

BROADWAY 101

A Comprehensive Study Guide
covering everything that is Broadway.

Acting

Acting Activity #1

In groups of 6

- Use the Internet or a literary source to research a musical from the “Golden Age of Broadway.” Find out what the story is about. For example, what happens at the beginning of the musical; in the middle (what is the conflict); and how does the musical end (or resolve)?
- The task for each group will be to create living statues or tableaux that represent the key aspects of the story’s beginning, middle, and end.
- Two members of each group will take on the role of Directors or sculptors who will ‘shape’ the members of the group into three tableaux (or frozen pictures) that represents the characters and their actions at the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- The Directors/sculptors will either instruct or physically move the statues/characters into position and interpret the scene for the class.
- *Extension 1:* Combine the statues/tableaux into one flowing piece adding creative movement and/or music to connect the beginning, middle, and end sections of the story.
- *Extension 2:* Once each tableau is set, the Directors tap the shoulder of each frozen statue cueing each character to ‘come to life’ and speak a line that explains his/her action(s) at the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Technique Tips for Tableaux Work

Tableau is a frozen representation of human figures captured in the middle of action. Tableaux communicate meaning and maintain aesthetic form by ensuring that all figures and actions:

1. Relate to a given story, theme, time or place;
2. Depict an emotional quality;
3. Engage in physical activity that incorporate a variety of levels (high, medium, low) and directions;
4. Are well balanced, large, and easy to read with a clear focal point.

Acting Activity #2

In groups of 2

Number Dialogue

Actors tell the story of a play using not only the words in the script, but also their tone of voice, facial expressions and body posture.

- Begin with the script of the one-minute play (or any short text.) Read it aloud with your partner several times, until the story is clear to you both. Perform it for the class.
- Now, instead of speaking the text, substitute numbers for the words - right off the top of your head. Example: Instead of saying, "We should leave right now," you might say "Seven, seven, four, five!" or whatever number occurs to you. You and your partner should still alternate speaking as in the script, telling the same story. Don't think about the numbers; think about what you are trying to communicate.

Practice the scene with your partner. Now that you don't have the words, you have to use your face, voice and body to get your meaning across.

- Perform it for the class. The effect should be like watching a scene from a movie in another language - the audience may not know what the exact words are, but they get **the general sense of what is happening.**