

Creating a Physical Character

From Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Workshop

- Objective: Students will create a physical character using their bodies and imagination
- Teacher Instructions:
 1. You will need 7 containers for each subject (I use Ziploc bags)
 2. The examples I have are all student created. Some didn't save correctly, but you get the idea. Feel free to add your own, and have students create their own as well. If students are creating ideas, you'll need to organize that a few days before going through the lesson. You want the ideas ready to go. It's easier if they're typed and cut into slips of paper.
 3. Lead students in a physical warm up
 4. Let students know this is a silent, introspective exercise. They are to focus on themselves.
 5. Start with students randomly choosing 1 slip of paper from 1 bag.
 1. With their slip of paper, have them walk silently around the room as themselves first, noticing how they walk/move.
 2. Next, have them transition moving like the example on their slip of paper. Give them ideas walking at Level 1, or 10, or anywhere in between.
 3. You may have a discussion after walking once, or wait until they've done it again.
 4. Repeat #1-2 as needed
 5. Now have students choose 2 pieces of paper from different bags. They will walk as one, then as the second, then combined. Use levels again "Walk like #1 at a 5 and #2 at a 10, etc..."
 6. Repeat #5 as needed
 7. Discuss how they felt combining examples. Discuss what type of character they felt like.
 8. Expansion activity: students write a monologue based on one of the physical characters they createe

Weight

Weight – as light as a speck of dust

Weight – light as a feather

Weight– as light as air

Weight – as light as your breath blowing against the cold air

Weight – as heavy as a sumo wrestler

Weight – as heavy as a 100 lb brick

Weight – as light as ocean foam

Weight – as heavy as a Hummer SUV

Weight – lighter than a feather

Weight – heavy as a house

Weight – as fat as an overweight, obese, elephant

Weight – as light as a light bulb

Tension

Tension- as nervous as someone with a wedgie that they are afraid to pick

Tension- as tense as a student who didn't study for a final

Tension- as scared as a claustrophobic person in an elevator

Tension- as nervous as someone who has to perform a monologue

Tension- as tense as a pregnant teen about to tell her mom

Tension- as tense as a cat stalking its prey

Tension- as tense as a nerd with a C

Tension- as tense as a boy as he waits for his report card

Tension- as tight as newly tightened braces

Tension- as nervous as somebody being stalked

Tension- as tense as a poor family around Christmas

Tension- as tense as a shoe string

Tension- as tense as a girl's first kiss

Tension- as embarrassed as a girl wearing the same dress as another girl at prom

Size

Size-as big as Fat Albert

Size- as big as an elephant

Size- as big as the big dipper

Size- as small as a baby's pinky

Size- as small as a newborn panda

Size- Size- as small as an ant

Size- as skinny as a twig

Size- as tall as the Eiffel Tower

Size- as big as curb stomping boots

Size- as small as a micro chip

Size- as long as a ruler

Size- as big as the Death Star

Speed

Rhythm

Rhythm- rhythmic like a waltz

Rhythm- rhythmic as Mozart

Rhythm- fist pumping at the club

Rhythm- singing in the shower

Rhythm- a yappy little dog afraid of the vacuum

Rhythm- The Game rapping

Rhythm- blasting the music in your car

Rhythm- smooth as a smoothie

Rhythm- as smooth as a geek talking to a cheerleader

Rhythm- rhythmic as maracas

Rhythm- fast as a valley girl talking on the phone

Rhythm- the rhythm of your favorite song on a lonely Friday night

Rhythm- rapping really badly

Rhythm- as slow as a snail

Rhythm- rhythm of a broken record player

Energy

Energy- hyper as a little kid with a sugar rush

Energy- hyper as a kangaroo

Energy- lazy as a turtle

Energy- energetic as Superman

Energy- energetic as a dog on steroids

Energy- energetic as a kid on Christmas Eve

Energy- energetic as the sun

Energy- energetic as someone who drank 12 Redbulls

Energy- energetic as a kid chasing an ice cream truck

Energy- energetic as a kid with their first piece of candy

Energy- energy flowing through your body when you hear that special song

Energy- energetic as a chipmunk on redbull

Energy- your heart beat after running

Energy- hyper as the energized bunny

Energy- energetic as a kid with candy and soda

Body Center