



classic repertory company

This document is intended to give you a sense of the structure, content, and style of our workshops. We can make adjustments to serve any experience level and to suit your specific community! We can also expand to create a longer, more in-depth workshop! Reach out to Sarah Morrisette, Education Associate at sarahmorrisette@newrep.org with any questions.

Bringing Text to Life Workshop

TIME: 60 minutes

AGES: Grades 6 through 12

GROUP SIZE: up to 50

OBJECTIVE: To give students a concrete set of tools with which to analyze and adapt a piece of narrative text into a living, breathing performance, and to give them a new understanding of that text in the process.

WARM-UP: Every workshop starts with a warm-up. This varies depending on the size of the group, the nature of the space, and the circumstances of the workshop. This particular workshop has been done in English classes with students who have no theatre background, and it has also been brought to Drama classes with an experienced group of theatre students. We always take into consideration the context with which the students are entering the workshop, and we shape everything accordingly.

We like to start in a circle to introduce ourselves. If the group of students is small enough, we ask them to introduce themselves as well. If it's a large group, we usually wait until breaking up into smaller groups to do introductions. We often start by asking the students to walk around the room. As they walk, we ask them to fill any empty floor space they see, and to cut across the room. We ask the students to take a moment to turn their attention inward - to notice their breathing, how they're holding their body, what their energy feels like that day. A simple exercise like this enables students to break out of their everyday routine, and to take a moment to gain some self-awareness on how they feel coming into this workshop. Then, we move into a game! Here are some of the games we like to play:

- Opposite of Jackson (full body focus game)
- Patterns (designed to build focus)
- Cat and Rat (high energy and fun)
- Jana Cubana (high energy and teamwork)
- Pass the Sound (using full body and voice)
- Pass the Energy (imagination and improv)
- What Are You Doing? (silliness and improv)

With the warm-up we have three primary goals:

- ***Come together as a group*** - The greatest initial barrier is self-consciousness; warm-ups enable students to work together and play together.
- ***Energize*** - Getting the students to move their bodies around and get their hearts pumping is essential to getting them ready for the workshop.
- ***Focus*** - The final step in every warm-up is to transform all of the rowdiness and silliness that gets whipped up by the games into useful, focused energy.

INTRODUCTION: After the students are warmed-up and ready to work, we return to our circle and explain what we'll be doing with them that day. We split the students up into groups, each with a CRC leader. Each group claims its own area of the space and the CRC leaders present them with an excerpt from *Animal Farm*. The group reads through the text a couple times together, and discusses what stands out to them.

FREEZE FRAME: The CRC leaders tell the students they have one minute to create a freeze frame image to evoke the piece of text they just discussed. To make things a little more challenging and exciting, the students are not allowed to talk or to decide ahead of time who is taking on which role. They must find a way to silently create something together using just their bodies. The leader then facilitates a quick discussion with the students - What was that experience like? What role did each student take on? What did you like about what you created? What did you think was missing? The students will then work together to assign characters for everyone.

BEGINNING, MIDDLE & END: The CRC leader asks the students to take their freeze frame and expand it into three still images: the beginning of the story, the middle of the story, and the end of the story. This time each student knows what role they are playing, but they are still not allowed to speak. They have one minute to create each image. After, they again debrief on what they have created.

FILLING IN: The CRC leader asks the students about what is missing in order to tell the full story, and what they need to get them from image one to two to three. What actions take the characters from the beginning to the middle and then the end of the story? This time the students are allowed to use their voices to communicate with one another.

In addition, the leader gives them a list of five elements they must include in their performance. These are:

- a moment of unison movement
- a moment of song or sound
- a moment of reveal (a person, an object, a secret, etc)
- at least three lines of dialogue
- a moment of direct address

These special elements add on an extra challenge to the experience, while also giving the students concrete theatrical tools to use in their performance. The students are given some time to put together their piece and to rehearse it until they feel confident that they have something clear and repeatable.

SHARING: Each group then shares their performance with everyone else!

WRAP-UP: At the end of the workshop, we give the students the opportunity to share something about their experience, and to ask any questions they may have. We then finish with a big thank you, and ask all the students to give themselves a round of applause!

**To book a workshop, or get more information
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