

# **Comedy Club Improvisation Activities**

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**These activities, as the title says, involve giving the children the outline and then getting straight onto it.**

### **Rating for each game**

**To help you, I have rated each activity/game according the following scales.**

#### **Ease of play 1-5:**

- 1** Inexperienced players can participate easily;
- 2** Inexperienced players can participate fairly with an example;
- 3** Some performance skills needed, possibly a challenge for younger or less experienced children;
- 4** For confident players. Will be a challenge for younger or less experienced children;
- 5** For experienced players. I would recommend that younger or less experienced children watch the first time(s) this is played.

#### **Ease to explain 1-5:**

- 1** Can be explained in less than a minute, children will pick it up very easily as they play;
- 2** Explanation is little longer or more complicated, but children will pick it up fairly easily as they play;
- 3** Needs a bit of explanation, but is then relatively clear how to play, children should pick it up fairly easily;
- 4** Explanation is a little complicated but example of how to play, should make things clear;
- 5** Needs a lot of explanation and an example of how to play, step by step examples needed, stop to make sure the children are following before going on.

#### **Re-playability 1-5:**

- 1** Can be played several times in a term;
- 2** Can be played a few times a term;
- 3** Can be played several times in a year;
- 4** Can be played few times a year;
- 5** Play only once a year.

## **Alphabet Game**

This is a scene consisting of 26 lines of dialogue. The first line starts with a given letter (say `R`). The reply to that line must start with a `S`, and so on, until the whole alphabet has been covered. After `Z` comes `A`.

Players that hesitate, or use the wrong letter `Die`, and are replaced by another player. The replacement needs to take over the character of the player she replaces.

**Note:** Urge players not to `stick` to the game - if you can't think of a good sentence to advance the story, it's better to just `die` than to muck up the story

- *Ease to play 3*
- *Ease to explain 3*
- *Re-playability 3*

## **Artist Model Clay**

**3 players.** One is a lump of clay - behind her is a second player who is a model. Model takes a pose, which the `clay` is not allowed to see. The third player becomes the artist, who will “mold” the clay after the model. The artist is not supposed to touch the clay, can't speak and it not allowed to use *their* body to show the clay what to do or to become. The artist must only use movements to coax the different body parts of the clay into looking like the model.

When done, let the model inspect the artwork to see if details fit. This can be played as either an activity where all the students are doing the activity at the same time, or as a performance.

### **Variation**

Limit the time the artist has to build to statue.

- *Ease to play 3*
- *Ease to explain 2*
- *Re-playability 3*

## **Freeze Tag**

**2 actors start a scene.** At any point in time the teacher (or another player when they are more experienced) can call Freeze. This player then tags out one of the 2 actors, and takes their place. Both players then start a new scene, with the tagger taking the same frozen pose and then taking the scene in a completely different direction.

- *Ease to play 4*
- *Ease to explain 3*
- *Re-playability 2*

## **Goalie**

Great high-tempo exercise. 1 player up front. He's the goalie. The other players all think of an opening line for a scene, and a character. E.g. A baker to his assistant. "Hey can you check on the wholemeal loaves?"

When everyone has their opening line and character, we bombard the goalie with these offers, one at a time. Goalie needs to react right away to an offer, acknowledging the opening and character, snap into an opposite character and reply to the opening line. Immediately after that the next player comes up with his or her offer.

This exercise is good for teaching players to react right away, and to snap into a character almost without thinking.

- *Ease to play 4*
- *Ease to explain 3*
- *Re-playability 3*

## **Make A Scene**

Group stands outside a designated performance space.

One person walks to the space, announces what she is, as in "I'm a tree." And then forms her body into a statue

The next person runs on and forms something else in the same picture. "I'm a bench under the tree."

The next person further adds to the picture. "I'm a little boy on the bench."

"I'm a dog peeing on the tree."

Etc., until the whole group is part of the picture.

If there are two teams, they alternate.

### **Variations:**

After a while, you might say, "Okay. . .on a count of three this becomes a moving picture!"

Or even, "A moving, talking picture!"

- *Ease to play 1*
- *Ease to explain 1*
- *Re-playability 1*

## **Scenes From A Hat**

This is a famous game from the show "Whose Line Is It Anyway", however even though it mentions a hat in the title, I have never used one I just use a sheet of paper with the ideas on it. I sometimes play this with all grades or sometimes a stage group or sometimes just a single grade- all work well. The playing group sits in a line facing the audience. The teacher gives an example of a scene. The children then come up to a designated spot and say and act out their example.

