

## Warm-Up Routines

# Drama: Step

# 1

**WARM-UPS:** used to increase and/or focus energy

- WHAT:**
- Before beginning creative work, it is important to increase and/or focus energy by warming up the body, the voice, and the brain.
  - A warm up should take 3-10 minutes, and should include exercises from different categories (check-in, concentration, physical, and vocal).
  - All or most of your warm-up should remain consistent. Establishing routine will help children “shift gears” into creative work. It is okay to have a specific time in your warm-up where a different activity is inserted each day, if this is desirable.
  - Although especially important in Drama class, the warm-up routine can be effective in any class in which students will be working creatively. All CIAE teachers should know, and utilize, their students’ warm-up routines.



**TIP!**

Some populations need a warm-up to help increase their energy, while others may require more assistance in using their (copious) energy in a more focused manner. Choose exercises accordingly.

- HOW:**
1. Review the Warm-Ups and Warm-Up Games in **Drama: Insert 1**. You may wish to try some or all of these with your students to see how they respond to them.
  2. Together with your fellow CIAE teachers, choose exercises to create a 3-10-minute warm-up you feel is appropriate for your students. Each class could have the same routine, or they could be different.
  3. Write your warm-up routine on chart paper and post it in the classrooms for future reference.
  4. As students become familiar with the routine, it can become a student-led activity.



## Warm-ups and Warm-up Games

### CHECK-IN EXERCISES

#### Rose and Thorn

Each person in the room says their “thorn” and their “rose” for the day.

- A “thorn” is something in their day that’s not going well
- A “rose” is something in their day that they are happy or feel good about

#### “Cross the Room”

1. Clear an area of open space.
2. Half the class lines up on one side of the space, facing the other half lined up on the other side.
3. The leader says statements such as, “Cross the room if you are wearing brown.” “Cross the room if you have a pet.” “Cross the room if you like chocolate ice cream better than strawberry.” “Cross the room if you have a sister.”
4. If a person from either side agrees with the statement, they walk across the room and stand on the other side.
5. Students can have turns asking the questions.

**VARIATIONS:** Rather than crossing the room, students could, for example

- step in to a circle
- raise their hands
- stand up

### CONCENTRATION / FOCUS EXERCISES

#### Clap Together

1. The object of the game is for everyone to clap at the same time as the leader, by watching the leader very carefully.
2. The leader can change their tempo, or stop, whenever they wish.
3. The leader’s objective is not to trick the other players, but rather, to lead them by using clear body language.

CONCENTRATION / FOCUS EXERCISES (CONT.)

**Concentration Circle**

1. All participants stand in a circle. The leader looks at (makes eye contact with) the person next to them and says, "One."
2. That person (Player #2) then turns, makes eye contact with Player #3, and says "Two."
3. Player #3 turns, makes eye contact with Player #4, and says "Three."
4. Play continues around the circle until the number returns to the leader.

**VARIATIONS:**

- Add a second sequence; i.e., when play has reached the fifth or sixth person, that "pulse" continues around, but the leader begins a second "pulse" behind it, starting at "One" again.
- Use letters of the alphabet, days of the week, or months of the year instead of numbers, or have two different types of sequences going around
- VERY ADVANCED: Start a second sequence in the opposite direction; at some point they will cross and continue

**Counted Breaths**

1. While the leader counts to 4, everyone inhales through their noses.
2. While the leader counts to 8, everyone exhales through their mouths.

**Pass the Beat**

1. While sitting in a circle: Players put both palms down on the table or floor.
2. The leader slaps the table or floor with their right hand, then their left hand.
3. The person to the leader's left continues the beat with their right hand, then their left hand, and play continues around the circle.

**VARIATIONS:**

- Players cross their hands but keep the beat going in correct physical sequence, without skipping a hand.
- Players cross their left hand over their neighbor's right hand and keep the beat going in correct physical sequence, without skipping a hand.

CONCENTRATION / FOCUS EXERCISES (CONT.)

**Passing the Object**

While standing in a circle:

1. Pass an object around the circle, with no talking.
2. Make eye contact with your neighbor as you pass the object to them.
3. The entire group actively focuses on each person as they pass the object.

**Clapbacks**

1. The leader claps a 4-beat rhythm; the rest of the group echoes. Repeat with a new rhythm.
2. The leader can make the rhythms more complicated by adding different sounds, such as stomps, finger snaps, and slapping thighs.

