	A mother refuses to allow her teenage daughter to wear a skimpy bikini
Rearing children	One of the children disappears.	The parents argue over who should supervise the children in the sea.	The parents won't allow their daughter to visit a night club
Love Sex / Friendship	Two girls both want to go out with the same boy.	Mother gets annoyed when dad oggles the young girls sunbathing.	A boyfriend refuses to let his girlfriend go abroad alone.
Finding work	Two ice-cream sellers argue over the same "pitch".	The workers in the hotel try to persuade reluctant colleagues to strike because ...	The manager of the hotel tells his staff that they have to take a wage cut.
Money Wealth / Material possessions	A beachcomber finds a ring; a holidaymaker claims it.	When dad's wallet is stolen, his family accuse him of being careless.	Two "posers" try to convince a girl their sportscar is the better.
Territory Land / Countries / Kingdoms	Swimmers dispute over the last sunlounger by the pool.	Friends attempt to persuade each other their choice of resort is better.	A border guard refuses to allow one of the party to enter the country.

Some conflicts will arise more obviously from some situations than others. In the developed world, obtaining food is less of a problem than it might be in some countries. But if this situation worsens, as in famine, war, homelessness on the streets, or a nuclear winter, then obtaining food becomes a much more accentuated need, and more viable dramatically.

At the more sophisticated end of the needs spectrum, disputes over wealth and territory suggest conflicts arising from political intrigue or power struggles, though the same kind of disputes can still be identified in the simplest of everyday situations, neighbours arguing over boundary lines, or attempting to “Keep up with the Joneses”.

The matrix provides a structured way to look for possible conflict situations in any topic area, and is simple enough to be kept in mind, even when developing ideas as players present them. Think:

- Food, Shelter, Clothes, Children, Love, Work, Money, Territory
- Ownership, Unity, Status

A useful INSET exercise is to take the alphabetic topic list, and attempt to complete a “conflict matrix” as shown above for as many of the topics on the list as is possible in the time available. Once the matrix has been completed, consider how each situation can be given a specific starting point, a “spark”, to set the scene in motion. Remember that this might be an opening line:

**“If you think I’m going to let you wear that bikini to the beach
you’ve another think coming young madam..”**

..or an object, (the last sombrero), or an action, (“Mother hides dad’s shorts”). In this way, a large stock of ideas can be built up, which it is not too difficult to turn into actual classroom materials.

-
- A** Adventure, advertising, animals, aeroplane journeys, assassination, accidents, attacks, ambitions, astronauts, atomic power, aliens, alcohol, accusations, alibis
- B** Baby-sitting, birth, Bible stories, building sites, bullying, bailiffs, beggars, boasting, boarding houses, breakdowns
- C** Crime, childhood, Children's Theatre, Community Theatre, Cinema, chance, circus, clowning, captives, carnivals, Christmas, contracts, contests, customers
- D** Dinosaurs, Do-It-Yourself, death, disease, detectives, disco, deceit, divorce, dreams, A day in the life of..., dating (agencies), diamonds, dossiers, dinners
- E** Expeditions, events, entertainment, enemies, emergencies, embarrassment, envy, elopement, epidemics, equality, escapes, excuses
- F** Fairy stories, football, fortune telling, farming, famine, Fate, fairgrounds, feuds, fetes, farce, funerals, festivals, factories, fans, fires, floods, flattery, folktales,
- G** Giants, goblins, ghosts, gluttony, greed, gangs, gangsters, gambling, games, good deeds
- H** Holidays, hospitals, history, haunted houses, (moving) house, horoscopes, Heaven
- I** Illness, islands, injuries, intrigue
- J** Jealousy, jail, jury, journey, Jesus, Jews (treatment of)
- K** Kings, knights, killing,
- L** Love, letters, lottery, legends, lies
- M** Murder, machines, meals, museums, Madam Tussauds, music, modelling, myths,
- N** Neighbours, news, Northern Ireland, nights out, nuclear weapons
- O** Odyssey, offices, obstacles
- P** Police, politics, pets, proverbs, puzzles, prejudice, poems, psychiatrists, prophets,
- Q** Queens, quests, quotations, quiz shows
- R** Robots, rain forests, radio, race, rebellions,
- S** School, sport, (7 Deadly) Sins, sex, sailing, sci-fi, stories, survival, storms,
- T** Theft, travel, team (spirit), television, telephone conversations, tableau, taxes,
- U** Unexpected events, underworld, underwater, underprivileged, underground
- V** Voyages, votes, victories, vivisection, vandalism, vagrancy, victimisation, videos,
- W** War, westerns, witches, work, wonderland, wedding, (Last) Will and Testament,
- X** X-Files, xenophobia
- Y** Yuletide, (a funny thing happened) yesterday, youth club, young and old
- Z** Zoo, zodiac
-

Classroom management

Many of the topics which have already been covered affect classroom management. A group of students who are concentrating on the task in hand, working co-operatively, and controlling their movements and voices in order to communicate their ideas make the whole business of classroom management very easy. To achieve this, however, it is necessary to provide students with a clear framework in which to operate, to have a set of routines which enable two main outcomes. Students should be able to:

- Work safely at all times
- Understand and achieve the work they have been asked to do

Any strategy employed in a lesson, whether it is an explicit rule which is required of the students, or the teacher's consideration of how long a task should take, or what equipment should be used, is ultimately concerned with either or both of these outcomes. Students need to get on with the work, and in safety.

To do this, the teacher has to manage these things:

- Space
- Time
- Equipment
- Noise
- Groups
- Instructions

The problem of course is that most of these things usually have to be managed at the same time. Providing students with a clear set of guidelines at the outset enables the teacher to be proactive. If the students know in advance how they are expected to carry out particular tasks, a good deal of time and energy can be saved. Where more than one drama teacher is working in a school, an essential activity is for them to decide upon the routines which will be established as a common policy, so that when students arrive at any drama lesson with any teacher, there should be no confusion as to how things are done.

Space

The management of space begins before the lesson actually starts. It is important to decide where students wait before the lesson, how they enter the room, what they do with their luggage, and how the space is organised in order for the lesson to begin. Consider these guidelines as examples:

- No one should enter the drama area before being invited to do so.
- All bags and coats should be left safely on the racks as you enter the room.
- Never run in the drama area unless it is part of an activity you have been asked to perform.
- At the beginning of each lesson, take your chairs, and place them quietly in a large class circle, ready to start.

Discuss the reasons for these guidelines, placing emphasis upon safety aspects, and for ensuring that the drama area is kept secure and undamaged. These guidelines pre-suppose that there is a purpose-built drama area being used. All too often, this is not the case, and drama lessons are time-tabled in a wide variety of weird and often not-so-wonderful places, from school assembly halls, to huts, to (on one notable occasion) a chemistry lab. It may be necessary to re-organise (or abandon!) the room, most often by moving tables, so devise a method to be followed each week, and make sure the students know what it is. This may well be the first “drama” activity with a new class, so look over the area in advance, and give clear instructions. Where space permits, it is best to arrange tables around the perimeter of the room since this probably involves least movement, and enables students to quickly change from movement to written activities as and when necessary.

An empty space can have a physical effect on students, especially in a school situation where most rooms are fairly confined and packed with tables. Some students immediately want to fill the space by leaping around in it with abandon, while others will shirk from it, and hover around its edge. This effect needs to be recognised and acknowledged; students need to be taught how to use the space constructively.

Watch how, like most of the animal kingdom, students will decide upon their own “home” territory by sitting in the same place whenever the whole class are called together, and even dispute these areas with others, though there does not appear to be any logical reason to do so. Much of this is to do with feeling secure, so reflect also on where you yourself sit, and by whom. Games such as **Fruitbowl** described previously, as well as being good vigorous fun, can also help to make students feel more at ease in adapting to space.

Two useful management techniques for controlling the use of space are the **Circle**, and the **Freeze** command

The Circle

Organising the class into a large circle at the start of a lesson, or whenever a new stage in the work has been reached, has several advantages:

- The circle immediately defines an acting area in which particular tasks can be demonstrated.
- Everyone can see everyone else, so that attention is focused on to the centre of the circle.
- It is a democratic arrangement, with no one person having a superior position or rights.
- It provides a formal, structured situation which can be re-established whenever the need arises.

The main rules of the circle, and the reasons for them, need to be made clear:

- Only one person can speak in the circle at any time.
- If you wish to speak, indicate this by raising your hand.
- When others are performing in the circle, watch carefully and without speaking.

Since several parts of the drama lesson may consist in discussion, trawling for ideas, or observing others, it really is important that these rules are kept to, and sanctions employed if necessary. (What these sanctions might be, is discussed later.) Usually, the teacher's role in the circle will be that of "chairperson", that is, someone has to decide whose turn it is to speak, and ensure that they can be heard. With older groups in particular, there is every reason to invite students to take on this role, to emphasise that it is the role which is important, not necessarily the person who performs it. Asking the "constant interrupters" to take on the chairperson role is often a useful ploy. Even if the discussion then falls to bits, some clear teaching points can be made.

When using the circle as an acting area, it helps if the players number themselves in order, calling out their number in turn around the circle. This makes it easy to choose volunteers at random, simply by thinking of two numbers and calling them out. It also ensures that there is a mixing of who the players work with. Don't forget to give yourself a number, and be prepared always to do any task that you are asking the other players to perform. When evaluating this kind of work, emphasise the positive at all times, since some students may well feel exposed in being at the focus of the circle. As a rule of thumb, invite three positive comments ("Tell me three things that went well in that piece") to one suggestion for development ("Let's have one suggestion how it might be improved").

The circle provides a suitable ending to the lesson since it formalises the proceeding, provides the opportunity to reiterate the main teaching points which have been made, and to evaluate the success of the work which has been done.

The Freeze command

The freeze command has already been mentioned as an aesthetic device enabling students to consider the composition of their work; in addition it is a useful tool to bring hectic activity under immediate control. It requires students to concentrate at once on holding a position, and exercising the physical control to do so. Whenever the command is used, take the time to observe and comment on the success with which students maintain their positions, encouraging and praising good examples as you walk briefly among the "statues". For this reason, overuse of the command is to be avoided, since familiarity may breed contempt. Make it a kind of challenge to see how well it can be sustained by the whole group. Beginning work from a freeze position is to be encouraged, so that the whole group start an activity at the same time, with a moment or two of complete quiet and stillness before they begin.

Many of the drama games which have already been described develop a sense of spatial awareness. One of the key things to teach is to respect other people's space in order not to encroach upon their work. A game which is won by *avoiding* contact with others works like this.

- Depending upon the size of the space, sit up to ten or twelve of the group on the floor at equal distances from each other, so that they can almost, but not quite reach hands when fully stretched. These are the catchers.
- The rest of the group have to make their way from one side of the space to the other without being tagged by the catchers, biding their time to sneak through the gaps between them.

- Once tagged, they have to sit out until the next game, but usually games do not last very long. Vary the spaces between the catchers as necessary, until a good balance of catching / avoiding is achieved.

After playing the game, discuss the idea of personal space, and trawl for examples of occasions when it can be embarrassing or uncomfortable if people get too close.

Some other pieces of advice concerning the management of space are mainly common sense, but worthwhile recording nevertheless:

- Make sure that no one moves until you say so. Give a clear command *at the end* of explaining the required instructions.
- When students are working in groups, *allocate* each group a particular area of the space in which to work. This avoids territorial disputes, or having overcrowded edges, and spaces in the centre.
- Avoid getting too involved for too long in the work of a single group, for example if they ask you to take a role. Try to find ways around this, since it is difficult to monitor the whole class, and to concentrate upon a particular group at the same time.
- When working with a group, always face into the room so that you can see what the rest of the class are doing. Make sure you can see everyone all the time.
- Avoid allowing groups to work in other areas outside the main space unless absolutely necessary. Splitting the class in this way immediately loses the focus of the work, makes it difficult to monitor by dividing your attention between separate areas, and creates disputes. ("Why can they work outside but we can't?") If noise is the problem, address that issue rather than creating others.

Management of space is probably the main area of difficulty for teachers new to drama activities. Make sure you can be seen and heard at all times, and ensure the students know that you are in charge. It doesn't matter how hectic the activity may become, as long as the teacher can bring it to a halt immediately if necessary. Talking to teachers of physical education about their management of space, and observing their lessons, can be extremely useful, since the two subject areas share many common features in this respect.

Time

Since each drama lesson is likely to be different in some way or another, there can be no hard and fast rules about how much time should be spent on a particular activity. Some general observations can be made however.

Before the lesson, divide the activities into their several stages, and estimate how long each stage is likely to take. It is better to estimate too little time, rather than too much, since this ensures the lesson will not run out of material, that there will be no "dead" time when students have completed an activity. Indicate how long each activity is to take, and keep the pressure on by counting down the time left. This helps to develop the pace of the lesson, and keep it business-like, with some sense of urgency.

I like to consider the structure of a lesson in the same way as you might put together a story:

- Begin with something to engage interest and curiosity. Something happens.
- Fill in the background explanation once interest has been aroused. Show where things might be leading to next.
- Develop the situation. Explore the consequences.
- Bring things to a climax.
- Arouse consideration of the events.

The stages in a drama lesson might parallel this structure like this:

- Get the players to do something to gain their interest.
- Explain the importance of this activity, and discuss ideas.
- Give instructions for task(s).
- Explore task(s).
- Present (part of) the work to the rest of the group.
- Discuss and evaluate work.

This “formula” will not hold for all teachers in all lessons, and I would not expect it to. It does indicate, however, that each lesson is a creative activity, and as such, needs to be put together in a thoughtful way. Openings to lessons, like stories or films or music, are really vital. Spending too long on a particular stage is likely to make the lesson flag, so try to keep things moving along at a reasonable pace, but be ready to explore any area so long as it remains fertile ground. Each teacher has to develop for themselves an intuitive sense of when to allow things to continue, and when to move on to the next stage. But *always* have a next stage to move on to.

Equipment

One of the first considerations here is whether it is desirable or necessary for students to change their clothes for their drama lessons. Changing into loose fitting clothes:

- Allows freedom of movement, particularly for the girls
- Prevents school clothes from getting dusty from floors
- Marks drama as being a slightly different lesson (providing this difference is positive!)

But it also:

- Requires areas in which this can take place
- Takes time out of the lesson
- May create problems with students who do not bring kit

My own view is to ask students to bring a change of clothes if it is really necessary for a particular activity, for example the **Circus** ideas in the materials. However, some drama teachers consider it essential for all lessons, in the same way that students change for PE. This is something for departments to form their own policy about, and once in agreement, to stick to the routine. One final thought is to ask what students should wear on their feet. Do you really want them in the muddy boots they’ve used to play football?

Is the surface of the room suitable for bare feet or socks? Is a change into trainers necessary? Again, there are no hard and fast answers here, but do make sure you have asked the question.

Health and safety requires guidelines for students about the movement and use of both furniture (including drama blocks), and electrical equipment in the drama room. Consider these:

- No one may move or use any drama equipment without being given clear permission to do so by their teacher.
- Always have two people to carry a table, or a block. Never try to carry anything on your own. Watch your fingers!
- You may not use any of the electrical equipment until you have been shown how to do so. Do not switch on or use it until you are told to do so.
- Lamps get very hot. Do not touch!

All equipment should have its own “storage” space, or the place to which it is returned at the end of the lesson. Students should learn to tidy away safely all equipment they have used, and leave the room ready for the next group. Ensure that all blocks are checked and well maintained, and have all electrical equipment tested (and labelled with the date) regularly. Never use any equipment which has a fault since you will be held responsible in the event of an accident.

Blocks provide different levels at which to work, but they also enable students to fall off and hurt themselves, so ensure that they have been warned to use the equipment sensibly and safely. Remove any student from the blocks who misbehaves.

Lighting can absolutely transform the drama area in order to create a whole variety of atmospheres. Ceiling mounted lamps are to be preferred to free standing ones which can be knocked over. Students should be formally instructed in the operation of any lighting equipment in use in the drama room, and will generally be very enthusiastic to do so. As with all equipment of this kind, make sure that everyone at some point in the year has their turn, and do not allow groups to hog the show, especially if they try to use this to duck out of particular activities. If the room has windows, consider constructing a simple blackout which not only enables lighting effects to place, but also prevents prying eyes. An overhead projector is a real asset which can be used to quickly set up a backdrop display, and a “silent movie” effect can quickly be achieved by mounting a strip of black card in a hand-drill, and turning it slowly in the beam of a lamp.

Music and sound are essential aspects of drama for many reasons. Using music as the backdrop to a piece of work:

- Creates an atmosphere or ambience
- Defines the length of time the work lasts, providing clear starting and finishing moments
- Provides a rhythm to accompany the movement of the work
- Helps restrict excessive noise level

It is relatively easy to build up a useful store of likely tracks. Get into the hoarding habit, and think ahead so that the music for a piece of work is available in advance. Create a

compilation CD of the tracks you want to use, or have a play list available in MP3 format on a computer or player. Always have a fall back idea available in case the equipment goes wrong. And on some occasion it will.

Books and printed resources are likely to be essential at some point, but can get in the way of practical work. Have a collection point, a shelf or a box, to which they are returned when no longer needed. Make sure the students are in the habit of doing so.

A video camera, TV and recorder are very useful if available, since this enables work to be studied and evaluated much more closely, and to draw attention to detail which might otherwise be overlooked. The drawback to the use of video recording is the time it takes, and the “dead time” for other groups while it is in progress. Limit the amount of time each piece to be recorded can take, allow as many students as possible to film the work, and devise a clear set of “studio” routines and roles so that everyone knows when filming is about to start. With more experienced groups, the differences between live theatre and film can be explored, and the advantages or drawbacks to both forms discussed.

I tend to use props and costume very sparingly, since their impact and effectiveness can be diluted if overused. Most props are unnecessary, and can be created by use of mime (a reason to avoid their use in its own right), while the use of costume to develop character frequently resembles more of a jumble sale than a set of discriminating choices. Limit the number of props or pieces of costume to be used, and insist that the choice plays an essential part in the work. Encourage valid, thoughtful use.

Craft materials are necessary if you wish to explore the use of masks or puppets for example, but create a number of class management problems including:

- Storage of both equipment and artefacts (especially when these are “drying”)
- Mixing of glue and paints (Is there water nearby? Is there electrical equipment at hand?)
- Sensible and safe use of equipment such as scissors, and paint
- Protection of both furniture and clothes

Devise a set of routines, and explain these to the students beforehand. Ask the art staff what their routines are, since the students should be used to them, and follow these.

Noise

Management of noise levels can be difficult when large groups of students are energetically engaged in drama, particularly if this creates problems for other classrooms nearby, and can be affected by the size of the room, and its acoustics. There is no panacea for this problem, but several strategies can be employed to attempt a solution.

The first step must be to make students aware of the problem, and to show that control of noise levels will benefit their working conditions. (The section on **Control of voice** gives some suggestions about this). Having drawn their attention to the problem explicitly, it may be necessary to call a halt to work whenever noise levels become excessive, and to remind students that the solution is very much in their hands.

For groups who are unable or reluctant to control their voices in this way, the next strategy is to devise activities which require little or no speaking once the initial planning of ideas has taken place. Mime and movement activities provide much scope, particularly if music is used. Deliberately keep the volume of the music down, so that the students need to listen carefully, and monitor their own volume in order to hear it.

A further strategy is to make use of activities which demand real quiet to be successful. **Wink murder** is a classic example of this. Once this has been played successfully, it proves that even the most naturally noisy of groups can control their own volume, a fact which can be pointed out to them on later occasions when noise levels begin to grow.

Finally, pre-empting the section on giving instructions, make sure that your own voice levels rarely rise above normal speaking level. Insist on quiet before beginning to speak, and never attempt to talk above their noise. To do so simply reinforces the root problem of noise, which escalates as each speaker raises their voice in order to be heard. It is important to break this cycle of escalation, and to keep working on restraining noise levels, even if it seems to be very difficult.

Groups

It is important that the teacher controls the sizes and set up of groups. On many occasions it is perfectly natural to allow the students to choose their own partners or groups to work with, and doing so helps to build trust and confidence. However there will be occasions when the teacher may wish to organise the composition of groups, for example if particular students do not work well together, or where a mix of ability or gender is required. Single sexed groups, particularly in the lower school years, can severely restrict the nature of the work, so that every attempt should be made to mix up groups. This also includes those students who seem to demonstrate hostility towards each other. Arranging for such students to take part in improvisation within the formality of the circle can address the problem, but not without some element of risk. If they can work constructively under such circumstances, however briefly, it provides a basis on which to build. Ideally, every student should be willing to work with any one at all. It may never happen, but it is a worthwhile aim.

It is better for the teacher to grasp the nettle of organising groups early on, so that it becomes an accepted pattern, rather than allowing students always to choose their partners, and then introducing a change later on. Using numbers in the circle is a good first step, as is organising groups according to colours, fruit or whatever. Move round the circle and give each student a colour according to the numbers of groups you wish to form. Groups of four, for example, in a class of thirty would require seven colours (two groups will have five); Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, indigo. When each player has been given a colour, call the task, and allocate a space for each colour to work in. Since friends are likely to be sitting next to each other, with the girls in one section, and the boys in another, this provides a very good mix. Keep the task simple and successful at first; make it a "fail-safe" activity to increase confidence, and eventually forming a wide variety of groupings in this way will come naturally.

There will always be some students who present particular problems, and there can be no specific recommendations made here about how to cope with them, but some general observations may help. At one end of the scale there are those who always demand to be at the centre of attention, who deliberately attempt to shock, or reduce every piece of

work to a vehicle for their own attention seeking. Tackle the problem of inappropriate behaviour, do not ignore it, and say why their work falls short of your expectations. But at the same time, give plenty of praise when exhibitionism is suppressed and good work is shown. At the other end of the scale are those students who are shy and isolated, who cannot find others to work with, or who refuse to take part. Do not allow them to become isolated. In the circle, role-play with them yourself, even if they do not get out of their seat. Cast them in the role of the “silent partner” if necessary, heap praise on their use of body language, but make sure they, and the class, feel they have taken part.

Sanctions

There are bound to be occasions when sanctions are necessary. What if someone continually gossips in the circle, or interferes with other people’s work, or behaves in a way which is unsafe? The biggest advantage the teacher has is the work itself; make this interesting, full of energy and fun and many of the problems will disappear. But there will be occasions when even the best laid plans need the assistance of the cavalry. Each school will no doubt have its own system to deal with more serious problems, and these of course should be used. But in drama lessons, the one real sanction I operate is to use a “sin bin” system, as in ice-hockey. Commit an offence and you’re out of the action for a number of minutes, sat at a table, facing away from the rest of the group. If you can dig up an excellent activity while the culprit is serving their time, so they really feel they’re missing out, so much the better. Deal with problems as soon as they emerge. But rehabilitation is the key. Make sure they understand why you aren’t happy, and get them back in the action as soon as possible.

Instructions

Explaining the work successfully, and giving clear instructions, is really essential. If students are unsure what they have to do, or how to go about it, they will rapidly lose confidence, and problems are created. Work out in advance what are the key points you wish to stress when you give instructions or explanations, and number these off on a list. Ask students to repeat instructions back to you, to make sure the message has got home, and watch out for those who obviously aren’t listening or paying attention.

Instructions can obviously be verbal, or written. Verbal instructions have the advantage that they are immediate since nothing needs to be handed out, but rely on the listening skills and memory of the students. Written instructions produce lots of pieces of paper which have to be handed out and given back in, but can be referred back to if necessary. A useful compromise is to reinforce verbal instructions with an OHP so that a copy remains showing on a wall or screen. (You may wish to consider making OHPs of the materials in this book, rather than duplicating them on paper).

Whichever means you are using:

- Make sure that the language you use is suitable, and can be understood by the students.
- Keep sentences short and syntax simple.
- Explain and reinforce specialist terms being used.
- Don’t give too many instructions all at once; break them down into stages.
- Always invite questions or clarifications.

And to reinforce a couple of earlier points:

- Your voice is your primary resource. Keep it clear, and don't shout.
- Don't let any one move until you are satisfied everyone understands what they are to do.

Assessing drama

Assessing drama is difficult because of its very nature, once it is done, it is done. Because it is a "live" performance art, there are obvious constraints placed upon assessing drama work accurately. Either the performance must be recorded on video tape, or the "tool" used to assess it must be easy and quick to use. Recording work on video can help, but even this is not a complete solution, since the "eye" of the camera has to focus on one place, and is slow to move, whereas the human eye can quickly take in a much wider field of vision, and can often pick up on things that the camera will miss. Similarly, the standard of audio recording on video cameras is not particularly high, unless a special microphone is used. So while video recording work is extremely useful, there is still the need for a tool which identifies criteria being looked for in the work, and which can be filled in quickly. This again is a useful task for a department to undertake as part of its INSET programme; here is an example which might provide a starting point for discussion.

The framework which has been suggested in this introduction indicates a number of criteria which might be included:

- Fundamental to the success of the work is concentration; to what extent has a student remained focused on the task, aware of others, listening and responding to their contributions, avoiding lapses such as missing cues, or having a fit of the giggles?
- Secondly, the level of co-operation is important, particularly if the planning stages of the work are being included in the assessment. How far has a student helped the other players by presenting them with opportunities, allowing them space both to move and to talk, and avoiding lapses such as deliberate blocking when improvising, or upstaging them when not directly at the focus of the work?
- Control can similarly be assessed, both physically and vocally, so that movement is accurate and defined, or the voice both has expression and can be clearly heard.

These key aspects can be readily identified while a piece of work is in progress, either as an unpolished piece, or as a final "performance".

Communication may be subdivided into four separate criteria:

1. Use of space
2. Presentation of character
3. Development of ideas
4. Unity of the work.

The first criteria focuses upon both the basic organisation of the acting area, clearly defined entrances for example, and upon the imaginative use of space, so that full use is made of drama as a three dimensional art form.

Presentation of character is possibly the most obvious criteria upon which to assess drama, and here again it is useful to consider this as being "three dimensional":

- How far has the player performed a role simply as herself (a two dimensional performance, since although playing herself, the situation is imaginary)?
- On the other hand, has she succeeded in inventing a recognisable character, perhaps with a developed range of imaginary previous experiences, who is sustained throughout a situation which the player has not actually met in real life?

The is the range of achievement being considered. Assessing the development of ideas asks the questions:

- What has this piece of work got to say?
- Is it thoughtful, provocative, unusual, or fairly obvious and mundane in its approach to the situation.

"Contradictions are our hope" is a frequently quoted Brechtian observation, and a useful one to apply to ideas.

Finally, the unity of the work:

- How do situations develop into each other, as a series of actions and consequences?
- How long does a piece last?
- Could any pieces be edited out without significantly altering the success of the work?
- How successful is the work in creating tension, suspense, empathy?

These criteria, reproduced on a whole group matrix, appear like this:

	Concentration	Co-operation	Control	Use of space	Character	Ideas	Unity
Abbi							
Brian							

How a level to indicate performance is entered into each cell on the matrix is relatively arbitrary, though it is useful to have a standard system which all members of the department have agreed, and which all make use of. The important thing is that using criteria which refer back to an understood framework provides a suitable context for accurate assessment to take place.

How to use the photocopiable materials

The materials are arranged in three sections:

- Movement and mime
- Improvisation
- Scripts

This separation is an arbitrary one, to show and introduce the distinctive nature of each mode of communication. Many of the ideas in the materials can therefore be developed across the three modes. The materials are loosely organised according to the number of players who are involved; solo, pair, and group work. The easiest pieces appear at the beginning of each of these sub-sections, and the more demanding pieces at the end. For example, **Walking the dog** is a good individual mime starter, while **A Good Night's Sleep** is a performance piece suitable for a formal drama examination.

For the main part, no attempt has been made to indicate which age group with whom the materials can be used. This is deliberate, since many of the ideas have been used across a wide range of ages, with naturally differing results. Judge when it is an appropriate time to introduce a particular piece of work with a group of students, depending upon their experience and abilities. Some pieces, such as **Children's Theatre**, will go down well with any age group, and can be suitably adapted for particular audiences if you wish.

As well as providing some ideas to use in the classroom, the materials have been chosen to illustrate many of the points raised in the introduction, as examples of methods suggested in this framework. For example, in the Improvisation section, there is a deliberate attempt to demonstrate how storylines can be dramatised in increasing depth and complexity, from the narrator lead dumb-show of **The Most Haunted House**, to developing one's own storyline from a series of situations and consequences in the **Soap**. Similarly, more detailed planning and research methods are introduced in each of the pieces, so that there is a progression within the materials themselves.

On a practical note, as far as is possible, the extended materials have been designed to photocopy into booklets of multiples of four pages for ease and economy of production. One advantage in printing out the resources is that students can read them as a homework task either before or after the lesson, planning ahead and having plenty of ideas ready and raring to go.

Alternatively, you may wish to consider using the materials on an overhead projector instead of in printed form. Key elements in the materials have been highlighted for this purpose, so that some of the instructions can be given verbally, while these key elements can remain projected on to a wall or screen. This will reduce the amount of paper in the room, and the number of transparencies which are required.

And finally.....

I hope that using these materials will give you as much pleasure and satisfaction as I have had trying them out over the years. Drama is one of the oldest forms of communication. To have survived this long, it must also surely be one of the best. In short, **Drama Works!**

Section Two: Mime

Organisation of materials

As with all the materials, these are organised in terms of the number of players taking part. Within each of these subsections, the pieces are arranged in terms of the demands they place upon the players. For example, the first of the solo mime pieces can be attempted by relatively inexperienced players, while the later pieces are intended as performance work by skilled players.

The **Introduction for students** explains how the instructions for each piece are presented, so that there is a consistency of approach. Several pieces require technical preparation, particularly music or sound effects. Theme music and sound effect CDs produced by the BBC are excellent sources and readily available. Think ahead when producing accompanying tracks, especially so if the students are to prepare them.

Music is an excellent way not only of providing a sense of background to the pieces, but also of suggesting the tempo of the work, and giving cues for synchronising movements.

Some reminders..

Many of the pieces involve often vigorous activity, particularly **At the Circus**. Make sure that all aspects of safety have been considered before beginning the work. The acting space should be uncluttered for movement, or suitably covered for falls or balances. Read through the section on managing equipment in the introduction, particularly students' clothing and footwear, so that all the activities can take place in safety.

The whole group pieces towards the end of the section can be created initially in smaller groups, before being put together to form the finished piece. This makes organising the whole work more manageable; simply give each smaller group a number which tells them the order in which they appear.

Movement and mime is often a neglected area of drama, but I recommend beginning here. Actions speak louder than words.

Mime: Introduction for students

The guide sheets are all arranged in a similar way to make it easier for you to see what you have to do. You may need to prepare a few things before you get started. At the very least, you will need to organise the space you intend to use. Here are some explanations of the headings which have been used on the guides.

Situation

This describes briefly what the scene is basically about, so that you can form an overall idea of what you have to do.

Technical

Most, if not all of the pieces, require some kind of technical preparation, either by you the students, or your teacher.

You will need to locate the music or sound effects which are suggested to accompany the piece, or find something suitable yourself. It may then be necessary to edit a compilation track together, sequencing extracts from different pieces of music together using audio editing software.

For some scenes and sketches it may be necessary to find or make particular costumes or props, especially if you intend to prepare them for performance. Generally, these have been kept to the minimum. It is more important to create your own "props" through the illusion of movement, than to rely on an actual object. Costumes can be suggested by adding one item of clothing to a basic rig out, tea shirt and track suit bottoms / leggings for example.

Space

The instructions here explain how the acting area should be set up. Again, simplicity is to be aimed for, though even an "open" space will need entrances to be agreed upon before you begin.

Characters

When necessary, these instructions give you a list of the characters needed for a scene, short suggestions as to their personalities, and show the relationships between them.

Action

This section provides detailed guidance on how the scene can be built up, stage by stage. There are suggestions for activities which will help you develop a particular skill, as well as ideas to work on within the scene. Remember you can adapt, develop, add your own ideas to the basic situation.

It is good practice to note down what you have worked out when you are satisfied with a particular series of movements. This is particularly important if you intend to pick up the piece again at a later stage, since your memories may not be up to it!

Walking the dog

Situation

Taking an imaginary dog for a walk is a very versatile idea. There are as many ways of doing this as there are dogs and owners. Decide what kind of a dog it is. It could be:

- A pampered poodle
- A greyhound
- A terrier
- An Irish wolfhound
- A police alsatian
- A bulldog
- A chihuahua

Work out a routine in which you take this imaginary dog for a walk, or it takes you!

