

IMPROV 2.0

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IMPROV GUIDELINES

1. **YES, AND...** - Agree to the Nth degree and provide additional information to advance the scene. Players should be able to trust that anything said will be immediately accepted.
2. **GIVE GIFTS** - Players should provide new ideas that further the scene or add new information (location, character, action, etc.). Initiate every move with a gift. Gifts can come in the form of verbal information or physical information.
3. **START IN THE MIDDLE** - Exposition sucks. Players should start their scene with the problem. The inciting incident is much more interesting than setting up who the characters are. The given circumstances should still be revealed throughout the scene, but with much less set-up.
4. **SHOW, DON'T TELL** - Make *ACTIVE* choices and follow through. The scene does not progress if the idea is talked away. Physical choices often lead to new ideas.
5. **JUSTIFY / THERE ARE NO MISTAKES** - One of the most important jobs an improviser has is justifying what your fellow players have said. Everything is accepted, now provide the *WHY*. Not everything needs to be justified immediately. Remember what was said.

IMPROV CRIMES

- **PIMPING** - Telling a player to do something vague or invent something with little to no assistance (i.e. Handing a player a book and saying, "here, read this out loud").
- **ASKING QUESTIONS** - Questions take away from your fellow player. It cuts the ground from under them. Questions put your fellow player on the spot and require them to do the heavy lifting instead of you. Often the answer we get to questions are not what we anticipated (anticipating is also bad).
- **BREAKING REALITY** - Disagreeing with a previously established rule (i.e. Actor starting a lawnmower with a, "brrrrrrmmmm!" and having another player ask, "why are you pulling the air and making weird noises?" (also a question) or when players establish a table and others walk through it).
- **VIOLENCE** - Not creative and puts the audience off. Approach any necessary violence with slow-motion or an extra-stylized technique.

GO!

Warm-Up | 6-20 Players

Players gather in a circle. One person passes the "GO!" (scoop up with hands to the left or right). The "GO!" continues until reversed by a "WHOA!" (hands in front of face to signal "stop") OR until the "GO!" transforms into a "YOU!" (point and eye contact with someone across the circle). You cannot "WHOA!" a "WHOA!" and you cannot "YOU!" a "YOU!" or "WHOA!" a "YOU!" You can only "GO!" a "YOU!" Once students master this, add "DINNER PARTY" and "BUFFET" where everyone finds a new spot in the circle demonstrating what it is like to be at either of those events. BONUS: Make up your own!

Evolution

Warm-Up | 6-20 Players

Players mill around the room. Everyone begins as an Egg. When prompted (bell) everyone who is an Egg will pair up and Rock / Paper / Scissors / SHOOT to determine who evolves. The winner becomes a Chicken. This process continues up the Evolutionary line until you end up with a Laser Shark! If you lose your hand at Rock / Paper / Scissors, you devolve (ex. Chicken → Egg). Evolutionary Chain: Egg → Chicken → T-Rex → Superhuman → Robot → Laser Shark

Forward & Reverse

Story Structure | 4 Players

Players arrange themselves in four quadrants on the stage. The two players downstage will be given a prompt from which to start a scene. The director calls "Forward!" and the players in the quadrant rotate one quadrant clockwise. The two new players downstage will be given a different prompt from which to start a scene. The director continues this until each pair of players has a prompt. Once each pair has a prompt and has reviewed, start each scene. As a scene progresses, the director will either call "Forward!" prompting the players to move one quadrant clockwise OR "Reverse!" prompting the players to move one quadrant counterclockwise. The players must pause the scene when prompted to move. Once the quadrants rotate around and the focus returns to that same player pair, the scene will resume right where it left off. NOTE: I tell students they will have the opportunity to present three parts of their scene - the Beginning, Middle, and End.

One Line Set-Up

Story Structure | 2-3 Players

The goal is to fully set up a scene in as few lines as possible. Each player only has one line to fully establish the Characters, Relationships, Location, and Problem within the scene.. If, after each player speaks, any of these scene elements are still unclear, the game ends and the players must start again with a new prompt.

New Choice

Spontaneity / Justification | 2-6 Players

Players start a scene with a prompt from the audience. As the scene progresses, the director rings a bell or calls, "New choice!" The last line spoken or action performed must be redone with a brand new choice.

Emotional Family

Characterization | 3-6 Players

Players start a scene with a prompt from the audience for a typical family activity. As the scene progresses, the director pauses the scene to give each character a dominant emotion to play. This continues until each character has an emotion and the scene concludes.

Smelly, Sexy, Stupid

Characterization | 3-5 Players

Prior to players starting a scene, they must decide for themselves how they are going to feel about each of their fellow players within the scene - either Smelly, Sexy, or Stupid. The goal is to be subtle as to conceal their true feelings from their fellow players.

Unusual Olympics

Characterization & Physicality | 4 Players

Two players will serve as commentators and two players will serve as Olympians. Pull the audience for an usual activity or a household chore (ex. vacuuming). The two commentators will then introduce the Olympic Finals of Vacuuming and the scene begins. The Olympians will play out the scene silently responding to prompts given by the commentators. The commentators will respond to the physical gifts given by the Olympians and can even replay a sequence or switch to slow motion.

Character Swap

Characterization | 2 Players

Players start a scene. Halfway through, the director stops them and the players must switch roles.

Line Please

Justification | 2 Players

Players start a scene. One player is given a random script or book and must only speak using lines from the text. The other player must work to justify those lines within the scene.