



# "Improvisational theater methods applied to English language learning"

## Supplementary Tools

Partners:

"Green Elephant" Foundation



ΠΑΛΛΑΔΙΟ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΗΡΙΑ  
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


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# ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

## METHODOLOGY

This booklet is a collection of tools to improve the English language skills of school-age participants through the application of improvisational theatre techniques. The tools are intended to be adaptable to a range of ages, language levels, and interests and allow for a high degree of flexibility so that they may be used in many different contexts. The tools have been arranged under three different categories:

-  • **Lights:** activities designed to enlighten participants to new issues and concepts
-  • **Camera:** activities focussing on detecting and solving problems
-  • **Action:** activities that ask participants to learn by doing

This collection of tools is supplementary to the original set of 18 tools produced during the IMPROVLANG project.

## LEVEL AND AGE APPROPRIATENESS

In order to give a basic idea of the age range and difficulty of the activities without putting them into a strict category such as the Common European Reference Framework (CERF) scale, the tools are ranked with a star system of 1 to 5 stars.

The system loosely indicates that low star activities are for lower ages and language levels. However, please note that due to the flexibility of the tools, some lessons with low star rankings can be adapted to older ages and higher levels, so be sure to check the descriptions for this possibility. The rankings are as follows:



Very basic, for low language levels and young ages (around 10 years old)



Around a pre-intermediate level. Requires some knowledge of forming sentences.



For participants with intermediate language skills and appropriate for middle teens (12 to 16 years old)



Somewhat advanced activity requiring solid communication skills in English. Most appropriate for students aged 16-18.



Complicated and advanced activity requiring a high level of communication and advanced knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Appropriate for participants aged 17+.

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# IMAGINARY ORCHESTRA

IMPROVISATION, DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGINATION, VOCABULARY AND MIMING PRACTICE, LISTENING AND RESPONDING

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this activity, participants will be part of an imaginary orchestra and act out different situations according to what they hear.

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Practice their vocabulary while miming actions
- Learn how to keep an open mind and listen attentively
- Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The only material need for this activity could be a Music player. Encourage the participants to be imaginative. Ideally, the activity should have 5-10 participants and last 15-20 minutes.

## PROCESS

Participants are asked to stand up. While playing a highly lively piece of classical music, the participants conduct an imaginary orchestra as if they were conductors. The facilitator can give participants new situations and ask them to add mime:

- Somebody poured itch powder onto your jacket
- A little kid comes in front of you and starts staring at you.
- You hear a wrong note.
- A fly is buzzing around your head.
- A dog's attacking your foot.
- Bring the end of the scene yourself.

The activity is expected to produce some funny scenarios as they will be acted out one after the other.

## REFLECTION

Afterwards have a discussion with the group about the overall experience they had about this activity?

- Which action did you find the funniest?
- What was difficult about this activity?

# TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

1

You can add music to change the mood of the activity.

3

Vocabulary must be relevant to participants' age/ level

2

Check for understanding as new words are introduced.



# CONTINUE THE ACT

IMAGINATION, CREATIVITY, COOPERATION, VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR DEVELOPMENT

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this activity, learners will use contextual cues to recreate scenes from movies and use their imaginations to create scripts.

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Create a script using common words and phrases from movies
- Apply their knowledge of intonation when impersonating roles
- Improve their ability to speak in English using correct pronunciation
- Practice colloquial expressions used in everyday conversations

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We advise you to have the following materials ready for this activity to be effective: electronic equipment (projector, video player, speakers etc). This activity takes about 45 minutes 10 minutes for each of the first two stages/25 minutes for the rest of activity.

The number of participants required for this activity is at least 20. An external person can be sought (a drama teacher, for example) who can suggest movies or series/provide insight into acting techniques or supervise the activity.

## PROCESS

1. All participants, divided in groups of 4 or 5, watch scenes from famous series/movies on mute.
2. Then they select some of their favorite scenes and press pause. They will discuss what the scenario might be and recreate each scene based on the actors' gestures and expressions. They must use context cues to decipher what is happening and what is being said.
3. Each group acts out their version of the scene to their classmates.
4. The audience must decide if there is any relevance between the new version and the original script of the movie/series.

## REFLECTION

Voting at the last stage of the activity helps participants to reflect on their performance. After the activity participants are asked the following questions to reflect and share any additional comments or insight:

- What challenged you the most?
- How did you work together to come up with lines?
- Do you think this activity had an effect on your confidence in speaking? Why or why not?



# TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

1

The activity runs best if participants are familiar with drama/acting beforehand

2

The films/series chosen for the activity must be age-appropriate



# IS EVERYTHING OK WITH US?

AWARENESS, IMAGINATION, DEVELOPING LANGUAGE CONSCIOUSNESS AND IMAGINATIVE USAGE OF LANGUAGE

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this activity, participants will work use their understanding of people and characteristics to act out different scenarios.

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Apply their knowledge of vocabulary to describe people
- Engage in active listening to understand and act out different characteristics

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Ideally, this activity requires 6-20 participants and lasts 30 minutes. The number of participants may vary but it is recommended to keep it below 20 in order to ensure discipline and quality.