Technical

Prepare a suitable piece of music to accompany your walkies. Why not the old soul classic "Walking the Dog"?

Space

Open, to represent a street, or a park.

Characters

They say that owners grow to be very like their pets, so decide what kind of a character you are going to be, and how obediently this animal is going to behave.

Action

Think what might happen during the course of the walk as you try to control the dog, and to get it to:

- Sit
- Have its lead put on
- Stop jumping up and knocking you over
- Stop pulling on the lead
- Come away from that lamppost
- Leave that other dog alone
- Fetch its ball or a stick
- Get off your chest
- Let go of your hand, leg or foot
- Come back

Once you've worked out a routine on your own, pair up with a partner and take both dogs out walkies. Or "fighties"!

Learning to ice-skate

This is an excellent exercise in practising control, since to perform it successfully you have to imitate a body out of control.

Situation

The first time on the ice for a novice skater.

Technical

Prepare a track of some suitable music with frequent variation in tempo. “Coppélia” by Delibes is excellent.

Space

A smooth surface, with your shoes off. Wearing an old pair of socks is recommended.

Action

Begin as you step nervously on to the ice for the first time, and test the grip (or lack of it) with several small steps.

Show how you attempt to maintain balance when your centre of gravity shifts from side to side.

Lose control of your legs as they begin to go slowly outwards in opposite directions into a terrible split.

Keep one leg fixed as the other begins to circle round out of control.

Clutch the side of the rink as you lunge for safety.

Gradually gain in confidence and become more ambitious, attempting larger glides. Then go frantically out of control, skating madly on the spot but getting nowhere fast.

Finally, your legs betray you and you land on your backside. (But be careful! Always remain in control of a fall).

Gym workout

Situation

This exercise gives you a good opportunity to create the illusion of using all the equipment in a gymnasium. If you can perform this well, it will be clear which piece of apparatus you are using, even though there is nothing there.

Technical

Prepare a track with some muscular workout music, very rhythmic with a really strong beat.

Space

Open. Some boxes if possible to provide different levels for the equipment, and perhaps a ramp for the running machine.

Character

A rather unfit would-be gymnast

Action

Begin with some fairly easy limbering up, stretches and running on the spot. Even at this stage, the back feels a twinge.

Move on to the first piece of apparatus. Pump some iron on the weight frame. The pace begins to tell and those weights seem to be out to get you. Watch out for the recoil.

Some road work on the running machine. Running on the spot, gradually increasing in speed until the machine threatens to throw you off. Jump for safety...

...and go for a row. Watch out for those spring loaded oars though, especially when the come back and whack you in the face.

Time for some boxing training. Speed skipping until the rope gets tangled round your legs and trips you up. Take it out on the punch ball or bag. And when it hits you back, and knocks you out, give up!

The Wasp

Situation

A wasp causes problems when a chef tries to hold a summer barbecue. It turns into a battle of wits and wills between the chef and the insect.

Technical

A track with the sound effect of a wasp. Though a solo piece, you require a partner to work the pause button on the track at exactly the right moments, to show when the wasp is at rest, or at play. The cues are shown in the action script below.

Space

Open, with a table or box to represent the barbecue.

Characters

The barbecue chef.

Action

The chef sets up the barbecue, arranging the charcoal, sprinkling the fuel, singeing eyebrows. All is going wonderfully well, the burgers and drumsticks are sizzling away. Then the wasp appears.

The chef waves it away, unconcerned, turning the burgers with style.

Track pauses.

The wasp buzzes more closely around the chef's head. The attempts to get rid of it become a little more frantic, a bit more annoyed.

Track re-starts.

The wasp seems to have disappeared.

Track pauses.

The chef resumes the task cheerfully, flipping burgers into the air, and catching them in the buns with great skill.

Track re-starts.

The wasp returns, the chef following its line of flight as

Track pauses.

The chef stalks his prey, coming up on it slowly, ready to swat it with his turner. He pounces, swats and misses.

Track re-starts immediately each time the chef swats.

This repeats, several times, the intervals between each swat becoming less as the chef's temper goes. The burgers go on the floor.

The chef follows the wasp's line of flight, then swats and ducks frantically as it dive bombs.

Track pauses.

The chef stands up, checks all is clear. The wasp has landed once more on the food. The chef tries a different tactic, deliberately walking away casually whistling. When the chef thinks the wasp has been lulled into a false sense of security, another frantic attack.

Track re-starts.

A cat and mouse game follows. Whenever the chef is looking the wasp is silent. As soon as the chef's back is turned, the wasp becomes active.

Pause and restart in time with the chef's movements.

Then, a lengthy silence. The chef cautiously returns, checks, then bends to retrieve the food from the floor.

Track re-starts.

The chef is stung on the backside, and leaps around in pain.

The chef moves off.

Track re-starts.

The chef returns with a can of insect spray. Everything, including the food, gets sprayed. The wasps "chokes".

Pause and re-start the track quickly several times.

The chef checks the wasp is dead, picking it up carefully between finger and thumb, flicks it away in triumph.

The chef returns to the barbecue, cooking with aplomb and self-satisfaction. Finally, eats one of the burgers with relish.

A pause, then chokes, staggers, falls down poisoned by the spray.

Track re-starts.

A Good Night's Sleep

Situation

Though two actors are needed for this piece, it is basically a solo performance by one character. This character, the "insomniac", just cannot get to sleep. He or she is kept awake by the demands of a small baby, by the sounds of a party, or by the snores of their partner who blissfully sleeps through everything.

Technical

Prepare separate sound effects as follows:

- 1 Baby crying
- 2 Loud party music
- 3 A car alarm
- 4 An alarm clock

The sound operator must time the sound effects to coincide with the actor's movements. The sound effects should be played as indicated in the action script below.

Space

A bedroom containing:

- A double bed.
- A cot.
- A window to one side.

Characters

The insomniac

The partner (remains asleep all through).

Action

The insomniac is trying to get the baby to sleep. The insomniac:

Walks the baby up and down	(Baby stops crying)
Tries to put the baby in the cot	(Baby cries)
Resumes walking.	(Baby stops crying)
Tries to sit down.	(Baby cries)
Resumes walking. Tries a dance.	(Baby stops)
Resumes walking. Sits.	(Baby still quiet)
Puts baby in cot. Tiptoes back to bed.	
Pause. Settles down to sleep.	
Restless. Drifts off.	(Loud techno party music)
Wide awake.	
Gets out of bed. Opens window.	(Music louder)
About to shout. Remembers baby.	
Closes window. Goes back to bed.	(Music to original level)
Puts head under pillow.	(Music continues)

Disappears under bedclothes with pillow.
Strange contortions under bedclothes.
Gets out of bed. Finds shoe.
Opens window. Throws.
Finds second shoe. Throws.
Satisfied, dusts hands.
Ducks out of sight below window.
Crawls back to bed.
Further attempts to block out the noise.
Pause.

(Music stops).
(Car alarm starts)

Settles down to sleep. Drifts off.
Tries to move partner to stop snoring.
Holds partner's nose.
Puts pillow on partner's head
Settles down. Drifts off.
Panics in case partner has suffocated.
Relief. Settles down. Drifts off.
Pause.

(Partner snores)
(Partner stops, then re-starts)
(Partner stops, then re-starts)
(Partner stops)

(Partner snores)
(Silence)
(Baby cries)

Tries to wake partner. No joy.
Gets out of bed. Picks baby from cot.
Smells baby needs changing. Gloom.
Collects baby's things half asleep, still holding the baby.
Changes nappy with difficulty.
Gets pooh on fingers. Attempts to remove it.
Puts nappy on. Sticks nappy pin in finger.
Sucks sore finger. Remembers pooh.
Puts baby in cot.

(Baby stops crying)

Goes back to bed. Tries to sleep.
Drifts off. Two sets of snores.
Pause.

(Alarm clock goes off)

Clown Dancing

Situation

An exercise in practising moving together (synchronising movements) in pairs, which can be developed into a ballroom dancing routine.

Technical

If developed, a track containing a variety of ballroom dance music, for example waltz and tango. Costumes to suggest ballroom dancing if required.

Space

Open.

Action

In pairs, one partner is **A**, the other is **B**. Partner **A** should be the larger of the pair if they are not both of similar size and build. Partner **B** should remove footwear.

Partners stand opposite each other, and place hands on each other's shoulders. Partner **B** then stands gently on partner **A**'s feet so that his feet no longer touch the ground. The pair have to move in time together, taking steps, so that Partner **B** never touches the ground with his feet.

Before attempting to move, decide which foot Partner **A** is going to lead with. Partner **B** will have to move the opposite foot, and in the opposite direction from Partner **A**. If partner **A** moves forward on his right foot, the Partner **B** will have to move backwards on his left.

Make sure that both partners have their weight on their non-moving foot before attempting to move.

Some tips..

- Support each other to keep balance. Don't try to make your steps too long or too quick to begin with.
- Once you have mastered moving in a straight line in one direction, try moving backwards and doing some turns.
- Try some races against other pairs, but be careful!

Develop the routine

To develop this exercise into a routine, the movement needs to be worked out in time to the music. The tango is particularly dramatic, with the "Partner B" being lowered backwards towards the floor. Watch your balance though. Several pairs can work out a routine together to form a formation dance team.

Me and my shadow

Situation

In pairs, one actor plays themselves, the other plays their shadow.

Technical

Prepare a music track of the song "Me and my Shadow", or any other suitable song which suggests a bright sunny day. A relaxed tempo works best.

If the situation is developed for performance, the actor might wear bright summer clothes, and the shadow be dressed all in black.

Space

Open. Chairs can be set up as a park bench if required.

Action

Agree on five different movements that could occur as the actor, and the shadow, are walking down the street, or through a park. These might include:

- 1 Waving to a friend
- 2 Eating a hotdog
- 3 Tying your shoelace
- 4 Looking at yourself in a shopwindow
- 5 Sitting on a park bench and reading a newspaper

Practise walking in time with each other first, with the shadow in perfect step, and always the same distance behind, or in front.

Then practice each of the movements, one at a time. Link these by means of the walk, taking an agreed number of steps between each one.

To develop the situation, imagine that the actor is fed up with having this shadow pursuing him, and tries to give the shadow the slip, by turning suddenly, or by performing sudden movements to catch it out, or chasing after it to catch it. Naturally, the shadow must co-ordinate all movements, however rapid, exactly.

Finish the scene with the actor losing his temper, and attempting to hit his shadow; the shadow of course knocks him out instead.

Saturday Night Fever

Situation

In pairs, one actor prepares to go out on the town, washing, grooming and dressing, ready to be an instant hit with the opposite sex. The other actor plays the bathroom / bedroom mirror.

Technical

"Saturday Night Fever" by the Bee Gees, "Saturday Night" by Whigfield, or any other suitable music which is lively and rhythmical.

Space

Either open, or with two chairs facing each other to suggest a bedroom dressing table, and its mirror image.

Exercises

Before beginning work on the actual situation, practise mirroring your partner's movements and expressions, as follows.

Air writing:

Sit opposite each other. Hold eye contact. One partner uses forefinger to write his or her name in large capital letters in the air in front of them. The "mirror" partner uses the forefinger of the opposite hand to copy the letters backwards. Once you have mastered writing each other's name, try drawing an air picture. Remember that movements should be in time, and opposite to each other.

Gurning:

The art of pulling horrendous faces. Sit opposite each other. Hold eye contact. One partner pulls a succession of terrible faces which the "mirror" must try to imitate as closely as possible, and at the same time. Do not lose concentration and fall about laughing.

Action

In pairs, prepare to get ready for a night on the town. Boys can wash, shave, clean teeth, put on aftershave (don't forget to grimace when it "burns"!), spray on deodorant, gell hair, get dressed, and admire themselves in the mirror.

Girls can do any of the above, as well as put on blusher, pluck eyebrows, put on lipstick, and blow themselves a final kiss in the mirror. Mix the pair boy / girl if you want a real laugh. All actions should synchronise with the music. List all the actions and number them so that you have a "script" for your routine.

Develop the situation with another pair. A boy and girl get ready on opposite sides of the space. Then they walk down the street, accompanied by their reflections in shop windows. When they reach the discotheque, the girl and mirror image dance, the boy and mirror image look on, waiting to make a move. When this happens, the girl(s) are unimpressed, link arms and move off, breaking the illusion with a touch of humour.

Silent Movie

Situation

The “apprentice” in this silent movie is very eager to work, but totally useless at whatever he or she attempts. During the first scene, she is left in charge of a hairdressing salon while the boss is out at lunch. Customers arrive for their appointments. The apprentice attempts to do the customers’ hair, all at the same time, with increasingly alarming results.

Technical

Prepare a music track which lasts approximately three to four minutes. Any suitable music silent movie music can be used, and a strong bouncy rhythm can create amusing effects when actions are performed in time with it. Experiment with different sound tracks and see what differences these make.

Space

Arrange the space to form a hairdressing salon. Decide where the entrance is, where the chairs and sinks are, and all the equipment, hair dryers, scissors, clippers, is kept.

Characters

The apprentice, the customers, the boss.

Action

Scene one

Work out what is going to go wrong in the scene. Build up the calamities from fairly small accidents into total catastrophe. Here are some ideas you might like to use:

- The boss leaves the apprentice in charge, making it clear that nothing must go wrong.
- The apprentice sweeps up, pretends to cut hair, uses hair lacquer, tries out the electric clippers, the hair dryer, the taps, to show that the scene is set in a hairdressers.
- The customers enter, one at a time, immediately demanding attention, “asking” the apprentice to take their coats, pointing out the time, checking the appointment book.
- The apprentice settles one of the customers into the chair with magazine, cup of coffee, while at the same time having to greet and check appointments of the others. Finally the apprentice begins work. She rapidly moves between them, shampooing one, cutting another’s hair, putting the drier on a third and so on.

As the scene continues the apprentice's panic increases, and the customers gradually become aware that things are going wrong. For example:

- She strangles one of the customers when putting on their gown.
- She holds a customer’s face down in the sink while sorting out the gown problem, so that they are nearly drowned.
- During the shampoo or the perm, the customer's hair starts coming out in handfuls. The apprentice naturally tries to glue it back on.

- She cuts off one customer's ear with the electric clippers, picks it up off the floor and sews it back on (back to front).
- She leaves one customer under the drier too long, so that their hair starts to smoulder, and of course has to be put out with a bucket of water.
- When the hairdos are finished, the customers see the mess she has made of it and are outraged.
- The boss returns to sort out the situation. The apprentice makes a hasty exit under the cover of their complaints.

Scene two

Now choose the next job the apprentice tries out for, and develop a scene (or two) which also goes disastrously wrong. Here are some ideas:

- An operating theatre, or a dentist's surgery, where the apprentice is left in charge by mistake.
- The production line in a factory, which runs smoothly at first with everyone knowing their jobs, until the apprentice takes over when someone goes off for a break.
- A restaurant, with a very fussy head waiter, who cannot tolerate mistakes.
- An army squadron practising their drills. The others all do it in time together, but the apprentice gets it totally wrong.

Filming your movie

Here are some tips if you want to try filming your movie, using a camcorder.

1. Rehearse the scenes, thinking about where you are going to place the camera, and what kind of shots you are going to use. In Silent Movies, there weren't usually many different types of shot, as film making was in its early days, and was nothing like as sophisticated as it is today. You may like to make use of:
 - Establishing shots, showing where the scene is taking place, and introducing the characters.
 - Mid-shots, which show people from the waist upwards, having a conversation, or a meal for example.
 - Close-ups, to show facial expressions and reactions. A look "to camera" can provide a good way of showing what a character is thinking.
2. Make a series of caption boards to be filmed in close up. These have "messages" written on them to tell the viewer what's going on. This could include:
 - The Title of the movie
 - Where the scene is set
 - Who the characters are
 - What the characters are saying
 - When the scene is taking place.
3. To get the "flickering" effect of a silent movie, use a hand-drill, like this.
 - Find a piece of hardboard or thick cardboard about four inches wide, and two feet long.
 - Paint one side with matt black paint.
 - Drill a hole in the centre of the board, and push through a small bolt.
 - Put the bolt into the drill chuck, and tighten, so that when you turn the handle, the board revolves.
 - Turn the board fairly slowly in the beam of a standing lamp for a good flicker effect.

Statues

Situation

The next pieces all make use of statues. To create a successful illusion requires complete concentration and control for several minutes. Try these exercises first before going on to the sketches.

Make 'em laugh

In groups of three, one person is the statue, the others are the distracters.

The "statue" stands perfectly still, up straight, and expressionless. Focus your attention upon a spot on the wall, and keep it there without blinking.

The partners have to make the statue laugh by distracting her in some way, though they may not touch her. Tell her jokes, call her names, remind her of embarrassing moments, pull faces. See how long the statue can last without cracking. Swap roles and see who can sustain the illusion the best.

Dress the dummy

In groups of two or three, one person is the statue, a shop window dummy, the others are the window dressers.

The dummy adopts the statue posture, standing straight, eyes focused in the distance. The dressers have to move the dummy into a suitable pose for a shop window model. When the dressers move an arm, a leg, a hand or finger, the dummy must hold it in that position until the dressers change it.

The dummy's expression must not change unless the dressers change it. If the dummy's head is moved, the eyes should remain "fixed", never making eye contact with the dressers.

Once the dressers are satisfied with the dummy, organise a window display with several dummies. Moving the dummies into the "window" provides a good test of their control.

The dressers should grip them under their arms and elbows, pick them up, and place them in position. While being moved the dummies should keep the "shape" they have been placed in.

If necessary, try to lie the dummies down flat and move them. The dummies have to retain their shape, and to keep as rigid as possible when being moved.

Window dressing

Situation

A window dresser arranges the dummies in a shop window. When the dresser sits to have lunch, the dummies come to life and begin to "party" behind the dresser's back.

Technical

Some suitable "shop" muzak, and livelier party music which the dresser plays on a portable CD player. Clothes or accessories with which to dress the dummies.

Space

Organise boxes for the dummies to stand on. A chair for the dresser to sit on when having lunch.

Characters

Dummies, dresser.

Action

The dummies begin in the frozen "storage" position. The window dresser takes each in turn, sculpting them into position, and dressing them to form a display. Decide what kind of a display it is going to be, sports, ladies' or gents' fashion.

The window dresser sits down to have lunch with her back to the display, and puts party music on the portable player. The dummies come to life, gradually, one at a time, and begin to party in time to the music, dancing, drinking, swapping clothes, and generally having a good time.

Whenever the dresser turns round to look at the display, the dummies must freeze immediately into whatever position they are in. The dresser gradually becomes more suspicious, inspects the display, tries to catch the dummies out.

End when the dresser finally sees what's going on, and faints. The dummies put her on display, and leave, still partying.

At the Laundrette

Situation

A mother (or father) takes the baby, and the week's washing, to the laundrette. Unfortunately, when the washing machine goes wrong, it seems the baby gets put in with the washing ...

Technical

Prepare a track which contains:

- A piece of suitable "muzak" with which to begin the scene, while the laundrette setting is being established.
- Sound effects to indicate that the washing machine is going wrong.
- Sound effect of a baby crying.
- Sound effect of a washing machine spinning vigorously.

Scene

A row of chairs, as in a laundrette. The washing machines are to be imagined in a row facing the chairs. Entrances to the street, and to the rear of the laundrette.

Characters

A mother, (or father) with a baby.

A friend.

The manager(ess) of the laundrette.

Action

The mother (father) enters the laundrette, carrying the baby and a large bag of washing (do not use props for either of these). She puts the child carefully down on a chair, after nursing it to get it asleep. She then begins to sort out her washing, and to load and operate the machine.

Her friend enters, and they begin to gossip. (The father could flirt with a female friend, to further distract him from minding the baby).

When the machine begins to malfunction, the baby is once again put down upon a pile of washing, while the two friends attempt to "kick-start" the machine, with much effort and loading / reloading of the tub.

The manager(ess) enters. When the baby starts crying, (s)he picks it up, fails to attract the mother's attention, and so takes it into the rear of the laundrette to pacify it.

The two customers finally get the machine working, and sit down to resume their conversation. When the machine goes into its spin, the mother suddenly realises the baby is missing, and with horror, thinks it has been accidentally loaded with the washing. The customers' heads rotate with the clothing attempting to spot the unfortunate child.

The mother attempts a rescue, spilling water and wet clothing all over the floor, at which point the manager(ess) returns with the baby.

A Romantic Dinner

Situation

A couple celebrate a special occasion by dining out at an expensive restaurant. Unfortunately, the evening goes terribly wrong...

Technical

Prepare a track of a piece of romantic piano music. "As Time Goes By" is ideal.

Space

A table and two chairs arranged as in a restaurant. There are two entrances, one leading into the dining area, and the other to the kitchen.

Characters

A husband, wife, and waiter (or waitress).

Action

There are several ways of playing this scene, by varying the relationships between the three characters. Whichever version is chosen, some basic elements remain the same. The restaurant is very posh, and this should be suggested by the way the meal is ordered, served and eaten.

First of all, experiment with these ideas:

- The waiter takes the diners' coats, and settles them elaborately into their chairs.
- The menus and wine list are presented with a flourish, and the diners ask the waiter's recommendations.
- The wine is uncorked and tasted with due ceremony.
- The soup is ladled from a height with consummate skill.
- The meal is served au flambé with considerable drama.
- The diners gaze romantically into each other's eyes, and link wrists to drink their champagne.

Version One

The waiter looks down on the diners, thinking that they are not really posh enough to eat in his restaurant, obviously critical of their lack of sophistication and etiquette. As the meal progresses, he does his best to humiliate them, but in a very discreet way. He might:

- Correct their use of knives and forks.
- Place napkins on their laps instead of tucked into their collars.
- Mop up their spillings.
- Show them how to eat politely, taking small mouthfuls of food.
- Show them how to drink politely from their glasses.
- Pick up food from the floor where they have dropped it.

Finally the diners gain their revenge by ladling soup down the front of his trousers, or putting the meal over his head.

Version Two

It is the couple's wedding anniversary. The meal begins in a very civilised fashion, with the wife very keen to make it a romantic occasion, in spite of her husband's lack of enthusiasm.

At the mid point of the meal, she gives him his anniversary present. When she realises that he has no present for her in return, and in fact has forgotten the importance of the occasion, she uses the remainder of the meal to gain her revenge. She might:

- Kick him "accidentally" under the table
- Pour hot soup into his lap
- Cover his meal in pepper when he isn't looking
- Anoint him with gravy
- "Custard pie" him with his desert

The waiter in this version is a silent observer at first, favouring the wife at the expense of her boorish husband. When she begins to get her own back, the waiter assists by efficiently handing her the utensils she requires..

Version Three

The waiter here takes a more active role, and begins to flirt with the wife, attempting to make her husband look foolish. The husband gradually gets more and more jealous, and he gets his revenge upon the other pair.

Version Four

The waiter is in the middle of an unhappy love affair, perhaps with a fourth character, a waitress, who rejects him. To console himself, the waiter has taken to drink, usually from the bottles and glasses of the diners.

As her serves their meal, he gradually gets more and more drunk, and bursts more frequently into tears.

A Puppet Show

Situation

In pairs, one person is the puppeteer, the other a string puppet. Two or more pairs work together to put together a puppet show.

Technical

A music or sound effects track appropriate to the idea chosen.

Two pieces of wood tied together cross ways to represent the string attachment.

Space

Two large boxes side by side for the puppeteers to stand on, as if working the puppets. The puppets begin the scene slumped against the boxes, and then perform in front of them.

Characters

Puppeteers and puppets, as shown in the ideas which follow.

Action

Practice in pairs first, so that the main illusion of this piece of work is achieved. It must appear at all times that the puppeteer is in control of the puppet by means of the strings, even though these do not exist. Under no circumstances be tempted to use real strings. Use the music to provide cues for movements, since the puppet cannot see the movements of the puppeteer. This will require considerable practice, and exact timing.

Opening moves

The puppets begins the scene seated, slumped against the box, heads down. The first puppeteer mounts the box, lifts the strings, and sorts them out. The puppeteer experiments, moving one string at a time in order to see what happens. The puppet moves jerkily as follows:

- Head up
- Lifts right arm, turns head to look at it, puts it down.
- Lifts left arm, turns head to look at it, puts it down.
- Bends right knee to move leg towards body; lays it flat.
- Bends left knee to move leg towards body; lays it flat.

These moves repeated with greater speed and confidence until the puppeteer loses control and the puppet ends up tied in knots, arms and legs wrapped round each other. The puppeteer untangles the strings, and begins again.

- The puppet stands uncertainly, and begins to walk stiffly one leg at a time.
- The puppeteer gradually increases in confidence; the puppet begins to turn, skip, jump, do a simple dance.
- The second puppeteer arrives, picks up the strings, and brings the puppet to life.
- The two puppets bow to greet each other, bump heads, which they rub without the control of their puppeteers, who they shake fists at.

The dance

The two puppets now practise their dance:

- The first puppet teaches the other the steps; (keep these simple).
- The second puppet follows, uncertainly at first, then growing in confidence.
- The dance goes wildly out of control; both puppets end in a tangled heap on the floor.
- The puppeteers argue, then untangle the strings.
- The dance continues, but each time ends in a tangled heap.
- The puppeteers gradually get increasingly angry, blaming each other for the disasters.
- Eventually, the puppeteers resort to blows, at which point:
- The puppets, shrug their shoulders, and exit, leaving their “masters” to it.

Development

If there are skilled dancers in the group, try a more lyrical approach. Use a more romantic piece of music, (for example “Gymnopédies” by Satie), and just one girl puppet and male puppeteer.

The piece begins as described above, as the puppet begins to move uncertainly. Once she has “found her feet” she strikes off on her own, without the strings, to the astonishment of the puppeteer, who looks at his strings in amazement. Then:

- She invites him to join her in the dance, showing him how to follow her steps.
- The pair grow in confidence, and move into a lyrical dance sequence.
- As the music draws to a close, they resume their previous roles.
- She ends once more slumped and lifeless; he is left holding empty strings.

This piece of work depends very much on the synchronisation of the puppeteers “pulling the strings”, with the movements of the puppets. This illusion is central to the work.

Further ideas

Instead of having the puppets perform a dance, you might like to choose one of the following ideas:

- An imaginary juggling act
- A duel with swords
- A slapstick fight
- A balancing act
- A sports event

Slow-motion Sports

Situation

This piece is the opening sequence to a sports-programme which is made up of a series of slow motion sporting action.

Technical

Prepare a track with suitable music with a strong rhythm, fairly slow in tempo.

Space

Open. In the final sequence, groups should enter alternately from opposite sides.

Characters

Sportsmen and women taking part in a variety of events.

Action

Work in groups which are suitable for the sport you have chosen, though six is probably the maximum size. Some sports, especially field athletics or weight-lifting, are suitable for solo work if you wish.

Choose an event, and limit the action to a short but dramatic moment such as scoring a goal, hitting the finishing tape, making a catch.

Work out the sequence of movements carefully, and co-ordinate all the movements of each person in the group. If the sport is a ball-game, each member of the group should follow its imaginary flight with their eyes.

Control of movement is really important. Speed must remain constant, so don't speed up when doing difficult movements like dives and jumps.

Facial expressions as well as movements will seem more exaggerated in slow-motion, so make the ecstasy of winning or the agony of losing seem really dramatic.

Each group should run through their action several times so that the order of movements is remembered by everyone. After this, the whole sequence can be put together.

"Overlap" each piece of action slightly, so that the next is beginning as the previous one ends. Enter and leave the action in slow motion, so that the illusion is not broken.

Video Rewind

Situation

In this piece, you have to replay a sequence of movements backwards rapidly, as if you were watching the action on the search rewind button of a video recorder.

This provides a humorous alternative view of any piece of work, and fits nicely after the Slow-motion Sports sequence. You can use the technique with any piece of work though.

Technical

A sound track of a music being rewound quickly is required. Place a music tape in a cassette recorder. Press Play / Rewind at the same time. Record this sound using a microphone on to a computer or other device. Use this recording to prepare the sound track.

Video record the original piece of work if possible.

Characters / Space

These will remain the same as in the original piece of work which is being replayed.

Action

This is a difficult piece to make look convincing, so observing how movements appear when played on the rewind search of the video recorder is a useful first step.

The natural speed of movement is reversed, so that when running backwards, the movement should appear to be quicker at the beginning of each backward step than at the end.

Similarly, blows should be "sucked away" from the faces of their victims, and dead bodies should "fall up" from the floor as bullets or knives leave them. The humour of this piece depends upon the skill with which these movements are presented.

Breakdown the sequence into reverse order, and practice each movement carefully one at a time. Do this at normal speed first, and when you feel confident in performing the actions, go for a fast rewind!

At the Circus

Situation

A circus performance with acrobats, jugglers, clowns, horse-riders, weight-lifters, and tight rope walkers, introduced of course by the ring master.

Technical

- 1 Part of the acting area, where the acrobatics takes place, requires to be covered in rubber gym mats.
- 2 A track of typical circus music, "Entry of the Gladiators" by Julius Fucik for example.
- 3 A drum (for drum rolls), drama blocks (for the tight rope walkers), and bean bags or balls (if real juggling is attempted) are needed.

Space

Arrange the acting area to form a circus ring. This might be done using shallow blocks, or chairs. Leave a gap for the entrance to the ring, known in circus jargon as the "back door" and have a waiting area outside of the ring, the "back yard".

Action

The ringmaster decides on the order of the acts, praising the acts to the skies, and explaining what they are going to do. Invent suitable exotic and exciting sounding names for each of the acts. The circus can begin with a parade introducing each act to the imaginary audience. Here are some suggestions for individual acts.

The acrobats

Read through the instructions and diagrams for these simple acrobatic balances. Some "safety firsts" need mentioning before attempting any of these activities:

- Make sure that there are gym mats on the floor to prevent any injuries from falls.
- Do the warm up and some stretching exercises before you begin.
- The activities should be performed in bare feet. Make sure the floor is clear of anything which might cause injury.
- Work in groups of four. One pair attempts the balance, as the other two stand either side ready to "catch" if there are falls. Then change over.
- The lightest of the pair should always be the one being balanced.

Warm up

The whole group stands in a large circle. Everybody is asked to think of an easy movement to perform, for example hopping three times on one leg. The first person moves into the middle of the circle and demonstrates their movement. Everyone else in the group then imitates the movement.

The second person then demonstrates their movement. This time, however, the whole group has to perform both movements. One person in the circle can act as "caller", numbering the movements as they are performed. Once the circle has reached movement 25, and repeated each of these every time, both bodies and memories will be well warmed up!

The balances

Work on the balances as shown in the instructions. Try to make all of your movements controlled and in time with your partner. Once you have perfected the balances, including the dismounts, work with another pair so that you attempt to perform the balances in time with each other. Build the balances up into a display involving the whole group performed in time to music.

The tank roll

The tank roll is a forward roll in which two people take part. Read through the instructions and diagrams to see how it works. To work well, both partners need to co-ordinate their movements closely together. The forward roll of one partner pulls the other partner after them so that it continues like a "tank".

Several pairs can perform the roll either in unison, or using "crossovers". Pairs approach each other at right angles, but time their rolls so that they do not collide with each other. When well co-ordinated, this can be a really effective opening to the show.

Roman riding

Another acrobatic idea is to imitate bareback horse riding. When two horses are used, with the rider having one foot on the back of each horse, it is called "roman riding" in circus jargon.

Work in a group of five. Two pairs form up as the horses in traditional pantomime fashion. The fifth, and lightest, member of the group is to be the rider, who should be bare footed for grip, and to prevent hurting the "horses".

The horses must practise moving around the ring at a steady speed, keeping close together. The easiest method for the rider to mount the horses is to use a drama block about the same height as the horses backs. The rider then stands with one leg on the shoulder of each of the back pair, holding on to the shoulders of the front pair, and keeping balance as the horses circle the ring. You can see why the horses have to keep close together! Again, this can be developed into more than one set of horses and riders circling the ring in time to music. Careful you don't fall off!

Tightrope walkers

Use the edge of large drama blocks to establish the illusion of the tightrope. To fully create the illusion however, your mime needs to show clearly how a tightrope walker moves:

- Feel for the tightrope with your toes
- Keep your eyes fixed firmly ahead
- Spread your arms to gain your balance
- Make each step careful and precise
- Turn quickly
- Create the illusion of "wobbles"

Attempt some more difficult techniques; lower yourself by bending one knee to the "wire", and then raising yourself by straightening the leg. Introduce a clown figure who is supposedly clumsy and in danger of falling off the whole time. (This is more difficult than doing it straight!)

