

# IMPROTATE

If you want to use improvisation with a group inexperienced in drama, improtate is the perfect model to use.



- Divide the young people into two groups and ask the first half to make a circle in the centre of the room (this can also be done while sitting at tables if space is an issue).
- Ask the young people in the circle to face out, and invite the other half of the group to face a partner. Explain that the people in the inside of the circle are Group A and those in the outside circle are Group B.
- Explain that you are going to give Group A a starter line. This can be the beginning of any conversation you choose. For example: *"I'm not going to vote, I can't be bothered."*

## Possible outcome

**A:** *"I'm not going to vote, I can't be bothered."*

**B:** *"What! But this is your chance to make your opinion count."*

**A:** *"Yeah, but what's the point? I'm only one person; it's hardly going to make a difference."*

**B:** *"Well, if everyone said that then no one would vote, so of course it will make a difference!"*

## Or

**A:** *"I'm not going to vote, I can't be bothered."*

**B:** *"Why not?"*

**A:** *"Waste of time. My mum and dad said that voting is pointless."*

**B:** *"Yeah, I agree."*

Any direction in which partners take their conversation will raise many important issues that can be highlighted and discussed.

- After approximately one minute, call out 'freeze' and ask the Bs to move one place to the right, giving everyone a new partner.
- The Bs are then given the starter line.
- This can be repeated as many times as you want.



### Variations/Development

- This activity can be conducted in fours rather than twos if the young people are coping well.
- After each starter line improvisation, choose a pair to share their conversation with the whole group.
- After the whole exercise, position the whole group as an audience and invite volunteers to share their conversation as a performance. Encourage feedback/debate from the audience.
- A and B can be substituted for different roles (eg, teacher and pupil, parent and child).
- Starter lines can be suggested by the whole group, written down on pieces of paper prior to the game and chosen at random, or simply suggested as the game goes on. You should ask for the lines to be about the theme being studied.



### Links well with...

- ALL ACTIVITIES

# DIARY:

## GOOD ANGEL, BAD ANGEL



**This activity allows young people to explore contrasting opinions on children and young people's rights, and to understand different points of view.**

- Discuss conscience with the young people. What is right and wrong? How do people know the difference? Why do we sometimes have conflicting thoughts in our heads?
- Divide the young people into groups of three. Ask each group to write a five-day diary for one of the characters from the photo cards provided.
- One young person will take the lead and write diary entries from the character's point of view; the other two in the group will be good and bad 'angels' and add 'conscience' to the entries.
- When the diary entries are complete, ask the groups to read them to everyone else. The lead character should have an angel on either side, each reading their own entries in turn.
- Have a follow-up discussion to see which of the angels the young people would listen to most regularly, and why.

### **For example:**

**Diary entry:** *"Today I went to the shop and bought juice. I really wanted chocolate too but couldn't afford it."*

**Bad angel:** *"Steal the chocolate; you could get away with it easily."*

**Good angel:** *"Don't steal, it is wrong and you will be caught and will feel terrible when your mum finds out!"*

**Diary entry:** *"Honestly, there was an alien in the back garden, I couldn't believe it."*

**Bad angel:** *"Yeah, you should go outside and take photos of the alien and sell them to Heat magazine."*

**Good angel:** *"No, stay here and watch from the window, you might scare them."*



- This activity can be further developed into 'Conscience Alley', where everyone is divided into two lines facing each other. Participants take it in turn to walk down the alley, reading aloud their thoughts. The other young people become their consciences by offering different opinions.

### Links well with...

- IMPROVISE
- MONOLOGUE AND CHARACTER HOT-SEATING
- VOX POP

# WHOLE GROUP ROLE PLAY

**Whole group role play is an interactive and engaging method of debate.**



Depending on what workshop(s) the young people have completed, choose a setting for a community meeting (eg. family home, school, workplace, village, town).

- Divide the young people into small groups and allow them to create their characters from within this setting (eg. in a school setting this could be teachers, pupils, cleaners, janitors, teaching assistants, parents, etc).
- Explain that there have been complaints made that the rights of the young people in the community are being violated.
- Ask each group to discuss what they are complaining about/what issues they are raising.
- Nominate yourself or a young person as leader (eg. head teacher, MSP or council leader). It is the responsibility of this character to lead the discussion and try to offer solutions.
- Allow characters to 'take to the stand' and air their opinions to the leader and the group. Encourage questions, comments, ideas and solutions from the group.
- At the end of the meeting, it is important for the leader to conclude.



