

ACTOR NEUTRAL

Warm Up Activity

SUMMARY

Students practice assuming a neutral physical stance that can be used as a base for developing movements and characters. Use to signal the beginning and end of any acting activities; to encourage physical awareness and self-control.

OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

Students will ...	What it looks like...
Establish an effective, physically neutral position.	Student stands upright, feet shoulder length apart, shoulders relaxed, arms at his or her sides, looking straight ahead with no expression. Arms or legs are not crossed, no hands in pockets, no smiles, no head turns.

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students find a spot in the room where they can see you. Discuss what the word "neutral" means. For example, "Neutral is like a blank sheet of paper before a painter begins to paint. It is like a car that has its engine running, but isn't moving anywhere yet."
2. Tell students that the first thing they must do as an actor is to find out what neutral is for them. Actor neutral is established when an actor stands upright, feet shoulder length apart, shoulders relaxed, arms at his or her sides, looking straight ahead with no expression. Nothing can be crossed, no hands in pockets, no smiles, no head turns.
3. Demonstrate your actor neutral to students. Demonstrate positions that are not actor neutral.
4. Let students practice finding actor neutral. Then, tell them to go to a position that is not neutral (this can be anything) until you call out "show me actor neutral." Repeat this several times. Walk from student to student and comment on their neutral stance.
5. Repeat often and use during other acting activities.

TIPS

- ♦ Give feedback to students on their neutral stance.
- ♦ Look for students' particular stances or mannerisms and coach them to neutralize them.
- ♦ Have students find actor neutral at the start and end of all activities and work on scenes. Also, use the term and concept, actor neutral, to focus students' attention.

BALL OF SOUND

Warm Up Activity

SUMMARY

Students toss an imaginary ball around a circle. With each toss, the thrower makes a noise that reflects the way the ball is being handled. Then, the person who catches the "ball" imitates the thrower's noise, develops a new noise, and throws it to another person. Use to pull students together; before activities in which students use their voices to communicate character, action, or emotion; to introduce a sense of playfulness.

OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

Students will ...	What it looks like...
Warm up vocally.	Student uses a range of pitches and volumes. Creates sounds that reflect how the ball is being handled.
Take risks.	Student tries a variety of sounds and movements.
Think quickly, creatively, and spontaneously.	Student generates new sounds and movements rather than only repeating other students' ideas. Responds quickly, maintaining the speed of the play.

DIRECTIONS

1. Students stand in a circle or along the outer edge of the classroom. One student begins by tossing an imaginary ball to another student. As the ball is tossed, the student makes a strong and open sound such as "hey," "weeee," or "whoosh." The sound should reflect the way in which the ball is being handled. For example, if a player gives the ball a very high toss, she might make the sound "keeeeeeeee!" starting at a high pitch and sliding to a low one. If she treats the ball as if it is heavy and large, she might make a low "wooooo" sound.
2. The student who catches the ball should respond by imitating the thrower's sound, then developing a different sound and throwing it to another person.

TIPS

- ◇ Encourage students to experiment with the pitch and volume of their sounds and the size and shape of the ball.
- ◇ If students are dropping the ball or are letting it fall between two students, have the thrower point to the intended catcher.
- ◇ Coach students to think of a sound so they are ready once the ball is thrown to them.
- ◇ At the end of the warm up, have a student store the ball in their mouth or pocket and have them bring it out when it is time to play again.