

LESSON PLAN: THE SIX TRICKS OF STAGE DIRECTION BLISS/"DIRECTOR SAYS"

AGES: Elementary School, Middle School

DESCRIPTION

Actors need to know where and how to move on stage in order to reveal more information about a character and to be aware of ones setting/surroundings. Can be used as a warm up activity or until students are familiar with stage directions.

MATERIALS

- Marker Board
- Markers
- Stage
- Prizes

FULL LESSON PLAN

Key Terms:

- Blocking
 - Center Stage
 - Downstage
 - Upstage
 - Improv
 - Stage Left
 - Stage Right
- > See Uploaded Picture for Diagram of Stage Map

Procedure for the "Director Says" Game:

Imagine you are actors on stage and I am the director. I say move left. Whose left? Yours or mine? What if the director tells an actor to move upstage? Which Direction is that?

- 1) Have the students draw a diagram of stage directions off of the front board on their papers.
~ Discuss if this is how they thought it would be; how, from different perspectives, right and left are also different; how best to remember downstage/upstage
- For example, downstage is closer to the audience who is often seated down lower than the stage or that in history, stages were elevated in the back and lower in the front, hence there being "upstage" towards the back and "downstage" towards the front.
- 2) Have the group stand and face the teacher/director as if they are on stage. Here will begin the game of "Director Says" (aka: Simon Says).
- 3) The director says, "Director says move downstage you crazy cats!" and students respond with a few forward steps acting in character.

4) The director continues to give directions with various characters for the group to move around the stage according to the stage directions. If the director does not say "Director Says" and a student moves, they are out.

5) The game continues until only a few students are left or as long as time permits.

Some examples of commands: Chatty Chickens, Guitar Players, Leaping Frogs.

At the end of the game, ask students to describe the characters they played in the game.

- What was their posture like?
- Did they move with self-assuredness or were their movements more tentative?
- Did they have any health issues that affected their movements?
- (If applicable) Did their costuming affect their movements?