The Clowns

No circus would be complete without its clowns. Here are some ideas for simple routines.

Getting on a horse routine

One of the first clown routines involved trying to mount one of the circus horses. You need a group of three, two to play the horse, and one (the lightest member of the group) to play the clown.

- First, catch your horse. Each time the clown approaches, the horse moves just far enough away. The clown adopts different strategies, from the casual “I’m-not-really-trying-to-catch-you” approach, to increasingly mad wild lunges.
- Next, get your horse to stand still. Offer bribes, issue threats, as it pulls against you on the end of an imaginary rope. Take care it doesn’t stand on your foot or kick you up the backside when you least expect it.
- Now mount your horse. But make sure you don’t go right over the top, or end up hanging underneath, or finally get on board but facing the wrong way. And if you do get in the saddle, how do you get it to move? At which point you fall off, so ...
- First, catch your horse....

Slapstick

Slapstick comedy involves lots of knockabout moves as two clowns get involved in an argument which develops into a fight. It gets its name from the use of two sticks slapped together by another clown “offstage” to create the idea of the blows landing.

Develop this idea with the use of further sound effects. In a group of four you will need two clowns who have the fight, and two assistants who produce the sound effects, one for each clown. Collect together as many things as you can which can make a sound:

- Two sticks, preferably flat
- A drum
- A large tin tray or a dinner gong
- A tin with some large nails inside it, or rattles of various sizes
- Things to scrape, to make sounds like fingernails on a blackboard
- A kazoo
- A long cardboard tube
- Whistles of various types, especially those with a “slider” in them
- Horns, especially those worked by squeezing a rubber “ball”

Begin the fight with the two clowns having an argument about who sits down on a solitary chair. Each moves the chair just at the moment when the other wishes to sit down. Increase the tempo of the moves so that the chair is whisked away from the other ever more rapidly. The assistants use sound effects as the clowns land on their backsides.

The chair is forgotten as the dispute develops into a fight. Each clown takes it in turn to do some damage to the other (who naturally enough doesn’t try to resist, knowing that it is his or her turn next). Begin with small injuries, and gradually increase the “pain”! Link the sound effect to the injury being inflicted, for example:

A jab in the eye (well to the side of the head if you please!)	☞ A short horn blast
Shaking the head	☞ Rattle the tin
A kick up the backside	☞ Blow down the tube

Experiment with the type of sounds being made. Most importantly, make sure that the two clowns involved in the fight have their moves well worked out to avoid accidental injuries. You might like to introduce a third clown into the fight who attempts to act as a peacemaker, but who generally ends up on the wrong end of blows intended for others.

Sweeping the spotlight

The clown, equipped with an actual brush and dustpan, attempts to “sweep up” the circle of light produced by a spot positioned above the circus ring, operated by an assistant. A wind sound effect is also required.

Begin with a large wide circle of light. As the clown sweeps around the edges of the light, the circle gradually gets smaller, until it will fit inside the clown’s dustpan. Just as the clown is about to sweep the light into the dustpan, the wind rises, and spreads the light into its original width. The clown begins to sweep once more.

Once the light is again small enough to be swept into the dustpan, the clown is thwarted, this time because it moves just as he is about to complete the task. A game of “cat and mouse” follows as the clown pursues the spot around the ring.

Eventually, the clown manages to “stamp” on the spot to hold it in place. He carefully holds it in his hands, picks it up, and puts it in his pocket.....Blackout.

Jugglers

Juggling is a good skill to learn, and it is not too difficult to do with just three balls or bean bags. Read through the instructions and diagrams which show you how to do it.

Alternatively, mime a juggling act, either solo or working with a partner. Co-ordinate your movements, so that the illusion of balls flying between you is created.

Each juggler attempts to show that their skills are the better, with under-legs, back-catches, foot-drops, neck catches. After all, there’s no chance of dropping anything...

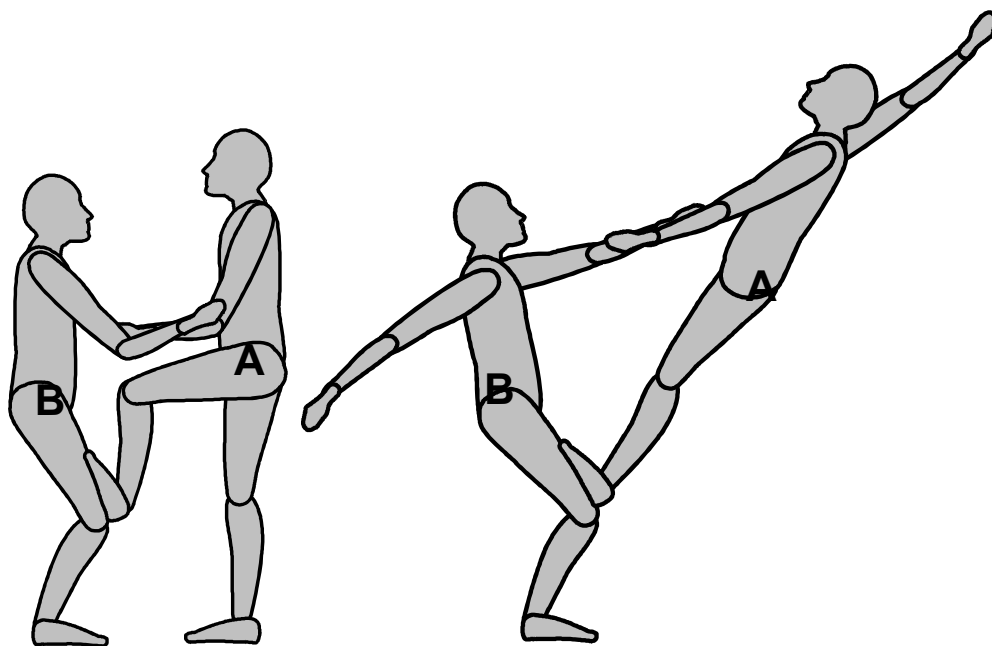
Weight-lifter

This is a well-worn visual gag. Work in a pair, with one large and one small partner. The large partner is the weight-lifter who begins by doing a great deal of shaping up to the barbell, flexing muscles and generally posing about.

Eventually, the lifter addresses the bar, gripping it with great concentration and any number of grunts or groans. With much difficulty, and ferocious expression the lifter finally raises the bar to chest height, and then above the head. In triumph, the barbell is crashed to the floor as the lifter accepts the acclaim of the crowd.

As the lifter leaves the stage, still milking the applause, the smaller assistant enters, lifts the barbell easily, and walks off briskly whistling.

Counter balance stand 1: Facing partner



Position One

1. Partners A and B stand facing each other.
2. Their arms are crossed, holding each other's wrists.
3. A places one foot on B's knee

Position Two

1. A pushes up to stand with both feet on B's knees.
2. Both lean backwards to achieve balance.
3. When balanced, both release one hand.
4. Dismount: pull together, then step

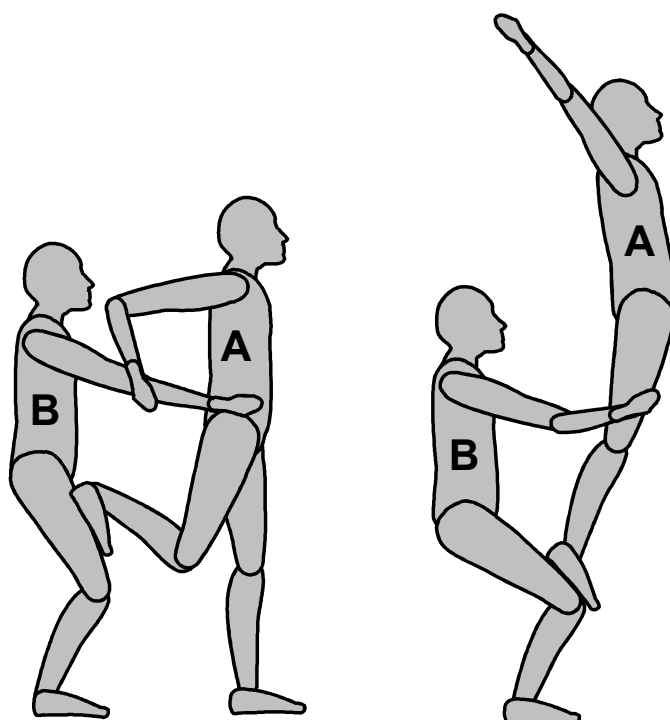
Counter balance stand 2: Partner facing away

Position One

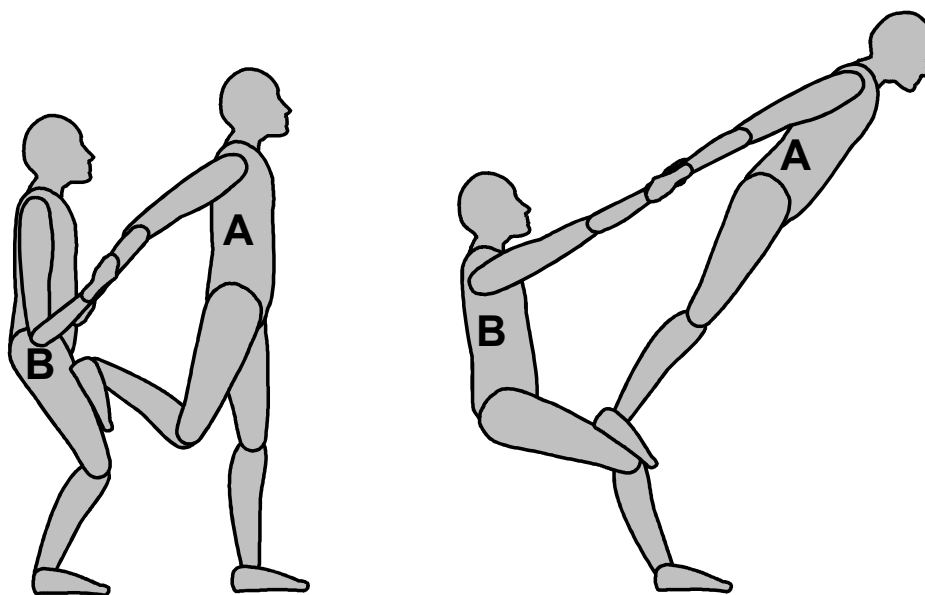
1. B stands behind A with hands on partner's waist.
2. A holds B's arms, and places foot on B's knee.

Position Two

1. A pushes with foot to stand upright, and places foot on to B's other knee.
2. B moves hands down to hold A just above the knee.
3. A releases hands and stretches fully upright.
4. Dismount: A holds B's arms, and jumps to floor.



Counter balance stand 3: Partner leaning away



Position One

1. B stands behind A, bending knees.
2. The pair hold each other by their wrists
3. A places first foot against B's knee.
4. A pushes upwards to place second foot on B's other knee.

Position Two

1. A pushes upright to stand on both of B's knees.
2. B leans back, A leans forward to balance.
3. Dismount: pull together, then reverse movements.

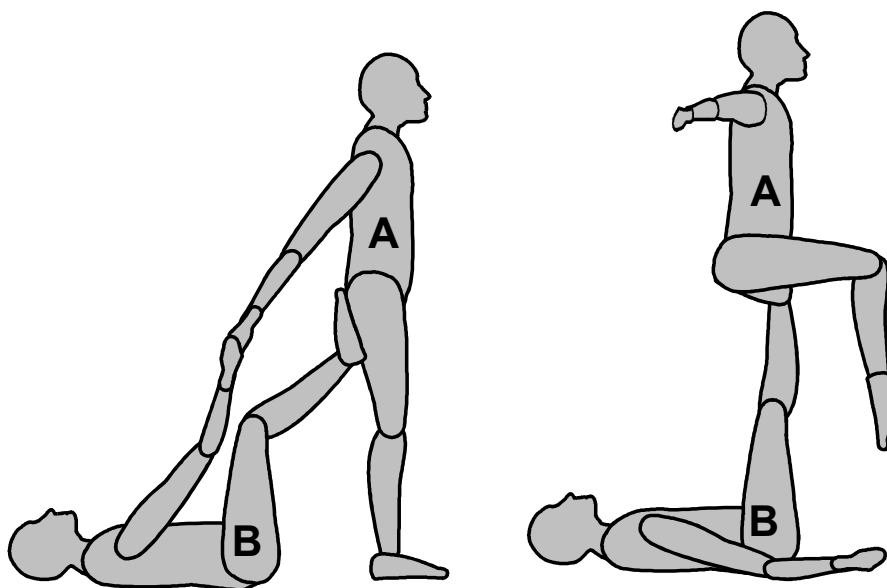
Sitting balance: On partner's feet

Position One

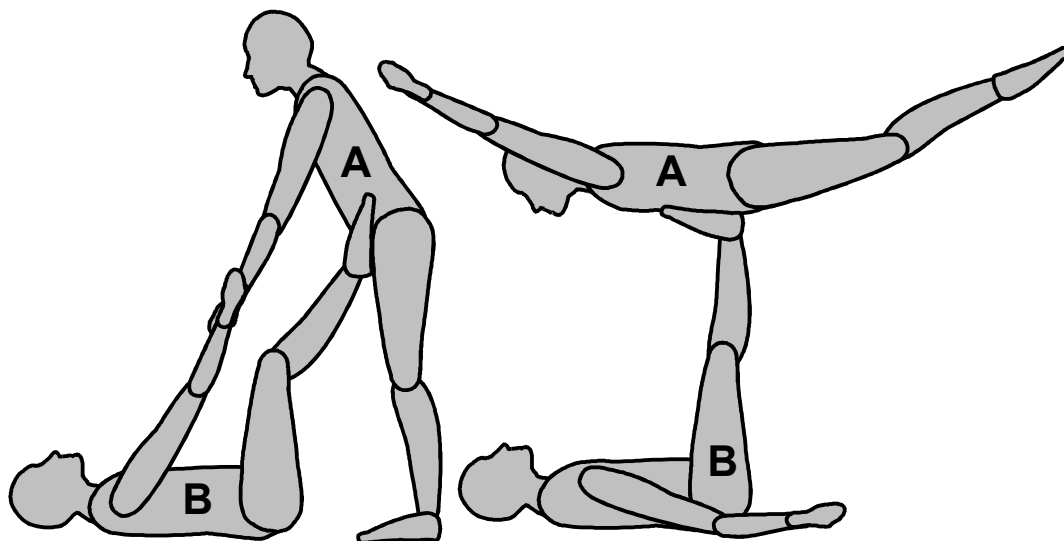
1. B lies on back as A stands with back to B.
2. A leans against B's feet.
3. Pair hold hands to support each other.

Position Two

1. A sits on B's feet as B straightens legs.
2. Pair release hands when balanced.
3. A holds position arms outstretched.
4. Dismount: reverse movements



Forward angel balance



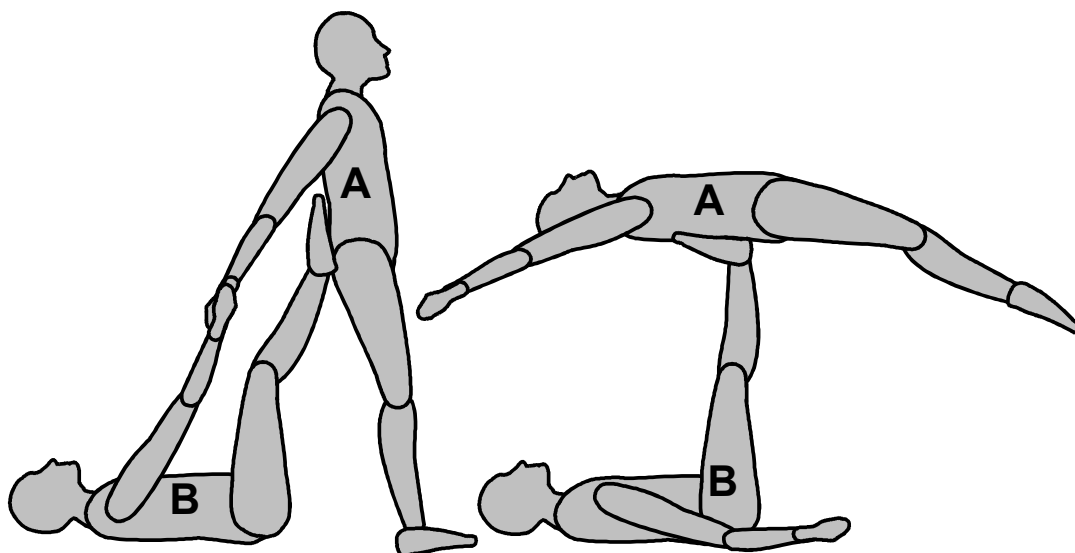
Position One

1. B lies down on back facing A
2. Pair take hands.
3. B puts feet against A's hips (not stomach).

Position Two

1. A leans forward as B straightens legs to the vertical.
2. When pair are balanced, they release hands and hold the stretched position.
3. Dismount: reverse moves.

Backward angel balance



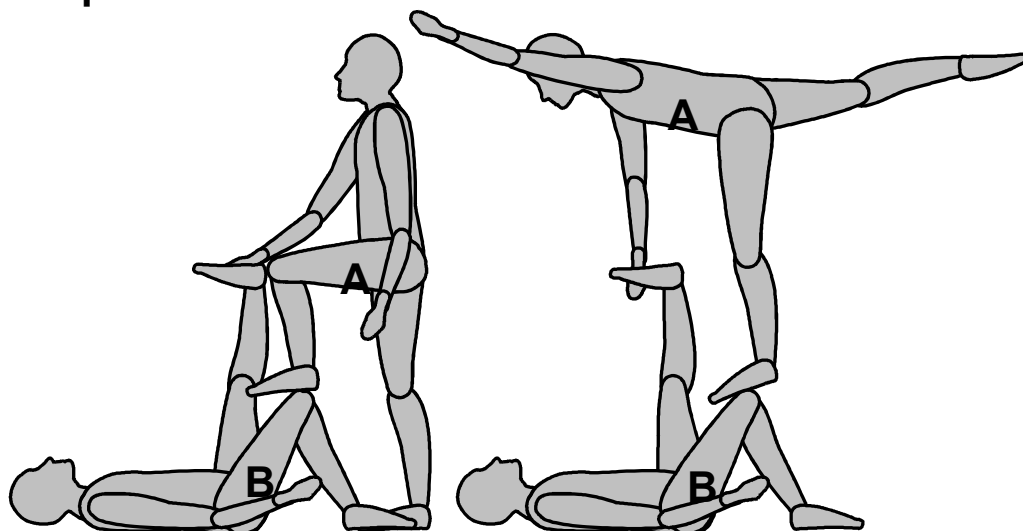
Position One

1. B lies down on back behind A.
2. Pair take hands.
3. A leans against B's feet.

Position Two

1. A leans backwards as B straightens legs to the vertical.
2. When pair are balanced, they release hands and hold the stretched position.
3. Dismount: reverse moves.

Arabesque stand



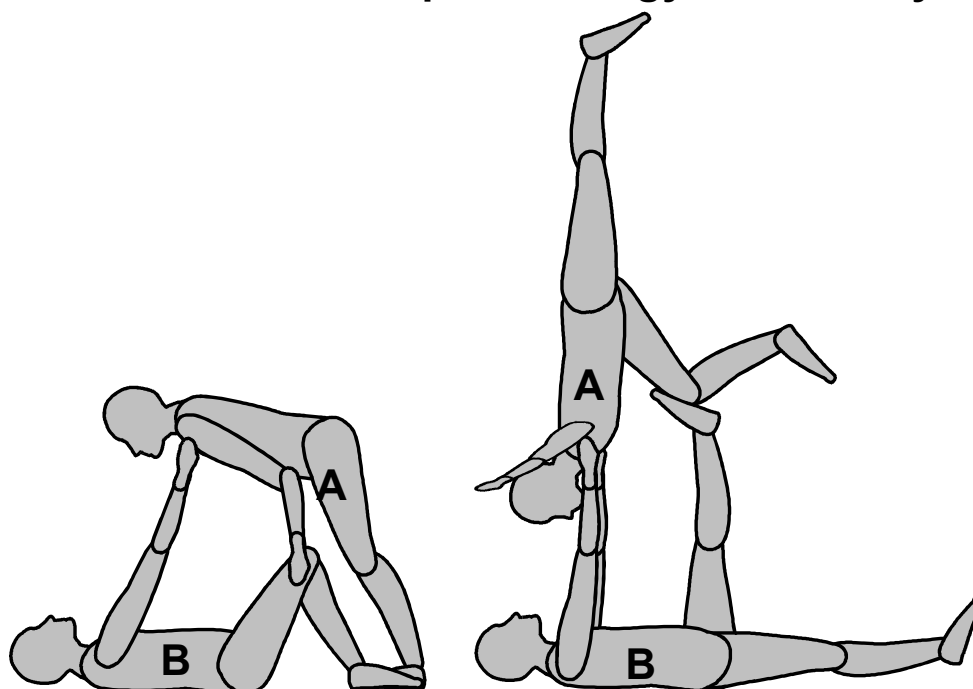
Position One

1. B lies down on back facing A with one leg vertical, the other bent at the knee.
2. A holds the foot of B's vertical leg, and places own foot on B's raised knee.

Position Two

1. A pushes upwards with foot on B's knee.
2. A lifts leg backwards to arabesque position.
3. B holds A's free hand, then releases when pair are steady.
4. Dismount: reverse movements.

Shoulder balance stand: Experienced gymnasts only



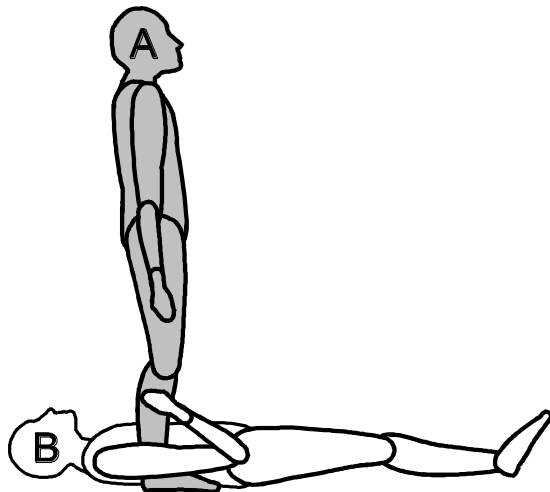
Position One

1. B lies back facing A, knees bent.
2. A puts hands on B's knees.
3. A leans forward to put shoulders into B's hands.

Position Two

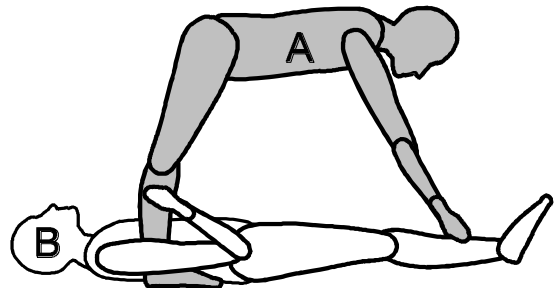
1. A kicks up to a shoulder stand as B lifts leg to the vertical to support A's knee.
2. When balanced, A raises arms to side.
3. Dismount: B lowers A who puts feet to floor.

Tank roll



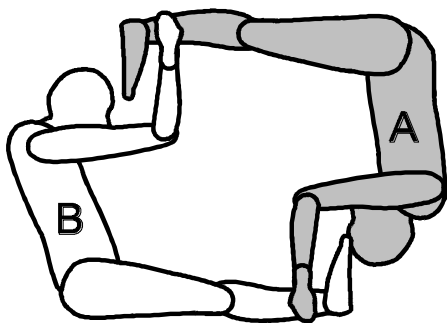
Position One

1. B lies down on back
2. A stands facing B's feet
3. B holds A's lower leg firmly



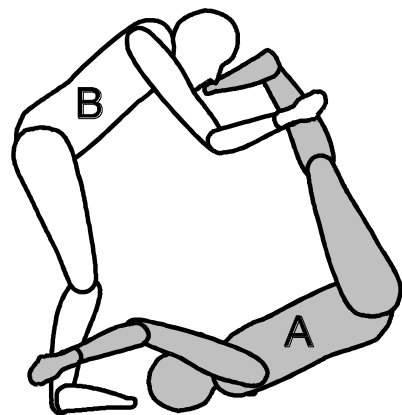
Position Two

4. A leans forward to hold B's ankles
5. A continues forward movement into a roll



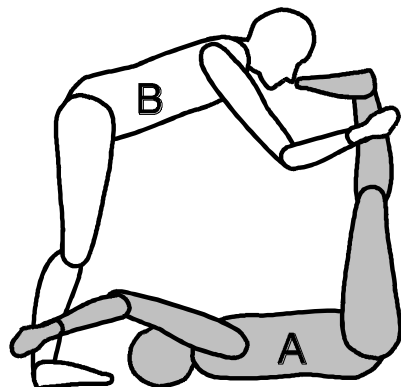
Position Three

6. As A moves into the roll, B sits up
7. B uses A's movement to rise into roll



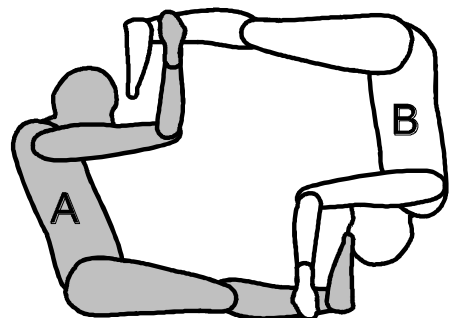
Position Four

8. B is pulled into standing position
9. A is at the mid-point of the roll



Position Five

10. A completes roll as B begins roll



Position Six

11. Pair are now in position three, though in opposite places, as roll continues

How to juggle with 3 balls

Stage One: The throw

This is the most important part of juggling. If you get this stage right, the rest will follow. So practise this until you can get at least 10 perfect throws one after the other.

Begin with one ball. Hold it in your stronger hand. Throw it so that it follows the path shown in the first diagram. Not too high, and parallel to your body. Don't look at your hands; keep your eyes fixed at the spot in the air where the balls will eventually cross in flight.

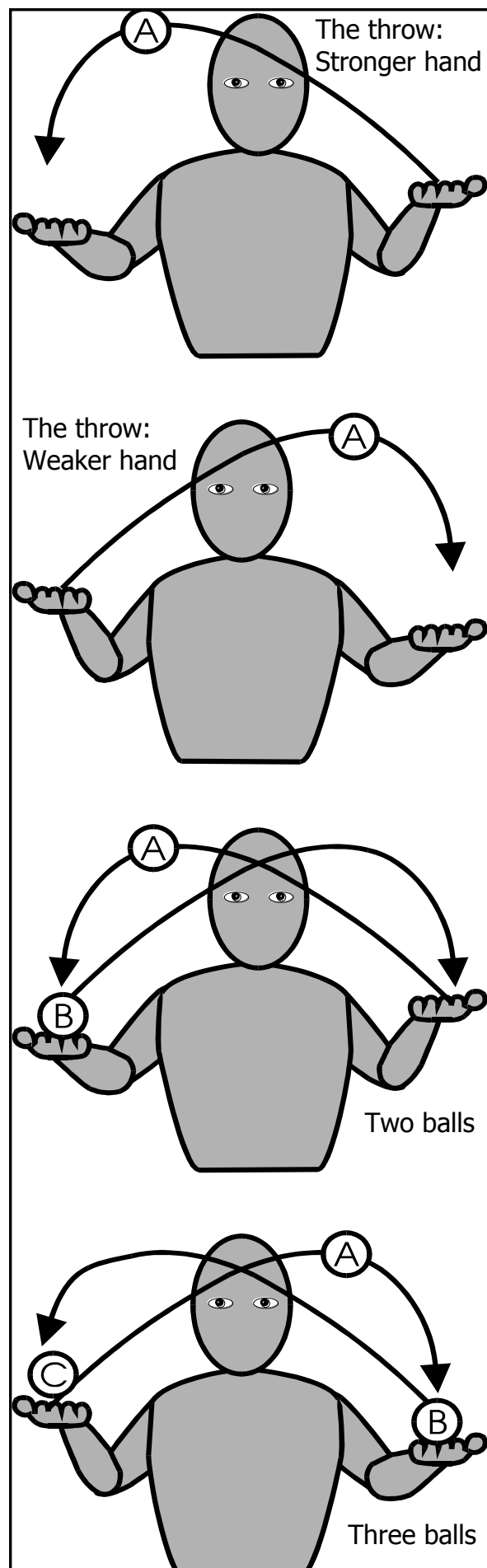
Now throw it back with your weaker hand. Make sure that it travels in the same path. Don't look at your hands as you throw or catch. The aim is to throw the ball where your hand will be waiting to catch it. This is why the throw is the most important part of juggling.

Stage Two: Two balls

Once the throw is ready, progress to two balls. The second ball should be released when the first ball is just about at the highest point of its path. Only one ball should be in the air at any time. Time your throws; don't hurry. Keep the throw steady and regular. Don't look at your hands. Concentrate on the spot in the air where their flight paths cross.

Stage Three: Three balls

When you are confident with two balls, and can do at least 10 throws one after the other, move on to three. Hold two balls in your stronger hand. Throw the first ball. Throw the second ball when the first reaches the highest spot in its path. Throw the third ball when the second ball reaches the highest spot in its path. Only one ball should be in the air at any time. The other two balls are actually in your hands, just being caught, or about to be released. If you drop a ball, go back and practise the throw.



A Day At the Beach

Situation

A day at the beach begins early in the morning when the life-guards and campers wake up. Gradually during the day more holiday makers arrive until the beach is crowded with activity. By evening time, only a few people are left as the day comes to a close.

Technical

Three pieces of music to suggest different times of the day. The first piece is fairly slow but cheerful to represent the early morning, the second lively to suggest the middle of the day, the third slow and relaxed to suggest a warm summer's evening. There are suitable tracks by Chris Rhea, the Beach Boys and the Beatles.

Make use of lighting changes to suggest the three stages in the day.

Space

Open. Use boxes to suggest different levels for rocks, or the life-guards' "tower".

Characters

Divide the characters into two main groups, holiday makers, and "workers", that is people who are making a living on the beach. There need to be more holiday makers than workers. Here are some suggestions:

Holiday Makers

Family groups, mums, dads, kids
Teenagers: flirting, posing
Campers
Serious surfers
Anglers

Workers

Life guards
Ice-cream sellers
Campsite owner
Sellers: hats, sun-glasses, T-shirts
Beach combers

When you have chosen a role, try to give your character an individual personality. For example, the campers could take camping really seriously, the sort of people who are up early with a bracing dip in the sea and breakfast cooking on the portable stove, or they could be a bunch of slobbers whose idea of a balanced meal is a fag in one hand and a can in the other.

Each character should stand out from the crowd in their own individual way.

Action

The action follows the ebb and flow of the day as the beach gradually fills with people, and then finally empties with perhaps just one or two people left.

Build up the scene by working out your own piece of mime as a group first of all, and then try to see how you might interact with other groups. For example, the beach sellers can work their way around each group in turn, the lifeguards can rescue someone from the water, the beachcombers can help to find someone's lost car keys or money.

Work in groups first

Each group of characters has to decide what they would be doing on the beach during the day. They arrive, enjoy themselves, and depart. Here are some suggestions for the things they might do:

- Pitch a tent
- Set up a windbreak, lay out a groundsheet
- Set up a deckchair
- Change into swimming costumes
- Make sandcastles, dig holes, bury a parent
- Put on sun-cream, or get sunburnt
- Get attacked by insects, get bitten or stung
- Play beach games, cricket, football, volley-ball, boule, tennis
- Blow up a lilo or beach ball
- Climb on rocks, fish in pools
- Eat an ice-cream, a hamburger, a sandwich
- Go paddling, swimming, surfing
- Tread on a jelly-fish
- Nearly drown!
- Lose something; one of the children, the car-keys, a contact lens, false teeth, money.
- Pack up everything
- Argue, fight; the usual end to a wonderful day
- Flirt, fall in love, look at the moon, and listen to the sea

Each group should practise their own activities before the whole piece is put together.

