

Class Title – Improv Theatre (Example)	
Lead Teaching Artist: Chris Harney	Supporting Teaching Artist: N/A
Dates: Twice a week, 12 classes	
Weekly Breakdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1: Ensemble Building/Theatre and Improv Basics • Week 2: Basic Improv Games • Week 3: Large Group Improv Games • Week 4: Small Group Improv Games • Week 5: Character Work • Week 6: Game Day/Final Class 	
Day 1 (Ensemble Building/ Theatre and Improv Basics)	
Objectives /Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions: names, pronouns (optional), what you'd like to get out of this class? • Class Overview/Expectations: Basic outline of weeks together/end goal of doing long form & scenes. Rules are: respect each other, we're a team, give everything a try. • Ensemble Game: Zoof <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Energy passing game. Students will form a circle and "pass" energy to the right with the word "Zoof," that will continue until a student blocks the energy with "Zap," where the energy will reverse directions in the circle. The energy is passed only left or right unless a student sends it across the circle with "Shablam," which cannot be blocked with "Zap." Students will get out if they say the wrong word, do the wrong action, or are not fast enough. This game focuses on speed and split second decisions. • Tell Me About Your Day Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Students are paired up and told to tell each other about their day; no gimmicks, no trying to be funny. They are to comment and ask questions about the things that they hear. The goal of this exercise is to show them how easy the basic tenets of improv are: Make a statement, respond to the statement, and repeat. It's not a particularly funny scene, but it is honest. • Improv Game: Secret Clubhouse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Students will be either "A": The Clubhouse Guard or "B": The One Trying To Get In. B will ask "Can I enter your Secret Clubhouse?" and B will respond "No, only _____ can enter." B will then leave the stage and "come back" as whatever A told them could enter the clubhouse; focusing on a different body and voice. B will then ask again if they can enter, and A will let them in. A will 	

then sit in the audience, B will become A, and a new B will come up from the audience. Repeat until all students have gone.

- Pack up/What to expect next time

Day 2 (Ensemble Building/Theatre and Improv Basics)

Objectives /Activities

- Introductions: names, pronouns (optional), favorite movie/TV show
- Warmups: Body Shake down & Lip Trills
- Theatre Terms Discussion: Cheating Out (bring up Secret Clubhouse as example), Tactics, Projection, Onstage/Audience
- Yes
 - o Students stand in a circle facing each other. The instructor will start, make eye contact with a student in the circle and say “Yes.” The student will begin walking towards the instructor, and the instructor will look around the circle to make eye contact with someone else. That someone else will then say “Yes,” and the instructor will start walking towards them, and now it is their turn to make eye contact with someone else to get a “Yes.” The goal of this game is ensemble building, and for someone to be moving at all times without collisions.
- Park Bench
 - o Two students will start onstage, one is A and the other is B. A begins sitting on the bench, and B approaches from offstage. B’s job is to get A to leave the bench by utilizing different tactics (tactics that are off limits: can’t physically touch A, can’t threaten with physical violence, and it needs to be school appropriate) Once A leaves the bench, B sits down and becomes A, and another B comes from offstage/audience. Emphasize that there is no winners/losers in this game, the goal is to create a scene and for A to find a reason to leave, as well as for B to choose a tactic and/or become a character
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 3 (Basic Improv Games)

Objectives/Activities

- Introductions: names, pronouns (optional), favorite superpower
- Warmup: Puppet stretch and Tongue twisters
- Rules of Improv Discussion
 - o The only way to fail at improv is to not try (Effort/Try something new)
 - o Improv is about relationships between characters (Declarations/Just say something)
 - o Make your scene partner’s look good, we’re a team (Respect)
 - o There are no mistakes (Exactly that)
 - o Don’t be a fixer, trust each other (Yes, and)
- Declarations/Say Something Activity

