

## **LEVEL UP!**

Let's take improv to the next level! These games are intended to familiarize students with the notion of improv. Different levels of complexity can be added to certain exercises, if the group is already familiar with the basics of improv. All games are suitable even for students who are diving into the unknown!

### **Warm Up Games**

#### **Find your "home":**

##### Goal:

This exercise aims to free us from our self-judgement, and allow us to give ourselves permission to sound and look "silly". It also hones our listening muscles and cultivates team collaboration.

##### Instructions:

The teacher assigns half the students the animal "cow" and the other half the animal "chicken". He/she then ask them to close their eyes and walk around in space as their assigned animal, making the relevant noise. The goal of this exercise is to find your "home". By listening to others, and with their eyes closed, the students need to find their respective group of animals and move/stay together. By the end of this game, two very distinct groups will form.

#### **Machine Building:**

This exercise aims to encourage team work. The whole group builds together an imaginary machine. One person comes on stage and starts making a "mechanic" gesture, accompanied by a sound. He/She repeats the gesture & the sound at a certain pace (try to start relatively slowly). He/She is soon joined by another person who comes on stage and makes another gesture and sound, forming a bodily relationship with the first person (next, behind, in front etc.). Every member of the team does the same, and at the end we have created a machine that moves together and sounds uniquely!

##### Added levels of complexity:

Once the students have familiarized themselves with the game, the teacher can give instructions to the machine which everyone needs to follow. These can be pace-related: faster/more slowly or emotion-related: assign a specific emotion to the machine that everyone needs to adopt (sadness, excitement, fear, suspicion, anger etc.)

## **Character game**

### **Different Walks:**

This exercise helps students explore different character through physical choices. The Teacher will ask students to walk around in neutral. Then, he/she will shout out a different body part (i.e. walk with your nose/groin/hair/chest etc.). As the students change their normal walk, and they start adopting a character, the teacher guides them through. He/she asks them to silently give themselves – this new person who is walking with their nose – a name, then a “label” (an adjective that reveals that person’s POV, for example someone walking with their nose could be someone “arrogant”, “snobby” etc.), and a profession. Then, the teacher claps their hands, everyone freezes in character and the teacher goes around asking everyone to introduce themselves (name and profession) revealing this person’s POV. Encourage them to make distinct vocal choices for that specific character too.

Example: “Hi, I’m Brandon and I’m a pilot.” (in a manner, voice, body posture that is in agreement with the label they gave themselves based on the walk, for example “arrogant”).

Once the first round is complete, the students go back to walking in neutral, the Teacher shouts out a different body part, and they repeat the process.

## **Word Games**

### **5 Things:**

The students form a circle. They gently start tapping their legs chanting rhythmically: “These are five things, these are five things”. The Teacher starts the game, asking the person next to them for 5 things in one category; it can be something real (5 songs on your playlist), it can be curriculum related or it can be something that requires the students’ imagination: (5 things that Donald Trump had for breakfast). The goal is to say the first thing that comes to your head. Every time an item is listed, the whole group yells out the number: milk (one), burger (two), coca cola (three), the constitution (four), 25 donuts (five). Then the whole group sings again: “These are five things, these are five things”. The person who was coming up with the 5 things gives a new category to the person next to them, and the process is repeated until we come full circle.

### **Wordopoly:**

The students stand next to each other in a line facing the audience. This is a challenge game, as there is the elimination factor. The goal is to think quickly on your feet and let your imagination thrive. The teacher gives a category and – starting from one end of the line – everyone steps forward naming something that belongs in that category. If they run out of real options, they are allowed to make something up. (i.e. “Name breakfast cereal” Choco snowflakes...)

### **The Alphabet Game:**

Students stand in a circle. The teacher suggests a discussion topic and a letter. Then, one person at a time needs to say a phrase on that topic, beginning from the next letter in the alphabet than the person before.

Added levels of complexity:

Once the students have familiarized themselves with the game, the teacher can suggest an emotional round: the teacher assigns an emotion and everyone needs to play the game and deliver the phrase in a specific emotion (excitement, fear, shyness etc.). Or – taking from the Character walk game – the Teacher can invite the students to play this game in the voice of the characters they previously created.

**Book synopsis:**

This is a variation of the Story Conductor game. The Teacher gives the students a made-up title for a book and a genre. The students stand in a semi-circle looking at the teacher. They then need to come up with the book synopsis. The Teacher – functioning as the story conductor – points to a student and that student starts the story of the book. (Tip: The first line needs to establish the main hero, the location, some of the “who-where-what-why” that are the cornerstones of storytelling.) The Teacher then points to another student who needs to continue the story and add new information. This is a more advanced exercise that helps hone our listening skills and our storytelling technique.

Added level of complexity:

To make it more fun, and once the students have familiarized themselves with the game, the Teacher can point to another student mid-phrase!

**The Value of Improv**

YES AND! Improv cultivates confidence, team spirit, and skills that can be transferred to a life-affirming personal lifestyle.

Useful link for more games and exercises:

<http://improvcyclopedia.org/categories//index.html>

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