Putting the piece together

The focus of the scene has to pass from group to group as the day on the beach progresses. Keep your best ideas for the time when your group has the focus of the scene. At other times, you need to keep “acting” to continue the illusion that this is a real beach. When not at the focus of the scene, remember that you are an “extra” at this point; don’t try to upstage the group at the focus.

Every group needs a number, so that the activities can be put into a running order. It may well be that each group is at the focus of the scene more than once.

Remember:

- Who you follow.
- The last thing they do (your cue to take over the focus).
- Who comes after you.
- Your cue to them (don’t change it!).

The scene will probably need two or three runs-through before the timing is right, and all the action fits in with the music. Keep the scene on the move. If in doubt, leave it out.

A Day at the Beach (2)

Situation

This piece builds a storyline into the previous beach situation. A family set out in their car for a day on the beach. Sun, sea and sand soon turns to tears, threats and tantrums.

Technical

Prepare a track with four pieces of music, one for each stage of the action:

- 1 "Summer holiday" by Cliff Richard, or something suitably, horribly jolly to start the scene off.
- 2 "Car music"; anything which suggests how easy it is to travel by car. "I get around" by the Beach Boys, for example.
- 3 Beach music. Something wonderfully inappropriate about what a good time you have on the beach. Beach boys again probably.
- 4 Arriving home music. Anything tired out and depressed.
- 5 Thunder and heavy rain

Space

Set up four chairs to represent the car. The beach space is open.

Characters

Mum, dad, kids (at least two, preferably more), Grandparent (optional), a girl sunbather, her boyfriend, other beachgoers

Action

Packing the car

Each of the family assembles several items which they are bringing with them on the day out. For this piece of work, you may like to use actual props, to show how packed the car gets, and to actually fill up the space inside the car:

- Boogie boards
- Footballs, cricket sets, tennis rackets
- Beach balls and lilos
- Swimming costumes and towels
- Food and drink
- Deckchairs, parasols, windbreaks
- Large teddybears brought by small kids
- Bags and rucksacks

The car is packed to the rafters and beyond with both stuff and passengers. There is a great deal of putting stuff in the boot, and crowding inside with things on laps (like inflated lilos). When everyone is finally settled, someone has to pay a last visit to the loo, causing another round of unpacking and packing. Then, underway at last, they return to make sure the door is locked.

On the road

The journey continues “smoothly”. One of the children is sick in the back of the car. Another has to pay a roadside visit to the toilet.

They have a puncture which means that everyone has to get out. Dad can’t find the jack, so the car has to be unpacked. Everyone has to lift the car while Dad changes the wheel. He gets his foot caught, but eventually the repair is done. All have a covering of grease and grime.

On the beach

The family settle in to the last square metre on the beach, causing much annoyance to the other beachgoers as they manhandle all their stuff into place. A great deal of to-ing and fro-ing, unsettling all the other sun worshippers.

All the family settle in. Several jokes at dad’s expense:

- He hits his thumb putting the windbreak up
- The kids pull away his towel when he is putting his swimming togs on (captured on camcorder by mum)
- He passes out trying to blow up the lilo

He pretends to be asleep when the kids want to head off for the sea; mum takes them. This leaves him free to turn his attention to the attractive girl sunbathing next to the family’s spot. He sneaks glances out of the corner of an eye as she changes into her costume. He ogles as she smooths on suntan oil. She catches him looking. Her boyfriend returns; dad puts on his innocent face.

The boyfriend struts and poses, playing frisbee with the girl. Dad munches his sandwiches. The boyfriend heads off to the sea. The girl settles down. Dad begins to flirt, offering her a sandwich. She settles on her stomach to tan the other side, unfastening her bikini top. Dad almost chokes, especially when she asks him to oil her back.

While he is engaged on this act of chivalry, the boyfriend returns. He searches through the family’s belongings, and finds the car keys and Dad’s wallet. He gestures to his girlfriend to show what he has found, and disappears.

Mum and the kids return. Dad is caught mid-oiling. Mum inflicts many threats and actual bodily harm. The girl rapidly packs and leaves. The family decide to do the same. Dad discovers the keys and wallet are missing. Much frantic searching. More threats and violence. The family collect their things and begin the long walk home.

Arriving home

The family trudge home on their knees under the weight of all their beach stuff. There is much exhausted relief as they put down their things and wait for Dad to unlock the door.

He goes through his pockets looking for the key. Remembers its in his wallet. They are locked out. Cue the thunder and rain.

The Building Site

Situation

A typical day's work on a building site. The foreman tries to keep the workers at their jobs. They try to dodge him. A series of visual gags links the piece together.

Technical

1. Make a background track which has some fairly bouncy "silent movie" music.
2. Sound effects: A factory hooter, A pneumatic drill

Space

Open, with blocks arranged to the rear to suggest different levels of the building in progress. If possible, some planks arranged to connect the levels, and some pieces of scaffolding. A table and chairs to represent the site office.

Characters

The foreman	The brickies	The concrete layer and mate
The chippies	The diggers	The plumbers
A woman and her dog	The kids playing football	The secretaries

Action

All the tools in the scene are imaginary. The actors show what each of the workmen is doing by use of mime alone.

Setting up the scene

The opening to the action is signalled by the hooter. Each group of workmen filters on to the scene in turn, and establishes where they are working. The men stretch and yawn but don't do much else, brewing the first round of tea, reading the papers, smoking the first fag of the day and having a good cough and scratch. One group plays cards.

Only the concrete layer, who is totally dedicated to his profession, starts immediately. His mate mixes concrete, while he plots where the path is to be laid with great precision. The mate shovels the concrete into a wheelbarrow, brings it to his master, and then returns for more. He continues to do this throughout the scene.

Dodging the foreman

The foreman arrives with his clipboard. He chides each group of workmen in turn by pointing to his watch, and they reluctantly begin their jobs. As soon as the foreman disappears the men immediately stop work, and adopt their previous occupations. They have a sixth sense when he will reappear, and resume their jobs exactly together just before he can catch them out.

This continues as the foreman goes in and out of his office or off the set. He becomes more suspicious, until a game of "Mr Wolf" emerges as he tries to turn round suddenly to catch them slacking. As he turns, each group springs into work; as he turns away, each group stops. Timing is all important here!

Developing the action

Each group of workers establishes their jobs by use of mime, and includes a number of visual gags, as described here:

The Brickies

The brickies are building a wall. Some lay bricks, the others carry them up on a hod. One of the brickies fetch a ladder. As he swings it round, the other brickies duck. Unfortunately the foreman is too slow, and gets hit on the head. Finally, they have built their wall, but forgotten to put the doorway in. A new version of “exploring a wall”!

The Chippies

The chippies are putting in windows and doors, measuring, sawing and nailing. They carry a large sheet of glass to fit into their window. After much difficulty, and a few heart stopping moments, they manage to carry it across the site. At this point another worker walks “through” the glass, breaking the illusion.

The Plumbers

The plumbers are installing a bath. They carry it into place, then one shows what it is by climbing “inside” and pretending to have a bath. His mate is unaware of this, connects the water, soaking his mate for real.

The Diggers

The diggers are digging foundations, using shovels, and pneumatic drills. (The sound effect is needed here; use a second recorder). When they stop drilling, they attempt to drink tea, or light a cigarette, but can’t stop shaking.

The Secretaries

The secretaries arrive, and do everything absolutely in unison. They put on lipstick, mascara, and blusher, each using the same hand, and totally in time. They begin typing, again together, with carriage returns absolutely synchronised.

The Concrete Layer

The concrete layer continues to work throughout the scene. Every time he has finished his path to perfection, something happens to spoil it. First, the lady with the dog walks across it. He controls himself, and starts all over again. His mate is used to this, and simply moves off with his wheelbarrow to get more concrete.

Then the kids playing football get gradually closer to the concrete path. The concrete layer is aware of them, and when the ball comes close, he prevents it from going on his path. The game continues. One of the kids kicks it wildly high in the air. The concrete layer watches it, and moves to anticipate where it will land. Eventually he dives to collect it, and lands himself in the middle of his path. He stiffens into a statue.

Ending the scene

The scene ends with the factory hooter to herald the end of the day. The workers spring into action for the first time, ready to leave. They ignore the protests of the foreman who tries in vain to get them to help the bricked in brickies and “concrete” layer.....

The Orchestra

Situation

An orchestra gives a recital of "The William Tell Overture". During the recital, a terrorist enters, pursued by a SWAT squad. As they exchange gunfire, members of the orchestra die dramatically in the crossfire, while the survivors continue to play, picking up the instruments of those who have been gunned down, and playing these as well as their own. At the end of the performance, the conductor, takes the applause enjoying a well deserved cigar.

Technical

Two tracks need to be prepared, played on two separate audio players. The first contains the music, the second contains gunfire, explosions, aircraft in screaming bomb dives and so on.

The music track requires these sections:

- 1 The orchestra tunes up.
- 2 Applause greets the arrival of the conductor.
- 3 A quiet extract from "William Tell", the "Dawn" section (about one minute).
- 4 The fast movement from "William Tell", from where the trumpets enter.
- 5 Air on a G string (the Hamlet cigar advert music).

The orchestra require suitable posh costumes, while the terrorist and SWAT squad require camouflage jackets, balaclava helmets, berets and so on.

Space

The orchestra is set out as follows:

- Front left: violins.
- Front centre: violas
- Front right: Cellos, double bass
- Middle centre: Woodwinds
- Behind these, in a semi-circle, from left to right:
 - Trumpets, french-horns, trombones, euphonias, tubas.
- Left and right rear: Percussion.

The back rows can be raised on blocks if available. At the front, a podium and music stand for the conductor.

Characters

- 1 The members of the orchestra
- 2 One member who arrives late carrying a large instrument
- 3 The conductor
- 4 The terrorist
- 5 The SWAT squad (three maximum).

Preliminary exercises

Since no real instruments are used, the orchestra need to show clearly by their movements which instruments they are playing. Some rehearsal with the music will be necessary so that the strings, percussion and so forth all co-ordinate their movements in time with each other. For example, violin bows should move together, as should trombone slides.

The conductor needs to familiarise him/herself with the music so that groups of instruments can be conducted at appropriate moments in the music.

The terrorist and the SWAT squad need to practice dramatic rolls, leaps, and dives. A final hand to hand fight routine needs to be arranged.

Action

The action follows this order, with the characters taking their cues from the changes in the tape. The length of time each section of the tape takes, will determine how much activity can take place.

- 1 The action begins with the orchestra on stage tuning their instruments.
- 2 The conductor arrives and is greeted by applause from the "audience", whom he acknowledges, and by the orchestra. The orchestra settles to begin, at which point the late musician arrives, carrying a large instrument. This creates a great deal of fuss, as the musician is to sit at the end of a row and has to push past several other musicians to reach the seat. This confusion can be continued by the musician having to fetch something (the bow) which has been forgotten, if desired.
- 3 The conductor gradually becomes more irritated, but eventually the concert is ready to begin. During the slow movement, the flute and the oboe share the limelight, much to the frustration of the other players who are wanting to join in. Eventually the trumpets "hi-jack" the music, and the well-known overture begins.
- 4 Once the music is well under way, the terrorist enters pursued by the SWAT squad and accompanied by gunfire. As they exchange fire, members of the orchestra gradually get caught in the cross fire, and die dramatically. Others snatch up their instruments, and frantically begin to play two or more in turn.
- 5 Since there is a great deal of confusion, a large amount of planning is needed here. The moves of the terrorist/ pursuers must be worked out carefully, and the order in which the members of the orchestra die planned to coincide with these movements. Both the orchestra, and the conductor should remain oblivious to the mayhem going on around them; the music must go on! Once dead, corpses must lie perfectly still.
- 6 The final hand to hand fight between the terrorist and the last of the SWAT squad coincides with the climax of the music. The survivors from the orchestra collapse in exhaustion.
- 7 The conductor turns to receive the applause of the audience, taking out a cigar, and relaxing to the strains of Air on a G string.

Section Three: Improvisation

Organisation of materials

These materials are organised as follows:

- Ideas for improvised monologues
- Circle activities for pairs or small groups
- Dramatised narratives, in groups and as a whole class
- Developed situations

Improvising a monologue is a demanding task, and as such is not really the place to begin with inexperienced players. The circle activities are better in this respect, especially if introduced for a short time over a number of lessons before asking the students to tackle a piece of improvised group work. Other than this, the materials do aim to suggest a progression of demands placed on the students.

Circle activities

These activities themselves are arranged in order of difficulty. While it is relatively easy for inexperienced improvisers to tackle "Accusations", situations which demand rather more control of feeling and expression will stretch even the most able of students. Ask students to write first lines of their own, and add these to your "store". Consider these materials as examples which you can develop in practice. Some activities, such as "Memories", are very useful to include whenever developing relationships between characters. Aim for students to use these as a familiar "tool" in any lesson.

The Most Haunted House, A Dragon Play, and Children's Theatre

All of these pieces develop narratives into drama. The storyline provides security of structure; students should learn how to develop situations "sideways" from the narrative by exploring the conflicts which arise. The *Haunted House* makes use of a narrator, so that groups can decide for themselves how much dialogue they wish to add, or even perform the whole story in dumb show if they prefer. *A Dragon Play* develops this into a whole group piece, including crowd scenes, and provides a good opportunity to explore multicultural stories. *Children's Theatre* develops planning skills, and focuses upon making imaginary situations credible enough to satisfy a real audience.

A Soap and Airplane

Both of these pieces show the importance of setting, how to create characters from role cards, and to develop situations into storylines. *A Soap* creates a place in which group storylines and characters can be woven into a whole class piece of work. *Airplane* demonstrates how hidden roles can be used to put experienced improvisers on their mettle, so that they react *in role* to unexpected situations about which they know nothing.

Generations

This final demanding piece of work is aimed at experienced students, asking them to both research and dramatise their own material within the structure provided by the evolving story of several generations of a family. A companion script, **In the Mood**, which can be used to illustrate this work, appears in Section 4.

On the tip of your tongue...

Improvising a monologue

A monologue is a short piece of work which is performed by one player. This is quite demanding, especially when you have to invent what to say without much preparation.

Here are some situations which you can use. Choose one of them. Imagine that you are talking to the people suggested by the situation. For example, the football manager in the first idea would be talking to his players. Some "clues" about what to say are given in brackets.

You are.....

A football manager giving the half time team talk to his players.
The team are 5-0 down, and there are still 45 minutes to go.

The Head of a school in an assembly, telling the students off about various acts of misbehaviour. (What have they been doing wrong?)

A children's TV presenter demonstrating how to cook something, or make something, which unfortunately keeps going wrong. (Decide what you are doing, and think of the stages in doing it).

A door to door salesperson, trying to persuade a householder to buy something. (What are you selling?)

A sports commentator describing a particularly crucial moment in a critical match, a penalty shoot out for example. (What match?)

A drill sergeant telling his (or her) bunch of raw recruits what life is going to be like for them in the army, and what will happen to them if they step out of line. (What is their daily routine going to be?)

A posh art expert describing a painting, and explaining why it is worth millions of pounds, even though the subject has two heads...

A shy boy or girl ringing up someone to ask for a date, but afraid to come right out and say it. (What excuse for ringing can they give?)

A tour guide introducing the "fabulous" hotel and resort to the holiday makers. (Where is it, and what are its attractions?).

A politician who has been involved in a scandal of some kind, explaining that really they are innocent of all the charges. (What kind of a scandal? What are they supposed to have done?)

An air steward(ess) explaining the safety regulations on the plane to the passengers. (What would he / she have to demonstrate?).

A “make-over” artiste explaining to a rather unattractive customer what needs to be done to improve their appearance. (What features could be improved, and how?).

A keep fit enthusiast explaining the benefits of a healthy life style, while demonstrating various exercises at the same time.

A “have-a-go” hero(ine) who has prevented a crime from taking place. (What was the crime, and how did he / she stop it?).

An elderly Lord or Lady introducing their stately home to a group of tourists, explaining its history and the legends attached to it.

A famous film star or pop celebrity giving an acceptance speech after receiving an award.

A boss breaking the news to his assembled employees that the firm is hitting the rocks, and many of them will be sacked.

A football star making a press statement about getting sent off in an important match for punching the referee. (What made him do this?)

A magician performing a number of tricks, none of which work. (What tricks? Why do they go wrong?)

A boy / girl ringing up a girlfriend / boyfriend explaining that they never want to see them again. (What has happened to bring this about?).

A scientist explaining why some strange new discovery is going to make food better or cheaper. (What is the discovery?)

Accusations

What time of night do you call this? Where've you been until now?

Excuse me, but have you paid for those goods?

There was £5 in my purse / wallet. Now where's it gone?

I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to accompany me to the police station.

Look what you've done! You've ruined it!

Do you really expect me to eat this? It's disgusting!

How do you explain this I found upstairs under your bed?

I can't believe you said that about me! Some friend you are!

What's that smell? Have you been smoking again?

You were out with my boyfriend / girlfriend last night weren't you?
Don't try to deny it 'cos you were seen!

What do you mean, you only "borrowed" it?

Come off it. That's never your mother's signature is it?

I don't believe it! That's my jacket you're wearing!

What's that you're trying to hide behind your back?

Is that your idea of a joke? Well I don't think it's funny!

Go away! I never want to see you again as long as I live!

Don't tell me lies! You've been seeing him / her again haven't you?

Confessions

I'm sorry to have to tell you, but I think we've sent your luggage to Australia, by mistake.

I didn't mean to do it. I just lost my temper..

Dad, you know your new car.....?

It wasn't just me. The rest were doing it too!

I needed it really bad. I wouldn't have taken it otherwise..

This is really embarrassing. I'm afraid the room has been double booked.

You know your best jacket? I gave it to the jumble by mistake.

Sergeant, I have to report a crime. And I did it.

Concerns

You look terrible! What on earth is the matter?

Here, let me help you up. Who did this to you?

Of course I don't mind you phoning me at this hour. I wasn't asleep.

But you're bleeding! What's happened to you?

Have you been crying? You have, haven't you...

Is it money you need? You know you only have to ask..

Now have you got enough money? And your umbrella in case it rains? You can borrow my scarf if you want, save you catching cold. You did put on clean underwear didn't you? Just in case of accidents ...

But where will you go? You can't just wander the streets...

Persuasions

Hand over your dinner money. If you don't want to get hurt..

But why can't we have the party at your place?

Go on, try it. You don't know what you're missing 'till you do.

Oh great, there you are! Listen, something's cropped up. Can I borrow your car?

Lend's fifty quid. You'll get it back at the end of the week, promise.

It depends if you want to be one of our gang. If you do, you'll do what you're told.

Now then! Can I interest you in our latest model? Top of the range this is!

Complaints

But why can't you send a man round today? I'm really stuck without it.

They're your children. You should be responsible. You can't let them get away with this!

'Ere! What d'you think you're doing shoving in the queue like that?

If you think I'm spending another night in that room you've got another think coming!

This is the worst meal I've ever had! What are you going to do about it?

This is really shoddy work. And I'm not going to put up with it!

That was totally irresponsible! You could've got someone killed!

Would you mind being quiet? Some of us are trying to watch the film..

My dad's better than your dad!

This improvisation game is based on the way that young children like to outboast each other about their dads' feats and skills. Two actors enter the circle and attempt to outboast the other by making extravagant claims about the things their dads can do. They can find faults with their opponent's dad as well as boasting about their own. Play the game two or three times to get the idea of it. You might like to boast about the things their mums can do as well.

It isn't only young children who behave like this. Teenagers and adults also try to put one over on each other in these games of "one-up-man-ship" about all sorts of things. Use the list of ideas below, and play the game using these instead of the "dads".

Girls or boys you've dated
Cars you've driven
Exam results you've obtained
Houses and homes you've lived in
Holidays abroad you've been on
Clothes you own
Christmas or birthday presents you've received
Jobs you've had
Sports you can play
Football teams you support
Computer games you can play
Personal beauty you have
General knowledge you have
Blading / skateboarding tricks you can do
Accidents you've survived
Bets that you've won
Good deeds you've done
Famous people you know
Television programmes you've been on
Feats of strength you've performed
Musical instruments you can play (and pieces of music)
Meals you can cook
Scientific discoveries you've made

Once you've played the game using some of these ideas, make it slightly more difficult. This time, the two "opponents" have to boast and find faults, but must try to be polite and "friendly on the surface" while at the same time putting the other person down.

Choose one of the ideas, and turn it into a more developed, polished scene.

Passing the buck

In this improvisation game, two actors have to invent reasons why they cannot do a job. The “loser” ends up having to do it because the “winner” has successfully “passed the buck”. As well as inventing reasons why you cannot do the job, you can try to knock down their reasons for not doing it. For example, if they suggest they cannot move the piano because they have a bad back, offer to lend them some marvellous medicine which will fix their pains in no time. You might try flattery too, and invent any number of reasons why they are better suited to doing the task.

Begin with the first actor asking the second straight out to do the job:

“I say (Mat / Karen), would you mind shifting the piano ‘cos I’ve got a bad back..”

Here are some suggestions for jobs no one wants to do:

Clean out a sty full of pigs
Cover the worst class in the school for a fellow teacher
Give the large, mean looking guy with the scar a parking ticket
Get the escaped dinosaur back in its compound
Wash the dishes, the car
Get that spider out of the bath
Weed the garden
Decorate the house
Cut the tiger’s toenails
Change and feed the baby
Tell the hardest kid in the year he / she’s been dropped from the team
Protect the President from an assassin’s death threat
Go out first on to the planet to talk to the hostile aliens
Take the pregnant woman in labour to hospital in your car
Climb on to the roof to fix the satellite dish
Tell the school bully to stop picking on your little brother
Ask the very peculiar guest to leave the hotel
Go out in a storm to rescue a stranded motorist
Look after the next door neighbour’s horrible kids
Fight the monster to save the village
Go on a blind date to help out a mutual friend
Volunteer to do a bungee jump for charity
Capture the vicious dog in your garden

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the art of breaking bad news gently. The first actor has to reveal a piece of bad news, but without alarming the second actor. If the second actor spots what the bad news is too soon, the first actor loses. The group can judge the first actor's success.

Here are some pieces of bad news. Obviously, only the first actor may know what is on the card. If the group wishes to know what the bad news is before the scene is played, the second actor must be sent out of the room while the bad news is told to everyone.

Your girlfriend / boyfriend is going out with someone else.

✂-----

You've lost your job.

✂-----

Those relatives you really hate are coming to stay for a month.

✂-----

Your car has been stolen.

✂-----

You have got a serious body odour problem.

✂-----

You've got the lowest marks in the whole school in that exam.

✂-----

That chocolate you just ate was a laxative.

✂-----

Your fiancée has asked me to tell you the wedding is off

✂-----

The family from hell have just moved in next door to you.

✂-----

Your holiday to Florida has been cancelled because the travel agent has gone bust.

✂-----

The police have just called at your house to arrest you.

✂-----

Your rich uncle has left you absolutely nothing in his will

✂-----

The local vandals have sprayed graffiti all over your front door

✂-----

Your son / daughter has been arrested for shoplifting

✂-----

Your winning lottery ticket has been lost

Rabbit, Rabbit

To “rabbit” is to talk non-stop without letting the other person get a word in edgeways.

In this game, the first actor has to keep talking, whatever the subject might be. The second actor has to try to interrupt to change the subject. If the second actor can find a subject that the first actor cannot talk about, they are the winner.

You might like to set a time limit that the first actor has to keep talking in order to win.

Here are some subjects to start you off:

Did I ever tell you about my operation...?

You know that woman / man / girl / boy down the road? Well I can tell you a few things about her....

You must come round and see my video of our summer holiday...

The price of things in the shops! I don't know how I'm going to make ends meet...

Kids these days! They're a total disgrace....

I don't know why I pay the licence fee! Television's such rubbish these days!

What a day it was when we moved house..

I've never been to a wedding like it...

You know we really must do more to protect the environment..

My new computer's come. It's got an MMX processor with 64 meg of RAM, 24 speed CD drive and an enormous hard disc...

If I won the lottery I wouldn't have any trouble spending it let me tell you!

Call themselves a football team? I've seen kids in the park play better..

I must admit to being a bit of an expert on good food and wine...

Playing the martyr

Someone is said to be “playing the martyr” when they have a grievance against another person who has done something to upset or offend them. Instead of coming straight out with their complaint, the “martyr” sulks and secretly enjoys being the “wounded party”.

This game works on this situation. The first actor is the “martyr” who drops wounded hints about what the second actor is supposed to have done. The second actor has to try to find out what’s upsetting the first actor, and so obviously does not see the “card”.

Try these situations

✂-----

You’ve forgotten my birthday / Christmas present / our wedding anniversary ...

✂-----

You’ve been seen talking to another girl /boy..

✂-----

You broke your promise to take me to the cinema...

✂-----

You haven’t brought your homework in for me to copy ...

✂-----

You left me all by myself at that party...

✂-----

You talked to your friends all night instead of talking to me...

✂-----

You got me in trouble with that teacher and didn’t explain it was really your fault..

✂-----

You left me waiting for half an hour at that bus-stop...

✂-----

You didn’t bring the video I wanted to see from the store, but chose what you wanted to watch..

✂-----

You went to the match with your mates instead of coming shopping with me..

✂-----

You didn’t notice I’m wearing my new clothes / I’ve had a new hairstyle...

✂-----

You made a joke to your friend about my weight / height ...

You'll never guess what's happened!

This game is all about the stories people make up to impress other people. The first actor has to invent a totally incredible story. The second actor has to try to disprove the story by catching the first actor out on its details. If the second actor can prove it's all invented make-believe, the first actor loses.

Here are some ideas to get you started. Begin each "round" with the opening line:

"You'll never guess what's happened! ...

and then add one of these ideas:

I've been picked to go on the next manned space flight to the moon.

I've been taken on as a model by a famous fashion house.

I've been out for a date with (*pick a celebrity of your choice*).

I've got the best exam result in the country for (*pick a subject of your choice*).

I've been abducted by aliens.

I had to land the plane when the pilot and crew all collapsed..

I wrote (*pick a song of your choice*) and it got to number one..

I was asked to play the starring role in (*pick a movie of your choice*)..

I've just got back from preventing a robbery at the bank..

I saw the ghost of (*pick a famous person*) and they told me ...

I got the fastest time in the Olympic trials for (*pick a sport*).

I just made a break of 147 twice on the trot..

I discovered that painting I found in the attic was a Rembrandt..

I was mugged by a gang of six, and sorted them all out ...

I've just given the Queen a lift to the supermarket..

I've invented a robot that does all the housework..

Memories

Invent memories that two characters have in common, by making up a series of stories which both have shared. Each character has to add to the memory, and develop it into a past experience the two characters have had together.

Begin with one character giving a line which suggests a memory. Here are some ideas to start you off:

What about that party we went to last New Year's Eve!

You'll never guess! I just got a phone call from those boys / girls we met last year on holiday!

That was some game we played last week!

Why don't you drop in tonight? I've just had the photos back from the shop.

I was turning out my wardrobe and I found that dress I wore to the wedding..

I found those letters you wrote me. When you were away that time. . .

What about the time we went catching frogs down in the pool!

It doesn't seem two minutes since we were starting school together.

That was a time we had of it. During the war..

Darling! Haven't seen you since we played Hamlet at Stratford!

Stone me! I ain't seen you since we shared that cell together in the Scrubs..

Sir Gawain! By my troth, what hast thou been doing since our last quest?

The Most Haunted House in Britain

Situation

Which is the most haunted house in Britain? This work invites you to recreate the events behind the haunting, using a narrator as a kind of guide to the house and its history.

While the narrator tells the story, the rest of the group act out the story either in mime, or adding improvised dialogue where necessary. The story acts as "stage directions" suggesting to the actors when and what they might do or say.

One story, "The House by the Dark Pool" is included as an example, but there are very many legends of haunted houses throughout Britain which you could research yourself.

Technical

Ghost stories depend upon creating the right atmosphere, so there is plenty of potential in this work to think about how both lighting and music can be used to help create this.

When using lights, think not only about how light or dark the space is, but also which areas of the space are lit, and in what colours. The angle of the light is important too, as you can get very different effects lighting from above, compared to lighting from the front or side.

Choose music which helps to create tension in the scene, and think too about the level of volume at which it should be played during different parts of the play.

Space

How you organise your acting space will depend upon the story you have chosen. But do these things:

- Work out how many different areas you will need to present all the scenes in the story, and where these can be in the space you have available.
- Decide what furniture or props are needed in each space. (Less is best)
- Decide where the entrances to each space are. (Make sure everyone knows).
- See whether using different levels adds anything dramatically to the scenes.

Read through "The House by the Dark Pool" and decide how you might organise the space for this story.

Action

The narrator has a key role to play in the action. The story must be told very clearly, and with sufficient volume for both the actors, and the audience (if there is one), to hear.

The narrator must not rush telling the story, but must give the actors time to perform the actions shown, and to add any speech. Work out where pauses are needed in the story, but also where the action needs to move along, especially when things get exciting.

Think too where the narrator should stand when telling the story. When can the narrator come right to the front, or move to the side of the action? How can the audience be kept riveted in their seats as the story unfolds.....?

"The house by the dark pool"

A hundred years ago, a husband and wife lived in a cottage in the middle of a deep wood, near by a dark pool. They made a living by cutting wood. The husband, Ebony, treated his wife Martha very badly. He made her work hard for him all day long, cooking, cleaning, growing the vegetables they mostly ate, and even chopping up the logs he cut each day. She hated her life in this dark place, and longed to get away. She dreamed of taking the money he hid in a box under their bed, and escaping from his clutches.

One evening, as Martha was cooking, Ebony came in to the cottage in a foul temper, sat down at the table and demanded his food. When Martha put his plate in front of him, he looked at it in disgust, and then threw it at his wife. He shouted and ranted, accused her of being lazy, and beat her. She fended off his blows as best she could, and finally escaped to the bedroom. Ebony sat downstairs, his evil temper smouldering and flickering like the single candle which lit the room, drinking heavily from the bottle on the table. She listened for the sounds which told her he had fallen asleep. At last she heard his drunken snores.

With difficulty, she moved the heavy bed, hardly daring to breathe. She moved the floorboard, heaved out the moneybox, lifted the lid, and ran her fingers through the heavy coins. But when she raised her eyes, there at the door stood Ebony. With a wild roar, he plunged the knife with which he'd eaten his meal into her heart.

He stood looking in amazement at the blood covering his hands, unable to move. At last, he awoke from his trance, and went out to the hut where he kept his tools. He found a large sack and returned to the room where his wife lay dead. He put her body in the sack, pulled it outside, put in a large rock, and then tied the neck firmly.

The night was dark. He dragged the sack towards the edge of the pool. A veil of mist covered its dark surface. He lifted the sack into his rowing boat, stepped carefully aboard, settled the oars, and rowed out to the middle of the pool. When he reached the deepest part, he pushed the sack out of the boat. It slid at once into the black water.

Ebony rowed back to the cottage across water as dark as his evil heart. He went once more to his hut, collected a pail and brush, filled it with water, and returned to the room where the blood of his wife still splattered the wall, and lay in a pool on the floor. For the rest of the night he scrubbed to remove all traces of his crime. At dawn he fell into an exhausted sleep.

When he awoke, the memory of his crime flooded back. For the blood he had cleaned away the night before still lay in pools on the floor, and in spatters on the wall. In a panic, he rushed to the hut, collected limewash and a paintbrush, and returned to the room. Frantically he tried to blot out every trace of blood.

That night, as Ebony lay once more in a fitful sleep, there was a stirring on the surface of the dark pool. A figure slowly formed from the mist covering the pool, and slid across the surface towards the shore. Silently it slipped towards the house, through the locked door, and into the room where Ebony slept. It stood at the end of the bed. Ebony muttered in his sleep, became aware of the chill that had come into the room, and awoke. He saw the figure at the end of his bed, shrank away from it in fear, a strangled cry in his throat as the ghost of his dead wife claimed her revenge.

A Dragon Play

What this work is about

There are many legends about dragons from all over the world. Here is an example:

A village in a country far away was terrified by a dragon which lived in a cave in a nearby mountain. It frightened them with the noise of its great, flapping wings, roaring by day, and turning the night sky crimson with the flames from its mouth. It swooped down on the village, carrying off their animals in its giant claws, and destroying their crops and houses with the flames and smoke from its nostrils.

