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First Week Activities for Drama Class



Spell Your Name

With your butt!

A fun exercise to use as an icebreaker and to learn everyone's names.

What to do?

- The students stand in a circle.
- One at a time they go to the center and just “spell” their names by moving their butts to form letters.

“It’s a lot of fun and every time I use it the kids have loved it.” Lora Oxenreiter

Introduce Yourself

As Somebody Else

A get-to-know-you exercise with a wee bit of acting thrown in for good measure.

What to do?

- Think of someone who knows you well. (e.g. parent, friend, teammate)
- Then as that person (imitating their accent, mannerisms, etc.) introduce *yourself* as they would introduce *you*.
- The introduction must have embedded into it something most people probably don't know about you and also why that person likes you. For example, "People may sometimes think that X is a snob, but she's really just a little shy. She's a really loyal friend, though."

"This works really great. Everyone really listens and also it is a way for students to let others know something that they want them to know" ~ Janet Hegman Shier

Pair Introductions

Let someone else introduce you to the class

A quick way to learn everyone's names and a little bit about them.

What to do?

- Start with an inner and outer circle facing each other. The pairs facing each other get one minute to ask each other two questions.
- The inner circle then moves one spot to the left.
- The new pair gets one minute to ask each other two questions, then the rotation happens again, etc.
- After three or four turns, whichever two students are partnered introduce each other to the class.

Thanks to Ellen Massey Bloomfield

Red Undies

What do you have in common?

This icebreaker is fun to play and creates instant bonds.

What to do?

- Kids sit in chairs in a circle (similar to a musical chairs set up, except without music). One is in the middle.
- The kid in the middle says something about themselves. Examples: “I had eggs for breakfast this morning,” “I have a dog”, etc. Basically anything within reason.
- Whoever matches the kid in the middle (e.g. had eggs for breakfast) has to get up and run to another chair. The last one standing goes to the middle and the process repeats.
- If the kid (or teacher) can’t think of anything to reveal, they say “red undies” and *everyone* has to get up and find another chair.

“Kids love it and learn stuff about each other as well” Chantelle Welsh

Wink Murder

A murderer lurks among a roomful of detectives

This activity combines physical movement, a bit of acting, and mental focus.

What to do?

- Students stand about the room and close their eyes.
- The teacher taps one student on the head. They are now the murderer. Everyone else in the room are detectives.
- Students walk randomly around the room making eye contact with each other. The murderer “kills” someone by winking at them. When they do so the victim should wait 10 seconds to die. Since this is acting class, make the death as loud and dramatic as you can.
- Detectives can accuse someone of being the murderer at any time (as long as they’re not dead yet, of course). If the detective is right, they win. If they’re wrong, they die.

Do You Know Your Neighbors?

Well, do you?

Students get to know each other's names with this fun and physical activity.

What to do?

- Everyone sits in chairs around a circle with one person in the middle.
- The person in the middle asks one person in the circle, "Do you know your neighbors?"
- There are two possible responses:
 1. They know their neighbors' names so they say, "Yes, and their names are [Joe] and [Mallory]." They continue, "But what I'd like to know is who is [wearing blue jeans]?" At that point everyone wearing blue jeans, for example, has to leave their seat and find another. The person in the middle also tries to get a seat. Whoever is standing at the end is now the person in the middle.
 2. They don't know their neighbors' names so they say "No." At that point the two neighbors have to stand and switch seats while the person in the middle tries to claim one of those empty seats.
- Remind the students it's just a game, so don't make it personal and try not to single anybody out. Keep the activity low risk (nobody's put on the spot).

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Thanks to Katie O'Neil Herring.

Get to Know Your Classmates

...and your teacher!

Everyone learns they have something in common with everyone else.

What to do?

- A bond-building exercise where everyone learns they have something in common with everyone else.
- The teacher prepares a sheet that has 25-30 facts about themselves on it. Some examples:
 1. My favorite pizza is supreme
 2. I wear glasses
 3. I have family in the military
 4. I have a younger brother
 5. I've never read Harry Potter
- On first day, students spend the whole class getting their classmates' signatures on the sheet. The goal is to get a different signature on every line.
- At the end of the class we wind down the teacher reveals that all the traits reflect THEM, so the teacher has something in common with all of the students!

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Thanks to Amanda Ray Lyons.

Unguessable Fact

Can you fool your classmates?

A fun get to know you exercise.

What to do?

- Everyone takes a piece of paper and writes something about themselves that they think nobody else would guess.
- The teacher collects and shuffles the papers.
- One by one the papers are read out by the teacher and everyone in the class has to guess who they belong to.

“This one was originally taught to me in which everyone earned points for correct guesses - and triple points if nobody guessed yours correctly - but I like it better without keeping score.” Corey-Jan Albert

Three Things

What are you proud of? What do you want to accomplish?

Set some goals for the semester.

What to do?

- Students take index cards and write down three things they're proud of and three things they want to accomplish during the semester.
- The teacher collect the cards and saves them. On the last class day of the semester, take out the cards and see how everyone did!

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Thanks to Jeremy Williams

Sixty Second Vacation

Everything you did this summer in sixty seconds

A fun exercise to use as an icebreaker and to learn everyone's names.

What to do?

- Students get into pairs.
- Each shares a memorable moment from summer vacation.
- The pair then switches stories, making the story his or her own.
- This should only take about ten minutes to do. Focus on listening carefully, thinking fast and performing on your feet!
- Have the students perform the 60 second monologue for the rest of the class.

"It was great watching their minds work." ~Jane Martineau