### **Variation:**

Players are in pairs and they act out the two player scenes.

### ***Scenes From A Hat Ideas***

- Buying a sandcastle
- Elephants packing to go on a holiday
- A weight watchers party

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- Inside a microwave
- Transylvanian hospital
- People who can't stop moving
- A bald man going into a hairdresser's demanding a haircut
- Shipwrecked on a desert island
- Fortune cookies that tell the truth
- Pointless things to take on an expedition to Antarctica
- Things you must not do near electricity
- Arriving at the wrong place
- Sports that will never make the Olympics
- Odd things to celebrate
- Strange caveman inventions
- Things you wouldn't expect to find in a kangaroo's pouch
- What you don't expect to find at the end of the rainbow
- Pointless things to take when crossing the desert
- Invitations you'd never accept
- Worrying things to be given on a plane
- Famous last words
- Other things the first man on the moon might have said
- Bad times for the microphone to cut out
- Songs that did not make it to No. 1
- Things you don't want to hear a pilot say
- Bad things to hear in a restaurant.
- Things you don't expect to hear from a seashell when you put it to your ear
- Bad times to break out in song
- Why the dinosaurs REALLY went extinct
- New games that Mr B introduced to Comedy Club that didn't work
- What rugby league players say to each other in a scrum
- Senior citizen Olympic events
- What doctors really see when they look in your ears
- The good news and the bad news
- Things you did as an Infants child that aren't as cute when you're in primary school
- Circus acts that didn't last long
- Difficult things to say with a straight face
- Trivial reasons to hold a news conference
- Weird things for your grandmother to give you for Christmas
- Things the pilot wishes he hadn't said when the intercom was on

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- What your dogs think and do when you leave them alone in the house
- If people broke into song in real life
- Jobs that shouldn't be done when feeling sleepy
- Things a teacher shouldn't say in the classroom.
- Things you can say about your vacation, but not about your brother or sister
- Names that children should never be given by their parents.
- Bad things to do during an earthquake
- Things you shouldn't do at the last minute
- Bad wishes to ask to the genie in the bottle.
- Shortest books ever written.
- Weird things to look for on Google.
- Gifts you really don't want to get.
- If adults settled arguments like Infants children do.
- Things you instantly regret.
- Things you don't expect to hear from Siri/ Cortana.
- What an Infant's child should not bring in for news.
- Things you shouldn't hear from your doctor.
- Things you shouldn't say when meeting the president.
- Strange things for an athlete to say after winning a gold medal
- Strange things to put on your Christmas wish list.
- Unusual things for a neighbour to ask to borrow.
- Unfortunate times to sneeze
- Jobs where you shouldn't joke around
- Unusual ways for a doctor to test your reflexes.
- Why Humpty Dumpty really fell.
- If statues could speak
- Superheroes you wouldn't want to be rescued by.
- Something you always wanted to tell your parents but couldn't, until now.
- Things you shouldn't be doing while talking on the phone
- Unexpected things to read or find in a first aid manual or kit.
- Bad times to say what you're really thinking
- How little Bo Peep really lost her sheep.
- What Goldilocks was doing before she broke into the bear's house.
- The latest must have app for your phone.

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### **Scenes From A Hat Ideas Pair activities**

- A child trying to convince their babysitter to let them stay up an extra hour
- A child trying to convince their parent to buy them a mobile phone
- A child trying to convince their friend to eat sushi for the first time
- Two children break one of their parent's possessions, they try to fix it before their parents get home.
- Two friends on a bushwalk when they meet a dangerous creature.
- A child tries to convince their parent why they shouldn't have to clean up their room.
- A teenager tries to convince their parent to take them for their first driving lesson.
- A grandparent and grandchild try to bake a cake but the grandparent can't remember the ingredients.
- Two friends go camping and try to put up their new tent, but the instructions are missing.
- Two friends go to a theme park, one wants to ride the rollercoaster, but the other is afraid.
- Two friends go fishing, but one is afraid to put the worm on the hook.
- A child needs glasses, but tries to convince their parent that they can see just fine.
- Two friends go shopping. One friend wants to buy a shirt that the other friend thinks is ugly, but they don't want to hurt their friends feelings.
- A child gets caught eating their parent's chocolate bar.
- A child tries to convince their parent to get them a pet pig.
- A child tries to convince their friend that they saw a UFO last night.

