

David Farmer

101 **more**

# Drama Games

& Activities



## 101 More Drama Games and Activities

This sequel to the best-selling *101 Drama Games and Activities* contains inspirational and engaging games and exercises suitable for children, young people and adults. The activities can be used in drama lessons and workshops or during rehearsal and devising periods.

The book includes lively and fun **warm-up games**, as well as activities to develop **concentration**, **focus** and **team building**. The **drama strategies** can be used as creative tools to explore themes and characters. There are dozens of ideas for developing **improvisation** (which can be extended over several sessions). There are many new activities for exploring **storytelling** skills as well as **mime and movement**.

**Search the book using the categories or index – or just dip in to find the activity you need.**

What they said about the first book:

*'David Farmer's excellent little book... it is here that you will more than likely find an activity that will suit your needs.'* – Journal of National Drama.

*'One of the handiest things to have around.'* – Teaching Drama Magazine.

*'Belongs amongst the top ten books any director or drama teacher should own.'*  
– English Touring Opera.

**David Farmer** is a freelance drama consultant and theatre director. A founder member of Tiebreak Theatre Company, he has led projects for Creative Partnerships and the Shakespeare Youth Festival. He runs regular training courses for teachers and directors in the UK and abroad. He manages the popular website **www.dramaresource.com**, keeping in touch with thousands of people around the world.

# **101 More Drama Games and Activities**

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**Illustrations by David Hurtado**



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# Introduction

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## What are Drama Games?

Drama games are interactive group activities with simple structures and clear objectives.

## Why use Drama Games?

- ★ They help groups to work together for a shared goal
- ★ They encourage a sense of playfulness and creativity
- ★ They are physical and interactive
- ★ They appeal to kinesthetically-inclined learners
- ★ They develop communication skills
- ★ They boost confidence
- ★ They foster presentation and performance skills
- ★ They help people learn in ways that are enjoyable and memorable
- ★ They promote a playful atmosphere where there is no concept of “failure”
- ★ They are fun!

## Circle And Cross

**Age:** 7 to adult

**Players:** Whole Group

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Skills:** Concentration, Ice-breaker

*A game for breaking the ice and quickly getting the attention of the group.*

Ask everyone to hold up their right hand and draw a small circle in the air in front of them with their finger. Demonstrate this and get them to join in. Now ask them to drop their right hand and raise their left. With this hand they should draw the shape of a cross in the air. Demonstrate this as well. Now ask them to draw both the cross and the circle at the same time. Most people will probably be able to do this part.

Now ask them to swop hands so they are drawing a circle with their left hand and a cross with the right. This is the part that most people will struggle with – it can be quite amusing. Swop back and forth a few times. (It may remind you of that old chestnut of patting your head and rubbing your tummy – then swopping hands.) Augusto Boal often used this game at the beginning of his drama sessions.

## Wrong Names

**Age:** 9 to adult

**Players:** Whole Group

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Skills:** Imagination, Creativity

*A quick warm-up for waking up the right and left sides of the brain – and igniting the creative spark.*

Everyone walks around the room at the same time for a minute or so pointing at random objects and calling out their names. That was easy (and probably noisy). Now repeat the walking and pointing – but call out the name of the *previous* object you pointed at. For example, you point at a chair and say nothing. You walk further, point at a broom and say “Chair” – and so on.

Now comes the challenging third stage. Walk around the space and point at objects but give them random names – they should not in any way be related to the object. The words you use can be names of other objects which are not in the room, or any word at all. This is a liberating game for freeing up your imagination.

## Human Bingo

**Age:** 10 to adult

**Players:** Whole Group

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Skills:** Ice-breaker

*Find out as much as you can about other people using a bingo card.*

Each person is given a sheet of paper set out in a grid like a bingo card. However, instead of numbers, each box contains a phrase relating to hobbies, interests or other personal information. A time-limit is given and everyone asks each other questions. When they find someone who fits one of the categories, they ask that person to write their name in the box.

The winner is the first person to get a signature in every box or to gather the most names within the time-limit. You can make it a rule that each person can only sign one box on someone else's card. You will need to prepare the cards in advance and choose around 12 – 20 categories to suit the characteristics of the group members. Examples are given below.

