

Heritage Games Pack

How to use this pack

This pack contains a range of drama games inspired by the King's Theatre People's Archive. At the top of each game it will say who the game is aimed at, but this is a suggestion rather than a rule. Games are colour coded by stage: yellow = early years, red = first level, blue = second level

We have included key skills, rather than Experiences and Outcomes, as you might find games support a range of Experiences and Outcomes, or are used outside of a classroom context. You are welcome to use this resource as a guide and adapt it as necessary.

At the bottom of each game, you will find a "Did you know" box containing a fun fact about the King's Theatre's heritage and a link to the People's Archive.

Who this pack is for

This pack is intended for Primary age children and can be used by class teachers, drama specialists, supply teachers, after school clubs, or anyone else who works with groups of children. The games are intended to be led by an adult, but you might find older pupils can lead a game once they have played it a few times.

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Spotlight

Suitable for: Early Years, First Level

Key skills: Focus, stillness

How to play

Find a large, clear space in a room or outside (your gym hall or playground would be perfect).

Ask the group to stand in a straight line, side by side against a wall or line and hold an imaginary spotlight. Ask them to imagine that the spotlight is shining light anywhere they point it. Give everyone a chance to test out their spotlight before regaining focus.

Explain that you will shortly choose someone to become the spotlight operator. They will stand on the other side of the space fixing their spotlight.

While they do this, the rest of the group will role play as cheeky actors who want to steal the spotlight.

The spotlight operator can choose to turn around any time and shine their spotlight on the actors. When they do this, everyone else must freeze. If the spotlight operator sees any cheeky actors moving, they must send them back to the start.

If an actor manages to tap the spotlight operator on the shoulder, they can become the next spotlight operator.

Did you know?

In the early 1900s, The King's Theatre had a lighting technician named Bethia Cassie who lit the stage. This was a very uncommon job for a woman in Bethia's time, and she was a force to be reckoned with! Learn more about Bethia [here](#).

Conductor

Suitable for: Early Years, First Level

Key skills: Concentration, mirroring, impulse control, focus

How to play

Gather your group in a circle sitting down.

Ask everyone to imagine they are an orchestra or band in a theatre. What do you think the person who keeps time and tells an orchestra when they should be playing is called? A conductor!

Explain that, shortly you will choose one person in the circle to become the conductor. They will repeat an action or movement and everyone in the 'orchestra' must copy them. If they change the movement, the orchestra must change their movement too.

Explain that you will soon ask someone to leave the circle and close their eyes. This person will be the detective and their job is to try to guess who the conductor is. They will have three guesses.

Once they have guessed, the conductor can become the next detective. This game is more fun for everyone if the 'orchestra' try their best to not look directly at the conductor the whole time.

Did you know?

In the King's Theatre, if a show has an orchestra, they usually sit underneath the stage in something called 'The Orchestra Pit'. Actors have to be careful when performing near the edge of the stage or else they might fall into the pit! This is exactly what happened to costumer Mickey York's husband Roly. Listen to the full story [here](#) (Under the title 'A Family Affair')

Horses & Carriages

Suitable for: First Level

Key skills: Teamwork, coordination, spatial awareness

How to play

Choose a partner and stand in a space in the room, label yourselves A and B.

Ask person B to stand behind person A with their hands gently on person A's shoulders. Person A is going to put their hands out in front of them and close their eyes, they will be the 'horse' and person B will be the 'rider'.

When you say 'go', the rider must carefully guide the horse around the space, looking out for any other pairs and making sure they don't go too fast.

For an added challenge, riders can swap partners with another rider by stopping their horse and waving at another rider. The horses must keep their eyes closed while riders swap partners.

After a few minutes, you can ask everyone to stop (horses keeping their eyes closed) and ask all riders to stand in a line side by side. You can then ask all horses to open their eyes and guess who their last rider was by putting their hand up when you point out each rider.

Once all horses have had the chance to guess, they can swap with their rider so everyone has the opportunity to be both a horse and a rider.

Did you know?

The first performance at the King's Theatre in 1906 was the pantomime Cinderella. On opening night, there was a horse drawn carriage parked outside the theatre covered in flowers. Many people came to see Cinderella by horse and carriage - so many that the carriages caused a traffic jam when the show ended!

Who's behind you?

Suitable for: First Level

Key skills: Listening, concentration, voice work

How to play

Ask everyone to sit down on the floor in a clear, empty space, all facing in one direction.