**PHYSICAL EXERCISES**

**4-Point Physical Warm-up (can be done standing or seated)**

1. Stretch and yawn (2-4 times)
2. Shakedown
  - Sequence: R arm, L arm, R leg, L leg, whole body - start with 5 shakes each, then 4, then 3, 2, 1
  - Shout out the numbers while shaking the body parts
3. "Picking Apples"
  - Stretch up one hand, then the other (8X)
  - Pick an apple with one hand; chew and hum; toss apple and repeat with other hand
4. "Raisin and Banana"
  - Raisin: saying "raisin" in a small voice, make your body as small as possible
  - Banana: saying "banana" in a big voice, make your body as big as possible

## PHYSICAL EXERCISES (CONT.)

## Mirrors

1. Full Group: One person is the leader, and makes movements with their body (slower movements are easier to follow). The other players mirror their movements
2. In Pairs: Pairs face each other. One person is the leader; the other follows their movements. *Eye contact is maintained.* It's great if no one can tell who the leader is! Switch leaders after a while so that both partners have a turn.

## Walk, Point, Jump

1. Participants follow instructions as they move around the room, **repeating each instruction as it is given.** Instructions and actions are listed below:
  - a) "point" → point to another person in the room
  - b) "walk" → walk silently in any direction around the room
  - c) "jump" → jump in the air
  - d) "hop" → go down on one knee
  - e) body part → touch named body part to that of another person
  - f) a number → get in groups of that number (optional: introduce yourselves)

## VOCAL EXERCISES

## 4-Point Vocal Warm-up

1. Sirens on the word "woo," while swinging your arm in large circles
2. "Wee wah" - exaggeratedly, making big facial movements, starting slowly and getting faster
3. "Mamala pappala" - exaggeratedly, concentrating on good diction
4. "1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5" / "5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1" (SINGING)
  - 1 is the lowest pitch; 5 is the highest (1 2 3 4 5 = do re mi fa sol)
  - raise and lower your hands as the numbers go up and down

## Soundball

1. Players stand in a circle. Player #1 throws an imaginary ball to someone across the circle, making a sound while throwing. *The thrower must make eye contact with the intended recipient!*
2. Player #2 "catches" the ball, making eye contact and repeating Player #1's sound.
3. Player #2 "throws" the ball to another player, making a new sound.

## PHYSICAL / VOCAL EXERCISES

### Sound and Movement

1. In a circle: one person makes a movement and a sound at the same time.
2. The other participants repeat the sound and movement.
3. Play continues around the circle, with each person getting a turn to make up their own sound and a movement.

### Zip

In a circle: pass the energy around the circle, without letting it stop! Keep the energy high in your body and in your movement!

#### 1. "Zip!"

- a) Movement: right hand held at head level, palm facing forward, comes down and across the body to the left as upper body turns to the left.
- b) Make eye contact with both the person who passes you the zip, and the person to whom you pass the zip.
- c) Zip only travels in the same direction, i.e, if someone zips you from your right, you must zip the person on your left; you can't zip back to the person on your right (that would change the direction of the energy).
- d) Zip can also be started in reverse direction; exchange "left" and "right" in the movement directions.

#### 2. "Bop!"

- a) Movement: body turned toward the person you are bopping, both hands up, palms facing forward
- b) Bop **reverses** the direction of the zip. If you zip someone and they bop you, the energy bounces back to you and you must zip it away in the opposite direction.
- c) If you are bopped, you can't bop back. You can only bop a zip!

#### 3. "Zap!"

- a) Movement: hands with palms together; step into circle while pointing both hands toward the intended "zap" recipient
- b) Zap sends the energy across the circle to another person. If someone zaps you, you can zip to your left or to your right, or you can zap a different person across the circle.
- c) If you are zapped, you can't bop back. You can only bop a zip!

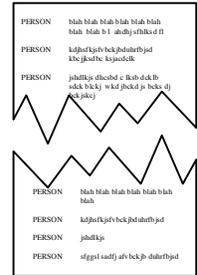
**\*\*\* If someone makes a mistake, KEEP ON GOING! DO NOT TALK except to say "zip," "bop," or "zap!" Don't stop! \*\*\***

#### VARIATIONS:

- Send more than one "pulse" around the circle. If you receive two pulses at once, you must send both of them along in some manner!
- Try playing silently, using only movement.

## Memorization Tips

- 1. Small Chunks:** Divide the script into small sections, and work on one section at a time.



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- 2. Daily Reading:** Do a little bit each day. This is MUCH, MUCH more effective than “cramming” at the end.

- 3. Get Rid of the Script:** After rehearsing a few lines (small chunks, remember?), put the scripts away and try again.



### 4. Use a Prompter:

- If an actor forgets a line during a rehearsal, s/he says “Line.”
- The prompter (who is not onstage) then reads that actor’s line from the script. The actor repeats the line and rehearsal continues.