## **Development**

If the characters are not satisfied with the end result, they can write a formal letter of complaint, organise a protest or decide to take matters further. Discuss these further actions with the whole group.



### Links well with...

- VOX POP
- CAMPAIGN
- MONOLOGUE AND CHARACTER HOT-SEATING

### Glossary

**'Take to the stand':** When a young person expresses their opinion in character to everyone else.





# PROBLEM PAGE



**This is an ideal way to introduce the group to the characters on the photo cards, and to explore the different cultural and social backgrounds they may come from.**

- Explain to the young people that they are going to write a problem page for a magazine from the perspective of one of the characters.
- Show the photo cards of the characters and ask each young person to choose the one they identify with most.
- Divide the young people as you see fit – into pairs or small groups. This activity can also be completed individually or by the whole group.
- Start a discussion about the different backgrounds their characters may come from, and the kinds of problems they may face.
- When background has been established for the character, each young person should write to 'Aunt Aggie' about a problem their character is facing, based on one of the rights they have encountered in the workshops (eg. parents not looking after them, discrimination, etc).
- All letters are then placed in the 'magazine hat', and each young person (playing the role of 'Aunt Aggie') selects a problem and offers advice. The problem should be written in the role of the character, the response delivered as themselves.



## Development

- Choose a few letters at random and read them to the whole group. Discuss how everyone thought the character was feeling at the time of writing their letter. Did the response answer the problem and offer help?

### Links well with...

- MONOLOGUE AND CHARACTER HOT-SEATING
- VOX POP
- CHAT SHOW

# VOX POP



A 'vox pop' is an interview with members of the public to gather opinions on different subjects/ issues. This activity allows participants to explore the ideas and opinions of others in a fun, active and engaging manner.

- You start off as the reporter (employ as little or as much characterisation as you want!).
- As a warm-up/example, ask the young people various questions with or without a microphone. Questions might be:
  - "What is your opinion on wearing odd socks?"
  - "Have you ever been stuck in a hole and if so what was your experience of this?"
- When you're confident that everyone understands the concept, divide them into groups or pairs. Ask them to prepare questions on whatever section of the young people's rights they have been working on that week (ie. community, home or school). The questions could ask for opinions, or be yes/no, true/false or multiple choice.
- After the questions have been prepared, the groups can take it in turn to ask the rest of the young people for their honest opinions. This can be done by simply sitting at their tables or, if you prefer, the interviewees could be put in other situations (eg. in the play park, in a cafe or at the supermarket) and impromptu interviews could happen 'on location.'
- To extend this activity, the groups may question other people in the building (eg. catering staff, janitors, other adults, other groups of young people). These interviews could be captured on an MP3 player or camcorder if available. Alternatively, answers could be placed next to photographs on a PowerPoint, or noted down in a jotter or note-pad.
- Findings can be displayed in pie-charts, graphs, PowerPoint or wall charts, as video, audio or photography, or on stage as a rehearsed piece of drama.

## Links well with...

- IMPROTATE
- NEWSPAPER ARTICLE
- CAMPAIGN



# THE RIGHTS FACTOR

**This is an ideal activity for the start of the project as it is a fun and active introduction to children and young people's rights.**



- Have a discussion on voting. Why is it important? Should young people get more of a say? Why do we vote?
- Explain that everyone will act out/perform one of the rights using *X-Factor/Britain's Got Talent* as the inspiration, and use the 'buzzer' voting system to see which groups are most clear with their message.
- Put all the young people's names in a hat and pick five at random – these are the judges.
- Choose 10 of the 42 articles for use and give a copy to the judges. You should choose the articles based on the young people's knowledge after the introductory workshop.
- Divide the young people into pairs or small groups. This activity can also be completed individually or by the whole group.
- Ask each group to pick an article card at random.
- Allow the groups 5-10 minutes to discuss the article they have picked and work out how to get the message across, without actually saying the full article in their act!
- They can perform a sketch, a dance or a song.
- When the groups have decided what they want to do, allow a further 10 minutes for them to prepare their 'act' and come up with a 'stage name'.