## PROCESS

- 1.1. Divide the participants into two teams. Members of each team should imagine that the people in the other team are characterised by specific traits - quirky, unique or completely common. Here are examples:
  - a. are naked
  - b. are Martians, are dead,
  - c. are dangerous criminals who have escaped from prison,
  - d. are vampires,
  - e. are presenters of a morning programme on television,
  - f. were frostbitten,
  - g. are in prison,
  - h. are members of the royal family, are drunk,
  - i. are trying to sell life insurance, They are each five years old,
  - j. are monks and nuns.
2. The other team should guess the feature that has been assigned to it. They can try a certain number of times (e.g. three).
3. Guide the game so that teams swap roles. You should know the correct answer so that you can prompt if necessary.
4. If possible, with the help of a second facilitator, demonstrate an example of a game to the participants in the form of the following dialogue:

A: Are you sure everything is OK with us?

B: Well, in a physical sense rather not. We should cover up the windows. A: Do we look like the Elephant Man?

B: No. Are you sure you are warm?

A: Do we come from warm countries?

B: No.

A: We are naked.

## REFLECTION

Afterwards have a discussion with the group about the overall experience they had about this activity:

- How did your behaviour change when given different characteristics?
- How did this activity stimulate your imagination?
- Did you think the activity was a fun exercise and why?

## TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

1

Participants usually become enthusiastic about the game after the first few attempts. Once they have learnt to ask the right questions, the guessing game will go much faster.

3

As with other games of this type, the facilitator should try to suggest the correct answer.



# EMPTY CHAIR

IMAGINATION, CREATIVITY, EMPATHY, LEARNING THROUGH DOING,  
CREATIVE LANGUAGE USAGE

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this activity, participants will learn to develop empathy while working creatively and imaginatively.

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Be more confident, use the target language desired and be free to express their ideas
- Associate words with actions
- Potentially lower their anxiety surrounding speaking in a foreign language

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We advise you to have the following materials ready for this activity to be effective: a chair and a stop watch. This activity takes about 30 minutes with 10-15 participants. The duration of activity can be increased depending upon the number of participants.

## PROCESS

1. Place a chair in the middle of the class and ask the participants to imagine that a celebrity is sitting on an empty chair. The celebrity can be someone who is dead or alive. Let them consider the empty chair for some time.
2. After a while, ask them to imagine that the celebrity can talk to them. Suppose that they want to talk about something - what might they tell you? Give them time to ponder.
3. Ask participants one by one. "Who was sitting in the chair and what did they say to you?"

## REFLECTION

After the activity ask a few reflection questions to the audience:

- Did you enjoy this activity? If not, then why?
- Why did you choose this celebrity?
- How easy or difficult was it to imagine a celebrity sitting on a chair and talking to you?

# TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

1

Plan the timeframe well and inform the participants in advance to make the activity more effective.

2

Initiate an imaginary situation if any participant struggles.



# POWER

IMAGINATION, CREATIVITY, IMPROVISATION, VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT,  
USE LANGUAGE TO THINK AND REASON

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The activity will allow the participants to analyse their classmates' behavior to determine which role they represent.

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Be able to use strong emotions vocabulary to describe their actions
- Be able to use the simple present in an effort to describe their role's daily routine

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For this activity, no materials are needed, but it's a fun touch to add props to give life to the characters. This activity takes about 45 minutes (15 minutes for preparation / 15 minutes for performance / 5 minutes for presentation / 10 minutes conversation (role reveal)) with 20 participants. The duration of activity can be increased depending upon number of participants. The facilitator can support the activity by showing a few videos of people in power (Presidents, politicians & Kings etc.) to the participants to provide them an insight into acting techniques/ to identify some of their characteristics.

## PROCESS

1. Gather the participants and ask them to stand in a circle.
2. The facilitator will then ask 5 participants to exit the room and assign them a role. Each role has a different level of power (ex. king, general, courtier, soldier, worker).
3. Thereafter, these five participants enter the room again and begin to enact according to their roles (the king must walk standing tall and fiercely, displaying an authoritative persona, while on the other hand, the worker must look weary, might be carrying a burden and be submissive to those higher up, etc.).
4. After the role play, participants will be asked to briefly describe a day in their life without revealing their role.
5. The group needs to find out which role each of the 5 participants was performing.
6. The activity ends when all roles are 'revealed'.

## REFLECTION

After the activity participants are asked the following questions to reflect and share any additional comments or insight.

- Did assuming a role so different to your personality challenge you in any way?
- Which skills do you think this activity helps to develop?
- What inspired your performance and how did you select what characteristics you need to exhibit while performing?



# TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

1

Props can be used as supplementary materials to enhance the role play

2

Ensure that enough free space is available to manoeuvre.

# GRANDMOTHER'S STEPS

DICTION, LISTENING, VOCABULARY

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this activity, participants will hone their diction and listening skills.

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Recognise different sounds in English
- Enhance their active listening

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This activity can be done with any number of participants and does not require materials. Make sure that participants have enough room.

## PROCESS

1. One participant stands on one side of the classroom with his back to the other participants, all the others stand on the other side.
2. While the leader of the game recites some fast-talking exercises, for example “Four fine fresh fish for you”, the other participants walk towards him slowly and quietly.
3. When the fast-talking exercise is said, the leader turns to the others, the one who moves goes back to the starting line.

## REFLECTION

After the activity, participants can reflect on the following questions:

- How many times did you reach the destination?
- Did you prefer being a leader or participant?
- Which emotions did you feel during the activity? Why is that?

# TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

1

Participants can move like fish, bears, jump like bunnies, etc. by using the words they have learned.

2

Participants can walk on the tips of the toes, heels, outer/inner edges of the foot, etc. to make the action more challenging.