To keep the dragon happy, the villagers fed it a sheep or a cow every day, tying the animal to a stake near to the dragon's cave. But eventually there were no more animals left. The dragon got angry once more, and began to attack the village. There was only one thing to do. Someone must be offered to the dragon in order to get it to leave the village in peace. The villagers drew lots, and the daughter of the village chief was picked to be eaten by the dragon. Everyone was shocked, but no one was prepared to take her place. The chief offered large rewards, but they all made up excuses why they couldn't do it.

So the day came, when the villagers tied the poor girl to the stake near to the cave, and then crept to a safe distance to watch her terrible death. At this moment, a young man dressed in rags arrived, and asked the villagers what was happening. He went to the chief and offered to save his daughter, and kill the dragon, if the chief would let him marry her. Now the chief thought he was a scruffy looking beggar, but since none of the other young men were brave enough to save her, he was the only chance.

The young beggar approached the dragon's cave, armed only with a small dagger, and a pouch. The villagers laughed and mocked in despair, saying he would never kill such a large dragon with such a feeble weapon. Then the dragon appeared, saw the chief's daughter, and went for its daily snack. The beggar shouted and roared, waving his shirt to attract the dragon's attention. A terrible fight began as the dragon chased the beggar this way and that, making him leap and jump to escape its terrible breath and sharp claws.

At last, the beggar got close to the dragon and seized his chance. He opened the pouch and threw pepper into the dragon's terrible face. There was an awesome pause as the dragon sniffed it in, then sneezed so fiercely that it blew out its flames. Now the beggar dodged its terrible claws, and plunged the dagger into its eyes. The dragon howled with pain, twisting and turning this way and that. With one last leap, and thrust of his blade, the beggar killed the dragon.

Now the dragon was dead, the beggar claimed his reward. The chief was glad to have his daughter alive, but didn't want such a scruffy beggar as his son-in-law. So he broke his promise. At once his daughter turned into a beautiful bird, and flew away never to be seen again.

Dragons appear in festivals in many countries, especially to celebrate the Chinese New Year, though Chinese dragons are not hostile like the one in the story. The dragon is formed by a group of players moving together in a snake-like way. It isn't too difficult to make a dragon "costume" to cover them, and then to use in a story like the one above.

Dragon races

Practise being a dragon first of all by holding some dragon races. Divide yourselves into three groups. If there are 30 in your class, this will give three groups of 10 which will be ideal for this work.

One of the groups first of all forms an obstacle course. They do this by sitting in a space and being a marker the "dragons" have to go round, like skiers on a slalom run. Pairs of "markers" can join hands and form bridges the dragons have to go under, or if they kneel down, gates the dragons have to step over.

When the course is in place, the two dragons begin at opposite sides. The race is a pursuit, so that the dragon which wins is the first to catch the other's "tail". BUT if a dragon comes apart at any point in the race, it immediately loses. Missing any obstacle also means going back to go round it properly.

When the first race has been run, the "obstacles" become a dragon, and have their turn. Continue with the races until a champion dragon has been crowned.

Running these races should help you to see how the dragon can move, both around corners, and up and down, like waves.

Technical: Making the dragon costume

The costume can be as simple or elaborate as you like. Make a mask for the head:

1. Draw a dragon head seen from the front. Make it fairly wide, with lots of teeth and horns and things.
2. Don't colour it in. Simple black and white lines are needed.
3. Choose the best design, and make an overhead projector sheet of it on the photocopier.
4. Paint a large sheet of cardboard with white paint. Any large old box will do, and a bit of white emulsion.
5. Project the design on to the cardboard, and draw in the lines.
6. Now paint the mask.
7. Glue strips of card underneath to make handles for the first person in the dragon to hold

Tip: It may help to fold the mask a little to keep it stiff, and to form the dragon's nose.

The covering for the dragon's body can be made from old curtains or sheets. Decorate these with strips of crepe paper, or paint in bright colours.

Turning the story into a play: Characters

Here's how the story above might be turned into a play. These are the characters which are needed. Decide who is going to play these parts:

- The Chief
- His daughter
- The beggar
- Villagers
- The dragon

Action: Divide the story into scenes

Next, divide the story into separate scenes, so that each scene moves the story on and concentrates on one particular part of the action:

1. The dragon terrifies the villagers
2. The villagers offer it animals to keep it happy.
3. The animals are all eaten, so the villagers have to draw lots.
4. The Chief's daughter is chosen; he tries to persuade someone to take her place.
5. The daughter is tied to the stake; the beggar appears, and offers to save her.
6. The beggar fights the dragon, and wins.
7. The Chief goes back on his promise.

Each scene now has to be dramatised, that is turned into a play with action and dialogue:

Scene One:

The narrator introduces the story, as the villagers go about their daily business.

In pairs, work out a short piece of conversation or gossip for the villagers to say.

The dragon suddenly enters, twisting and turning, chasing and attacking the villagers, who beat drums and cymbals to scare it away.

Scene Two:

In pairs, or small groups, the villagers compare what the dragon has done to them.

They complain about their houses being burned, their crops being destroyed, and their animals eaten. They boast about their narrow escapes, and their "bravery". They complain when the Chief tells them they must sacrifice an animal each day.

In pairs, or small groups, try to outboast each other about the hardships the dragon has caused you.

Scene Three:

The Chief calls a public meeting because all the animals have been eaten. He asks for suggestions about what to do.

In pairs, work out some ideas to put forward at the meeting. What should the Chief do?

The Chief has to work out reasons why these won't work. He tells them someone has to be sacrificed, and that they will draw lots. The angry villagers insist both he and his daughter take part in the draw. His daughter draws the short straw.

Scene Four:

The Chief tries to persuade others to take her place. He offers the men bribes, or insults their bravery. He tries to get wives to persuade their husbands, offering to marry them when their husbands are dead.

In small groups, work out reasons why you reject his offers. (Some of the wives might try to persuade their husbands!)

Scene Five:

The villagers take the Chief's daughter and tie her to the stake. As they are doing this the beggar enters. He asks several villagers in turn what is happening. He makes his offer to the Chief, much to the derision of the crowd.

In pairs, work out something to call out when he makes his offer.

Scene Six:

The fight with the dragon. Work out each movement in the fight in detail, first without the costume. The villagers bang drums and cymbals in rhythm with the fight as in the first scene.

When the beggar throws the pepper, everything goes still for a moment. Bang the drums and cymbals on a given signal to show the dragon's sneeze.

Scene Seven:

When the beggar claims his reward, the Chief offers him something else. What does his daughter do? Will she marry the beggar, or not? Whose side are the villagers on?

The Chief, beggar and daughter work out what they are going to say. The villagers work out an opinion to offer, for or against the beggar.

Finally, the daughter turns into a bird. How on earth are you going to do that.....?

Space

This work will need a fairly large, open space for the dragon fight to take place in, so this area should be kept clear and uncluttered.

Some other areas for the villagers to meet, mingle and grumble can be set up. You might like to include some interior areas (a tavern for example) if space allows.

For the crowd scenes with the Chief, it helps if he (or she) is on a higher level, so that it is possible to see and hear him in the middle of the crowd. Use blocks to make a platform.

Some points to remember..

- The movements of the dragon, especially in the fight scene, need to be worked out very carefully. Number the movements, which can be repeated, like a kind of dance, in order to extend the scene.
- The villagers must beat their drums and cymbals in time together in order to make the rhythm of the dragon. Practise this, trying to get a variety of rhythms and speeds.
- In the crowd scenes, only one person can be heard at a time. Give each person a number as they are meant to talk. Remember who you follow after, and make yourself heard.
- When the dragon is dead, it has to stay dead until the end of the play. Don't move!

A Dragon Play: Template for the mask



Children's Theatre: Jack and the Beanstalk

What this work is about

In this work you will take a well-known story and turn it into a play specially intended for an audience of children aged between 5 and 10 years old. There is no narrator used in this piece of work, so you have to tell the entire story through the play itself. Some scenes from "Jack and the Beanstalk" are given as examples to show you how to turn the story into a play.

Playing it for real

Children's stories often take place in a kind of make-believe time and place. Strange things happen, and even stranger characters appear. To turn the story into a play, the trick is to make it seem as if these things really can take place. Cows can talk, beanstalks can grow overnight, giants' castles are perched on top of clouds, and geese can lay golden eggs. At each point in the story, ask "What if ...this were to happen in real life?"

The story starts off with Jack and his mother down on their luck, with no money to buy food. Here's the first "What if.....?"

Scene 1: What if....you were really poor, and had no money at all?

Work in a group of about 4 people. To collect some ideas, you will need a large sheet of paper, and some coloured felt tip pens. In the middle of the paper, write down the "What if?". As quickly as you can, write down as many things as you can think of that might happen to someone who has no money at all. Arrange them around the "What if....", so that it forms a kind of spider's web on the page.



When you've got some ideas together, decide which of them you want to use. Now, in the story it says that Jack has to sell the cow, so we know we have to use that one. But:

What if Jack is so lazy he won't get out of bed?

What if..... the shopkeepers come to demand their money?

What if the bailiffs arrive to take away the furniture?

What if the landlord comes to evict them from the house?

You could use any or all of these ideas, so that finally, there is no alternative except to sell the cow.

Dramatising the opening scene

Once you've decided which ideas to use from your spidergram, dramatise them like this:

Space

- 1 Where is the opening scene going to take place?
- 2 What time of day is it?
- 3 What props and furniture will be needed?
- 4 Where are the entrances?

Characters

- 1 Which characters are going to appear in the scene?
- 2 When do they come into the scene?
- 3 What is the first thing they say?
- 4 What kind of mood are they in?

Action

- 1 What is the first thing that happens in the scene?
- 2 What do each of the characters do?
- 3 Why does Jack eventually have to sell the cow?

Talking it over

When you've played through the scene, talk about how well it went:

- 1 Which bits of the scene went well, and are going to be kept?
- 2 Which bits didn't really work?
- 3 Does anything need to be added to the scene to make it better?
- 4 (Another idea from your spidergram, another character, more talking, more action?)

When you are happy with the scene, run through it one more time, so that everyone knows how it works.

Scene 2: What if a cow could talk?

One of the best things about these kind of fairy tales is that the animals can often talk, and are themselves characters in the stories. Turn the cow in this story into a character. First of all, work in pairs and practice being a pantomime cow, with one as the front end, and the other as the back end. Get the movements right first and practise:

- Lying down
- Getting up
- Walking
- Eating grass

Now, Jack is taking the cow to market where it is likely to be sold to the butcher. What is Jack likely to tell the cow about where they're going, and why? Is he going to tell her the truth? What is the cow likely to say, and do when she finds out what Jack is about? Try to develop some comic "business" with the cow, with Jack attempting to trick, persuade, bully or simply just push and shove the cow to market.

Scene 3: What if you sold a cow for a bag of beans?

Next Jack meets the old man who offers to buy the cow for a bag of beans. Jack has a bit of a problem here, because a cow is obviously worth much more than a few old beans. On the other hand, if he trades for the beans, it means the cow will be saved. And the man assures him the beans are magic. The cow probably will have a few ideas of her own about the sale too. So now work on the scene where Jack meets the old man and sells the cow.

The real problem of course is what happens when he gets home, and has to persuade his mother he has made a good bargain. How will she react to the news?

- Will she get angry and punish Jack?
- Will she get upset, and make him feel guilty because he's let her down again?
- Will she make the best of things, as she always has to do?

Try playing this scene in pairs in different ways. Combine the mother's reactions, so that at one moment she's angry, and the next she's upset and in tears because the cow was the last thing they had to sell. Remember, at some point in the scene she has to throw the beans out of the window so that they can grow overnight.

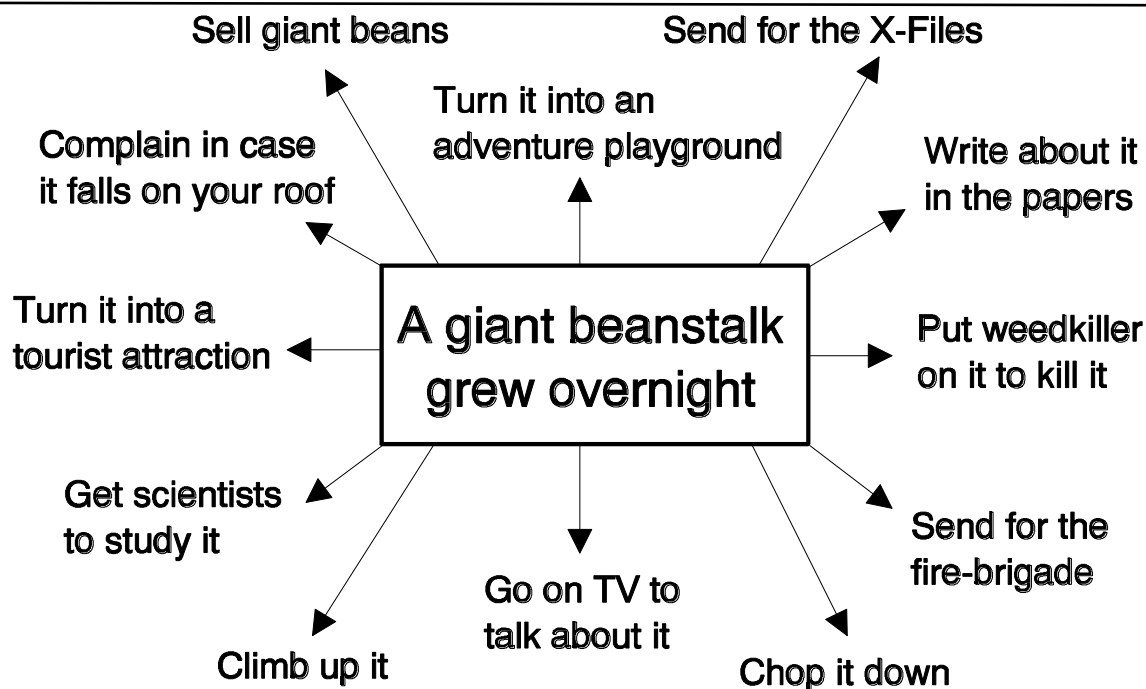
Scene 4: What if a giant beanstalk grew in your backgarden?

How do you conjure up a magic beanstalk?

The real magic is that you don't. Not an actual beanstalk anyway. Because there is no way that any prop or painted screen would do the beanstalk justice. The real magic lies in everyone *imagining* the beanstalk, and acting as if it really were there.

Walk round it, so that you know where it is, and how big the base is. Peer through the stalks to see if you can see people on the other side. (You probably can't). Look upwards to see if you can catch sight of the top of it. Pick up a few of the giant leaves and beans which have fallen off. And if you do these things, there it is.

Now that it's there, what should be done with it? You can't have a giant beanstalk in the middle of the road blocking everything. Brainstorm what might happen if a giant beanstalk actually did suddenly appear overnight. Some people might be in favour of it, and some might be against it. Whatever their opinion, they certainly won't be able to ignore it. Have a look at this spidergram when you've thought up ideas of your own.



Make up a crowd scene.

The beanstalk will create a lot of interest, so a crowd will gather, and a television news crew will be there. In pairs, or small groups, decide who you are, and whether you are in favour of keeping the beanstalk, or chopping it down. Here's a list of possible roles:

- The television news crew
- The police
- Jack's mum, and neighbours
- The mayor, town councillors and local business people
- Investigators and scientists
- Environmentalists
- Farmers and bean growers
- Mountaineers and adventurers

The police can set up a cordon around the beanstalk to keep people back. The environmentalists can tie themselves to the stalk to prevent it being chopped down. The television crew can interview the members of the crowd to learn their opinions. Practice what you are going to say to the interviewer before the scene begins.

Creating a focus for the scene

The problem with crowd scenes is that everyone wants to talk at once, but not everybody can, if they are to be heard. The scene needs to be organised like this:

- 1 Decide on the order in which the television crew are to interview the people. Give each group a number.
- 2 When each group is being interviewed, they alone should be heard. They are the focus of the scene. This is an extremely important idea to learn.
- 3 If the crowd reacts to what is being said, their cheers, boos, or comments should not interfere with the main focus of the scene.
- 4 When a group has performed its interview, they should retreat into the crowd, but remain involved in the scene, as if interested in what other people have to say.

- 5 “Extras” in the scene (people who may not actually say anything) are just as important in creating the illusion that this event is actually taking place.

Crowd scenes are more difficult to improvise than when working in small groups simply because there are more people involved. Concentrate the whole time, especially if you run through the scene more than once to explore different ideas. A well constructed crowd scene can be really exciting, and add a great deal to the story.

Scene 5: What if you found a giant's castle?

The illusion of the giant's castle can be created as you did the beanstalk. Everything that Jack sees, touches, eats, sits on, hides behind or in, must seem much bigger than he is, and much heavier to move. On your own, in role as Jack, practise:

- Opening a giant door
- Turning a giant key
- Using a giant knife and fork
- Eating a sausage the size of a marrow
- Drinking from a mug as big as a bucket

In pairs, with one as Jack, and the other as the giant's wife, practise:

- Folding the giant's laundry
- Kneading giant bread or making a giant cake
- Bathing a giant baby

How to make a giant?

Not only the things in the castle will be gigantic, but the people are too. This presents a difficulty, since obviously real giants are a bit difficult to come by. As well as doing the obvious things, like casting the larger people in your group as the giant and his wife, it is possible to create an illusion of size, by making use of different levels.

Set up one area of your space with drama blocks, so that it is higher than the rest. If the giant only appears on this level, the illusion that he is considerably larger can be created. There probably won't be sufficient blocks for everyone to do this at the same time, so practise “on the flat” first, and then perform the scene using different levels when you get the chance.

How do you make a giant goose?

Come on, use your imagination! You should be able to do this by now. As with the cow, there are plenty of opportunities for comic “business” with the goose that lays the golden eggs. Have you ever tried laying one of those things? The size of them!

Organising the scene: Action

There are these sections in the storyline which need to be included in this scene:

- Jack discovers the castle, and examines it from the outside in amazement
- He knocks at the door, and persuades the giant's wife to let him in
- He eats a giant meal, and has to hide when the giant returns

- The giant looks for Jack. His wife persuades him that there is no one there.
- The giant eats his meal, counts his money, and has the goose lay a golden egg
- When the giant falls asleep, Jack steals the goose, and legs it!

Organising the scene: Characters

How does each of the characters feel and act at each stage of the scene?

- When Jack arrives at the castle he is full of amazement, but tired and hungry. The giant's wife is sympathetic and kind, but anxious what might happen if Jack is discovered, and so is reluctant to let him in.
- When the giant returns, he is angry and suspicious. His wife is anxious and frightened, while Jack is both frightened and curious, as he steals a look from his hiding place.

Work on each section of the scene in turn, putting together the ideas you have produced for both movement, and for speech. The scene can end with a chase, as the giant attempts to catch Jack, the giant's wife tries to help Jack escape, and the golden goose just gets in everybody's way.

And finally.....

There are several practical problems in dramatising the final scene of the story, since it isn't possible to show Jack climbing down the beanstalk, nor chopping it down so that the giant is killed. The trick here is to set these things off-stage, and have people who have seen them happen burst in to describe to others what they have seen. Begin the scene in Jack's cottage. Here are some things to think about:

- 1 What has been happening to his mother while he has been away? What does she think may have happened to him? Is there anyone with her, or do we hear what she's thinking by means of a soliloquy (a character talking as if thinking to themselves). Is she still being evicted from her house?
- 2 When Jack bursts in, with the golden goose, what does he tell her, if anything? What is he looking for? What does he do? What does she say and do, now that he has returned?
- 3 Which characters could be used to bring news of what's happening "outside"? Bring back some of the characters from the crowd scene, and introduce the news in "stages":
 - The first person describes the giant, and how he is chasing Jack down the beanstalk
 - The second person describes how Jack is trying to chop the beanstalk down
 - The third person describes the fall of the beanstalk, and the hole the giant makes in the ground (perhaps he nearly fell on them!)

Finish the scene with the crowd congratulating Jack, preparing for a happy ending (and buying his cow back!)

Choose a children's story of your own

You may decide to choose your own story, rather than using "Jack". Whichever story you decide on, follow the methods suggested for planning and dramatising shown in this example. Producing a piece of Children's Theatre is a very rewarding thing to do. You can always be sure of a very receptive audience!

A Soap

What this work is about

You've all seen soaps on the television. You may love them or hate them, but you can't avoid them. Soaps provide a lot of scope to invent a setting, characters and action, and have the advantage that separate storylines worked out in groups can be combined together to make up a whole "episode".

The basic ingredients

All soaps have things in common. Here's a list:

- The action takes place in and around a particular neighbourhood
- The characters belong to family groups, or friends sharing a house
- The storylines grow around the troubles these groups have

The Setting: Where does the Soap take place?

Every soap needs a neighbourhood, which often also identifies the programme's title.

In groups, do these things:

- 1 Make a list of the titles of as many soaps as you can think of, and see how many suggest the name of the place where it all happens.
- 2 Suggest a place, and a title, for your soap. You may decide upon a local neighbourhood you know well, or an imaginary place in another country. Why do you think yours would be a good idea?

When all groups have come up with suggestions, choose one person from each group to put their ideas to the whole class. When everyone has had the chance to do this, the whole class can vote to choose the best idea.

Once the actual neighbourhood has been agreed upon, all the different places which make up a locality need to be sorted out. These are places where people live, work, and relax, so the list is quite large. Have a look at these suggestions:

Houses and flats	Local pub	Cafe
School	Hotel	Market
Garage	Church	Farm
Community centre	Football club	Sports centre
Factory	Office	Newspaper
Radio or TV station	Health centre	Crèche
Youth centre	Night club	Police station
Shops	Supermarket	Restaurant

There are some blank "building" cards to use next. As a group, decide where you would like your part of the soap to take place. Fill in two choices, so that you can offer an alternative; you cannot have fifteen pubs and no houses in your soap!

The "building" cards can now be pinned or glued to a display board, or large sheet of paper, so that a "map" of the neighbourhood is formed. The whole class should discuss and agree where the various places go. It is a good idea to match the shape of the neighbourhood to the shape of the acting space, and to leave an open area in the centre.

Characters: Who is going to be in the soap?

Soaps tend to include similar “types” of characters. For example, there is usually a teenager (often a boy) who gets in trouble, or a gossip (usually a middle-aged woman). The characters tend to fall into stereotypes, people who can easily be identified or given a kind of label. Here is a list of typical characters who appear in soaps:

Hard nut	Young tearaway	Joker	Nice guy
Mouthy	Two-timer	Single-parent	Elder
Good looking	Go-getter	Cheat	Good mother
Loser	Gossip	Home-comer	Mixed-up teen
Bar maid	Pub landlady	Dealer	Good causer
Shopkeeper	Cafe-owner	Young talent	Faded beauty
Old busy body	Pensioner	Gay	Student
Teacher	Entrepreneur	Unemployed	Squatter

In groups, discuss the soaps you watch yourselves, and see if you can match the names of characters to these stereotype titles. What other stereotypes would you add?

Now have a look at the example **Role Cards** which give a short description of some of these possible characters. On a blank role card, fill in the details of a character you would like to play yourself. Before you do this, try to work out roles which will fit together with the rest of your group, so that your characters are related or connected in some way. These relationships might include:

Parents	Children	Grandparents	Uncles, aunts, and cousins
Lovers	In laws.	Friends	Lodgers Work mates

Aim to get a variety of characters in the group with whom you intend to work. It is a good idea to have mixed sex groups, and to include characters with a range of ages. Try to avoid having a group where every character is round about your own age, as this makes it difficult to develop family groups.

When you have decided on your roles, and filled in your Role Cards, pin or glue these on to the neighbourhood map. Place them around or near to your “building”. You now know who everyone is, and where they live or work.

Developing your role: Hot seating

Now everybody in your group has got a character card, develop these by using “hot seating”, like this:

- 1 Each character in turn sits in the “hot seat” facing the other members of the group.
- 2 The other group members bombard the “hot seater” with questions, which should be answered *in role*.
- 3 Questions can be about anything.
- 4 Each hot-seat session should last for about two minutes.
- 5 “Hot seaters” shouldn’t think too long about answers; just say the first thing that comes into your mind.
- 6 After everybody has been in the hot seat, discuss which answers were useful to develop the character, and which can be ignored.

Troubles: What is your soap going to be about?

"Troubles" lie at the root of soap storylines. The troubles may be small, like friends falling out, or large, like losing your job. Whether large or small, troubles cause conflict between the characters. People take sides, poke their noses in, do things they shouldn't, say things they don't mean. Here are some suggestions for "troubles" you might use:

Parents object to a boyfriend or girlfriend	Money goes missing
A unexpected pregnancy	Hitting the bottle
A feud with the neighbours	Getting the sack
A practical joke goes wrong	A divorce
Leaving home, going missing	An accident
A sudden illness	A burglary

These "troubles" are a bit vague though. Try to pin down **exactly** what the cause of the trouble is. For example:

- Parents object to a boyfriend who has got a bad reputation for petty crime.
- Money goes missing from the till in the pub when a new barman is taken on.

Your group now needs to decide:

- What the trouble is.
- Which of your characters are directly involved.
- What the other characters are going to do about the trouble.
- Whose side they are on
- What is going to happen next. Will things get better, or worse?

When you have decided all these things, you should have enough ideas to develop your storyline into at least one, and probably several scenes.

Getting started: Organising the space

Now build your set. Each group should set up their acting area according to the neighbourhood map.

If space is cramped, then make do with as little furniture as possible. The more space you have, the more rooms you can have in each building. It is useful to leave a central area open, as a "street" where people can meet in passing.

Make sure that each member of your group knows where the entrances to your set are, and where any windows the characters look out of might be.

You may decide to set some of your scenes in other group's locations, in the cafe or the pub, for example. Negotiate with other groups about this; don't just assume you can barge in! You will need to know where entrances to their sets are, and when you can move the action into their location without upsetting their plans. This kind of interaction can make this work really interesting, providing you co-operate well with each other.

Organising the action

Beginning the action is always the most difficult part. If you follow these simple tips, you will soon get started:

- 1 Which character(s) are on the set when the scene opens?
- 2 What are they doing? (Even if it's only reading a newspaper!)
- 3 Who is the first person to speak, and what do they say?
- 4 When does the "trouble" first become clear?
- 5 When do the other characters enter the scene?
- 6 What do they say and do?
- 7 How and when does the scene end?

There are many possible ways that your scenes can develop. If one version doesn't seem to be working, try a different way. Discuss which parts you like in the scene, and which don't seem to be working. Change it, and try it again. Eventually, your scene will be knocked into shape!

Developing the action: What happens next?

As you've seen, the storyline in a soap is basically a series of events, and their consequences. Take the "parents objecting to a boyfriend" example. There are a number of things which could happen next:

- 1 The girl agrees to give up the boy.
- 2 The girl carries on seeing the boy behind her parents back.
- 3 The girl and the boy decide to run off together, but their plan is discovered.
- 4 The boy gets really angry and decides to get his own back.
- 5 The girl discovers she is pregnant..

With the exception of number 1, which is really boring because it avoids the conflict, the other consequences suggest some strong possibilities. And if number 1 is linked to number 4, it too could be very interesting.

List the possible consequences for your storyline like this, and choose which seems to offer the most "drama". Organise your second scene using the tips given above for your first scene.

Putting the whole thing together

Once each group has worked on their own separate storylines, the whole episode can be put together, like this:

- Each group will be given a number. Remember which group you follow.
- In turn, each group produces the opening scene of their storyline.
- Once each storyline has been set up, the second round of scenes can take place.
- Keep the scenes flowing on from each other.

The very last scene in the whole episode should end on a cliff-hanger, something really dramatic which is likely to keep the viewers watching for weeks to come.

Now film your soap.....!

Gaz: Hard Nut

Nobody messes with me. I am the local hard man. Not that I ever actually hit anyone. I just make everyone think I will if they get in my way. Maybe I've got a softer side, but I keep it

Maggie: Gossip

Everybody's business is my business. Nothing is better than a good secret or a bit of juicy scandal to spread. OK, so I wouldn't win a popularity contest. Who cares...

Phil: Joker

Life is basically dull, so why not liven things up by playing practical jokes, and winding people up? Yeh, it gets on people's nerves, but these bores need to get a life ...

Sol: Nice guy

I sometimes think I'm too nice for my own good. I just like to help people, but then they take advantage. Why do I always seem to end up the loser? Why am I always on my own?

Rachel: Mouthy

Nobody, but nobody, tells me how to run my life. I tell them where it's at. So what if the mouth's in gear before the brain? So what if I tread on people's toes? They should mind

Tel: Two-timer

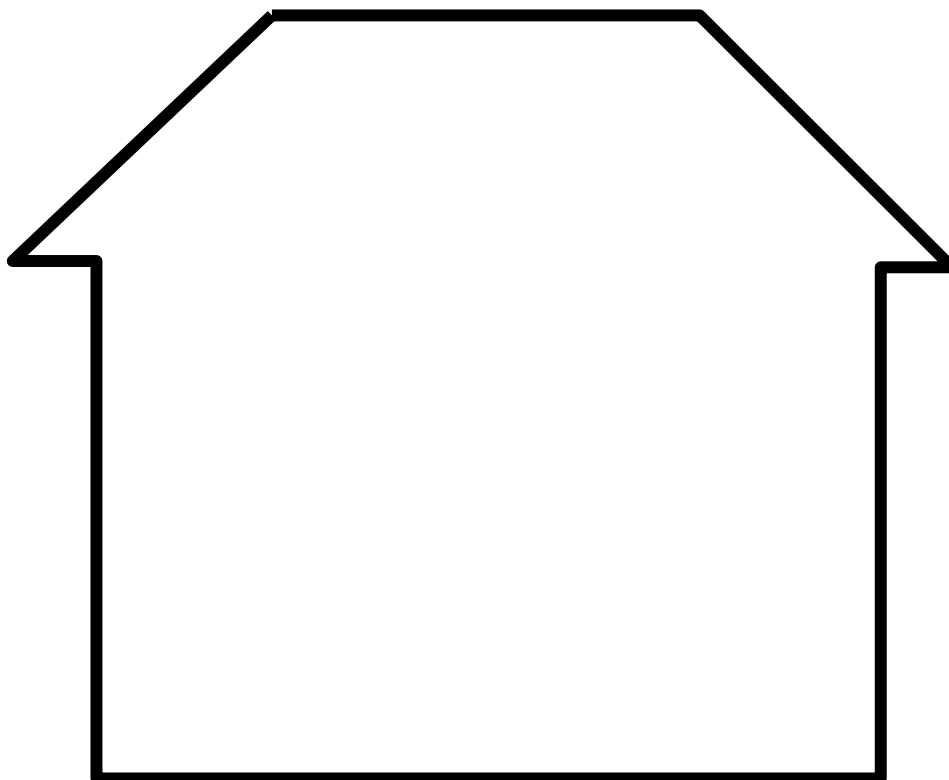
I just can't help myself. Whoever I'm going with, there's always someone else I fancy. OK, it makes life complicated, and people get hurt. But you only live once...and I get bored

Tina: Single parent

Life's a struggle since I was left in the lurch with the kids to bring up. Holding down a job, keeping the family together, and no time to enjoy myself. It gets too much sometimes..

Gloria: Pub landlady

In my pub, nobody puts a foot wrong. Not if they want to stay welcome. When I call time, it's time. Trouble is, I'd like to run



Name:

Age.....

Role type:

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Description:

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Name:

Age.....

Role type:

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Description:

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Name:

Age.....

Role type:

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Description:

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Name:

Age.....

Role type:

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Description:

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Airplane: Teacher's notes

Situation

This piece of work is an open ended improvisation. The students are not fully informed as to what will happen, and are not presented with the whole situation before the piece begins. Some will know more than others, as they are given separate role cards explaining what they have to do, and the character they are to present. They therefore have to react quickly, on the spur of the moment, as the situation develops, attempting to behave as they believe they would in real life.

The teacher of course needs to be aware of the basic situation, which is as follows:

A group of passengers are taking a flight. There are two terrorists on board, though obviously the other passengers are unaware of this. The two terrorists themselves are not known to each other, and have to make contact by means of secret signals during the course of the improvisation. Once they have made contact, it is up to them what they do, and when.

How it works

Each member of the group is given a role card, which explains who they are, and how they should behave. Read through all the role cards before beginning the piece so that you are aware of who is who. You may wish to allocate particular roles to people in the group, based on your own knowledge of their capabilities. For example, the terrorists need to be strong individuals.

There are two main stages to the work, in the check-in lounge, and on the plane itself. Tell the group that once the work is underway, you will not intervene; it is up to the group themselves whether it is successful or not. What is important is that the piece is kept going, and that each character "plays it for real".