- o Students stand in a circle, instructor in the middle. The instructor will point at a student and tell them to make a declaration. Start with true declarations (the sky is blue, my favorite color is red, etc) and then move on to harder, more complicated declarations (“Say something about hippos that is false,” or “tell me your favorite thing about astrophysics.” The goal is to just say something
- Wire Act
 - o Throughout this exercise, students will pretend that there is a “wire” pulling their bodies at different times. Start with “High” status- the wire is pulling them straight up towards the ceiling, shoulders are back, standing tall, think “king” or “royalty”. Next is “Middle” status- the wire is at their shoulders, but not held as high; think “soldier” or “manager.” Lastly is “Low” status, the wire is at their chest pulling them slightly downward; think “servant” or “hard worker.” At each of these levels students should vocalize how these characters would talk (without using actual words, just the idea) as well as move around the space as these characters. Once students do all 3, circle up. Choose a student to enter the circle and choose a status, another student will join in and do the same status. The first student will then leave and the lone student will choose a new status. Continue until everyone has gone.
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 4 (Basic Improv Games)

Objectives/Activities

- Introductions: names, pronouns (optional), favorite TV show
- Warmups: Shake down & Vocal registers
- The Ball Game
 - o Students circle up along with the instructor, and the instructor produces an imaginary “ball” from their pocket. Begin the game by making eye contact, “throwing,” and “catching” the ball. Emphasize how it feels in your hand to throw and catch it; give it weight. After everyone gets the hang of it, add that once someone catches the ball, they are to “change it” into something else. Make it a new shape and give it different weight (think a bowling ball, or a spear, or even a dog or butterfly!) and throw it to another person in the circle. They then have to “catch” it as if it was in that shape, and then reshape it into something else. This exercise engages creativity and focuses on object work.
- Steal A Line
 - o Class is split in half, and one student comes onstage from each half-they are scene partners. Partner A will begin the scene by making an (APPROPRIATE) observation about Partner B (Ex. “I like your hat”) Partner B will then respond in a way that incorporates part of that statement (Ex. “Thanks! This hat was a gift from my mom.” And finally, Partner A will respond using part

of that last statement (Ex. “Wow! That hat is such a great gift! I love the color.” These students will then return to the audience and the next two will go up until everyone gets a chance. This exercise is meant to teach “Yes, and,” as well as build trust and ensemble within the group. More complicated versions of this game can begin with statements that have nothing to do with the other person.

- What Are You Doing?
 - Students will either be A or B. A will begin onstage and begin pantomiming an activity. B will then enter and ask “What are you doing?” A will then tell B a completely different activity than the one they are doing (ex. A is swimming and tells B that they are playing basketball) B will then start doing the activity that was vocally said, and A will sit back in the audience. B is now A. The game continues until everyone has gone.
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 5 (Large Group Improv Games)

Objectives/Activities

- Daily highs and lows
- Warmups: Tongue Twisters & Isolations
- Conducted Story
 - 4-5 students stand in a line onstage facing the audience. The instructor kneels in front of the performers and points at one of them; this student begins telling a story. At any point the instructor can point to another student and they have to pick up where the last student left off. The students work together to create one story. Go until the story reaches a conclusion, or the instructor tells the students to “wrap it up.” This activity focuses on listening to others and making declarations.
- Why Are You Late?
 - One student starts outside of the room. With the rest of the group, we decide A) who is playing the “boss” and B) why the person outside the room is late for work. The late person enters and is confronted by the “boss.” The rest of the group’s job is to act out and mime why the person is late. This shouldn’t be as simple as “my car wouldn’t start.” Why didn’t the car start? Who did you meet? What happened? Ideally it should be relatively complicated and funny. During this, the “boss” is allowed to turn back to the group at any time. When the “boss” is looking at them, the group has to act as though they are “working.” Any who fail to do this are “fired” and are out of the game.
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 6 (Large Group Improv Games)

Objectives/Activities

- Daily highs and lows
- Warmups: Articulators & Puppet Stretch
- Press Conference
 - o One student starts outside the room, they are the “spokesperson.” The rest of the group are “reporters.” While the spokesperson is out of the room, the group decides 1) Who the spokesperson is representing 2) What the client did as a crime and 3) The location where the crime took place. Once that is decided, the spokesperson enters. The group is meant to ask leading questions in order for the spokesperson to guess all 3 of the things decided earlier. They should be guessed in order (client, crime, location.) When the spokesperson guesses correctly, everyone cheers, and when guessed incorrectly, everyone acts confused. Once all 3 parts are guessed correctly, the spokesperson gives an excuse as to why their client did what they did. This game is meant to teach teamwork and talking in subtext.
- Celebrity Taxicab
 - o This game has a person A and a person B. A begins in the “taxi” as the driver and B enters from offstage as any celebrity (doesn’t have to be a good impression!) and gets into the taxi. A then copies B and we now have two of the same celebrity in the taxi. They have a small scene, and A finds a reason to leave. B then goes back to neutral, gets in the driver’s seat, and another B enters. This is meant to teach “yes, and.”
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 7 (Small Group Improv Games)

