

EYFS/ KSI

Breathing

Practice breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. Invite students to suggest a colour to breathe in and a colour to breathe out to help with visualisation and focus.

Voice

Sing the alphabet together. A favourite version of mine - away from the norm - is [Super Simple Learning's The Alphabet is so much Fun](#).

Take it in turns, around a circle, to introduce yourself, focus on loud, clear voices. Start simple and add a new piece of information each week e.g. "Hello, my name is Sarah ...and I'm happy! Or ...and I like dancing!"

Physicality

Make big and small shapes with the face and body. Who can show me the biggest face they can make? Bigger? Bigger? And who can show me the smallest? Repeat with the body using a big star shape and a small ball on the floor. "

Coordination

Play Up, Down, Turn around, a simple but really fun game which uses these commands:

Up = hands up in the sky (reach!)

Down = hands down to the ground

Turn Around = students turn around (once!) on the spot



Speed / Reaction time

Add some fun to Up, Down, Turn around by giving instructions as fast you can and in slow motion.

KS1 development: Ask the students to 'listen not copy' as you give an instruction but perform a different action. E.g. Up! - whilst putting your hands on the ground. Students are to respond appropriately to the spoken instruction. i.e. They reach their hands up to the sky.

Memory

Have students copy a simple series of movements such as hands on head, shoulders, tummies, knees. Utilise different sequences of these four movements in a call and response fashion: you perform, students copy.

Gradually make the sequences longer and see if the students can continue to copy you correctly.

KS1 development: Have students up individually to watch and remember a sequence, and perform it correctly back to the class.

Creating characters

Walk in different ways around the room/space. Tip-toe, march, slide, crawl, jump, sideways (like a crab), like jelly... so on and so forth. Utilise follow-the-leader to aid classroom management.

I always like to have some peaceful instrumental music on the background for this activity.

KS1 development: Make it into a game of musical statues (with more upbeat music!). When the music stops, students must freeze. When frozen, call out a way in which students should walk the next time the music starts.



Exploring emotions

Play Magic Hand.

Swipe your hand down, in front of your face. As you do so, change your facial expression to portray a different emotion. As you swipe your hand back up, change your facial expression again. Invite the students to call out which emotion you are showing. Can they copy?

Continue to do this until you have covered a few different emotions.

KS1 development: In pairs, have one student leading and the other copying. The person copying has to try and match the same facial expression each time. And vice versa.

Breath

Stood in a circle, begin by simply taking a few deep breaths in through the nose, out through the mouth.

Next, add an arm movement. As students breathe in, they raise their arms up to their sides, in line with their shoulders (T shape). As they breathe out, arms return to their sides. Repeat a few times.

Continue this movement by bringing the arms all the way up as students breathe in, so biceps are beside the ears. Again, as they breathe out arms return to sides.

The idea is that when the arms go halfway students take what they think is a deep breathe, but you can always take in more and more air. By bringing the arms all the way up students have to control their breathe slightly, ensuring they fill up their lungs as much as possible.

Voice

Altogether to start, everybody takes a deep breathe in and releases their breathe on an 'Aaah' sound. (Think long vowel sound, rather than a short 'a' sound).

The sound is not to be forced, but relaxed and long. See who can last the longest. Time it.

Development: Do this in pairs maintaining eye contact. The urge to laugh will make it harder to control the breathe.

Physicality

Play an instructional game whereby the teacher calls out instructions and the students respond appropriately. This can be very simple, warming up the body, tuning the students in their bodies, the space and those around them.

Instructions should include different types of travelling, different places to travel to and different shapes to make. Some example instructions are:

Walk walking (normally!) around the space. In all directions. Always trying to fill the space completely, not all in one area.

Freeze everybody freezes on the spot. I like to perform this one with a clap or a percussion instrument.

Star instantly make a star shape with your body, either standing or on the floor.

Side 1 / 2 this works best if there is something identifiable about the sides of the room e.g. windows, mirrors, bars etc. If not, 'Side 1/2' works fine. Call out Side 1, students are to run and line up against that side of the room. Call Side 2, students are to run and line up against a different side of the room. This is a great one for tiring students out but the sides can also be used independently amongst other instructions, ensuring students are really listening.

And get creative! Absolutely any instruction, with any response you choose will work. The aim of this activity is to simply get the students moving, and moving in different ways. So you can have instructions like jumping beans, jellyfish, slow motion, reverse, rewind, bootcamp, whirlwind, circle, sit etc. Each with an assigned movement or stance to be performed.

Coordination

Continue to play the instructional game but switch some instructions around. E.g. Walk becomes Freeze, Freeze becomes Walk.

Assign constraints to some of the rules: Only those whose names begin with S can perform Star. Everyone else must continue whichever action they're on.

Divide the students into group 1 and group 2. Have one student from each group come up to the front to call out instructions. Students must only listen to the instructions called out by the representative from their group.

Speed / Reaction time

Have an object in the middle of the room. The object will be snatched up off the ground and so mustn't be too big/small, and I find something that makes a noise, like a bell is effective but not essential.

Two students will stand either side of the object, facing away from each other. Decide upon a 'trigger' word as a group E.g. potatoes!

An improvised story is to be told. As the story is being told, the two students are to slowly, and with small steps, walk away from each other. The story continues. When the trigger word is used in the story e.g. 'and the farmer went to collect the potatoes...' each of the students are to turn and dash for the object in the middle! Whoever claims the object wins a point for their team.

Two new students now stand up, a new trigger word is agreed and a new story is told.

Development: Have students tell an improvised story instead of you.



Memory

Create a short scene, one student and one action at a time. Decide together on a space familiar to everyone: rooms in a house or somewhere in school are usually the best options. E.g. living room.

One student enters the performance space, and performs only one action e.g. takes off their coat. The next student enters, performs the first action (takes off their coat) and adds their own action e.g. walks to and opens the fridge. The next student must then take of their coat, walk to and open the fridge and add their own action.

Continue this accumulative process until all students have performed (perhaps best done in two groups if you have a big classes) and by the end a short scene has been created.

Creating characters

Chant: Boom Chicka Boom.

This is one of the most well-known activities in the drama teaching world, and also one of my favourites. It's so simple and enjoyable that students don't actually realising their becoming different characters, therefore it's super effective too!

Boom Chicka Boom is a call and response chant whereby you perform the chant multiple times, but each time in a different way or in the style of a different character.

I learned this chant as a student and thought my teacher was simply the coolest for being so creative and confident, which is why this activity sticks with me. Therefore, though I have provided a link to the chant below, I strongly encourage you to learn it yourself and bring it into the classroom without any fuss.

My favourite styles to try out with students are like a goblin, like a giant, like a fairy, like a DJ, like monkey and like a teacher! (always interesting!)

[Click here to listen to the chant](#)