Place a chair in front of the group, facing in the same direction as them, with enough space for someone to stand behind the chair.

Explain that you will shortly ask someone to become the "panto dame" and sit on the chair. The panto dame has been very busy and all they want is a snooze. They will sit down and close their eyes.

Explain that, once the dame has closed their eyes, you will choose someone to become the 'baddie'. The baddie will sneak up behind the dame and announce "I'm behind you" in a theatrical, pantomime style. Encourage the baddie to disguise their voice and create their own evil voice.

The baddie will return to their space, at which point you will ask the dame to wake up. Ask them who they think the baddie was. They have 3 guesses. After this, ask the dame to go back to their seat, then choose a new dame and a new baddie.

Did you know?

In a pantomime, the 'baddie' always comes on stage from the left side and the 'goodie' always comes on stage from the right side.

Our own panto baddie, Grant Stott, visited the King's Theatre in March 2024 when the redevelopment was almost 50% complete. Watch the video [here](#).

I've got some news

Suitable for: Second Level

Key skills: Improvisation

How to play

With your group stood in a circle, ask for two students to stand in the middle.

One of the students in the middle needs to give the other some news, for example, 'I've got some news...you got the job! /...your holiday is cancelled! /...you've got to take a really important exam right now!'

The other player should react to the news they've been given; you may want to encourage your students to perform exaggerated reactions. Once their reaction feels like it has come to natural stop, they shouldn't be under pressure to continue the scene, instead they can re-join the circle, and another student is invited to come to the middle to replace them.

The student coming to the centre of the circle then gives some news to the person remaining in the circle, who will react and then re-join the circle. This continues with each person being replaced by another and everyone having opportunity to both give some news and react to a piece of news

We've got some news

The King's Theatre has been in the news a lot over the past few years, with news ranging from fundraising efforts, to building works, to the exciting discovery of a 119 year old message in a bottle. Why not check out some of our recent news stories to do with the King's Theatre [here](#).

Hitch a ride

Suitable for: Second Level

Key skills: Characterisation, improvisation, teamwork

How to play

Ask pupils to form teams of 4 or 5, and to place chairs out as if they are the seats in a car.

Ask each group to choose one person to be the driver of this car, who will start as a neutral character. Soon the driver will pick up passengers one at a time. Each other person in their group must think of an extreme emotion or character trait which they'll display when they enter the car.

One at a time, each passenger must enter the car and show an exaggerated version of their character trait (e.g. if their character is grumpy, they must be the most over the top grumpy character). As soon as they enter the car, the driver will also take on their character trait.

As each new passenger enters the car, every passenger inside the car will take on the latest passenger's character trait.

After a few minutes, the passengers will leave the car one by one, starting with the passenger who entered last. As each passenger leaves the car, the whole car will revert back to the previous passenger's character trait.

E.g. Start with driver only, passenger 1's character trait, passenger 2's trait, passenger 3's trait. Then passenger 2's trait, passenger 1's trait, then finally back to the driver.

Did you know?

When the King's Theatre opened in 1906, the most popular ways to get to the theatre were by horse and carriage or tram. Until 1956, you could 'hitch a ride' right to the King's Theatre by tram. Learn more about the early years of the King's Theatre [here](#).

Empty Chair

Suitable for: Second Level

Key skills: Teamwork, movement, awareness

How to play

Ask pupils to create a circle sitting on chairs. One pupil will stand in the middle of the circle, leave one chair empty.

The pupil standing in the middle of the circle must try to sit on the empty chair, however, the rest of the group will work together to prevent this, ensuring someone sits on the empty chair before the pupil standing in the middle.

If the pupil standing in the middle manages to sit on the empty chair before another pupil reaches it, the pupil who is left standing must now try to sit on the next empty chair.

You may wish to add extra challenge to this game by placing chairs in a random pattern around the room and asking the standing pupil to move with their knees together - this will prevent them from running and will mean that seated pupils must work harder as a team to fill any gaps.

To add variety to this game, you could ask pupils to only move in a certain way, or as a certain character (i.e. zombies, astronauts, grannies).

Did you know?

While the King's Theatre has been closed, one of the ways we have asked people to help us raise money is by 'naming a seat'. Our archive volunteers Andy and Harriet named a seat after a prank their son played on Pantomime Dame Allan Stewart while working backstage on the Pantomime. Find out more [here](#) under "Taken Rex for Walkies".