

Lesson objectives

To be able to capture the stylistic qualities of an action movie through creative choices and performance skills.

What am I looking for?

To be able to perform with a sense of character and dynamic variety.
Explores, selects and refines a range of travelling actions.
Effective use of characterisation and contrast.
Performs with characterisation, commitment and accuracy.

Warm up

Ask the students to find a space and notice any furniture or objects around the room in order to avoid them. Travel swiftly around the room for 8 counts. Then be still for 8 counts. Steadily count from 1 to 8 and ensure they pause effectively on the last count holding their shape for the duration of the pause.

*Encourage students to follow curving, twisting PATHWAYS.
Repeat 4 or 5 times.*

Repeat the previous task but add a twist, turn, or pivot during the pause to scan the space.

Again, count steadily from 1 to 8 several times, indicating when they should travel and when they should be scanning the room, encourage the use of FOCUS.

Repeat the previous task now add a jump during the travelling.

*Emphasise this can be performed at any time during the travel and can be any kind of jump - eg turning or star jump, or even consider a single body part as performing the jumping action.
Continue with the scanning action during the pause.*

Repeat the task with one final addition - add an action to the travelling section to change LEVEL, taking them low.

*Emphasise this can also come at any point during their travel.
Continue to count steadily and indicate when they should travel and when scanning, repeat several times.*

Ask the students to perform the sequence to the music.

Ensure all students start at the same time and follow the musical phrasing (this may require the teacher to continue to count). Repeat until all pupils appear to be comfortable with the contrast between travelling and being on the spot (scanning actions), as well as demonstrating some awareness of the musical phrasing.

Organise the students into pairs, labelled A and B.

Repeat the same pattern of movements, however person A will start by TRAVELLING for 8 counts (including the jump and the change of LEVEL), whereas person B begins with the scanning movements. The pattern continues so they are performing the alternative to their partner.

**Whilst A is travelling, B should be scanning
Whilst B is travelling, A should be scanning.**

Add the music and indicate when to start and when to change roles. Praise pairs demonstrating awareness of their partner.

Dynamics, travel, pathways, level + mobility

Lights! Camera! Actions! 1: Chase scene

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Context

Explain that the upcoming lessons are titled 'Lights! Camera! Actions!' because they are based on the theme of films - specifically action movies which are typically dramatic from the start - often opening with a 'chase scene'.

The warm up suggests this with the swift travelling including jumps and level changes suggesting trying to evade their opponents and the scanning actions being moments to shield or shelter whilst trying to locate their adversaries or find an exit.

Within this there is scope to reference popular culture by linking to well-known films, television programmes, books or graphic novels demonstrating different approaches to this genre from across the globe. There may be opportunities to show pictures, posters, snippets from the film or share pieces of text such as quotes from the script to further inspire ideas (but ensure that the content is age appropriate to the year group you are working with).

Exploration

Repeat the previous paired task adding a sense of character - eg during the scanning actions they may try to make themselves smaller as if trying to go unnoticed or hiding; when jumping they may imagine themselves leaping over obstacles to escape and the low level actions may be a result of ducking under barriers or obstructions.

Add the music for another 2 to 3 minutes, note any changes in performance such as use of facial expression, stamina and use of focus.

Character-isation

Composition

Ask the pairs to position themselves back-to-back (ensuring adequate space). Then move away from their partner for 8 counts (and remain looking away).

Explain they are now adding the introduction. Ask both students to move backwards towards their partner for 8 counts and just before they collide the 'chase scene' commences with person A travelling and person B scanning...

Take 2 or 3 turns to practise this opening before adding it to the travelling/scanning section.

Rehearse the whole section praising team working and projecting a sense of character.

Ask the pairs to discuss additional ideas they would like to add - eg instead of backing towards each other was one of them in waiting? Do they have a particular film in mind and want to incorporate the style or action content of the movie?

Ask the students to take 4 minutes to make any adaptations to their 'chase scene' dance and prepare to perform.

Add the music for 4 mins and continue to observe, support and feedback.

Structure + projection

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Perform

Select 4 or 5 pairs to show their work ensuring sufficient space. Ask the audience to move to the edge of the room and look for:

- The sense of CHARACTER and mood of the genre being projected.
 - Effective partner work showing awareness, contrast and using FOCUS
 - A range of movements including TRAVEL and JUMPS.
 - Effective use of the space including various PATHWAYS and changes of LEVEL.
- After feedback select 4 or 5 other pairs and repeat the process. (Continue until everyone has shared their work).*

If time permits ask all duets to discuss the feedback and their own observations then make any further adaptations to their duet.

Add the music for another 2 to 3 minutes and note any comments, observations or amendments that demonstrate a growing awareness and understanding.

Analysis
Cool down

Ask the students to find a space and repeat the warm up of travelling for 8 counts then remaining still for 8 but now attempting to 'blend in' and travel at a regular pace...when remaining still they are trying to go unnoticed...

Repeat 4 or 5 times, encouraging them to move a little slower and smaller each time.

Take a moment to reflect upon the key elements covered:

- Communicating a mood and theme through CHARACTER, FOCUS + DYNAMICS
 - Performing CONTRASTING actions to a partner
- Using a range of ACTIONS, PATHWAYS, LEVELS to maintain interest.

Size and speed