Setting up the space

Divide the acting space into two halves. Prepare seating in one half for the airport lounge, and in the other, for the plane itself. The lounge needs two tables as check in counters. Organise a boarding gate between the two areas.

In the check-in lounge

During the first stage, the passengers are waiting in the lounge, checking in at the desk, meeting each other. Organise the passengers by allocating numbers which tell them when they should enter the scene. Obviously, not all the passengers would arrive at the airport at exactly the same time, and this allows time for the scene to develop, and for roles to be established.

When all the passengers have assembled, and checked in, and been through security they should board the plane. Use a microphone through a cassette recorder to make announcements, like a public tannoy, so that everyone is aware of delays, messages to individuals, when it is time to board. Use these messages to help control the action.

On the plane

The flight should follow the usual procedures:

- Getting on board
- Safety instructions
- Take off
- Food and drinks
- Duty free purchases

What actually happens depends of course on when the terrorists decide to act. You may like to prepare announcements on the mike to act as cues for the steward(esses), so that they know when to introduce particular procedures. For example:

"Ladies and gentlemen we shall shortly be taking off. Please fasten your seatbelts, and listen to the safety instructions being given to you by your cabin crew who will now demonstrate how to get into your lifejackets. These may be found underneath your seat, but please do not remove them unless told to do so by a member of the cabin crew.."

How to end the piece

This very much depends upon what happens, and particularly on how the passengers react when the terrorists make their move. If it works well, it may be possible to develop the piece into a hostage situation with full media attention. Whatever the case, there are certain useful questions to put to the group to evaluate their work once it has finished:

- How successful were you at remaining in role throughout the whole of the work?
- What did you think of the role you were given? Would you have chosen it yourself?
- Which parts of the work were successful?
- Which parts of the work didn't go so well? Why?
- When the terrorists took over, what did you actually do? What did other members of the group do?
- If this incident had happened in real life, do you think you would have reacted as you did in the drama? If not, why not?
- What difference did it make that you did not know what was going to happen?
- If you re-acted the piece, how would it be different from this first time?
- What does this work suggest about sustaining an illusion in drama, that is pretending that what is happening is in fact happening "for real"?
- How would you turn this piece of improvisation into a performance piece?

Airplane: Students' notes

Situation

This work is set in the waiting area of an airport, and then on the plane itself. Each of you will be given a role card which explains what you have to do. You will not know exactly what is going to happen until it happens; just keep in your role, and react as if these things were happening in real life.

MOST IMPORTANT! Do not show what is on your role card to anyone else. The roles must remain a secret, with the exception of the **Tour guide**, the **Steward(ess)**, the **Pilot**, and **Co-pilot**. These characters may identify themselves to the passengers, but must keep the remainder of the information about their role to themselves.

Space

The acting area is in two halves. On one side is the lounge, with seats for passengers. On the other side, is the interior of the aeroplane. Between the two areas, are two check in desks, and a boarding gate. Check in at the desks, and board when the flight is called

Action

Wait and see! Follow the instructions on your role card. Just keep in role, talking to the other passengers or the staff.



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Action

Wait and see! Follow the instructions on your role card. Just keep in role, talking to the other passengers or the staff.

Passenger

You are 8 months pregnant

Once in flight, you start to have pains.

Choose a husband. He is worse than useless, and absolutely no good in a crisis.

Passenger

You are very clumsy and prone to accidents. You are forever dropping, breaking, or knocking things over. You fall off chairs and down stairs. You spill drinks over people, and only make matters worse when you try to help.

Passenger

You are very hard of hearing.

You find it very hard to understand what people are saying.

But you get very irritated when people try to help.

Passenger

You suffer from travel sickness, especially on planes.

You have taken some pills, but they make you drowsy.

When they wear off, you are likely to

Passenger

You are terrified of flying.
You have never been on a plane before.

You hate being in confined places, and are likely to get hysterical when you panic.

Passenger

You think you are God's gift to women. You chat up every girl you meet, and never take no for an answer.

Arrange as many dates, and collect as many phone numbers as you can.

Passenger

You are very fussy and always complaining about everything.

Nothing ever pleases you, however hard people try.

Complain about everything and

Passenger

You are the life and soul of the party, always cracking jokes, singing, and having a good time.

You expect everyone else to join in. Make sure the trip is a load of fun.

Passenger

You are very snobbish. You like to think you have lots of money, and to tell people about the things you own.

You expect people to attend to your every whim, and get annoyed if they don't.

Passenger

You are a know-it-all. Whatever anyone says, you know better than they do.

Contradict everyone at every opportunity, and tell them how things should be done.

Passenger

You are a bit thick. However often things are explained to you, you can never understand them. Ask about everything. About where you're going, how the plane works, what time you'll get there, how you're getting to the hotel

Passenger

You are a keep fit fanatic. You find it very difficult to sit still, and like to be very active.

Try to find ways to exercise, in the airport, and even once you have boarded the plane.

Passenger

You are a pick pocket, a sneak thief. Try to steal other people's belongings, but make sure you don't get caught.

If you do, try to put the blame on to other people.

Passenger

You are a really miserable person. You enjoy being miserable, and telling people how unfortunate you are. You have endless aches and pains, and bad luck. You are especially fond of talking about accidents

Passenger

You are extremely jealous, even when there is no reason. If anyone so much as talks to your partner, you are liable to fly into a rage.

Choose a partner, but don't tell them about your fault.

Passenger

You are a foreigner who does not understand a word of English. Find out if this is the right flight. On the plane, you suddenly remember your baggage should have been sent on. Ask the steward(ess) to check your bag is on board.

Passenger

You are a terrorist. You have a partner, but you don't know who it is. Make contact by whistling softly. In secret, plan to hijack the plane. Wait until the flight is well under way, then take over. You have weapons and explosives.

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Passenger

You are an undercover agent for MI5. You have received a tip off that there are criminals of some sort on this flight. Watch out for them.

Invent an identity for yourself to tell to others.

Passenger

You are extremely boring. You have been on a large number of package holidays, and like to talk about them endlessly.

Show people the photographs of places you've visited.

Passenger

You are very talkative and nosy. You ask people endless questions about their personal lives, and tell them about yourself the whole time.

You especially enjoy talking about hospitals and operations

Passenger

You are very absent minded, continually losing or forgetting things. You arrive at the airport late because you got lost on the way. You know you have your ticket somewhere, but can't quite just remember.

Passenger

You are a real yob, off on a Club 18 - 30 holiday, and determined to have a good time. This involves drinking too much lager, and being rowdy the whole time. If the other passengers don't like it, stuff 'em, right?

Passenger

You have just had a very sad love affair. You are going on holiday to try to get over it.

Whenever anyone talks to you, you burst into tears, and tell them endlessly about unhappy love-life.

Tour Guide

The passengers are your responsibility. Make sure they all have a good time and are well cared for.

Never lose your temper. The customers are always right. Especially when they're wrong.

Tour Guide

The passengers are your responsibility. Make sure they all have a good time and are well cared for.

Never lose your temper. The customers are always right. Especially when they're wrong.

Steward(ess)

Check the passengers on to the flight. Take their tickets, issue boarding passes, and check in luggage.

You have had a tip off that there may be a suspicious character on the flight. Keep your eyes open.

On the flight, go through the safety drills, serve food and drinks, and sell duty free goods. Keep them happy!

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Pilot

You have been to a party the night before and are still slightly hung-over. You could do with a good sleep.

Remember to go through all the safety checks, and give the passengers information about the flight's progress.

You have had a tip off that there may be a suspicious character on the flight. Keep your eyes open, if you can!

Co-Pilot

This is your first flight as a newly appointed co-pilot.

You are a stickler for rules and regulations, and do everything "by the book". Make sure that everything is done correctly.

You have had a tip off that there may be a suspicious character on the flight. Keep your eyes open.

Generations

What this work is about

The aim of this work is to produce a piece of drama which follows the lives of several generations of a family. The lives of these imaginary, or real, people become an unfolding drama spanning several years. Their lives will be affected by things which may be grouped under two headings:

- Personal experiences
- Historical events

Personal experiences will be marked by those significant events which happen in everyone's life, such as births, marriages, deaths, starting or leaving school, a first job, a first love, illness or accidents.

Historical events will include such things as the two World Wars, the Great Depression in the 1930s, the rock 'n roll era of the 50s, or even England winning the World Cup in 1966, things which can affect the lives of ordinary people, or stay in their memories. For example, having a baby nowadays in a modern hospital can still be a stressful enough experience. But compare this to having a baby in the middle of the Blitz. When personal experiences and historical events overlap there is plenty of scope for drama!

An example

Here is a collection of memories about going to dances during the second world war: They are different people's memories, but it is easy to see how they connect together to give a clear picture what it was like getting ready to go out to a dance in wartime, with all the restrictions of rationing, and with lots of American soldiers around...

After months of pleading, my Dad said I could go to the Saturday night dance at the Town Hall, but he would come round and bring me home. It was really embarrassing being met by your father

Rationing was still on - everything was rationed, food, coal, petrol, even furniture. Clothes were rationed too. One of our friends told us a barrage balloon blew up and landed in her garden. They cut up the material and made dresses with it. The ARP came looking for it, but they pretended they knew nothing about it

The G.I.s might have been loved by the girls but they were hated (with a passion) by the boys who said "The Yanks are overpaid, over-sexed, and worse still, over here!"..

The Yanks got the pick of the girls of course, they seemed to be able to get hold of nylons and always had cigarettes and whisky, all the things we hadn't seen for years and years. But I must say they were ALWAYS generous and amazingly polite, lovely people in my opinion...

The Saturday night dance was getting more exciting - we were introduced to the "Jitterbug". It was for me the best thing to come. Going out every Saturday night dancing was great, but it brought us problems - we had nothing to wear. I know you girls say the same things now, but we really had nothing to wear!

Make-up was also a problem, if it got out that Woolworth's had some in we would spend our lunch hour standing in a queue for Pond's Vanishing Cream and loose face powder. Mascara was a block and we used to spit on it and scrub away at it with a tiny little brush..

Lipsticks were red. No other colour, just red. When that ran out we'd use cochineal, the stuff we used to make pink icing, and as a last resort, Beetroot juice! Black shoe polish took the place of mascara when we couldn't buy that. Goodness knows what we looked like, but we felt good!

As stockings were unobtainable, we painted our legs with a mixture we made up ourselves. It was some brown powder that when mixed with water turned purple but dried brown on our legs, then we stood on a chair and got a friend to draw a seam on it with eyebrow pencil...

There was one young G.I. - not as tall as most of them, dark skin and very black hair and always on his own and a terrific dancer. The white boys didn't like us white girls dancing with them, but we did, we had no colour prejudice in those days. They ran a competition and Larry and I entered it, only because my friends entered us without asking me. There I was in my short black skirt and knickers made from black-out material, with a lad who never spoke to anyone. One by one all the other couples were sent off and Larry and I won...

Moulding the material

The memories provide some wonderful ideas to develop into a piece of drama about a couple of girls going out to a dance on a Saturday night when there's a war on. Here's how the memories can be woven into a storyline:

Beginning: Getting ready for the dance

- Getting something to wear
- Getting some make up
- Persuading your dad to let you go

Middle: At the dance

- The Yanks and the local boys
- Meeting Larry
- Learning to Jitterbug
- The competition

End: After the dance is over

- Being walked home by your dad

The opening scene might include:

- The girls making clothes from blackout material, or the crashed barrage balloon, and persuading the Air Raid Warden they haven't seen it.
- The girls queuing for makeup at Woolworths, and arriving late back to work, or using beetroot and polish for makeup, and painting stockings on their legs.
- One of the girls trying to persuade her dad to let her go, and having to agree to be met after the dance.

How could the rest of the material be moulded into the storyline? In a group, prepare some ideas, using the rest of the memories in the example. You may then like to improvise some scenes around this storyline, before collecting your own material.

Where to start: Research

To begin your own work, you have to do some research to discover two main things:

- Background information about the times and events
- Personal stories which can be used to develop into drama

Background information is important so that your drama appears true to the time when it is set. For example:

- How big was a barrage balloon? Where could you hide it?
- What kind of material was it made from?
- How much did makeup cost, in old shillings and pence?
- What music was popular at the time? How do you jitterbug?

There are two main sources of the information you need. The first is all the reference materials, books, newspapers, magazines, computer and Internet sources you normally use to find information. The second is the memories of your parents, grandparents, or people who live in your street. In particular, these will give you ideas for the personal stories to form the basis of your work.

Getting started: Interviewing people

The best way to get started is to interview people to collect ideas. When interviewing people, even people you know well, follow these courtesies and guidelines:

- Arrange the interview in advance, and tell the person what you are doing. This gives them time to prepare their thoughts
- Have a series of questions prepared.
- Have some way of recording the interview, at least a pen and notepad. Some people may agree to be recorded on tape. Ask in advance.
- Remember to thank your interviewee. If possible, issue an invitation to see the work when completed. People enjoy seeing their own “stories” given a wider audience.

Sifting through your research

This is the crunch moment. It is rather like panning for gold, trying to decide which nuggets are going to provide the best ideas for your drama. Share what you have found out with the others in your group. See if you can find separate memories and ideas from different sources, but about the same kind of events. Work your ideas into a storyline spanning a number of generations in the same family. When your storyline is ready, do the necessary background research to find out about the times when the scenes are set. Work this research into your dialogue, action, costumes, and set.

Turning your ideas into drama

Here is what you need to do to dramatise your storyline:

- 1 Decide when and where each of the scenes in your storyline takes place. Organise an appropriate set for each scene.
- 2 Cast each part of the story, remembering that some characters will appear at different times in their lives. You might introduce one of the “war time” girls as a teenager jitterbugging with her American soldier, but end with her as a grandmother in the 1990s. Depending upon the size of your group, some doubling up of characters and roles is almost certain to be needed.
- 3 Organise each scene so that you know:
 - 4 Who is on the set when the scene begins
 - 5 What they are doing
 - 6 What is the first line which is said
 - 7 When the other characters enter the scene
 - 8 What happens
 - 9 How the scene ends
- 10 Run through the scenes several times, and discuss how they went afterwards. Pick out the parts which went well, and keep these. Have another go at the parts which didn't quite work, trying out different ways of developing the scene. Change dialogue, action, entrances, consequences.
- 11 When you are happy with individual scenes, think of ways to connect each part of the work to the next. There will be time gaps between the “generations”, so you will need a way to make these clear. One useful device might be to have one of the characters acting as narrator, and telling the story as a series of flashbacks. Alternatively, try linking the scenes by means of radio or television news broadcasts. This immediately identifies the historical context of your scenes.

Section Four: Scripts

Organisation of materials

The opening selection of materials in this section are intended to introduce students to script work by making use of short extracts to be built into improvised scenes. The remainder of the pieces follow the pattern of the number of characters involved in the scene, beginning with monologues, and developing to group work. With the exception of "The Silken Tassel", all the pieces deliberately end on a "cliff-hanger" so that the scripted work can either be presented as it stands, or developed through improvisation.

Back to back and Smuggled lines

Back to Back introduces script work by asking students to prepare a short piece of script using their own words. The starting ideas for this exercise can be supplemented by any of the opening lines in the Improvisation section of this book. **Smuggled lines** uses a mixture of script and improvisation to provide a bridge between the two modes.

School snippets

This piece develops the connection between script and improvisation by providing short extracts of script which suggest a situation to be developed through improvisation. No names have been used for the characters who are identified by role letters. This allows for flexibility of interpretation; some of the situations can be developed very differently if roles are cast as students or as teachers. The school context has been chosen as it is very familiar to students, and the pieces can be developed into whole group work, to produce a kind of "Grange Hill" episode if you like.

Working the Crowd, In a Bit of a Pickle, On the Street, and Moll

These provide a variety of monologues, probably more suited to experienced players. A range of audiences are suggested by each piece, and both **In a Bit of a Pickle** and **On the Street** can be performed by either male or female players.

The way you say it

The intention here is to show that script can be interpreted very differently depending upon the expression with which it is said, and the gender of the characters involved.

The Silken Tassel

Puppets can provide a good way in to lengthier script work, since it is not absolutely necessary to learn the words by heart. This is an adaptation of a traditional story, and is intended to show the suitability of this work to explore multi-cultural literature through drama.

The remaining scripts..

...require little further comment, other than to point out that **In the Mood** can either be used as a piece in its own right, or in conjunction with the **Generations** material in the Improvisation section, to illustrate how a piece of drama can be developed from researching different times and situations.

Back to back

What this work is about

This work aims to show you how to collaborate, to work together, to make up a script. When you improvise, you have to do this, or the scene just doesn't work. Do the same when writing a script as a pair, so that both partners contribute to the way the scene turns out.

Sit on chairs, back to back, so that you can't actually see your partner. You need a sheet of paper on a clipboard or a book, so that you can write on it easily. The first partner writes the opening line of the scene. (There are some suggestions below if you wish to use them). Once the first line has been written, the paper is passed to your partner, who then adds a second line, or more if you wish. The replies should be *in role*, that is, you are replying as you think a character would in that situation. Pass the paper backwards and forwards for the time allowed, so that you will then have a script. Do not talk to your partner while writing your lines. This works best if it is done in silence, so that you can concentrate on being in role, and not on being "yourself".

Some example opening lines

- Hi there! You've been a long time. Where did you get to?
- Do we have to watch this? Can't we turn it over? You always choose what to see!
- Please fasten your seatbelt and put out your cigarette. The aircraft is about to take off.
- Excuse me, but I saw that parking space first, and then you went and took it!
- Do I have to baby-sit tonight? I wanted to go out!
- Please spare some cash. I haven't eaten all day.
- I can't believe the way you've been treating that animal! You should be prosecuted!

Turning the script into a play

Now act out your script. You will need to do these things:

- 1 Write out a second copy so that you both have one.
- 2 Read through the whole script together. See if you need to add, change or leave out anything.
- 3 Decide what actions you need to do during the scene. Write these in as *stage directions*.
- 4 Organise your space, so that entrances, furniture or props are in the right place.
- 5 Walk through the scene, reading from your script in the first case, making sure you know where you have to move, and what you have to do. This is called *blocking* the scene.
- 6 Once you are familiar with your lines, play the scene without the script. Rehearse it several times until it becomes smooth and "natural".

Smuggled lines

What this work is about

This work is a mixture of improvisation and script. Work in pairs. Each pair is given a card containing a short piece of script, one line, or a couple of sentences at most. The line is rather odd. What you have to do, is "smuggle" the line into an improvised scene, so that your audience cannot spot it.

Discuss the line you have been given. Work out a situation when this might possibly be said. Work out when to slip the line into the scene, and how you can disguise its entry.

✂ -----

Your motorcar has just run over my foot!

✂ -----

I'd really like a fried egg with strawberry jam please.

✂ -----

Excuse me, but did you know there's a cow in your garden?

✂ -----

He was a man with one leg, and a patch over his eye.

✂ -----

I'll just get her. She's upstairs scuba diving in the bath.

✂ -----

Tell everyone not to panic, but the tarantula's escaped.

✂ -----

Sorry I can't get up, but I'm superglued to the chair.

✂ -----

Do you often wander the streets at night in your underwear?

✂ -----

Of course it wasn't me! It was my identical twin.

✂ -----

Your meal will be here shortly when the lobster's been recaptured.

✂ -----

My name is Tarzan and I'm the King of the Jungle.

✂ -----

You mean you've never ridden an ostrich?

✂ -----

If you were an eskimo you'd kiss with your nose.

✂ -----

Oh her. She works as a tattooed lady in a fairground.

✂ -----

I'm not really crying, I've just been peeling onions.

✂ -----

I'm a famous musician. I play the african nose flute.

✂ -----

School Snippets

Choose one of these small pieces of script which are all set in a school to begin an improvised scene. The script could be used at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the scene. You will need to work out:

- What the situation is about.
- Where it is taking place.
- Who the characters are, and how they get on with each other.
- What might happen next, or what might have happened before.

Decide who is going to play which part. Read through the script several times. Give names to the characters. Organise your acting space. Improvise around the given piece of script.

Snippet One

ROLE A You won't believe what I've just seen in the dining hall!

ROLE B What's that then?

ROLE A I couldn't believe it myself!

ROLE B What? What happened?

ROLE A One of the little kids in the first year.

ROLE B Well? What about him? Are you going to tell me, or do I have to guess?

ROLE A Eating a packet of crisps...

ROLE B Earth shattering! What are you on about!

ROLE A Not eating the crisps of course, but he got one of those lucky blue tokens. Inside the packet.

ROLE B So what's the big deal?

ROLE A It was only worth a thousand pounds, that's all!

ROLE B You're kidding! You must have been had on.

ROLE A No, I saw it myself. One thousand pounds. Lots of people saw it.

ROLE B Lots of people you say? And what did he do with the token?

ROLE A Put it in his bag I suppose.

ROLE B In his bag...

Snippet Two

ROLE A What's been happening here?

ROLE B Someone took my ball out of my bag and was chucking it about. The ceiling tile got smashed.

ROLE A And I know who smashed it!

ROLE B It wasn't me!

ROLE A I bet. It's just the sort of thing you would do. And then wriggle out of.

ROLE C It wasn't. I was here. It wasn't [ROLE B name]!

ROLE A But it was your ball.

ROLE B And someone took it without asking. I just came in and found it.

ROLE A And you weren't joining in, I suppose? I think you'd better come with me.

ROLE B Get lost! I haven't done anything. And I'll get suspended if I get in any more trouble!

ROLE A You should have thought of that sooner. Come on, move yourself.

ROLE C No way! You'd better move yourself if you know what's good for you!

ROLE A Are you threatening me?

Snippet Three

ROLE A Can I borrow a pen?
ROLE B I haven't got one to lend you.
ROLE A Go on. You've always got loads. Proper student you are. Not like me.
ROLE B I haven't got one I said. Why don't you bring your own?
ROLE A What's eating you today?
ROLE B Nothing. I just know I haven't got one, and you keep going on.
ROLE A I bet you have. You're just being odd for some reason. Let's have a look in your bag shall we? (*ROLE A takes ROLE B's bag*).
ROLE B Stop that! That's mine! Who said you could look in my bag? Give it back!
ROLE C (*Enters*) What's going on here? Why are you shouting like that [*ROLE B*]?
ROLE B [*ROLE A*] has got my bag and is looking through it without asking! That's my things being thrown about!
ROLE C OK, but I don't think you have to make quite such a fuss.
ROLE A (*Looking through, and taking things out of the bag*). All your clothes are in here. No books or any school stuff. Just your clothes. What are you playing at? What's going on?
ROLE B Nothing! Why can't you just mind your own business for once?

Snippet Four

ROLE A I'm not going I tell you.
ROLE B But you've got to! What am I going to say if you don't turn up? She's bound to ask.
ROLE A Who cares. Make something up. Tell her I'm ill or something.
ROLE B But she'll know I'm lying. She always knows when someone's lying. Especially me. I'm hopeless at it. She'll ask questions.
ROLE A Look, I'm not missing my bus home because of her. Think I'm hanging around for an hour, or walking. Dream on. Soon as that bell goes I'm outta here. And stuff her.
ROLE B But what about me?
ROLE A What about you? Don't go either.
ROLE B I'll have to. I haven't got the nerve you've got. I just can't do it.
ROLE A Suit yourself. But just make sure you don't put me in it. 'Cos if you do, there'll be trouble. You understand me?

Snippet Five

ROLE A I'm not going in that room again. Not after what I saw.
ROLE B You're just imagining things. There's nothing there.
ROLE A No way, I saw it, and I felt it. Icy cold. An icy cold shadow.
ROLE C You mean like a person?
ROLE A I couldn't make out a person. Just a kind of shadow. But very cold.
ROLE B I think you're winding us up. Another one of your stupid jokes.
ROLE A Not this time. I'm deadly serious. I'm not going in that room again.
ROLE C But you've got a lesson in there. You have to go in.
ROLE A Not me. And I'll say why I'm not going in.
ROLE C They'll make you. They won't believe a word of it.
ROLE B Let's go and have a look. I bet there's nothing there.
ROLE A You go if you want, but count me out. I'm not going in there after what I've seen.
ROLE B Well I think this is a wind up. Whoever heard of a haunted school?

Snippet Six

ROLE A What have we got here then? A love letter? How sweet!

ROLE B Give it back!

ROLE A When we've all had a chance to see what it says. "[ROLE B] 4 [ROLE C]. Love you always". And there's a drawing of a heart!

ROLE C What?!

ROLE A You didn't know you had an admirer then? A secret lover?

ROLE C Of course not!

ROLE A Well you do now! And I'm bringing the happy pair together. Just like "Blind Date" isn't it. And just look at your prize!

ROLE B Will you stop this? It wasn't meant to be seen. It's personal.

ROLE A So what do you think of your new lover then? Are you going to return this hidden passion? Is it a date then?

ROLE C Will you stop embarrassing me?

ROLE A Embarrassing you? I'm doing you a favour. Bringing you two love-birds together. What's the problem?

ROLE C You've got the problem. You must get some kind of perverted kick out of embarrassing people like this. You're totally sad!

ROLE A I don't think you'd better talk to me like that...

Snippet Seven

ROLE A I hate you!

ROLE B What? Why? What did I do?

ROLE A Don't play the innocent with me! You know exactly what you've done. So just don't pretend OK? It only makes it worse than it is.

ROLE B You're still not making any sense. What am I supposed to have done?

ROLE A Those things I told you. Really personal things. They were a secret. And I was stupid enough to trust you to keep it.

ROLE B I know they were a secret. And I have kept it.

ROLE A The how come, when I go into my classroom, someone has written it up on the board for everyone to see? And laugh at. I just died.

ROLE B But I didn't tell anyone, and I certainly didn't write it up on the board.

ROLE A Not much!

ROLE B I didn't! Did you tell anyone else?

ROLE A Only [ROLE C]. Who would never tell anyone. Ever.

ROLE B But I would? I see. Seems to me you don't know who your real friends are, or what trust is!

Snippet Eight

ROLE A Right then, move.

ROLE B Get lost. I was sat here first. Find somewhere else.

ROLE A That's my seat. I always sit there. So you move. And hurry up about it.

ROLE B No way. Hasn't got your name on it has it? So it can't be your seat.

ROLE A It is my seat, and there isn't anywhere else.

ROLE C There's a seat next to it. Why don't you just sit there?

ROLE A Why don't you sit there if you're so keen?

ROLE D Because we always sit here. I don't see what the fuss is all about.

ROLE B Nor me.

ROLE A Well let's put it this way. I'm not sitting next to you because you smell.

ROLE B You what?

ROLE C You can't go round saying things like that!

ROLE A Well I just did, and it's true. (*To ROLE B*) You stink. I don't suppose you've had a wash all week, and your clothes smell too. So if you think I'm sitting next to you, or letting you sit next to me, you've got another think coming. I always sit here, so move now before I move you.

ROLE D (*To ROLE B*) Don't stand for that! Nobody should get away with saying things like that!

ROLE A Well you come and sit here then. Come on, change places. You put up with the smell. And catch nits too I wouldn't be surprised.

ROLE B I don't smell, I don't! (*ROLE B bursts into tears*).

ROLE C Now look what you've done!

Snippet Nine

ROLE A It's the only way I tell you.

ROLE B But we can't do that. It's too much. Not just to get out of a lesson. We'll never get away with it.

ROLE A It isn't just to get out of a lesson remember. The test is today. If we don't get a decent result we'll have to repeat the whole module, and I'm not going to do that. This way they'll have to put the test off until next week, and give us a chance to get it sorted.

ROLE B We're not going to learn it all by next week anyway so why bother?

ROLE A We might. And at least this way, we stand a chance. I'll meet you at the back of the boiler room between lessons. We can set it off there.

ROLE B Are you sure about this? I mean, the whole school will have to go out. They always do if the alarm goes off. There's bound to be a stink about it.

ROLE A So just keep your trap shut, and we'll be OK. No lesson, no test, no problem.

ROLE B I hope you know what we're doing..

Snippet Ten

ROLE A That's it. That's the last time I'm ever going to do that. So embarrassing!

ROLE B Me too. It's humiliating.

ROLE C Perverted I'd say. Watching us.

ROLE A The other teachers don't make you. Only Wilkie. Never again.

ROLE D But what are you going to do? How can you get out of it?

ROLE B I'll bring a note saying I don't have to.

ROLE D Your dad won't write that. He'll say "I had to have a shower after PE when I was at school. Never did me any harm." You know he will.

ROLE B I'll get my mum then. Forge it if needed.

ROLE A That's an idea. We'll all forge notes.

ROLE D And Wilkie won't spot that of course.

ROLE C Type them on the computers. Then we only have to forge the signatures.

ROLE B Good idea. Use the spell checker too

ROLE A That'll give it away. Your mum can't spell!

ROLE D Wilkie will see it coming a mile away if you all turn up with printed notes. I think we should do it properly. Complain to someone. A proper protest.

ROLE A Now that really is stupid. Can you imagine what Wilkie would do to you if you complained? You'd be dead!

ROLE D Not if we do it properly. Get everyone to sign a petition.

ROLE A You do your petition if you want. But me, I'm forging a note.

Working the crowd

TERRY the stallholder is selling china to a crowd at the market. Use your audience as the crowd. Have some pieces of china to use as a prop to demonstrate how good it is.

Right then ladies, have I got a little something for you today! How little? Saucy! I can see I shall have to watch myself with you girls today. Way ahead of me I can see that. And a welcome to the gentlemen in the audience. Here girls, don't he look miserable. You sir, near the back. You'd rather be down the pub wouldn't you sir. Well let me tell you with the money your little lady's going to save you here today you can spend all next week in the pub. So cheer up sir, it might never happen. And it doesn't look like it ever has, does it girls! Always something for everyone on my stall.

Right then ladies what's up first? You what? Saucy! What minds you've got. Listen up now. Any china left in your house madam, or have you chucked it at your old man there beside you? Well you can chuck this china 'ere as much as you like because it's unbreakable. Chuck it, drop it, you won't break it. 'Ere watch this, when I drop it it bounces. Do yours bounce when you drop 'em madam? Saucy! I bet they do, I bet they do! Right on his toe I heard! Couldn't walk for a week but it wasn't his foot that was hurting. Saucy!

Well this stuff's no good for a Greek wedding 'cos it's guaranteed unbreakable. And available in any colour as long as it's white. You'd better like the colour 'cos you're going to have to live with it a long time. Bit like your old man there. I bet you've been living with him a long time. Pity you can't put a bit of colour back there eh madam? Or trade him in for a new set.

What's it cost? I hear you ask. And how much is the china too. Ahead of me again girls. Well let me tell you, there's gonna be a crime committed here this afternoon. Watch out for the Old Bill on the way home because you're robbing me at these prices. You'll get arrested. And frisked if you're lucky madam. This is a thirty piece china dinner service guaranteed to stay in thirty pieces. On that I give my word, and you all know what that's worth. My word is my bondage. So how much d'yer think? Go on madam, name your price. How much? That's very reasonable. I'll be round your back door later.

You've got an eye for a bargain haven't you madam? So how come you picked up that miserable old git for a husband. Only joking sir. No offence meant none taken I hope? Can't we kiss and make up? No? Well what about me and your missis? Look, just to prove I meant no harm sir, I'm gonna give you this first set at an absolute cut throat price. Watch out for the blood down there at the front 'cos I'm doing myself in here. I'm not asking fifty quid. Not even forty, thirty or twenty. This guaranteed unbreakable dinner service can be yours for the ridiculous price of fifteen sovs. Fifty pee each. I'm giving the stuff away. My kids won't eat for the next month but keep the customers happy's my motto. Right then ladies form an orderly queue and I'll do you one at a time. Saucy!

In a bit of a pickle

TONI / TONY is sitting, hunkered and cramped. Dim lighting. She (he) talks to herself (himself) reflectively.

So embarrassing. And so stupid. I can't believe I fell for it. I can hear them talking about it in the staff room already. Especially old Fowler. He's had it in for me since I started. Always prowling around outside my room, or finding excuses to pop in. Snooping more like. Trying to find things to use against me. He thinks I'm too soft you see. First term in my first school. Says I should keep firmer control of my classes. Stop them making so much noise. Stop being so friendly. "Keep your distance" he says. "Don't smile until Christmas". "Children are like carpets, they should be trodden on". Every cliché you ever heard from a has-been teacher. He'll really make a meal out of this.