### Children:

- ★ Has a pet
- ★ Has two sisters
- ★ Likes chocolate
- ★ Has blue eyes
- ★ Plays a musical instrument
- ★ Has ever won a prize
- ★ Is the youngest child in their family

### Young people and adults:

- ★ Has lived in more than one country
- ★ Has a driving license
- ★ Has been to the theatre in the past week
- ★ Was born in the same month as you

## **Budge**

**Age:** 7 to adult

**Players:** Whole Group

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Skills:** Concentration, Energiser

*An exciting chase game where you can sit on a chair for a quick escape.*

You need the same number of chairs as there are players – minus two. Spread the chairs out around the space, facing in all different directions. Select one person to be the chaser (“it”) and another to be the runner. Everyone else sits down on a chair. Start off with the two players a good distance apart.

The two players race between the chairs. When the runner wants to escape, he can touch the back of any chair and say “Budge!” The person on that chair has to get up and run while the previous runner sits down. Once the chaser catches their prey (by tapping them on the shoulder) then they swop roles – or two new players can be chosen.

## Cat and Mouse

**Age:** 7 to adult

**Players:** Whole Group

**Time:** 15 minutes

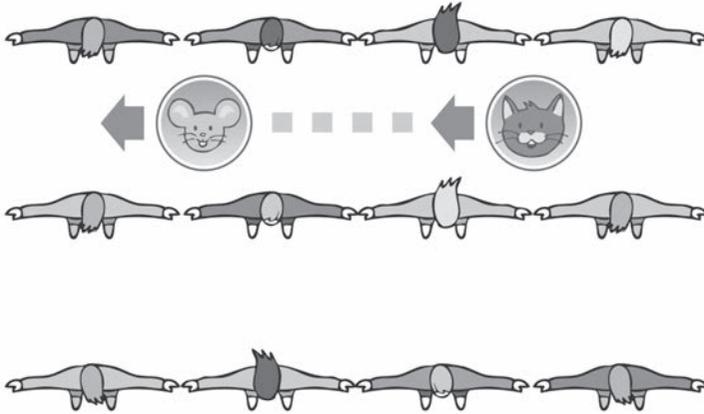
**Skills:** Concentration, Energiser

*The cat and mouse chase each other through an ever-changing maze.*

This takes a bit of time to set up. Two players are chosen to be the cat and mouse. Everyone else makes a maze for them to run through by standing in a grid layout. For example, if you have a group of fourteen players, two people will be the cat and mouse, leaving twelve people to make the maze like the one on the right. If you have uneven numbers the rows can vary slightly in length. You can easily have up to thirty or so players.

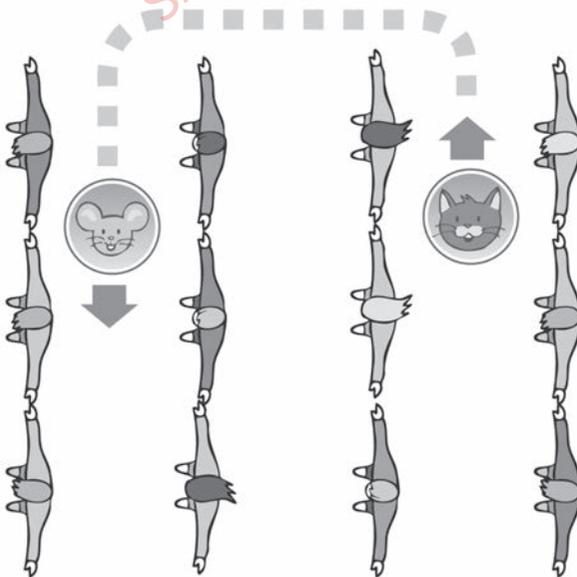
Everyone in the maze starts by facing in the same direction. They all hold their arms up in a T-shape, thus creating several rows. Now you need to practice changing from rows to columns. When you call "Change!" everybody in the maze turns 90 degrees to their right and by doing so they create columns instead of rows. When you call "Change!" again they should turn back to their original position. They hold their arms up the whole time.

The cat starts off in one row and the mouse in another and the chase begins. If the cat manages to get into the same passageway as the mouse the leader can call "Change!" so that suddenly the cat is in a different row or column. After a while you should let the cat catch the mouse, otherwise you will have two very tired players. At this point a new cat and mouse are chosen. Don't play the game for too long as everybody's arms will start to ache!



(Above) The cat chases the mouse along the same row.

(Below) On the signal "Change!" everyone turns to the right – so the cat and mouse end up in different columns.



## Bunnies

**Age:** 7 to adult

**Players:** Whole Group

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Skills:** Concentration, Energiser

*A daft game which requires everyone in the group to be wide-awake – because anyone could be a rabbit.*

The group stands in a circle. First of all they need to know how three people can make a bunny: the middle person holds their hands in front of their mouth and wiggles the first two fingers of each hand to make teeth like Bugs Bunny. The players on either side hold the hand nearest to the middle person up to the side of their own heads and wave them like big floppy ears. At the same time all three people say “Bunny, bunny, bunny” over and over very quickly.