**\*\*\* The prompter MUST wait for the actor to say “Line,” before prompting.\*\*\***

- 5. Record the Lines:** You or the students can record the lines on tape or on the computer. Students who wish to practice their lines can practice them along with the recording. They may also be able to take a recording home with them to practice.



- 6. Set an “Off Book” Deadline:** Set a date after which scripts will no longer be used.

# Drama: Step 2

## Using the Stage

### STAGE ETIQUETTE

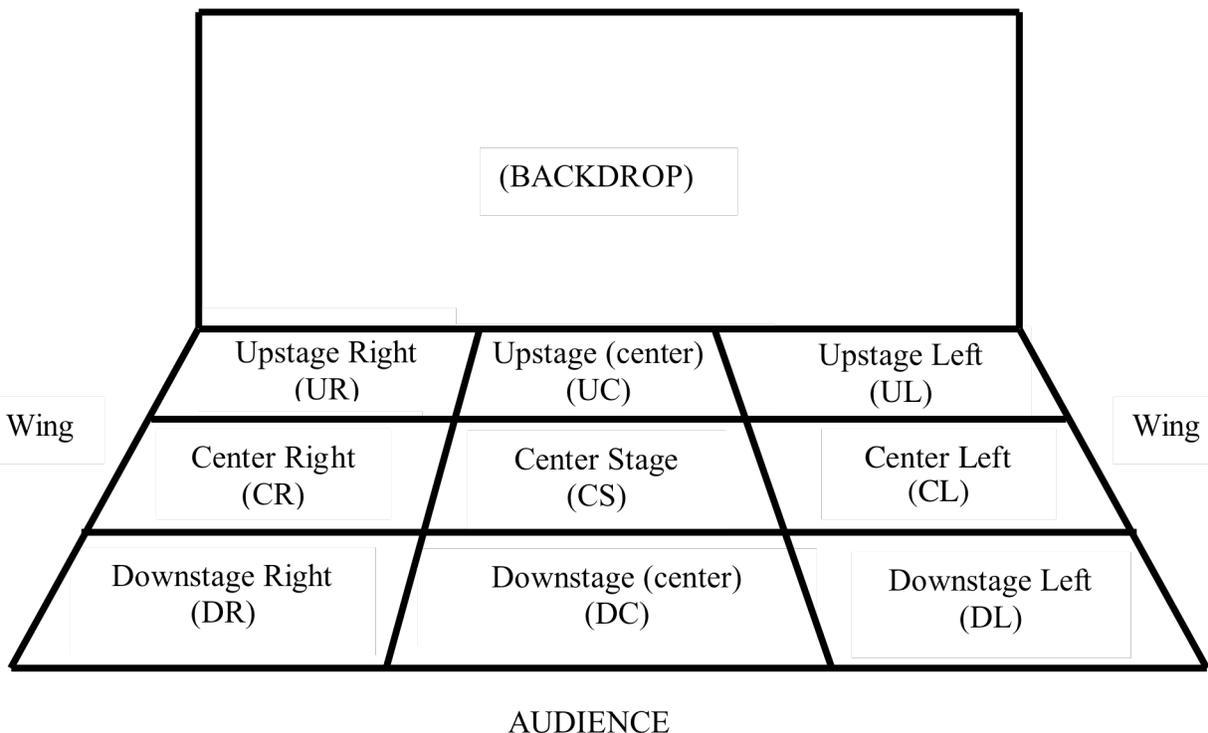
#### 1. The Stage

- During rehearsals and performances, the stage is for the show and nothing else. Respect it. It's a "magic zone." Use the stage for working only (and not for fooling around!).
- Tour the performance space before beginning work in it, to see where everything is and to identify working spaces.
- If the stage is elevated, use the stairs to get on and off.
- Walk, don't run, in the performance space - for safety and for respect.

#### 2. Backstage

- No one talks during rehearsals and performances (this includes grown-ups!), because
  - any talking can be heard by the audience
  - it's distracting -- people need to listen to what's happening on stage so they don't miss their cues
  - it is disrespectful to the actors and the work you're creating
- No peeking around curtains! If you can see the audience, they can see you.
- Everyone has a spot where they are supposed to be at all times. Be in your spot.

