

1-20

Players sit in a circle

The group concentrates intensely on each other. One person in the group will start by saying "1., Players must then "sense" which individuals in the group will say "2," then "3," then "4," etc.

The purpose is to get to "20" without two or more voices calling out the same number. If at first you don't succeed, keep trying (over a period of days if needed) until the task is accomplished.

Depending on the number of people in the group, like 25, some might sense that they are not to speak; some might sense that they are to call out more than one number.

Activity name/label	Actor's nightmare
# of participants	2+
Purpose(s)/skills	Justifying dialogue

Set up: One person has a script or play anthology, the other calls a page number

Description: The player with the script chooses one of the characters and begins to deliver his/her lines. The other player must justify what the character is saying.

Notes: You can use existing plays for this, but also lines from comics.

Whoever gets the script should not forget to play/act - only her lines are defined, not what she does, or how she does the lines.

Also known as **Playbook**

My note: Using a books with 2 person scenes is ideal.

Blabbermouth

2 chairs are set up facing each other at the front of the room/semi-circle.

2 students sit in the chairs. A topic will be assigned and each pair must talk non-stop about that top for 1 minute. I let the class give the topic (no toilet humour) and it can be as silly as possible (ie. cheese, elephants, etc.)

Both students talk at the same time, which helps some of the shy ones come out a bit, since they are not solely in the spotlight.

Eventually, we will have contests to see who can go the longest. The students think this one is funny, and it gets them vocally and mentally loosened up for the class!

Activity name/label Slo-Mo Falls

of participants any

Purpose(s)/skills body control; focus; calming down out-of-control kids

Directions: The students become...

- as astronaut falling in zero gravity with teacher counting from 1-10
- a ball of yarn unrolling to a 1-5 count
- a feather in the wind as teacher counts 1-15.
- a candle melting as teacher counts down from 1-10 or whatever.
- Anything which encourages controlled movement and focus.

Mirror exercises can help...esp. group mirrors when you have problems with specific kids. Play soothing slow music in the background as they move in zero gravity in outer space.

My note: I count backwards from the highest number so that the students always reaches "ground zero" on zero!

Name/Title: What Are You Doing?

No. of participants: 2 +

Purpose/skills: physical warm-up/ice breaker

Introduction: Everyone into a circle.

Description: Once the circle is formed one player goes into the circle and starts to mime a simple activity. Once the activity has been established one of the players from the circle jumps in and asks "what are you doing?" The player doing the mime responds with some activity other than the one they are doing. If they are mowing the lawn they might say 'filleting a soul.' The player that asked the question starts the activity that was answered (i.e., filleting a soul) and waits to be asked what she is doing. This continues until all have tried the exercise.

Variations: Get players to ask 'what are you doing?' in different accents or moods.

Projection activity:

Cotton Ball Blow-Breath control

Bring a container (a plastic box rather than a bag) of cotton balls. Have the students stand behind a line and extend their hand palm up. (I put a piece of masking tape on the floor.) Place a cotton ball on the palm and tell them to blow it off. This turns into a contest on who can blow it the farthest.

3 Ways to say it

Write on index cards random sentences. Pass the cards around and have each student say it a different way. Using an accent, emphasizing different words, turning a statement into a question, or displaying a particular emotion while saying the sentence are all acceptable.

Caution: discourage students from using the same technique, e.g. a squeaky voice, for all the sentences.

Variation: Have each student pick a card and say his/her sentence in 3 different ways.

Who-What-Where: Pantomime or solo improvisation

Use lists of characters, places, and objects and have the student pick one of each and improvise a solo scene or pantomime with the character using the object in the place. The items can be put on cards and laminated so they can be use over and over again with minimum wear.

Guidelines: The student cannot actually say who, what, or where, but act it out.

Activity name/label FRUIT BASKET UPSET (also-“Everyone who”

of participants 2 +

Purpose(s)/skills speed; dexterity; focus; concentration

Directions/set up: All players Sit in chairs in a large circle; one player stands in the center without a chair.

The person in the center calls out some category or description that might apply to some of those seated (examples: "Everyone with brown eyes"; "Everyone who's under 30 years old"; "Anyone who went jogging this morning"; "All women"). If a seated person fits the category or description called out, he/she must get out of the chair and run to another one across the circle vacated by a different person (try to avoid going to a chair recently vacated next to you). The person in the center also tries to run to a vacant chair. The person left standing in the circle with no place to sit calls out the next category or description. Continue until exhausted. A "catch all" category for everyone to vacate and move to a new chair is when someone calls out "Fruit Basket Upset."

Caution players to play safely - no pushing, be careful when you run, etc.

Guideline: I caution players to use facts rather than opinion or preferences.

Not acceptable: “everyone who likes orange juice”

Acceptable: “everyone who drank orange juice this morning”

Object Memory

Place up to 20 objects on a table and cover with a cloth. Have the students number papers from 1 to 20 and then gather around the table. Uncover the objects and allow them to study the

objects for one minute. Recover the objects and have the students go to their desks or writing area and list as many of the objects as they can remember.

Guidelines: No touching the objects or speaking while studying the objects.

I use a stopwatch for the time.

Activity name/label Human Knot

of participants 4-5 +

Purpose(s)/skills: team building

Directions: The kids all stand up, cross their arms at the elbows (I Dream of Jeannie, but with hands extended) and close their eyes

You give them directions to move around (1 step forward, backward, etc).

Then tell them to take the first two hands they find - without peeking. Then have them open their eyes and unknot themselves without dropping hands (You have to give a little allowance for needing to change hand the way they are holding hands, but not completely dropping hands).

Eagle Eye Switch

Students stand in a circle and look down to a spot on the floor in the center of the circle. (The teacher can put a small piece of masking tape on the floor.) Students look up at someone in the circle. If that person makes eye contact, the two players switch positions in the circle. The game should proceed in silence until all are focused and concentrating on looking down and looking up to make eye contact.

Guidelines: Players should not “search” for someone with whom to make eye contact, but look down again immediately if eye contact is not made.

Typewriter

Everyone sits in a chair. Distribute the alphabet across the group (of course, it works with 26 or less...and the fewer there are the more challenging it gets), so that everyone "has" a letter.

Then select a word or phrase that they must "type" out, by clapping their hands when their turn is up.

If it is a phrase, the entire group slaps their lap twice IN UNISON for the spaces between words. Set them with a tempo once they get the hang of it. The slower tempos usually are harder than the faster ones.

At the end of the phrase or word, the group then stands up in unison and sits back down in unison.

My variation: The students slap their thighs for their letter, and clap once for spaces between words. I have them add a whoooo and raise their hands high as they stand up, sort of like a unison wave.

Walking breath

A delightful voice warm-up. Each person starts in their own space in the room. The leader gives the following directions:

Breathe out all the air in your lungs. Now take a breath. As you breathe out, start walking in any direction, watching out for other people and changing direction if you have to. Keep walking until you reach the end of the breath. Now stop and take another breath before you continue walking in a new direction. The breath should be gentle and easy. Look out to the horizon - imagine the walls aren't there.

After a couple of minutes, ask the students to introduce a low growl or hum into their voice - again not pushing the breath. Gradually, over several breaths, the voice can get a little louder. When the voice begins to warm, the hum can be opened out to an aaah, ooh or eeee sound. (I start with ooo, then progress to eee, then ahhh. Each sound opens the mouth a little wider.) Students should start to tune into each other, being aware of other voices in the room.

The emphasis is on walking with the breath and on being gentle with the voice until it is warm.