## **Example:**

- Young people's right – '*...young people have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion...*'
- Song – A group writes a short song about a young person who believes one thing but is bullied into believing something else. This could be as serious as religious differences or as light-hearted as Santa and the tooth fairy.



- You or one of the young people acts as host to introduce each act.
- To avoid being 'buzzed out' by the judges, the groups must successfully demonstrate the right they have been given. If the judges guess which right the group are performing, the team sits down. If the judges do not guess correctly, start a class/group discussion on how the demonstration could have been clearer.

#### Ask this...

*"Why is a clear message very important to enable people to vote?"*



- Remember that the ultimate aims are to get the message about children and young people's rights across as clearly and as entertainingly as possible, to emphasise the importance of the respecting the opinions of others.

#### Links well with...

- VOX POP
- IMPROTATE

# NEWSPAPER

## FRONT COVER & ARTICLE



**This activity allows young people to present the information they have learned in the main workshops in a creative and informative manner.**

### **Ideas for the front page story line**

Children and young people have been given the right to vote

**OR**

Use a storyline that has come up in improtate or within the main workshops.

- Divide young people into pairs or small groups. This activity can also be completed individually or by the whole group.
- Ask the young people to choose an aspect of the workshop content that has particularly interested them.
- Ask the groups to create a headline around this story – show examples from a recent newspaper and discuss what makes a good headline.
- The groups now need pictures to support their headlines. Suggest drawings, paintings, photography or online images.
- Finally, the group needs to write the 'lead'. This is the introduction to a story that has to sum up the content in a quick sentence or two. Look at newspapers and discuss what works best.
  - The lead should raise questions.
  - It should set the tone of the story (eg. shocking, sad, etc).
  - It should encourage people to read the whole article (ie. get the reader's attention).
  - It should carry the important details (who, what, where, why and when).

### **Writing the article**

The front cover and lead should introduce the full article that will be displayed further on in the newspaper.

- Look at examples of recent newspaper articles with the young people and discuss what makes a good article. Study the style, tone and content of each piece.
- The young people can remain in their teams, or work individually to create a full report based on their 'front page news'.
- When the reports are finished, they can be swapped around for feedback.



### Ask this...

*“Was the report factually correct? Did it hold the reader’s attention? Did it spark your interest in the subject matter?”*



### Development

- This could be developed into a news report with newsreaders sitting behind a desk in the ‘studio’.
- One front page article could be chosen and the rest of the articles compiled to produce a mock newspaper.

### Glossary

**Pitch:** A chance to sell your ideas and win over the audience.

# MONOLOGUE

## and CHARACTER HOT-SEATING



**This activity allows young people to present their knowledge and understanding of the workshops covered using a creative approach.**

- Prepare cue/index cards in advance of this activity, with phrases and/or articles, which complement the workshop you have just completed.
- These phrases will be used by each young person as a starting point for their character monologue (eg. if you have just completed 'Me at Home', some phrases could be: *"I'm scared to show my dad my report card"*, *"If I get home late from school, I'm not allowed any dinner"*, *"My mum always buys me a treat when I do well in an exam"*, etc).
- Ask each young person to choose a character from the photos provided and a phrase/article card at random.
- Give each young person 10 minutes to create a background story for their character based on the phrase they have chosen. Ask them to ask themselves:
  - Why is the phrase significant to the character?
  - Is your character a happy child?
  - What would your character like to change or have more of in their life?
  - Does your character feel valued?
  - Does your character live round the corner and have a similar lifestyle?
  - Does your character live many, many miles away, possibly in a different country, and have a totally different standard of living?





- The young people will then perform their story/monologue for the rest of the group – the idea is that it is as improvised as possible without them writing anything down other than a few notes. They should not use their notes when performing their piece.
- The story should be no more than 1-2 minutes long.
- The rest of the group can then ask any questions of the character once the piece is finished – this is not to try and trip up the performer but to further develop the characterisation as the questions must be answered in character, off the cuff.



### Links well with...

- PROBLEM PAGE

# CAMPAIGN

**This activity can be completed in its entirety – although standalone sections can be just as effective.**

## **Idea generation**

- Divide the young people into groups.
- Using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ask each group to choose the right(s) they feel most strongly about.
- Explain to the groups that they will be creating a campaign to support the chosen right.
- Allow discussion time to explore ideas, then explain the first steps:
  - Choosing a name for the campaign.
  - Deciding on its main aim.
  - Coming up with the slogan.
  - Summing up the campaign in one sentence.