Objectives/Activities

- QOTD: What would you consider yourself an expert on?
- Warmups: Tongue Twisters & Puppet Stretch
- Experts
 - o 5-6 players sit down on stage. They are all assigned as “experts” in different subjects. Feel free to be silly or ridiculously specific. Go down the line and ask each player a question about their subject. It can be separate questions or everyone can answer the same question. After they all have answered 2-3 questions, swap out the experts and go until every student has gone. This game is meant to work on making declarations.
- The Secrets Game
 - o 2 players start onstage. Give them a prompt for a simple scene (fixing a faucet, wrapping presents, etc.) Define their character’s relationship and then secretly give each player a “secret” that they will get to play with

during their scene. These should be relatively small secrets (they have a crush, they secretly want to grow up to be a magician, etc.) They will then perform their scene while knowing these secrets. This may not have any bearing on the scene, but it can help create characterization where in normal scenes there might be none.

- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 8 (Small Group Improv Games)

Objectives/Activities

- Daily highs and lows
- Warmups: Object Work (ball game)
- Product Pitch
 - o 4 players sit onstage in a “corporate boardroom.” The audience gives a suggestion for a product that does not exist (the sillier the better!) The players onstage need to now decide: product’s name, product slogan, target audience who will love the product, and where to sell the product. Each player gets one line to answer one of those questions, and then the scene ends. This game is meant to surprise players with what they can come up with, and to show them that they can think of funny and interesting ideas on the fly. First thought, best thought.
- Multi-Headed Monster
 - o 5-6 students sit onstage in a line. They are one creature, each of them can only say one word at a time to make a sentence. Get questions from the audience to ask the monster, and the monster gets to answer around 2-3 questions (depending on time) This game is meant to promote working together in an ensemble.
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 9 (Character Work)

Objectives/Activities

- QOTD: Would you rather fight a chicken sized bull, or a bull sized chicken
- Warmups: Registers & Shakedown
- Party Quirks
 - o One student is chosen as the “host” and they leave the room. 5-6 “guests” are chosen and they line up onstage. They are each given a quirk, or character, to play and they go offstage. The “host” reenters, and the “guests” file in one-by-one and interact with the host as their characters. After everyone is onstage, the “host” lines everyone up and guesses what characters every other player is. This game is character focused and meant to facilitate character interactions.
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 10 (Character Work)

Objectives/Activities

- Daily highs and lows
- Warmups: Puppet stretch and Articulators
- Family Vacation
 - 3-4 players play a family (roles decided by audience) and another player is the travel agent. The travel agent asks the family how various aspects of their vacation went (scuba diving, mountain climbing, etc.) and the family has to work together to describe how awful each part was and how it horribly went wrong. They cannot decide before this and have to work off each other in the moment. This game focuses on the idea of “yes, and.”
- Freeze
 - Two players begin a scene (any location and relationship works) and at any time, someone in the audience can yell “freeze!” At this point, the players onstage freeze in whatever pose they are currently in. The one who yelled “freeze” takes the place of one of the players and assumes the physical position that they are in. A new scene then begins (started by the new player) that is inspired by the position that they just took.
- Decide on games for next week
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 11 (Game Day)**Objectives/Activities**

- Daily highs and lows
- Warmups: Shakedown and Lip Trills
- Game 1 (TBD from previous class)
- Game 2 (TBD from previous class)
- Pack up/What to expect next week

Day 12 (Final Class)**Objectives/Activities**

- QOTD: What did you learn from this class?
- Warmups: Puppet Stretch and Articulators
- Game 1 (Popular game that was not picked last week, or Freeze)
- Game 2 (Popular game that was not picked last week, or Secret Clubhouse)
- Pack up/Goodbye!