### PARTS OF THE STAGE

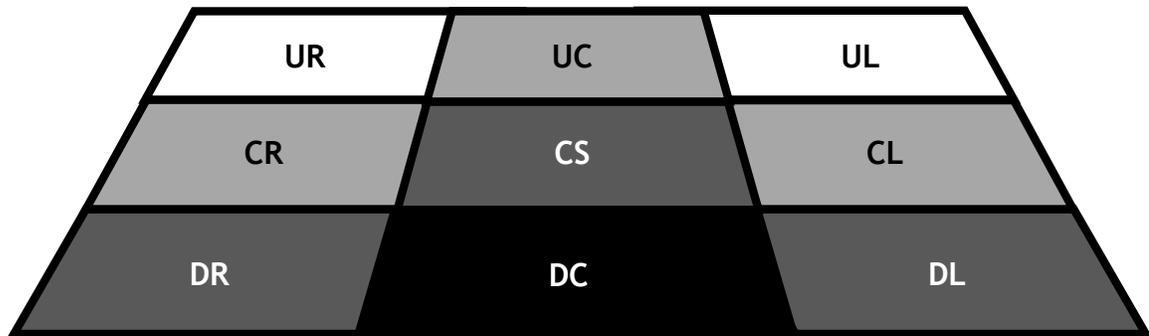


### USING THE STAGE FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT:

Different parts of the stage have different levels of dramatic power and focus. A good director uses the parts of the stage strategically to tell the story effectively.

- Action downstage commands more focus than action upstage.
- Action in the center commands more focus than action on the sides.

The following chart roughly indicates the relative power of different parts of the stage. The darker the area, the more dramatic power and focus it commands.



### “PARTS OF THE STAGE” EXERCISE:

Play this game on the stage to help students learn the parts of the stage. Give instructions such as:

- “Sneak to center stage”
- “Slide to upstage left”
- “Everyone wearing sneakers, jump to downstage right; everyone else, hop to stage left”

## Rehearsal Protocols and Techniques

**WHAT:** Effective rehearsals require good routines, protocols and techniques.

### SETTING UP THE REHEARSAL SPACE

Whether rehearsing in your classroom or in the auditorium or other performance space, the same routines should be followed.

1. **REHEARSAL IN PROGRESS - PLEASE DO NOT ENTER:** Make a sign (or signs) to put on the rehearsal room door(s), so that students can work without interruptions and distractions. Discuss ahead of time with administrators and colleagues, so that your educational goals can be understood and respected.

2. **Who should be in the room?** -- The people involved in the production.  
**Who should not be in the room?** -- Anyone else!

3. **Who should be talking during rehearsal?** -- No one.

When people are rehearsing, no other conversations should be taking place. This applies to both students *and* adults! As the grown-ups, teachers and paraprofessionals must set a good example.

**\*\*\* TALKING DURING REHEARSAL IS DISRESPECTFUL TO YOUR STUDENTS  
AND DEVALUES THEIR WORK. \*\*\***

4. **Rehearse in the performance space:** The more time spent rehearsing in the actual performance space, the better.

### BEGINNING A REHEARSAL

1. **Warm-ups:** Always begin with your warm-up to help create routine, energy and focus. When they know the routine well, students can take turns leading the warm-up.

2. **“Places”:** “Places” means where every person is supposed to be at the beginning of the show. This may be a location onstage, backstage, in the house (audience), or in another room. After the warm-up, the director (teacher) will generally ask everyone to go to “places.”

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF REHEARSALS

### 1. Working Rehearsal: STOP AND GO

- In a working rehearsal, the director (teacher) will stop the action when things need fixing, work on the problematic spot, and then restart the action.
- Remember to work ALL parts of the show - don't always start a working rehearsal at the beginning!

### 2. No Stops Run-Through: "THE SHOW MUST GO ON!"

- Actors must keep going no matter what! Students need to practice what to do if and when everything falls apart unexpectedly.
- **Notes:** instead of interrupting the run-throughs, directors will often make notes about things they wish to fix and rehearse. After the run-through, the director "gives notes" -- this can be just verbal reminders or instructions, but is usually more effective if the small, problematic bits are rehearsed immediately.

***Be sure to tell students which type of rehearsal  
(Working or No Stops Run-Through) you are doing before starting  
- and then stick with it! If you say it's a no stops run-through,  
DON'T STOP THEM!***

### 3. COMPLETE No Stops Run-Through: It is *essential* to do several COMPLETE run-throughs before your performance. This rehearsal should include:

- Warm-up
- "Places"
- Introduction (see *Documentation/P.R.: Step 5*)
- Performance
- Sets
- Props
- Costumes
- Bows (see *Drama: Step 5*)
- Post-performance "Places"

## Blocking and Staging

**ENTRANCE:** when an actor comes onto the stage

**EXIT:** when an actor leaves the stage

**CROSS:** when an actor moves from one part of the stage to another

**BLOCKING:** *where* actors go on the stage; entrances, exits, and crosses; like traffic patterns

**STAGING:** *how* actors do things on stage; the emotional context; physical gestures

**CHEAT OUT:** to stand on stage with your body facing (or at a *slight* angle to) the audience

**WHAT:** In order to get a show “on its feet,” you need a plan for *where* and *how* the actors move on stage.

**HOW:** Establish blocking and staging in the following three steps.

### 1. Seated Read-Through

- a) Choose a SMALL SEGMENT of the script to work on.
- b) Actors sit in front of the rest of the class and read through the script. (Children with reading difficulties may require assistance.)
- c) Make sure everyone understands what’s going on in this part of the story!