## **Design a poster to support the campaign**

- Encourage the young people to design a poster and to consider the following:
  - *“How will it grab people’s attention and educate them?”*
  - *“Will you use photos, drawings, cartoons or be more abstract?”*
  - *“Make sure your slogan and sentence are all on the poster.”*





### Getting support

- Each group has to put together a pitch for an invited audience (the rest of the young people) to try and raise their awareness of the topic, and to get their support.
- The pitch will include persuasion and education, highlight 'real life' examples and demonstrate what the group is going to do to support the cause.
- Encourage the groups to think of creative approaches for their pitch: video footage (done through prepared improvisation), interviews, vox pop, photos (using frozen images), etc.
- Encourage questions from the audience to group members after each pitch.
- After each group has completed their pitch and answered questions, ask each young person to vote on which campaign they thought was best put together/most informative.
- Announce the winner and invite final thoughts from the winning team.

### Links well with...

- IMPROTATE
- NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

### Glossary:

**Frozen image:** Where the group freezes in a 'photograph' like state to show a moment in time.

**Vox pop:** Interviewing members of the public to gather opinions on different subjects/issues.

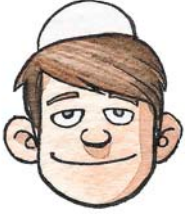
# STORYBOARD

## AND FILM-MAKING

**This activity pulls together all the elements learned throughout the project and allows the young people to express their ideas and opinions in a creative and innovative way.**



- Explain to the young people that they are going to write a movie based on everything they have learned about children and young people's rights.
- This activity, once complete, will allow the young people to make the movie in their own time should they wish to do so. They should be encouraged to make their films and incentivised with a showing of the finished films.
- Divide the young people as you see fit – into pairs or small groups. At this stage, the activity is collaborative and there is no need to assign jobs (director, editor, etc). The young people who follow up this activity will then take on these roles.
- Explain to the group that they need to come up with a story based around young people's rights and/or voting but remind them:
  - keep it simple – maximum 2-3 actors and 2-3 settings
  - keep it short – no more than 2-3 minutes
- They then need to plan their story:
  - Genre – is their film going to be a documentary, a comedy, a horror, an action film, or something else?
  - Characters – how many and who will act the parts?
  - Location – where do they hope to film?
  - Is the film to take place during the day or at night?
  - What happens at the start of the film?
  - What happens next?
  - What happens at the end?
  - What costumes do they need?
  - What props/objects do they need?



- When groups have their story/script and a plan of what they need, they should create a storyboard so that when they 'get on set' to actually make the film, they know exactly what shots are required to make the film work.
- Only when the story makes sense to someone reading the storyboard, is it time to make the film.
- Using the storyboard as a base, groups will replicate each scene with the actual camera. When all the shots have been filmed, they'll be edited in the same order as the storyboard.

This activity works well at the end of the project and information can be brought in from all the other exploratory activities. This activity engages the young people outside of their school/group, transferring and continuing their learning further into their community.



### Basic camera shots

**Long shot:** Usually the first shot to help set the scene as you can see everything.

**Mid shot:** Shows character(s) from the waist up. Useful when filming people talking.

**Close up:** Good to show detail like an actor's face or hand.

**Low angle:** Filmed from below with the camera pointing up. Used to make someone look bigger and more powerful (eg. a superhero).

**High angle:** Filmed from above with the camera pointing down. Used to make someone look smaller.

**Point of view:** Shot filmed close to the actor so that you see what the actor is seeing.

**Tilt:** The camera moves up and down. Good for introducing a character.

**Pan:** The camera moves sideways to follow the action (eg. someone running away).

### Glossary

**Storyboard:** A template sheet on which a series of sketches of shots/scenes are arranged in sequence for outlining the action of a film or video. Usually accompanied by captions containing dialogue, narrations, etc.

**Shot list:** A list of all the shots required in the film – this is usually a pretty long list!

**Shooting schedule:** The order in which all shots are going to be filmed (bear in mind that films are hardly EVER shot in sequence, so it may make sense to base the shooting schedule around the location (eg. film all the 'school playground' shots at the same time, then film all the 'inside the living room' shots at the same time). This will make filming a lot easier than trying to film everything in sequence.