

# 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.



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