### 2. First Walk-Through: Blocking

For blocking, we are only concerned with basic movements such as entrances, exits, and crosses - “where their feet are.”



#### TIP#1

The director should always enter the first blocking/staging rehearsal with some blocking ideas already in mind. These ideas can change based on inspiration and student input, but it is essential to know the script, and its blocking needs, well before beginning work with the actors.



#### TIP#2

Blocking relies heavily on set pieces and their placement on the stage. Therefore, good communication between the director and the visual arts teacher is essential. Neither dictates to the other; rather, they collaborate together to determine optimal utilization of set pieces.

- a) The teacher/director prompts and asks questions of actors and other classmates to determine character motivations (what each character wants) at this point in the story.
- b) To determine blocking, we want to think about the following questions:

**BLOCKING: QUESTIONS TO ASK**

**1. THE NEEDS OF THE SCRIPT:**

- What entrances, exits, and crosses are mentioned or implied in the script?
- Does the blocking help show what each character wants?

**2. THE “STAGE PICTURE” (like a snapshot of the actors onstage):**

- Can we see everyone - is anyone blocking the audience’s sightline to another actor?
- Are all the actors facing and/or cheating out to the audience? (Most of the time, this will be desirable.)
- Are the actors close together or far apart?  
Are they in groups or by themselves?  
Which options would help tell the story the best?



- c) TAKE NOTES! The director’s copy of the script should have all the blocking written into it. You should have at least three copies of the script with the blocking in it, in case one is lost, or the main director is absent.

**3. Second Walk-Through: Staging**

While blocking is simply *where* actors go onstage, staging is *how* they express their characters’ motivations and emotions through physical movement and gestures.

- a) Review characters’ motivations and emotions in this script segment.
- b) Walk through the script segment again, reading the lines and using the blocking.
- c) With assistance and prompting from the director (and from classmates), actors will find ways of moving and speaking that will reveal their characters’ emotional intention.



Rather than *tell* students what to do (“Your character is angry - Shake your fist!”), we want to *elicit* their actions and gestures through questions. Ask questions about how the character would do things if they felt a certain way. For example, “Your character is angry! How would they enter the stage if they are angry? What would they do with their body? How would they say their words in an angry way?”

## Bows

# Drama: Step 5

**WHAT:** We bow to thank the audience for their support. Bows must be rehearsed!

- HOW:**
1. **Plan it out.** Who comes on first, second, third? Where is everyone coming to the stage from? Who stands next to whom?
  2. **Jog, don't walk (and arrange for those with physical disabilities to get onto the stage as quickly as possible).** When coming onto the stage for bows, it is important to move QUICKLY -- both to show energy, and also so that the clapping does not stop before everyone is in place.
  3. **Wait for everyone!** Don't start a group bow until all "bowers" are on the stage!
  4. **Bow are taken together, in a row, holding hands.** With small groups such as ours, children generally bow together rather than individually.
  5. **Bow together, on a cue from the teacher.** Everybody thinks:
    - "Hands up, 1-2-3"
    - "Bow down, 1-2-3" (feet together, look at your feet!)
    - "Stand up, 1-2-3"
    - "Let go, 1-2-3"
    - move quickly and quietly to post-performance "places"
  6. **SMILE!** Make your audience know that you loved your show, and they should love it too!

\* ALL CIAE students participate in bows, even if they don' have an on-stage role. \*

## Pre-Performance Ritual / Protocol

### Ideas for focusing energy and building team spirit

After doing your regular warm-up routine with ALL students (not just those with on-stage roles), try a calming, focusing activity. This must be rehearsed and must become routine!

1. Pre-rehearsal/performance “huddle,” where everyone gets together to encourage one another
2. Each person says their favorite line from the show, and everyone repeats it
3. Each person says one thing to remember during the rehearsal/performance, and everyone repeats it

At the conclusion of our routine, everyone can say together, “Have a good show!” After “Have a good show,” everyone proceeds silently to “places,” and waits for the rehearsal / performance to begin.