

500 Activities for the Primary Classroom

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- In addition to name games, see also ideas for a name rap (6.3) and making name cards (7.1) and children's portraits (9.1) to help you remember children's names when you start teaching a class for the first time.

5.2 Abracadabra!

Level A1.1 **Age** 4–6 **Organization** whole class

Aims To show understanding through mime and physical response; to develop physical coordination.

Language focus *In the example:* animals, numbers 1–3, *be*

Alternatives: present continuous, food, actions

Materials *Essential:* none / *Optional:* improvised magic wand, eg ruler; witch puppet or hat

Procedure

- 1 Teach the children simple mimes to go with a familiar lexical set such as animals. For example, for *frog* children jump, for *cat* children make ears with their hands, for *duck* children make a beak with their hands.
- 2 Hold up the witch puppet or put on the witch's hat, if you have one, or wave your 'magic wand'. Explain that you're the witch and you're going to make spells to change the children into different animals. Say the following in a rhythmic way.
Abracadabra! Listen to me!
You're a ... (frog/cat/duck)!
One! Two! Three!
- 3 As you name the animal in line 2, turn away from the children and pretend to close your eyes as you count to three. Explain and demonstrate that children should mime the animal you name as you do this. As soon as you get to three, open your eyes and turn round suddenly. Look at the class and say, eg *Fantastic! The witch's magic works! What a lot of lovely frogs!*
- 4 Explain that every time the spell works perfectly, ie all the children respond by doing the mime you say, the class scores a point.
- 5 Say different spells, speeding up the time you give children to respond as they become familiar with the game.
- 6 Keep a score of the class's points on the board and count them up at the end.

Comments and suggestions

- Very young children love the element of 'magic' in this game. The more surprised and amazed you make your response at their ability to change into different animals and that the 'spell' has 'worked', the more enthusiastic their participation will be!
- Once the children are familiar with the game, you can ask individual children to take turns to come and be the witch, or the witch's helper, and say the rhyme with you and/or name the animal in line 2.
- This game can also be used with the present continuous and actions, eg *You're swimming!* or food, eg *You're eating a banana!*

- Miming events provides a useful way of recycling language from the story and helps to make this memorable. The 'copycat' technique also encourages children to work together cooperatively.

4.23 Story statues

Level All **Age** 6–12 **Organization** pairs

Aims To create a 'statue' of a character at a specific moment in the story; to look at and identify other statues; to collaborate in pairs.

Language focus *be, Wh-* questions, present continuous, opinions, vocabulary from the story

Materials *Essential:* none

Procedure

- 1 Ask a child to the front of the class. Explain that you are going to make them into a 'statue' of a character in the story. Move the child into position so that they are standing smiling and slightly leaning over, as if they have got a basket on one arm and with the other arm taking something out of the basket to give to someone. Get the child to 'freeze' like a statue.
- 2 Ask the rest of the class to guess, eg T: *Who's this?* P: *I think it's Little Red Riding Hood.* T: *What's she doing?* P: *She's giving a present to her 'grandmother'.*
- 3 Divide the class into pairs (A and B).
- 4 Tell the children to choose another character and moment from the story and ask the Child As to make the Child Bs into a sculpture in the same way.
- 5 When the children are ready, ask the Child As to look at all the sculptures and guess the character and what they are doing.
- 6 Children then change roles and repeat the procedure.

Comments and suggestions

- This activity serves a similar purpose to 4.22 above. In choosing a character and specific moment in the story for their 'statues', it also encourages children to recall the story in detail.

4.24 Still images

Level All **Age** 6–12 **Organization** groups, whole class

Aims To mime specific scenes from a story in still images; to use the still images to reconstruct and retell the story; to collaborate in groups.

Language focus present simple and any other language, depending on the story

Materials *Essential:* none / *Optional:* strips of paper with key scenes from the story (one for each group)

Procedure

- 1 Ask the children to think of the key scenes in the story and write a list of these on the board. For example, for *Little Red Riding Hood* (LRRH) these could be: *LRRH and her mother prepare the basket to take to her Granny.* / *LRRH meets the wolf in the forest.* / *The wolf goes to Granny's house.* / *The wolf eats Granny.* / *The wolf dresses up as Granny.* / *LRRH talks to her 'Granny' in bed.* / *The wolf attacks LRRH.* / *The woodcutter arrives to rescue LRRH and Granny just in time.*
- 2 Divide the class into groups of 3–4.
- 3 Assign a scene from the story to each group. Ask them to prepare a still image to depict their scene. Explain and demonstrate that, as well as the characters, children can mime being objects as part of their still image, eg trees in the forest. Set a time limit, eg 1–2 minutes, for children to prepare their scene.