That's the most galling thing. They've proved him right. They're nice kids really, and I think we get on. A few try to take advantage, but I was winning them over. It doesn't have to be like Fowler says. Mutual hostility, dislike. It shouldn't be like that. I just want to help them, teach them things. Trouble is, I think they know much more than I do sometimes. When they start talking about what they do out of school. Their families. I don't think I could cope with some of the stuff they have to put up with. What do I know about all that?

Getting stuffy. I could do with the loo. And something to eat. Soon be time for afternoon class. How am I going to teach them anything after this? What respect will they have for me? How to handle it. If I treat it as a joke they'll think they can get away with anything in future. But if I punish them it looks like I've no sense of humour. "Can't take a joke". "Just like all the rest". Talk about a no win situation. Why did they have to do this to me?

I bet it was Hooper put them up to it. He's the only one I don't like. Got it in for me for some reason. Shouldn't have got stroppy with him the other day. "There's no need for silly faces" I said. "So stop pulling them" he comes back with quick as a flash. Felt so foolish, lost for words. I knew he'd won that little round. Standing there in front of them all with egg on my face.

Can't see my watch. Have to do something soon if they don't come back. This is hopeless. Is it really worth it? Still time to do something else, find a new career. Everyone said I was mad. "Teaching!? You must be crazy! Spending all day wrestling with kids? No thanks!" Perhaps they were right. Maybe I'll just walk straight out the door and not look back. If I can ever get it open. Get on with the rest of my life. Never live this down. Shouldn't have left my keys on the desk. But I never thought. I mean who would've thought. Locked in the store cupboard by your class in your first term in school.

On the street

Chris is talking to the audience as if to a reporter.

CHRIS: So you're a reporter and you want to know about drugs?

(He/She whips up his/her sleeve to show needle marks)

This is all you need to know you bollix. You gonna get paid for writing about me, so what do I get? Nothing I suppose. There might be some cash if you can use my story? Well, go ahead, use me. Everyone else does.

A junkie, me? No way! I'm not one of them scruffy tossers. I ain't got a habit, I can jack it in any time. I mean, if you saw me going down the street would you think I was homeless? Look at this, Air Max, top of the range. Real leather this jacket. Levis, Reebok, Nike Airs. No tat for me. Where d'you think I get 'em. Gonna turn me in are yer? Dips, snatches, muggings, jumpers. Sometimes cars. Got caught breaking into a car once with a friend. Scuffers took us a ride out nowhere and chucked us out. Left us out miles from town in the pissing rain. Costs me fifty a day to score. Doesn't grow on trees does it. You have to get it where you can.

Course I know the dangers. You think I don't know? Just how stupid are you? That friend of mine died three months ago. OD'd and drowned in vomit. Sixteen years old. Drown in vomit or the Caribbean ocean. Don't make much difference does it, you're still dead. Well off out of it if you ask me. Thought about doing it myself sometimes. Tried to throw myself off the top of a car-park one time but I couldn't stand the height. You've gotta laugh ain't yer. So what's so good about being alive? If you were walking round in my life you wouldn't think so.

How'd I get like this? Well let me tell you about Christmas. I was nine years old, maybe ten. Boxing day it was. Santa Claus gave us a miss that year. Missed us most years come to think about it. Me mum was nine months gone and ready to drop the sprog, so what does my old man do? Buggers off on Boxing day to shack up with some other tart. I send him an anniversary card every year at Christmas, Glad you're not here, just to piss him off. Happy to see the back of him really, used to beat all us kids up. Then my mum couldn't cope so she puts us into care. I'm still angry at her for that.

How many foster homes have I been in? I've lost count. Some were OK, but most were only doing it for the money each week. Except the last place I was in. They were really good, you know. I even started going back to school, doing some exams. And then I get to sixteen and the money stops. Social workers said I had to move, look after myself. I didn't want to. I wanted to stay. But they said I couldn't. So I thrashed my room and left. Never seen them since.

So here I am out on the street. I never sleep rough if I can help it though. Too many psychopaths and pervs. Too many dirty old men. I try to get a bed at the hostel when there's room. Go ballistic if I can't get in. It usually works. They tried to buy me off with a feed of fish and chips one night. I just tipped it over the head of some posh tart and called her every bad name that came into my head.

Where's it going to end? Where'd you think. Same end for you as for me. Just a bit sooner for me maybe. Not much of a story is it. What's it worth? A tenner? Well bollix mate. Where'll you sleep tonight? Single, double, king-size bed?

Molly

MOLLY is the wife of a criminal. She confides in her audience.

I didn't really know who he was the first time I saw him. I was up on stage singing in this pub when he walked in and I didn't take much notice. I had an act in those days. Quite a good voice. And a figure to match. Lost both now but can't be helped.

"Big Spender" it was, you know that song? "The moment you walked in the door I could see you were a man of distinction, a real Big Spender". No? Probably before your time. Anyway I could feel him looking at me. He had these really deep eyes that made me go all goosebumps. Sent me a drink over when I'd finished and asked if I'd like to join him at his table. Just like in the pictures.

That was his song he said, "Big Spender". He thought I was singing it just for him. I wasn't of course. I just liked doing it to get the punters going a bit. "Spend a little time with me" and all that suggestive business. So anyway one thing lead to another and I got to spending lots of time with him. I didn't realise then that he'd be spending most of his time at Her Majesty's Pleasure. Don't suppose it would have made much difference if I had. When you love a bloke you love him don't you? Even when he's not there.

When did I find out he was a criminal? I suppose I always suspected. Even that first night in the pub I knew he was different, a somebody. The way people treated him, moved out of his way, got up to give him a seat. I suppose I liked all that. But I never really knew what he did, he didn't tell me, so I didn't ask. Of course, I knew when something was going down. There'd be meetings at our place, then he'd disappear for a few days, and soon after we'd be off on our holidays to Spain. Marabella. The whole family. The kids loved it. Hotel right next to the beach, lots of sun, being treated like royalty, plenty of money to spend. Good times.

Not that they lasted. We'd be back home and skint again. That's what people could never understand. He was going out dressed to the nines and there I was at home with barely two pennies to call my own. He was a Big Spender all right when he had it. But what when it was all spent?

It got really hard when he was banged up. The first time was for three years, receiving and handling. He says he was fitted up by the Bill. They knew he was doing stuff but couldn't pin nothing on him. So they got a mate of his to sell him some bent motors. And then in court this mate claimed he'd been told to steal them, to order like, for a punter. Took it in his stride though. Didn't even try to get back at the mate who'd set him up. Impressed everyone that did. Except me.

Well I was the one travelling up to Durham nick once a month with the kids wasn't I? I remember one time, the middle of winter it was. Sitting on the platform waiting for the train back to London, the kids whinging with the cold. And then being told the train was cancelled because of snow. I'd no money to put up anywhere, so we just had to sit there until the trains started running again. Doing jigsaws with the kids, one of these posh pictures, a painting of food, golden loaves of bread, fruit and these little birds. I'd have eaten them feathers and all by the time the train came. So I did my time while he did his

bird. "If you can't do the time, don't do the crime" he used to say, and I suppose I agreed with him or I wouldn't have stuck by him all these years.

He was in and out of prison and it was like our life went stop go stop go stop go. Good, good times with plenty of money and lots of laughs flashing past like watching it from a train. And then miserable years stuck going nowhere like that time on the station. Then came the big job, the one that made him famous.

I remember the usual signs something was on, the meetings, him disappearing for days on end. I was walking back from the hairdressers with my mate Rita and we saw this newspaper board. Millions taken in bank raid it said. Crime of the century and all that. Deposit boxes. Professional mastermind. "All right for someone" said Rita. "No such luck for us though" I said, and we had a laugh thinking what we'd do with all that money, a really big score. Even the bank didn't know how much was took.

He'd disappeared of course. He went missing for days, and then turned up one night saying he couldn't stop long and was I short of money? 'Course I was, skint as usual. So he hands me a fag packet. I just looked at it. "Well thanks for the smokes", I said, "but I could do with some cash". "Open it", he said, and it was stuffed with notes, twenties. There must've been a monkey in there. "More where that came from", he said, and then he was gone. I went straight round the supermarket soon as it opened, buying steaks and chops, a kind of celebration supper for me and the kids.

Then I got a visit from the Old Bill in the middle of the night banging on the door and crashing through waking the kids. "Where's your old man?" they said, "I dunno", I said, "I haven't seen him". "Have you heard from him?" they said. "Not at all", I said. "So what's this postcard from Spain doing on your mantelpiece?" they said. And I'd forgotten all about it, really I had. "I suppose he's gone off with some girlfriend", I said, making a joke about it. Which just goes to show you shouldn't joke about these things.

So they took the place apart, pulling out everything and throwing it around to make as much mess as possible. Then in the kids' toy cupboard they found a shooter. A sawn-off shot gun. In the kids' toy cupboard. They didn't use it much, 'cos they'd grown up by then, but even so something changed for me then. I went white with the shock of it. Even the plods noticed and went a bit nicer after that. I never forgave him for that. Not for keeping something like that in the kids' toy cupboard where they might've found it.

I was hoovering the maisonette when I heard the news. Rita was watching the TV. "Quick", she said, "Look at this. Your old man's on the telly!" And there he was, main item on the nine o'clock news. In Brazil. The Bill had tracked him down and were trying to get him sent back. I didn't listen too much to the details. Because there on his arm was this young girl, blonde, all lipstick and teeth, hanging all over him.

I passed out with the shock. I never thought he could do anything like that to me. I'd stuck by him all those years, and then as soon as he'd hit the jackpot that tart had latched on to him and he'd flushed all our times together down the pan. He used to send money to me, and I kept it, for the sake of the kids. Why shouldn't I? I thought. But I never answered his letters and hung up the phone when he tried to call after the money and the tart ran out. I never spoke to him again. Never found out whether he was dead or alive. And to be honest, I don't really care.

The way you say it: Instructions

This short script can be performed in two entirely different ways, simply by changing the way in which it is said.

Version 1

In this version, the two characters are men. They obviously dislike and do not get on together. The lines should be delivered using lots of sarcasm and irritation.

Version 2

In this version, the two characters are women. They like each other, and are kind and considerate. The lines should be delivered so that they mean what they say, with lots of care and concern.

- Which words are emphasised in both versions, in order to make these differences?

Development

Now try performing the script as if Character A were a man, and Character B a woman. What differences does this make?

Switch again, so that Character A is a woman, and Character B is a man?

- How does it seem natural to perform the lines when the characters are switched in this way?
- Can you explain why there is this difference?

On your own

Try writing your own script which can be interpreted in two completely different ways, depending upon how it is said. Here are some situations you might like to use:

- Two women, one of whom has bought a new dress which she is showing to a “friend”.
- Two men, one of whom is boasting about his ability to drive his new car.
- Two girls, one of whom is telling the other about her new boyfriend.
- A teacher comments upon a student’s work.
- A parent “praises” the way their son or daughter keeps their room tidy.
- A policeman (or woman) listens to the story told to explain why someone is wearing eight wrist watches.
- A football manager listens to the star player’s excuses for his poor performance.
- A builder explains to a customer why the roof leaks.

The way you say it

(Character A knocks on the door of Character B's house. It is early morning. Character B eventually opens the door, obviously just out of bed.)

- A** Look, I know you're terribly busy, but do you think you could come and move your car? It's blocking my drive.
- B** So it is! I'm really very sorry about that.
- A** And I do have to get my car out or I'll be late for work.
- B** That would be unfortunate. But why don't you use your other car? That is your other car parked just outside, isn't it?
- A** That's my wife's (husband's) car. And she (he) goes the opposite way to me.
- B** Two cars eh!
- A** Well when you're both working... No luck with a job yourself I suppose?
- B** I'm considering a couple of offers. Nice of you to be concerned though.
- A** What are neighbours for... So can you move your car?
- B** I'd like to, but the problem is, I don't have the key. I'm afraid my wife (husband) has it. And since she's (he's) away for the weekend visiting a friend, there's not a lot I can do.
- A** Visiting a friend eh? Well that is interesting, and I do wish I had time to hear more, but as I said, I am in a rush. Must be nice to have the time to spend all day chatting away. Don't you have a spare set of keys?
- B** 'Fraid not.
- A** You only have one set of keys?
- B** Well, I only have one car.
- A** Can't you just push it out of the way?
- B** Like to help, but the handbrakes's on, and the door's locked.
- A** Couldn't you break into it?
- B** That'd mean smashing the window, and I don't think I could do that. I couldn't afford to replace it. Sorry about that.
- A** But aren't there ways of opening car doors with coat-hooks or something. Especially older types of cars like yours?
- B** I wouldn't know anything about doing that kind of thing.
- A** What about the AA? Don't they have spare sets of keys for this kind of thing?
- B** Not a member I'm afraid. Can't afford it you see, with not having a job at the moment.
- A** Then the only thing to do is to phone the police.
- B** The police?
- A** Ask them to come and move it, as it's causing an obstruction.
- B** Brilliant! I'm sure they'll be round straight away. You go right ahead and do that.
- A** Thanks for being so helpful!
- B** No problem. Any time.

Missing lunch

(A kitchen, at tea time. Laura is unpacking her schoolbag. She takes her lunch out, and puts it furtively in the pedal bin. She has just finished when Peggy her mother enters, with lots of shopping in supermarket bags).

PEGGY There you are then. Got the tea on yet?

LAURA No, I'm just in myself.

PEGGY Help us put these away then.

LAURA *(Reluctant)* But I was just going round to Vicky's.

PEGGY It won't take you a minute. What's the rush?

LAURA I said I'd go straight round after school.

PEGGY But what about your tea?

LAURA I'll get some at Vicky's.

PEGGY Are you invited? You can't just go inviting yourself you know. What about her mum? Does she know you're coming?

LAURA Yes. She said. She knows.

PEGGY Well I wish you'd told me. I've just been out to get you your favourite for tea. I don't like good food going to waste.

LAURA It won't. I'll have it tomorrow. It'll keep. Don't make such a fuss.

PEGGY But you're always doing this. I can't think of the last time we've all sat down together for a meal. As a family.

LAURA Not my fault dad's never in. Look, I have to go. I promised her.

(Peggy is putting the empty supermarket bags in the bin).

PEGGY What's this? Why is your lunch in the bin?

LAURA I didn't get chance to eat it all.

PEGGY You've not touched it. Any of it. It's not even unwrapped.

LAURA I was busy. I had to get coursework finished at lunchtime.

PEGGY But you have to eat your lunch! Look at you. You're getting thin. I thought you were. You're losing weight.

LAURA No I'm not. I'm just growing taller.

PEGGY What have you eaten today? What did you have for breakfast?

LAURA Stuff. Food. Breakfast.

PEGGY This loaf's not been opened.

LAURA Cereal. I had cereal.

PEGGY There wasn't any. I've just brought some in.

LAURA Fruit. An apple or something. I can't remember!

PEGGY You've had nothing to eat all day, have you?

LAURA Yes! Look, why all these questions? I'm sick of it!

PEGGY Because I'm worried about you. I've thought something funny was going on for some time with you and your food, and now I'm sure of it.

LAURA There's nothing. I'm just busy with all this school work. And I've got to go.

PEGGY You're not going anywhere until I've had some answers. This is important.

LAURA I told Vicky I'd be there at five.

PEGGY Did you. Well, let's just see about that shall we? I'll go and phone her mother now, and see if she knows you're coming over.

LAURA You don't need to do that. Vicky may not have told her yet.

PEGGY You said she knew. And I bet even Vicky doesn't know. You're not eating, and I want to find out why.

Best of friends

(The clothes department of a large store. Two girls, Kelly and Trace are looking at the clothes. The assistant is serving another customer).

- KELLY This'll look good on you Trace. *(She holds up a sexy top).*
TRACE I couldn't wear that! There's hardly anything of it. You can see through it!
KELLY You'd get him all excited in that. Sure thing. He wouldn't be able to keep his hands off you.
TRACE Do you really think so?
KELLY Course. You'd be irresistible. *(She pretends to come on to Trace).*
TRACE Leave it out, there's people watching! I'm not sure it's really me.
KELLY So what is you? A thermal vest from the granny stall on the market?
TRACE I just want to make the right impression that's all. First time he's asked me out after all. I don't want him to get the wrong idea about me.
KELLY The right idea you mean. I heard about you and Moxy at that party.
TRACE What? I was only dancing with him.
KELLY Horizontal dancing I heard.
TRACE I wasn't! Who told you that?
KELLY Moxy of course.
TRACE And have you been spreading that around?
KELLY Course not. I'm only joking. I didn't believe him. Just checking it out. In case Miss Innocent has been letting her standards drop.
TRACE You've got a bad mouth on you sometimes Kell.
KELLY Only a joke. Don't get so touchy. All right?
TRACE Suppose.
KELLY You're taking a lot of trouble over this fellah. Catch me making all this fuss.
TRACE That's not what I heard.
KELLY What's that supposed to mean?
TRACE Just something Caroline said. When I said he'd asked me out.
KELLY And?
TRACE She just said. She thought you fancied him yourself. And then he asked me. That's all.
KELLY And you believed her?
TRACE No, course not.
KELLY Not much or you wouldn't have said it! Some friend!
TRACE I am. We're best friends Kell. I'm sorry. I was just getting back at what you said about Moxy .
KELLY I was only joking, but you meant it.
TRACE I've said I'm sorry. Can't we just get on with this shopping? I still haven't found anything to wear.
KELLY Yeah sure.
TRACE I can't see anything I like here. Let's try somewhere else.
KELLY Why not.

(When Trace is not looking, Kelly slips the sexy top into Trace's bag. As they reach the door the alarm sounds).

ASSISTANT Excuse me young lady. I don't think you've paid for this item. It still has it's tag on.

TRACE What? I don't understand. Tell her Kell, there must be some mistake.

(Kelly says nothing).

Fishing

(Alan and Brian are sitting by the riverbank, fishing).

ALAN: Where's Colin?
BRIAN: I don't know. I suppose he must be busy.
ALAN: But he did say he was coming?
BRIAN: As far as I know. Does it matter?
ALAN: No, not really. It's just he hasn't been for, must be a couple of weeks now.
BRIAN: Perhaps something came up. Leaves more for us to catch anyway. He always did get more than his share.
ALAN: Last time I saw him he definitely said he was coming. He seemed really keen. And then he doesn't turn up.
BRIAN: Look, forget Colin will you? We're here, the fish are there, and all this yapping is disturbing them. And me.
ALAN: Touchy today aren't you. OK. Forget I spoke. *(A pause)* But it is a bit inconsiderate isn't it. Don't you think? I mean I was going to take Dorothy to choose wallpaper. I promised. And then I had to ask her to make alternative arrangements.
BRIAN: That's not really such a big deal is it?
ALAN: No, but a promise is a promise. I don't like to go back on my word. Dorothy was really great about it. Said I had to go. Needed my relaxation at the weekend. Insisted in fact. There's not many wives would do that.
BRIAN: Certainly aren't.
ALAN: And then Colin doesn't turn up. I just think it's a bit strange that's all. Especially as fishing this weekend was his idea.
BRIAN: Was it? I don't remember.
ALAN: Yes. He said "Brian's on for it, how about you Alan? Make it a threesome again".
BRIAN: Maybe he did. I can't remember. *(A pause)*
ALAN: Do you want to know what I think?
BRIAN: Concentrate on the fishing mate. I think you had a bite there.
ALAN: No. You must be seeing things. I asked if you wanted to know what I think.
BRIAN: I daresay you're going to tell me.
ALAN: I think Colin's deep. Hidden depths.
BRIAN: You think so do you?
ALAN: Yes I do. Don't you?
BRIAN: No I don't. He's as shallow as they come. And definitely muddy water.
ALAN: Sounds like you don't like him much. Why do you come fishing with him if you don't like him?
BRIAN: I haven't come fishing with him remember. He hasn't turned up.
ALAN: You're not jealous of him are you?
BRIAN: Why would I be jealous of him?
ALAN: Well, he catches more than you for one thing. And you have to admit it's not quite the same with just the two of us is it? Colin's always telling jokes and having fun. He's entertaining, charismatic. One of those people everyone likes. Except my Dorothy strangely enough.
BRIAN: She doesn't like him, your Dorothy?
ALAN: Can't seem to stand him. She says he makes her flesh creep. It's one of the few things I have to chide her about.

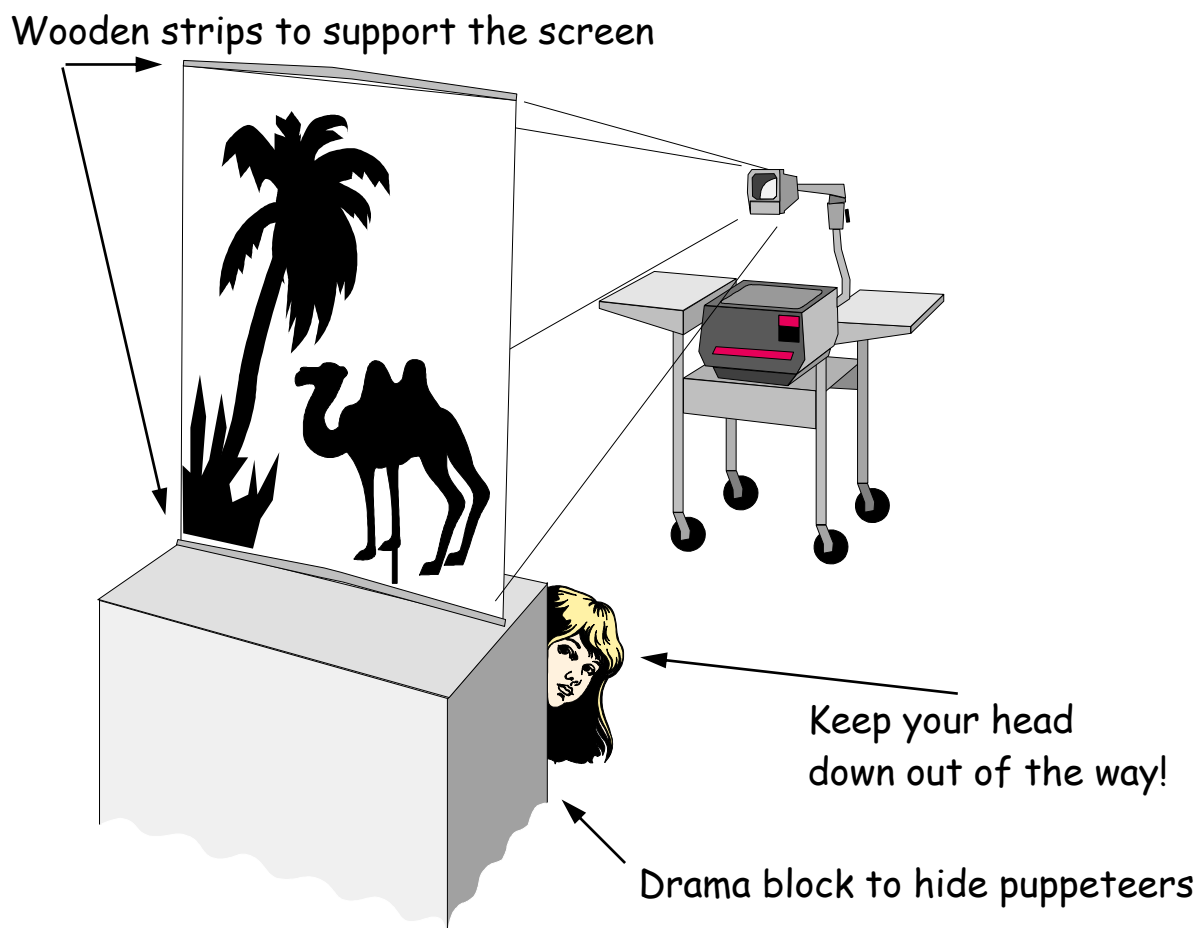
BRIAN: Is that a fact?
ALAN: Yes. Though generally speaking most women seem to find Colin attractive. Which brings me back to what I was saying.
BRIAN: How does it?
ALAN: About him being deep. You see I think Colin has got himself a woman. Fishing someone else's pond if you get my meaning.
BRIAN: Maybe we should try further along. Doesn't seem to be much doing here.
ALAN: And I think you think the same as me. And that's why you're jealous.
BRIAN: Come again?
ALAN: Jealous. Colin is off having it away somewhere, and you're jealous.
BRIAN: Don't be so daft.
ALAN: Well you've got to admit you've been a bit moody since we got here. Hardly said a word. Pretty boring company in fact. If you don't mind me saying so.
BRIAN: I'm boring company? Me?
ALAN: No offence meant.
BRIAN: Look let's just get on with the fishing. In silence if you like as I'm such boring company.
ALAN: I just meant... Well, it isn't quite the same is it with Colin not being here.
BRIAN: Bugger Colin!
ALAN: Here steady on! Can't go saying things like that behind a bloke's back!
BRIAN: You're really stupid, do you know that?
ALAN: What!?
BRIAN: You can't see it can you?
ALAN: See what? I can see you've got it in for Colin.
BRIAN: No, you're wrong there. Colin's got it in for you. Really got it in for you.
ALAN: Don't be daft.
BRIAN: Don't be daft yourself. I'm telling you he's got it in for you. While you're sat there he's having it away with your Dorothy.
ALAN: You've gone too far now!
BRIAN: Not as far as Colin though. Why do you think he was so keen for you to come fishing? Why do you think Dorothy was so keen? Because she's at home in bed with your own mate!
ALAN: You'd better watch what you're saying!
BRIAN: Work it out for yourself. You almost have.
ALAN: Not my Dorothy. She can't stand him.
BRIAN: She says. Just to throw a little sand in your eyes. Who's idea was the fishing? Colin's. What does Dorothy say when you let her down? "You need your relaxation". Who doesn't turn up? Colin. Joke-telling, good fun, all-women-like-him Colin.
ALAN: And you knew?
BRIAN: No I didn't know. But I do now. Maybe I know now. I know why Colin was always on the phone making sure I'd go fishing with you. He used me so's he can do the dirty on you.
ALAN: But you suspected. And you still came fishing.
BRIAN: What was I supposed to do? I tried to put you off, but I ran out of excuses. Besides, I might've been wrong. What was I supposed to say, "Sorry Alan, can't make fishing this weekend because if I do, I think Colin's going to have it away with your wife"? I might be wrong. But I don't think so.
ALAN: Colin and my Dorothy?
BRIAN: It looks that way. I'm sorry mate. (*A pause*) So, what are you going to do?
ALAN: I don't know.

A Shadow Puppet Play: Instruction sheet

Shadow puppets originate in Thailand. The basic idea is very simple. The puppets are silhouettes held in a light beam which projects onto a white screen. Originally the light would be provided by candles, but an overhead projector makes a convenient replacement.

The diagram below shows how it works. The screen can be made from a white sheet. Fasten light strips of wood at the top and bottom to keep the sheet taut. Drawing pins should do the job well. The screen then has to be suspended from the ceiling, or supported at the sides. Below the screen place a drama block, or an up-ended table. This is for the puppeteers to hide behind, so the taller it is, the better.

The puppets are made from stiff card supported by a control rod. There are more detailed instructions on the next page. Backgrounds which do not move, like the palm tree in the diagram, can be made from A4 size paper, and placed directly on the overhead projector. Cover the projector screen between scenes with a full sheet of A4 to make a blackout.



The space for the puppeteers needs to be as large as possible, especially if there are a number of puppets all on "screen" at the same time. Find some way of pinning the scripts to the rear of the drama block if you do not want to learn the lines by heart. You may need both hands free to operate the puppet, so you won't have a spare hand for the script. Don't forget someone will need to change scenes at the projector, a kind of "screen manager".

How to make the shadow puppets



The basic puppet is simply a silhouette drawn either from the front, or from the side, and cut out from stiff card. This example shows a Japanese girl. The white shapes are cut out from the black silhouette in order to give some facial features, or to suggest clothes. You will need to use a craft knife to cut these shapes out, so be very careful. Don't forget a cutting board too! Avoid making any part of the "black" background too thin, or your puppet may not be very strong.

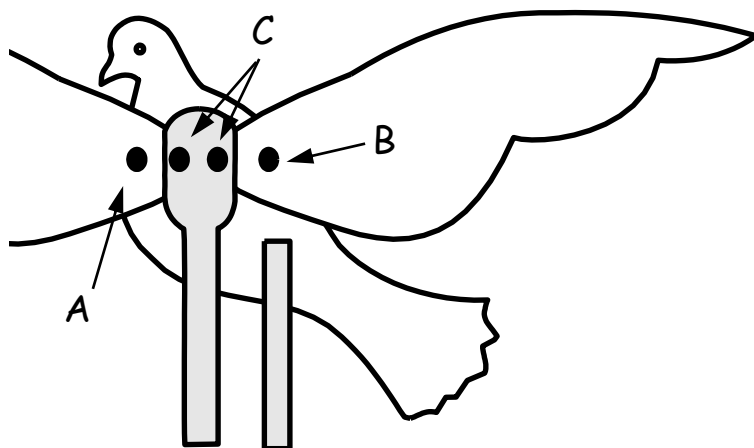
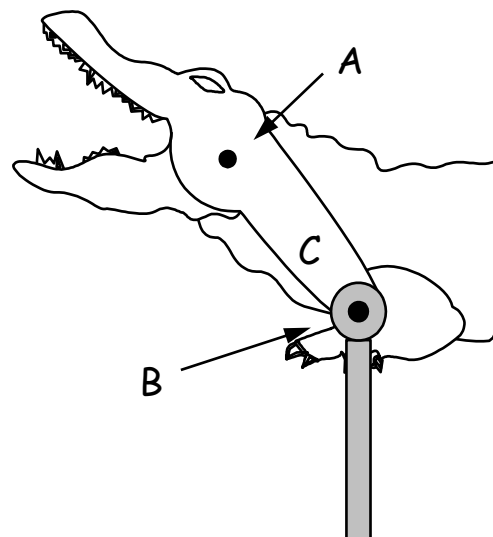
The control rod has to attach to the centre of the puppet, so remember to leave some card to stick it on to! You can make the control rod with thin wooden strips, like beading, or even by rolling paper into thin sticks. The puppet should be at least A4 size, and possibly bigger. You can change the shadow's size by moving it closer to or further from the screen.

Making moving parts for the puppet

You can make moving parts to the puppet by using a second control rod, like this alligator's jaw. The top jaw is hinged with a split fastener at point A. The control rod is also hinged at point B.

Make sure that you leave a long tab at point C so that the control rod can move far enough to work the jaw. Watch that this tab doesn't show above the top of the alligator's body when it moves.

You can hinge people's arms in exactly the same way. Do this at the shoulder, not at the elbow so that the rod doesn't show.



How to make birds fly

This again needs two rods, but this time, the moving rod is attached to both wings as shown in this diagram. Each wing is hinged separately at points A and B. The tips of the wings are then hinged to a piece of card glued to the end of the rod, points C. Make sure that the holes at points C are fairly loose so that the wings will move easily.

A Shadow Puppet Play: The Silken Tassel

Scene One

(The hut of Gurak the woodman. Kaha his wife is cooking a meal).

- KAHA *(Grumbling)* What I wouldn't give for a nice piece of meat to cook. Or a chicken. Even a big fat fish would be nice. Instead of these roots. I have to boil them for two days to make them soft enough to get your teeth into.
- GURAK You're always complaining Kaha. Things will get better when it gets colder. No one needs wood in the dry season. But you see, when the wind begins to howl and the cold begins to pinch their toes, they'll all flock to old Gurak to get their wood. Let's hope it's a really bad winter.
- KAHA A fine thing to hope for I don't think. And until then I have to eat roots like a wild pig? Some days Gurak I wonder why I married you. I could have married Dharva the fisherman. He brings home a big fat fish every single day. Every single day.
- GURAK Not when the lake freezes he won't. He'll be on my doorstep too. Rubbing his hands together, cold as those fish he catches. And a drip freezing on the end of his nose. Then we'll see who you might have married.
- KAHA Well don't complain if you turn into a tree before then after eating all these roots. Chachak! Your meal is ready. Chachak! Where is that girl?
- GURAK Combing her hair probably. Her Silken Tassel. We may be poor, but we have the prettiest girl in the village. All the young men are madly in love with her. They write her poems you know, she showed me. "Chachak with hair like a Silken Tassel. Your eyes are like wild cherries, your brows are like two rainbows....."
- KAHA And you eat roots like a wild pig.
- GURAK Leave the girl alone. She will be our fortune, let me tell you.