### **Space Jump**

This is like an extended *Freeze Tag* game but for 4 players. One player starts miming an everyday activity or routine. A second player (or the teacher) calls Freeze and the first one freezes. Second player builds another scene based on the frozen position of the first player. The other 2 players enter the same way. Once players 3 and 4 are in, as soon as Freeze is called, 2 and 3 take on their positions in which they were frozen, and continue their previous scene. And so on backwards. As soon as player 1 is

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back alone they go back to their original activity, and brings to game to a finish.

- *Ease to play 5*
- *Ease to explain 3*
- *Re-playability 2*

## **World's Worst Thing To Say**

Very similar to Scenes From A Hat. I sometimes play this with all grades or sometimes a stage group or sometimes just a single grade- all work well. The playing group sits in a line facing the audience. The teacher gives an example of the worst thing to say or hear in a given situation. The children then come up to a designated spot and say and act out their example.

E.g. The worst thing to hear or say at the Hairdressers.

Responses might be:

Child scratching head as miming cutting hair. "Yeah I just can't seem to get rid of these nits."

Or

Child mimes cutting, then looks concerned "You did say you wanted it all off didn't you?"

Here is a list of ideas.

### **World's Worst:**

- ❖ Thing to say or hear at a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday
- ❖ Times to fall asleep.
- ❖ Thing to say or hear at a wedding
- ❖ Things to say or hear when going through a metal detector at an airport
- ❖ Thing to say or hear to a new mother
- ❖ Thing to say or hear at a hairdressers
- ❖ Thing to say or hear when pulled over by the police
- ❖ Thing to say or hear in the principals office
- ❖ Thing to say or hear as a waitress
- ❖ Thing to say or hear during an operation



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- ❖ Thing to say or hear at a football game
- ❖ Thing to say or hear in a boat
- ❖ Thing to say or hear in a kitchen
- ❖ Things for your parents to do while driving
- ❖ Choices to make when your genie grants you a wish
- ❖ Things for you to do or say while your parents are driving
- ❖ Thing to say or hear at a funeral
- ❖ Person to sit next to at the movies
- ❖ Perfume scent that won't sell
- ❖ Police show
- ❖ Cooking show
- ❖ Ice Cream Flavours
- ❖ Reality TV shows
- ❖ Names for super heroes.
- ❖ Business slogans.
- ❖ Relative.
- ❖ Person to share an elevator with
- ❖ Names for a battleship
  - *Ease to play 1*
  - *Ease to explain 1*
  - *Re-playability 1*

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## **What Are You Doing?**

Group gets in a line at the edge of the playing space. The first person enters the space and begins to pantomime a simple activity--for example, brushing his teeth.

The second person runs on and says, "What are you doing?" The first person may answer anything EXCEPT what he is actually doing. In our example he may say, "I'm washing the car."

The moment the second person hears the answer, she must begin to pantomime the mentioned activity.

The first person goes to the end of the line and the third person runs on and says, "What are you doing?" Etc.

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### **Pointers**

The person acting **MUST NOT STOP** until he or she has answered the question. Sidecoach to make sure.

The new person **MUST START IMMEDIATELY** when the answer is heard.

The answer **MUST NOT** be what the person is doing, but, for convenience, it should also **NOT** be something that **LOOKS LIKE** what the person is actually doing.

### **Variations**

After a while, add to the original formula, "I'm \_\_\_\_\_." It can become, "I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_\_." Eventually it can become, "I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_\_ while \_\_\_\_\_." (For example, "I'm painting the barn with a codfish while snorkeling." It doesn't have to make sense.) The second person must begin to act as soon as she hears even **PART** of the answer. (In the example, we should see her painting the barn even before she hears that she's using a codfish. When she hears about the snorkeling she'll have to adjust.) Side coach to make sure they get all three details into their pantomiming.

You can play this as a tournament if you want. Two people bounce the question back and forth until one of them "fouls" by repeating himself, stopping the action before answering the question, not starting the acting in time, or answering the truth. A new challenger steps in, and so on until all but one person have been eliminated.

- *Ease to play 3*
- *Ease to explain 4*
- *Re-playability 3*

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All activities from:

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Other activities can be found in various places such as:

Top 50 Drama Games Unpacked By Celia Pennay

(Currently out of print)

I downloaded some free activities from the Drama Trunk website, but they haven't responded to email enquiries about what precisely is in their paid content.

<https://www.dramatrunk.com/>