The middle person of the three looks around the circle (continuing to say “Bunny” and wiggling their teeth) until they choose somebody. They point to that person with their wiggly teeth and nod towards them (as though throwing the bunny across the circle) while saying “Bunny” one last time. That person becomes the new bunny and of course the people on either side provide the new ears.

The aim of the game is to catch people out by “throwing the bunny” to them when they least expect it. They have to be ready to become the rabbit or the right or left ear at any time. Try it for a few minutes until everyone knows how to play it, then you can play a *Bunny Death Match*. In this case people should sit down if they are caught out, until you have just three or four players left. The winners could be awarded a carrot or a lettuce leaf.

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## Humming

Humming is one of the safest and most effective ways of warming up the voice. Take your time with any of the following, making sure your body (particularly around the neck and shoulders) is relaxed.

- ★ Softly hum one of your favourite tunes.
- ★ Hum a scale (doh-re-mi) up and then down.
- ★ Start low and then hum up smoothly to a comfortable high note. Swoop down again.

Every now and again, return to some relaxed sighing and vocalised “aaaah” sounds. Check your stance with the *Standing and Breathing* activity.

## Ball of Gum

Warm up your facial muscles by chewing an imaginary ball of gum. As you continue to chew, let it get bigger and bigger. Move your jaw from side to side as you move the ball of gum around in your mouth.

## Articulation

Tongue Twisters help with articulation and they are a lot of fun! Try saying the following several times, making sure that you enunciate the consonants:

*The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue,  
The tip of the tongue, the teeth, the lips.*

*Round and round the rugged rocks, the ragged rascal ran.*

*A box of biscuits, a box of mixed biscuits and a biscuit mixer.*

You can find a list of several more at the back of *101 Drama Games and Activities* (Farmer 2007).

## Status Swop

**Age:** 11 to adult

**Players:** Pairs

**Time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Skills:** Status, Improvisation

*The balance of power between two people shifts in a silent scene.*

This activity is all about exploring the status relationships between characters – and how they can change. For example, conventionally a waiter may have a subservient attitude towards a diner, but this could easily change if the diner can't pronounce the name of the wine. In any relationship between two people the power balance shifts frequently.

In pairs, think of a situation where it is possible that two characters would not be talking. For example, this could be in a library, gym or theatre, on a bus, train or plane. Alternatively the characters could be involved in a silent activity like putting a baby to bed or breaking into a house. There should be a clear status relationship between the characters – but it must swop by the end of the scene.

As soon as the players have outlined the *Who, What, Where* (p.49) they should stand up and try it out. There should be no talking or any vocal sounds. Instead they should communicate through body language and actions. They can think about making or breaking eye contact, respecting or invading personal space and making changes in physical level. Working silently helps the actors to concentrate on the visual aspect of their performance.

- ★ For further ideas about exploring status, see *Know Thy Place* (p.56), *Status Shuffle* (p.57) as well as *Status Images* and *Pecking Order* in Farmer (2007).

## Three Word Sentences

**Age:** 9 to adult

**Players:** Pairs/Small Groups

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Skills:** Improvisation, Verbal Expression

*Sometimes three words are just enough.*

Ask for two volunteers to improvise a scene where they both have to speak in three-word sentences. For example:

“Cup of tea?”

“I’d love that.”

“Here you are.”

“May I sit?”

Try two or three pairs. The players may find it difficult to keep going for long until they realise that they don’t have to talk the whole time. Encourage them to allow plenty of action to occur in the scene so that they gain more thinking time. Once they start to get the idea you can divide the class into small groups so that everybody can try it.

## Daft Definitions

**Age:** 7 to adult

**Players:** Whole Group

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Skills:** Creativity, Speaking and Listening

*New concepts can be invented by putting two random words together.*

Sitting in a circle, the first player says a random word. The next player along says an unrelated word. The following player has to give a definition as though the two words were the name of an object.

For example, let's imagine that Billy says "water-skis" and Linda says "spaghetti". Malcolm might say, "Water-ski spaghetti is a new kind of pasta that you eat underwater" – or "Water-ski spaghetti is when you get the lines from the boat tangled up and you fall off your skis" – or anything else he thinks of.

Continue around the circle with another two words and a definition – and so on all the way round.

- ★ To keep players on their toes, pick people randomly from anywhere in the circle to give the two words and then the definition.

Thanks to Molly Naylor for introducing this game to me.

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