(Chachak enters)

- CHACHAK Hello mother. Good evening father.
- GURAK Always such a polite girl. She will make any man a wonderful wife.
- KAHA Phsah! Can she cook roots?

(There is a knock on the door. Gurak goes to answer it.)

- KAHA Now who can that be? People always come calling when you have food on the table. I think they must sniff the air and think who to visit. Though

why they would visit us when the smell of a big fat fish cooking is coming from Dharva's hut I don't know.

GURAK Wife! We are honoured. Look who has come to call. It is Teldekpei the Shaman. And all his servants!

KAHA What?! How am I supposed to feed all of them?

TELDEKPEI That will not be necessary. I have already dined. And I am not very partial to root stew. Gurak, I will get straight to the point. Your daughter Chachak is now old enough to marry?

GURAK Yes indeed Teldekpei. She was fourteen last month.

TELDEKPEI I have watched her grow, Gurak, from when she was a small child, into the fairest girl in the village. I have waited for this time, with my hair growing white and thin. In short, I wish to marry your daughter.

KAHA Well I never! What fortune!

TELDEKPEI Fortune indeed. I have gold, riches and jewels, a wonderful house and many servants. What more could a girl desire?

KAHA Well Chachak! Has the cat got your tongue? What do you say to the Shaman's wonderful offer?

CHACHAK I thank him for his offer, but I cannot be his wife.

KAHA What!!?? You ungrateful girl! I've a good mind to knock your brains out!

CHACHAK I cannot marry him because I do not love him. How can I marry a man I do not love?

KAHA Well I married your father didn't I? Much good it did me mind! Root stew!

TELDEKPEI Listen to me child! I am not a man to be crossed. Especially when my mind is set on something. I have much to offer. This talk of love is sentimental nonsense. How can a girl as poor as you give yourself such airs?

KAHA Exactly. He might be old and nearly bald. And he may have lost a few teeth. But think of his riches, his gold and jewels. All those servants!

TELDEKPEI What! The daughter spurns my offer of marriage and the stupid mother insults me! Gurak, my patience is nearly at an end. What do you say, if you are master in your own house?

GURAK I say that I thank you respectfully for your offer, but that Chachak is right. She cannot marry a man she does not love.

TELDEKPEI In that case, have my curse instead of my marriage blessing. But I tell you this. I will marry your daughter, as you will see!

Scene Two

(Teldekpei's mansion. He is concocting a spell. The servants bring him the ingredients as he calls for them. He mutters strange things throughout the scene, except when he shouts at his servants).

NEBRI He's in a bad mood today. The worst I've ever seen him.

ABI You're telling me! He beat me because I was slow fetching some of the things he wanted.

NEBRI Such things too! Snake's teeth and toad spit. Tiger dung and lizard scales.

ABI That's nothing. I had to get the sting from a Queen hornet. Right from the middle of the nest. You should have heard the angry roar they made. I'm stung all over!

TELDEKPEI Abi! Nebri! Lazy fools! Where are the things I sent you for?

NEBRI Here master.

ABI And here.

TELDEKPEI Where is the scorpion's claw?

ABI Oh master, I couldn't find one. I turned over every stone between here and the sunset. There isn't a scorpion to be found.

(Teldekpei beats him).

TELDEKPEI Lazy good for nothing! Find me a scorpion or I promise you you'll find one in your bed as you snore, you lazy, idling loafer!

(He goes back to his spell. The servants hurry on their messages).

ABI See what I mean? If I wasn't afraid what he'd do, I'd find me another master. Beaten, stung, scratched, bruised and battered. And I still haven't found a scorpion.

NEBRI Someone is going to suffer. You mark my words.

ABI I'm suffering already!

NEBRI You're suffering is nothing in comparison. I have never seen him like this. I have a very bad feeling. I feel death hovering in the air.

Scene Three

(Gurak's house. Gurak is lying on his bed. The villagers crowd the room).

KAHA One minute he was fine, finishing the big fat fish I cooked for him, and the next he groaned, clutched his stomach, lay on his bed, and went all stiff, as you see him now. Was ever a woman so unlucky!

VILLAGER1 A big fat fish you say. Then why are there nothing but roots on his plate?
KAHA Seasoning of course. He ate the fish.
VILLAGER2 Including the bones? And the head, eyes, scales, fins and tail?
KAHA Everything. He ate everything.
VILLAGER3 It's no wonder he's ill if he ate the fish whole. He must have a ferocious gut ache. Especially if you cooked it.
VILLAGER2 And wind. Perhaps if we stuck a fork in his belly it would help with the wind.
VILLAGER1 It would be a neighbourly act.
CHACHAK You'll do no such thing! He needs a proper doctor, not your quack cures.
KAHA How can we afford a doctor? Besides, the only one skilled enough in a case like this is Shaman Teldekpei. And he won't help. Not after you turned him down.
VILLAGER2 Turned him down? He offered to marry her, and she turned him down?
VILLAGER3 What are girls coming to these days! A fine man like old Teldekpei!
KAHA I know. But she's headstrong, and her father spoils her.
VILLAGER1 Well I know what I'd do if she were a daughter of mine. I'd send her packing on her hands and knees so I would. I'd make her crawl to Teldekpei to beg his forgiveness, and ask him to cure her father.
CHACHAK I will go to Teldekpei and beg on my father's behalf.
KAHA Heaven be praised, she's come to her senses at last! Go quickly child, while there's still time.

Scene Four

(Teldekpei's mansion. Chachak enters).

TELDEKPEI So Chachak, you have had a change of mind. Do you accept my offer?
CHACHAK My father is very sick. I have come to ask for your help.
TELDEKPEI Why should I help him? Or you? What are you to me? You had the chance to gain my help for your family, and you turned it down.
CHACHAK What else could I do? What I said then, I say now. I cannot marry a man I do not love.
TELDEKPEI But if this man were to help your family in their hour of need, would that not help you to look more favourably upon him? Would that not soften your heart towards him?
CHACHAK My heart is not hard towards you. But it does not leap when I hear your name, or miss a beat when you are near. As it will when I meet the man I will marry. If you help my father you will gain my gratitude and respect, but my love is reserved for another.

TELDEKPEI You have some other lover then. Some boy with dark hair and flashing eyes. I might have known!

CHACHAK There is no one. But some day his eyes will meet mine and I will know.

TELDEKPEI And your father? What if he dies? I am the only one who can save him.

CHACHAK And will you use that power to marry a girl who does not love you?

TELDEKPEI She might come to love me in time. Each time she sees her father, fit and well, and thinks of the cold grave in the ground that might have been his.

CHACHAK I think she would come to hate and resent a man who could use his hold over her so. If you will not help my father, I must go.

TELDEKPEI Wait. I will help him in spite of your stubborn heart and foolish pride. When the sun rises I will be there.

CHACHAK Thank you Teldekpei. I knew you were a good man at heart. I will go back to my mother with the joyful news.

(She leaves).

TELDEKPEI And I shall have you, Chachak with the Silken Tassel, by fair means or foul.

Scene Five

Gurak's hut. He is dying on his bed, surrounded by Kaha, Chachak and the villagers).

KAHA If he doesn't come soon it will be too late. Poor Gurak, as stiff as one of the trees he used to cut. You're sure he said he'd come?

CHACHAK He promised he would come when the sun rose. The light is just creeping out of the earth. He will be here soon.

VILLAGER1 He's a man of his word.

VILLAGER2 And so very wise.

VILLAGER3 If anyone can save Gurak, old Teldekpei can. He knows all sorts of medicines and spells.

KAHA But what did you offer in return? Did you give him your promise?

CHACHAK I offered him nothing, and I told him what he had already heard.

VILLAGER1 Ungrateful I'd call it. Fancy turning down a man like that.

VILLAGER2 And one so kind hearted. Wants nothing in return for helping her father.

VILLAGER3 She wants a good beating. I know what I'd do if she was my daughter and her father sick. Fancy not giving her promise to save her own father's life!

KAHA I know, neighbours, I know. But what's that noise? Is he here?

(Teldekpei enters. Kaha falls at his feet in thanks).

KAHA Thank you, Teldekpei. Poor Gurak would thank you too if he could.

TELDEKPEI And your daughter? What does she say?

CHACHAK I thank you too for my father's sake.

TELDEKPEI And your answer?

CHACHAK Is still the same.

TELDEKPEI So be it. Let us begin.

(Teldekpei begins to chant. The villagers beat tambourines in time with his chanting. There is no change in Gurak).

VILLAGER1 He's very impressive. Look at his red Shaman's hat with its owl feathers and woodpecker claws.

VILLAGER2 And his robe with its snakes and frogs woven from magic grasses.

VILLAGER3 See how he dances and sways. Look at the sweat on his brow, and the tangle of his beard. How he goes into a trance!

TELDEKPEI Stop! My spells have no effect here. There is nothing I can do.

KAHA Oh surely not kind, wise Teldekpei. There must be something.

TELDEKPEI There is a demon at hand which is making Gurak ill. Until this demon is removed he can never be cured. And that demon is in Chachak. In the stone of her heart, the pride of her gaze, and the coldness of her words.

VILLAGER3 Told you so!

KAHA Oh don't say so Teldekpei! What must be done?

TELDEKPEI She must be sent far away from here, so that the curse is lifted from her father. She must be placed in a wooden barrel bound with nine iron hoops, the bottom nailed down with copper nails, and thrown into the rushing river where the rapids spray white angry foam.

KAHA Oh mercy Teldekpei, surely there is something else?

TELDEKPEI Nothing. I have spoken.

KAHA But she'll be dashed to pieces on the rocks in the river! She will be killed!

TELDEKPEI Perhaps not. If the barrel is stout, the buffeting may shake out the demon and all will be well. If not, well, her father will die. The choice is hers.

(Teldekpei leaves).

CHACHAK There is no choice to make. Neighbours, fetch the water barrel from the back of the hut.

(The villagers go to fetch the barrel)

KAHA But there must be another way. Chachak I won't let you do this!

CHACHAK But you would marry me to a man I don't love. I prefer to take my chances in the foaming river.

(The villagers return with the barrel)

VILLAGER1 Mind my foot will you! This barrel's heavy.
VILLAGER2 It's a good strong barrel. And it will need to be in that river. Those rocks!
VILLAGER3 I've got a hammer and copper nails. In you jump Chachak.
KAHA Neighbours! What are you doing? We can't let her do this. It's madness.
She will be killed, and Gurak may still die. Stop!
VILLAGER3 You heard what Teldekpei said. It's Gurak's only chance. And it's her own
fault for having a demon inside her. Careless I call it.
CHACHAK Come on neighbours, nail down the lid when I'm inside.

(Chachak jumps into the barrel. The villagers hammer on the lid).

VILLAGER2 Ouch! Mind my fingers will you! Some carpenter you are!
VILLAGER3 Chachak, can you hear me? Shall I drill a hole in the side to let some air in?
CHACHAK *(From inside)* Thank you neighbour but that would also let in the water. I
can breathe well enough.
VILLAGER1 Those rocks will put enough holes in it anyway. All done? Off to the river
with it then.
KAHA Chachak! My daughter!

(Kaha bursts into tears as the villagers carry the barrel out of the hut to the river).

Scene Six

(On the river bank. Balykchi is fishing. He sings.)

BALYKCHI A fine fish, a fat fish
Won't you come and look
There's a fine worm, a fat worm
Waiting on my hook

The butcher, the baker
Are working all day long
But I sit in sunshine
Catching fishes with my song

(He catches a big fish).

BALYKCHI There's another. They just can't resist my voice. What a fine day. I knew
it was going to be lucky. I listened to the water and it said "Today's your
lucky day Balykchi". What do you think Anjin? Have we caught enough to

go home yet?

(Anjin snarls and growls).

BALYKCHI Now don't you get growling at me. Just because you don't like fish. When I've sold them, I might buy you a bone or two if you behave yourself. Which means no more snapping and snarling at people, or I might just have to leave you back in the forest where I found you with that broken paw. "You can take a wolf out of the forest" as my old mother used to say, "but you can't take the forest out of the wolf". Well, just you prove her wrong.

(Anjin snarls and growls again, getting more agitated).

BALYKCHI What on earth is the matter with you? A fine sunny day, and you have to spoil it. Just pipe down and let me have a nap.

(The barrel comes into view. Anjin growls wildly).

BALYKCHI Now that is just enough! You'll scare away the fish.

(He sees the barrel).

BALYKCHI Well call me a turnip head but that is the strangest fish I've ever seen! How much more luck can you pack into one day!

(He gets the barrel to the bank).

BALYKCHI Now what do you suppose it contains. There must be something inside for the weight that's in it. Butter maybe. Or pickled fish. Salted meat. You'd like that wouldn't you Anjin. Gold coins! Could be I'm rich!

(Chachak knocks inside the barrel).

BALYKCHI Something's alive in there! After coming down the rapids. Off with the lid and let's see what jumps out.

(He prises the lid off. Chachak gets out a bit dizzy).

BALYKCHI Better than gold! It's a girl! And what a girl! My heart's leaping like a salmon and my head's spinning like a whirlpool. Here let me help you out. Are you all right?

CHACHAK Thank you kind sir. I'm a bit stiff from being cramped in the barrel, and black and blue from the knocks I've had. The sun is too bright after the

dark, and my head hasn't caught up with the rest of me. But I think I'm still in one piece.

BALYKCHI *(Aside)* And one very nice piece indeed if I may say so. Sit here on the river bank and get your breath back. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Balykchi the singing fisherman.

CHACHAK And I am Chachak the daughter of Gurak the woodcutter.

BALYKCHI If it is not a strange question Chachak, how did you come to be in a barrel in the river? It isn't a way to travel I'd chose myself.

CHACHAK My father is dying. When I refused to marry Teldekpei the Shaman he said I had a demon and must be sent far away so that my father will get better. He said I must be put in a barrel and cast into the foaming river to shake the demon out.

BALYKCHI And has it worked?

CHACHAK How can I tell? I never saw or met a demon in my life as far as I know.

BALYKCHI My fisherman's nose smells something very fishy. Anjin!

(Anjin growls and snarls. Chachak is alarmed).

BALYKCHI Don't be frightened. Anjin won't hurt anyone unless I tell him.

(He whispers into Anjin's ear. Anjin jumps into the barrel. Balykchi fastens the lid).

CHACHAK What on earth are you doing?

BALYKCHI Anjin here fancies a trip down the river. Don't worry, he'll come to no harm.

(He pushes the barrel back into the river).

CHACHAK My eyes have cleared, Balykchi the fisherman. You have a kind face and a sparkle in your eye like sun on the water. It is a face that could turn a girl's head if she wasn't very careful.

BALYKCHI "Caution is for fools" as my mother always said.

CHACHAK Did she really?

BALYKCHI Of course not. But she should have done. Come along, Chachak, we must get you home.

(He sings)

BALYKCHI Balykchi went fishing
With his fishing rod and tackle
He caught the very best of fish
Which wore a sillken tassel.

Scene Seven

(Teldekpei's mansion).

TELDEKPEI Abi! Nebri! Where are you lazy fools! Come here at once before I turn you into toads!.

(Abi and Nebri rush in).

ABI Here we are master! What do you want?

TELDEKPEI You took your time about it. Why weren't you here to greet me? My throat is dry and dusty from the road, and my horse is sweating. And you loafers are lying in the sun at my expense!

NEBRI No master, would we dare to do such a thing?

TELDEKPEI When my back's turned I don't doubt it. So jump to it, I have a job for you. Go at once to the river, to the slow bend where it leaves everything it has carried down its foaming back. There you will find a large barrel. Bring it to me at once, before the idlers in the town find it. At once, do you hear?

NEBRI Yes master, at once.

(The servants rush out).

TELDEKPEI Soon Chachak will be mine. No one will know she is here. Everyone will think she has been smashed to a million pieces as the barrel crashes over the rocks. She will be my prisoner, and I will have her for my wife. As for her foolish father, if she wants him to live, she must do as I say.

(Abi and Nebri struggle in with the barrel).

TELDEKPEI At last! Put it down there fools. Now listen to me carefully. Run away to the woods and never let me see or hear of you again. If you hear weeping, do not turn back. If cries and moans spread through the wood, do not look back. On pain of death. Now be off with you.

(Abi and Nebri run off).

TELDEKPEI Now Chachak. Let us see what your answer is after the river has knocked some sense into your so pretty head.

(He opens the lid of the barrel. Anjin jumps out, and immediately sets about him with great snarling and growling).

TELDEKPEI Help! Help me! Abi! Nebri! My good kind servants, help your aged master!

(Abi and Nebri return a little).

ABI Such weeping!
 NEBRI Such cries of pain!
 ABI Such moans!
 NEBRI We must help him. Even though he has beaten us and rubbed our noses in the dust for so many years. I cannot bear to hear such cries.
 ABI But you heard his curse! On pain of death he said. We must save our own skins this time. Off to the woods, as quickly as we can!

(They run off. Teldekpei leaves still howling, chased by Anjin).

Scene Eight

(Gurak's hut. He is recovered).

KAHA It's a miracle! One minute he's flat on his back dying, and the next he's up and about as right as rain asking for something to eat.
 VILLAGER1 Teldekpei was right. There was a demon.
 KAHA Poor Chachak. I wonder what has become of my poor girl.
 GURAK I will go and look for her. You should never have done Teldekpei's bidding. What value is the life of a grisled old woodcutter to that of my pretty girl? I shall follow the length of the river until I find her, for good or for bad.
 KAHA Don't scold me Gurak. I tried to stop her, but she just wouldn't be told.
 VILLAGER2 We all told her. Well I know I did.
 VILLAGER3 I never heard you!
 VILLAGER1 Well you nailed down the lid.
 VILLAGER3 And you fetched the barrel.
 GURAK Don't squabble neighbours. What's done is done, and cannot be undone. But I must make haste.
 KAHA Have something to eat at least before you go.
 VILLAGER1 Another big fat fish maybe. But don't eat the bones this time. And leave the head and the tail to make soup from.
 GURAK What are you talking about? I haven't had a big fat fish all year.

(Balykchi and Chachak enter).

BALYKCHI Well here you are then father. As many fat fish as you can eat!
 KAHA Chachak! It's Chachak! Alive and well and not smashed to pieces on the rocks! Let me hug you daughter!

(Kaha hugs and squeezes Chachak).

CHACHAK Not smashed to pieces mother, but a bit battered and bruised. So perhaps you wouldn't squeeze me quite so hard?

KAHA Chachak, I'm just so pleased to have you back.

GURAK And who is this?

BALYKCHI Allow me. Balykchi the singing fisherman at your service.

CHACHAK He pulled me out of the river.

BALYKCHI The best fish I ever caught. And so with your permission father, I would like to make her my wife. If the offer is agreeable to herself of course.

CHACHAK The offer is most agreeable. And you will never be without a fat fish on the table again mother.

(Balykchi gives Chachak a kiss and a hug).

KAHA You don't complain how tight he squeezes you I notice!

BALYKCHI "You have to suffer for your pleasures" as my old mother used to say.

KAHA Did she really?

BALYKCHI Of course not. But she should have done.

(He sings)

BALYKCHI Who could want riches, who could want gold?
Who could want jewels that shine?
I'll have all the riches I want in the world
When a Silken Tassel is mine.

I dare you!

(Night. At the back of the school. Three boys, Terry, Jason and Kev are hiding. They are watching the caretaker checking the back of the building).

- TERRY That's it. He's gone. Let's make a move. *(Kev is reluctant to move).*
Come on, what are you hanging around for?
- KEV Give it a minute. He might come back.
- TERRY He won't. He's off to his cupboard to watch the TV. He does it every night.
- KEV Well why can't we just wait? Until we're sure.
- JASON Not frightened are you Kev? He is. He's bricking himself. I told you we should've done it just ourselves.
- KEV I ain't frightened! But there's no sense in being thick is there? But you wouldn't know about that would yer!
- JASON You're asking for a smacking you are!
- KEV And who's going to give it me? Not you that's for sure!
- TERRY Will you two pack it in? We're in this together. Nobody's backing out now.
- KEV Who's backing out? I'm just saying there's no harm in waiting a few minutes just to make sure the caretaker's back in his cupboard.
- JASON Just you remember whose fault it is we've gotta do this.
- KEV My fault? My fault! Yours you mean!
- JASON No way. It's your brother's walkman. If you hadn't borrowed it.
- KEV I don't believe you! You took it out my bag! Without asking.
- TERRY And I'd got it when it was confiscated. It's all irrelevant. We've just got to get it back before your brother misses it. Old Bevan put it in his desk, so all we've got to do is get in the window we left jammed, get down to his room, and get out again.
- KEV What happens tomorrow when he finds it ain't there?
- TERRY That's the good bit. Make him pay for a new one.
- JASON That's right. They have to keep it safe. Or replace if it goes missing.
- KEV Bevan won't do that. They cost a hundred, walkman CDs do.
- TERRY He's got to. Can't you just see his face when he finds it ain't there!
- KEV He'll know I've had it.
- JASON How will he? It was there at the end of school, and then it's missing next morning. All you've got to do is look him right in the eye and tell him he's lost it and got to give you another. If you've got the bottle.
- KEV Yeah you'd be good at that. Telling lies. Your number one skill.
- JASON You're asking for a smacking you are. I'm getting sick of you!
- TERRY And I'm getting sick of the pair of you. You'll get us found out if you don't stop arguing and keep your voices down. This is going to be brilliant as long as you keep your nerve. Putting one over on Bevan. Just think what all the other kids will say when we tell them.
- KEV Tell them? What if one of them tells Bevan?
- TERRY Hope they do. Make it even better again. What can he do? What proof has he got? Just some kids mouthing off. And he'll know we put one over on him. Brilliant! Come on. Let's go for the window.

(They move cautiously towards the window, and prise it open).

JASON In you go Kev. If you're up for it.

(Kev climbs in the window. Half way through, he gets stuck).

KEV I'm stuck! I can't move! And I think someone's coming!

In the Mood

(Summer 1943. A terraced house. Downstairs, a sitting room and kitchen. The front door opens directly on to the street. The imaginary window to the street is stage front. Betty, a young woman of 19, enters from the street).

BETTY Dad! I'm home. Shall I put the kettle on?

(She goes out to the kitchen, fills the kettle, and puts it on the stove. She looks to find the tea, sugar and milk, talking to herself).

BETTY Not much tea left. No sugar. Not much milk. *(She sniffs it)*. Gone off a bit. Wet, warm and sour. Just the way I like it.

(She goes out to the sitting room, calls upstairs).

BETTY Dad? *(No answer)* Can't be home yet. Better hang on for a brew until he comes in. Not enough tea for two pots.

(She turns the radio on. Music, the ending to "In the Mood". She begins to hum along, doing some dance steps in time to the music. She is disappointed when the music ends and the announcer takes over).

RADIO This is the BBC Home Service. Frederick Grisewood speaking. Today's postbag offers suggestions on how to "Make do and mend". We've been getting a lot of letters from listeners who advise on the use of old curtains to make skirts and dresses. This is of course an excellent plan and saves a lot of valuable material. Since the introduction of blackout regulations you probably have one or two curtains to spare. A listener from Belvedere, Kent writes that she made an attractive summer frock with a floral design ...

(She turns the radio off in disgust.)

BETTY Dear Mr Grisewood, if I wear old curtains, will it help me to pull myself together?

(There is an urgent knocking at the door. Outside in the street, is Jean).

JEAN Betty? Are you there? Open up will you! Hurry up, someone will see in a minute!

(Betty hurries to the door and opens it quickly. Jean charges in).

BETTY Jean? What on earth is the matter?

(Jean has her coat on, and looks pregnant. Betty wonders at this turn of events).

JEAN Thank God for that. I'm sweltering with this lot. I know, I know. I got some funny looks coming down the street like this I can tell you. I look at least eight months gone don't I. About to give birth in the middle of an air raid like my aunty. All the gossips sharpening their tongues.

BETTY What *have* you got under there?

JEAN As a GI said to me only last week. Knickers made from blackout material I told him. Made them myself, but they aren't very strong. One yank and they're off.

BETTY Jean! The things you say! You don't get any better do you!

JEAN No siree. Take a look at this lot.

(She begins to pull out yards of material from underneath her coat).

BETTY What is it? Where did you get it? There's yards of the stuff here!

JEAN It's from a barrage balloon. Came down in the allotments at the back of my aunty's garden. The whole neighbourhood's down there, cutting it up and handing it out.

BETTY A barrage balloon? You can't bring it in here. We'll both end up in jail! If the ARP warden finds out we'll be arrested. What would my dad say?

JEAN Don't be such a coward. We won't get found out. Besides, they'd have to arrest half of the street. Everybody's got some.

BETTY But what do you want it for. I mean, what kind of material is it?

JEAN Who knows. Who cares. Feels kind of silky. Like the stuff parachutes are made of. And dreams. It's nice and light anyway.

BETTY It's a bit stiff.

JEAN Just the way I like it. I thought you could run us up a couple of skirts. For the dance on Saturday night. You being such a wizard on the Singer.

BETTY For Saturday? But it's Wednesday already.

JEAN So? What else were you thinking of doing between now and then. Champagne suppers at the Ritz? Nowhere to go, nothing to do. But on Saturday, the GIs are in town. They're bussing them down to the dance at the townhall from the base.

BETTY Colour's not up to much. Grey.

JEAN It isn't grey, it's silver. Ingrid Bergman always wears silver. Don't you remember? Casablanca. *(Like Bogey)* "Here's looking at you kid"

BETTY It was a black and white film.

JEAN So? I don't care. Silver, grey, it'll do me fine. It's the fashion this year. At

- least it will be when the whole street's wearing it. So can you do it, for Saturday?
- BETTY I can probably put something together for you.
- JEAN For us, not just me. I've bought enough for two dresses here. You've got to come too.
- BETTY I don't know about that. I don't know if I can.
- JEAN (*ITMA catchphrase*) "I'll have to ask me dad!"
- BETTY It's not just that. Though he isn't keen. I just haven't felt like enjoying myself since, well, you know.
- JEAN (*Concerned, dropping her cheerful bluster*) I know. But you can't let it stop your life in its tracks. Your mam wouldn't want that, now would she?
- BETTY I know. It just comes over me sometimes. I can be at work or anywhere and suddenly I find myself in floods of tears. And I wouldn't even know I'd been thinking about her.
- JEAN So the best thing to do is to get on with your life. Believe me. You've got to get out and meet people again. You can't stay in grieving the whole time. Enjoy yourself, have a bit of fun. You only have one life to live.
- BETTY I just feel guilty. I know it's stupid, and mam would tell me it's stupid if she was here, but I can't help the way I feel.
- JEAN Of course you can't, and I'm not saying you should. But you have to take life by the scruff of the neck and give it a good shake, or else it'll tread all over you. Say you'll come. I need someone to keep an eye on me.
- BETTY I'll think about it.
- JEAN Good enough. And think about it while you're making yourself a skirt. Get cracking. Where's those patterns?
- BETTY Spread the material out on the floor while I find them. But you'll have to be quick, my dad'll be home soon.

(Jean spreads out the material, while Betty gets newspaper patterns out of a drawer. She places them carefully on the material, trying to get the best fit).

- JEAN Aren't you going to take my measurements? I'm a growing girl.
- BETTY Stand up while I measure your waist. And keep still. You're so restless.
- JEAN I can't help it, its my nature. (*She stands while Betty measure her*). This war's playing havoc with my figure. I really must try to put on some weight. There's barely anything left to catch hold of.
- BETTY There's enough. Stop wriggling will you?
- JEAN You're tickling. I'm not used to being handled like this. Pity you're not a man. One of those lovely Americans. They've got so much stuff, and they get paid ten times as much as our boys. Chocolate, gum, stockings. What

I wouldn't do for a real bar of nutty.

BETTY (*Scandalised*) You shouldn't talk like that. If I didn't know you better.

JEAN Some girls do. Where do you think they get those stockings? Real silk too, not your nylon. It's one stocking before and one after if you get my meaning.

BETTY I do get your meaning and I don't think it's very nice.

JEAN Beats painting your legs with gravy browning though doesn't it. I don't dare go out in the rain these days in case my legs run.

BETTY It'd be the first time they did any running. Hold that pattern straight while I mark the material.

JEAN And dogs follow you. Did you ever notice that? They follow you down the street. Then they leave white patches if they lick it off. The things a girl has to do these days.

BETTY But you wouldn't, you know. Not for a pair of stockings.

JEAN Probably not. But I might if I found a bloke I liked. Who knows where we'll all be tomorrow. I intend to enjoy myself while I can. Do you know what a girl at work told me.

BETTY Something awful I suppose. They're really common down at that factory.

JEAN (*ITMA catchphrase*) "Ooh, After you Claude!" No worse than in your office I bet. Anyway, she told me women are born with only so many orgasms. Like a store. And when you've used them up you can't have any more. Do you think it's true?

BETTY I very much doubt it!

JEAN Well, I don't intend to take any chances. I'm going to use up a good few in case Adolf blows me to bits tomorrow. (*Betty reacts*). Sorry. Me and my big mouth. I didn't think. (*She quickly changes subject*). Do you like my eyeliner?

BETTY What is it?

JEAN Soot. Mixed with spit. How does it look?

BETTY (*Inspects her closely*) Terrible. There are lumps on the end of your lashes.

JEAN I know. I had to stick my head right up the chimney to get it too. I came out looking like a nigger.

BETTY Don't! Don't use that word. It's not nice.

JEAN It's what the white GIs say. They use it all the time. They won't drink in the same pub with them. And if they see them with a white girl, well... I think they're cute myself.

BETTY Cute? You're even talking american now.

JEAN But they are. Lovely smooth skin, just like polished wood. And they're the best dancers. You should see them move. Jitterbugging. Though they call it Lindy Hop. Here, I'll show you.

(She drags Betty to her feet, and begins to demonstrate how to jitterbug. She hums accompaniment to the instructions she gives her).

JEAN Right, I'm the man and you're the woman. Hold my hand, and I'll just slip my hand round your waist. Here we go. Count, one two three four five six seven eight. Loosen up a bit, it isn't a fox trot. And circle two three four five six seven eight. Then swingout two three four five six seven eight. And rebound two three four five six seven eight. Brilliant! Hey, you're a natural.

BETTY Not so fast! You're throwing me over!

JEAN And breakaway!

(She separates, and begins to improvise some individual steps).

Come on, you try. Just do whatever comes into your feet.

(Betty improvises some steps of her own).

You've done this before! Why didn't you tell me?

BETTY I haven't! Not actually done it. I've seen it a few times.

JEAN Just the airsteps now, and you're ready for the competition on Saturday night.

BETTY What airsteps? What competition? I didn't promise I'd come yet.

(They stop dancing, out of breath)

JEAN But you will come won't you? You'll be great, have a great time, meet a great guy perhaps.

BETTY I've still got to persuade my dad, and that isn't going to be easy. You don't think there'll be trouble do you, at the dance I mean. What you were saying about the GIs and the coloured men? I heard the local lads were making a fuss at the last dance too.

JEAN They're just jealous. It'll be fine. I'll help you persuade your dad if you like.

BETTY No thanks, I don't think that would help.

JEAN Still thinks I'm a bad influence does he? Well he's right. And getting worse. But you can't let him run your life for you. And you have you know.

(They go back to marking out the material).

BETTY I know. I thought of joining up at one point, doing my bit. But then I thought it would leave him here on his own.

JEAN He could cope. He's a teacher after all. So he's supposed to have brains. Though I never met one who had. What would you join?

BETTY ATS I suppose. I hadn't really thought about it in that much detail.

JEAN ATS?! Have you seen their uniforms? Talk about potato sacks. "Groundsheets for officers" my aunty calls them. I'd go for the WAAF myself. Meet a nice brylcream boy to take me for a spin in the clouds.

BETTY Do you ever think of finding someone, I mean, someone special. Getting married, having children and all those kind of things?

JEAN If I do, I soon put them out of my head. Why find someone only to lose them? No thanks.

BETTY But don't you ever dream?

JEAN The trouble with dreams is you always wake up to another grey morning. I'm just going to live for now, and make no plans further than Saturday night. But have I got plans for Saturday night!

(There is a knocking at the door. It is an ARP warden).

 Who's that? Your dad?

BETTY He's got a key of course. Why would he knock?

(She looks out of the window, and ducks quickly down)

 It's an ARP warden! And we've got half a barrage balloon spread across the floor. What are we going to do?

(They both duck below the window, casting furtive glances into the street).

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