

## LISTENING IS IMPORTANT

The Lesson Plan Exchange for Teachers of Theatre

**Educational Objective:** The students will demonstrate their ability to understand the importance of being aware of sounds by performing a short improv reacting to different sound effects.

**Materials Needed:** Keys, Recordings of sound effects, Tape player, Blindfold, Masking tape, Slips of paper, container.

**Hook:** Have students stand in a circle. Play Chain Sentence. One student begins a sentence by saying a single word. The student next to him in the circle adds another word to make grammatical sense. Continue around the circle and have each person add a word to make a logical conclusion. Any one can end the sentence by saying "period" if the sentence can grammatically be ended. Go around the circle once. Then make it a competition. Anyone hesitating, making a grammatical error, or saying "uh" is out. Play til there is a winner.

**Step 1:** Have the students stand on one side of the room. Tape a line on the floor which they cannot cross. Place a chair on the other side of the room. Ask for a volunteer and pull out a blindfold. Place a set of keys on the chair and then blindfold the volunteer. Explain that the goal for everyone on the far side of the line is to steal the keys and the goal for the blindfolded student is protect the keys. Only one person may cross the line at a time and attempt a steal, but the blindfolded student only has to touch that person to get him out. The blind folded person may stand anywhere but cannot touch the chair or keys. Anyone makes noise behind the line he is out. Play a few times and let others be the blindfolded guard.

**Step 2:** Have the students sit and then talk about why it is important to listen to what is happening. What did they listen for to protect the keys? What were the most common sounds?

**Step 3:** Set 3 chairs in front of the class as if it were a park bench. Place three students on the bench. The person in the middle must listen to both conversations on either side and respond both verbally as well as non-verbally. This forces concentration and positive listening skills. (Ex. one person has just heard some bazaar news and wants to share it with the one in the middle and the other is upset and wishes to confide in the one in the middle. After a while send someone else up from behind to ask directions to the bathroom. Let everyone participate.

**Step 4:** Hand two slips of paper to each student. Have them write down a simple situation for two people. (ex. getting on an airplane, looking for lost dog, walking a tightrope, washing windows.) Collect all the slips into a container.

**Step 5:** Put students into pairs and have the pairs perform. As they come up have them draw a situation from the container. Instruct them that they must improv the situation on the slip and incorporate the sounds they will here. Let them start their improv and then play random sounds on a tape player (ex. gun fire, boing, birds, chainsaw, car, scream, etc.) Play one sound every 15 seconds or so. Stop them after they have reacted to three sounds. Have everyone participate.

**Step 6:** Discuss the importance of being aware of the sounds around us on the stage. Did their characters they were portraying act differently to the sounds than they would have? Did the situation make them react differently than they would have in other situations?