

NUMBER DIALOGUE

Grade: 2-12
Goal(s): To explore communication in pairs
Materials: None

DESCRIPTION:

Without having to read or memorize dialogue, this activity allows the actors to explore how characters from Shakespeare's plays interact with each other.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Assign pairs.
2. Set up the circumstances between the characters. For example, Ariel wants to be set free but Prospero needs Ariel as a servant (*The Tempest*) or Juliet wants to marry Romeo but Lady Capulet has already prearranged a more advantageous marriage to Paris (*Romeo and Juliet*).
3. Explain that the actors can only communicate by using numbers, not words.
4. The actors improvise a scene: using numbers, not words, to convey their feelings and needs, based on their relationship and the circumstances of the scene.
5. Ending the work: Grades 2-4, after a series of number exchanges, stop the scene by calling, "Freeze!" Grades 5-12, the actors must bring the scene to a close.
6. Follow each scene with guided inquiry:
 - What did you observe in the work?
 - What questions did you have about the work?
 - What was the relationship between the characters?
 - Did you see what each character wanted from the other?

SUGGESTED VARIATION(S):

- Use costume pieces or hats to establish character.
- Use pseudo-Elizabethan or gibberish instead of the numbers.
- If the actors are familiar with different pairs of Shakespeare's characters, tell only the actors improvising the scene who and from what play they are from. Have the audience guess.
- **Raising The Bar:** Have the actors recreate scenes from the characters' past that may not happen in the actual play. For example, from *The Tempest*, Ariel getting released from the tree or, from *Romeo and Juliet*, the event that started the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets.

