

# Intro To Scenic Improv

**Educational Objective:** The students will demonstrate their ability to understand the basic concepts of scenic improvisation by performing several improvisation scenes.

**Materials Needed:**

**Hook:** Ask for two volunteers. Tell them to do a scene. Do not give them any information just do a scene. It will probably not be hard for them and not that good.

**Step 1:** Ask what was good and bad about the scene? Explain that we will be doing some scenic improvisation for the next few days. Why would scenic improvisation be good for actors? Who is scared to do this and why? Explain that we will learn some concepts of scenic improvisation and if you understand these concepts you will not be so scared because in scenic improv you do not have to be funny and be able to come up with witty one liners.

**Step 2:** Write on the board “TRUST.” Discuss trust. Actors begin by trusting their own skills and their ability to learn new ones. Actors cannot create an exciting scene if they are worried about their abilities. There is nothing more comforting than working with an actor you can count on. Just as in life, trust is slowly built and easily broken. Put them into groups of 8. Have them stand in tight circles and one in the middle. That person closes his eyes, crosses his arms in front of his chest and stiffens up his whole body. Those in the circle put their hands on the person and say his name in unison signifying the exercise has begun. They push and catch him as he falls in any direction. Let it go about 20 seconds then have them put the person upright and say his name again ending the exercise. Develop trust by having the person trust he won’t be dropped. Have everyone be in the middle.

**Step 3:** Write on the board “WORK TOGETHER.” Explain that Actors who showboat or steal focus hurt the group as a whole. Working together means really listening to the others and exercising give and take on stage. Working together takes time to develop. Divide the players into groups of ten. They may not talk or use hand motions to give directions. Call out a letter that they must form like a band at a half time show. Choose different letters and let them adapt to one another.

**Step 4:** Write on the board “NO ONE IS IGNORED.” Listen to everyone. When someone say a line, take that line and add to it. Ask for 5 volunteers. Have one person be the non-ignorer. They will do a scene. They are at a party. The 4 others will be at the party in a semi circle and the 5<sup>th</sup> will be anywhere. The four will take turns saying any random thing and the 5<sup>th</sup> must use that random line to “keep the party going” by talking about it or doing something about it or both. He must try to keep all the random things together and connect them logically. Have a couple of groups try it.

**Step 5:** Write on the board “TRANSFORM QUESTIONS.” Remind them that this is a concept and not a rule. Most questions avoid the responsibility. For example, two people are doing a scene and one says, “So, what’s going on?” This adds nothing to the scene. If a question forms in your mind transform it to a statement by answering the question. “What’s that over there?” becomes “Hey look, a lottery ticket.” Call out some questions to the class and have them transform them. What’s up? What are you doing? What’s on T.V. tonight? Want to go to the movies? Where are you going? When’s dinner? How’s it going?

**Step 6:** Have two people at a time come up and try some scenes using the concepts they’ve learned. They don’t have to be funny or entertaining. Ask the class to give a “where” for them to start.

**Step 7:** Talk about the scenes. What’s difficult? What are some problems?