

# Context – The “How”

Scenic Improv

**Grades 11-12 & up**

**Educational Objective:** The students will demonstrate their ability to create context in their scenes by performing several improvised scenes and following the concept of context.

**Materials Needed:** Two copies of a short scene (attached)

**Hook:** Have two players play the shot scene provided.

**Step 1:** Explain that context is the “how” of the scene. It is the road map to where the scene will go. Explain that this was just a dumb little scene without much context. If we were to say what the context is it would be talking about Tupperware. Have two other players come up and perform the scene but this time they must be angry about Tupperware. Now we have more context. The context is Tupperware makes these two characters angry.

**Step 2:** Now split everyone up into pairs. Have each pair come up and improvise the first few lines of a scene with a one word suggestion from the audience. Have them first improvise the scene without a how. Then have them do it again and have them choose a how (Sarcastic, afraid, laughing, crying, stomach aches, clumsy, something caught in teeth, etc.) and have both actors do the same “how.” After everyone has performed, discuss the difference in the scenes with and without the how. Explain that they must keep their how through the whole scene. Never let go.

**Step 3:** Now have them all try it again (creating a new scene without context and then repeat with context) but this time each player must choose his own how. There will be two different “hows” in the scene. They could be opposites or not.

**Step 4:** Now have another two players play the short written scene with anger but have them do it while they are defusing a bomb without much consideration for the bomb. Now they have created context for the scene. The how is what creates the context for the scene. They must stay with this context – never let it go. The context is now that being angry about Tupperware is more important than making sure the bomb doesn’t go off.

**Step 5:** Have everyone perform the same scenes again with the same hows but have them add more context to the scene by having them doing something in a specific place (like diffusing a bomb, stocking groceries, fixing a lawnmower, etc.)

**Step 6:** Discuss what they learned. What are their concerns? What did they like or dislike?

Short Scene

**Woman:** I'm sure excited about tonight's Tupperware meeting.

**Man:** Yeah, I hear they're gonna introduce a new banana split tray that's top rack dishwasher safe.

**Woman:** Even the regional rep is gonna be there.

**Man:** He said he was gonna bring us all some coupons too.

**Woman:** We really deserve those coupons after all the selling we did.

**Man:** You said it.