

Manners



London's Language
Lesson 2
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Manners

Aims

- To develop an understanding of manners in *Pygmalion*.
- To enable participants to develop skills in creating characters through physicality.
- To consider the role of manners today.
- To create a group monologue on the theme of manners.

Materials Required

- **Warm-Ups** (double sided sheet)
- **Appendix 1** (Turn Detective; one per person)
- **Appendix 2B** (Extracts from *Pygmalion*; one per person)
- **Appendix 4A** (Goops poems)
- **Appendix 4B** (Manners worksheet)
- **Pens and paper**
- **Whiteboard or flipchart**

Duration

- It should take approximately two hours to complete all the activities but the lesson can be reduced or extended as necessary to suit the timetable.
- It is important to stress that the drama sessions will work in a safe and imaginative way, and that participants will be expected to contribute and listen without judgement or criticism of others.

Warm-Up

Select a vocal warm-up and a game from the Warm-Up sheet (choose an exercise from either side of the page).

2.1 Manners Mean?

- Participants (preferably standing) read the selected pieces of text from Appendix 2B (*Pygmalion* extracts) through twice, firstly to get comfortable with the text and secondly to identify the characters' thoughts and feelings. After which you should ask the following prompt questions. It may be useful to record responses on the whiteboard or flipchart.



- What was happening in the scene you've just read?**
- What did you learn about the characters involved?**
- What are 'manners'?**
- Are good manners important, if so why?**
- Should you treat everyone the same?**
- Would you treat your grandmother and your best friend in the same way?**

2.2 Goops!

- The Goops were characters created by Gelett Burgees in 1903, the same period in which *Pygmalion* was written, to encourage children to behave properly. The Goops material used in this lesson is taken from, *The Goop Directory* and *More Goops, and How Not to Be Them*. You can find these books online at www.gutenberg.org. For this lesson the following Goops poems have been selected: *Whining, Talking While Eating, Throwing Away Things, Calling Names* and *Teasing Animals*.
- Divide the group into five and give each group a Goop rhyme (Appendix 4A) to read and discuss. After sufficient time, ask each group to create a poster that is the modern equivalent of their Goop poem. The posters need to be fun and of interest to 5–8 year olds. Prompt questions might be:

What text might you use in your poster?

Will you use rhyme/poetry like the Goops?

What pictures might you use in your poster?



2.3 Good and Bad

- Ask the participants to begin walking around the space encouraging them to walk as individuals. They should not look at the floor, but keep their eyes up and walk as if going to meet their friends. After sufficient time, explain that you will soon be calling out a number and the challenge is to quietly and quickly make a group the size of the number called out.
- Once this has been accomplished, ask the newly formed groups to create a scene at a football match, cinema or library. Each scene should show examples of good and bad manners. When this has been completed, see each one in turn before expanding the exercise further by giving them the following more 'everyday' scenarios which again should be devised as good and bad improvisations:

Queueing in the supermarket

Attending a grandparent's birthday

Greeting someone in the street

- After sufficient time see all of the new 'everyday' scenarios and discuss what an audience might observe. Prompt questions might be:

What situation was being shown to us?

What was the difference between the good and bad scenarios?

Which scene was more familiar?

Did you prefer the behaviour of the people in the first or second scene?

- Finish the exercise off by quoting a line from *Pygmalion's* Henry Higgins: '...the great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls...'

2.4 Vision Slogans

- Begin the final exercise by brainstorming what the word 'slogan' means (usually a phrase that expresses the aims or nature of an enterprise, organisation, or candidate). Explain that it needs to be short, engaging and have impact. An example known to most participants is McDonald's: 'I'm Loving It'.
- Remaining in the same groups as the last exercise, participants should now think about how best to treat people and come up with an appropriate phrase to complete the slogan: 'People in London should...'. After sufficient time, ask the participants to present their ideas for a slogan alongside a freeze frame (as if posing for a photograph).
- Each 'freeze frame' should be presented to the rest of the group with notes made on Appendix 4B (Manners worksheet).
- Develop this exercise further by using as many of the slogans as possible from the completed Manners worksheet. The slogans can be used as dialogue building to a group improvisation using tableau, vocal intonation and volume in order to present them most effectively.

DVD Point

To inspire the group improvisation, select Manners on the enclosed DVD.
The scene shown was written by young people in schools and performed by professional actors.

Turn Detective (HOMEWORK EXERCISE)

- As a homework exercise distribute Appendix 1 (Turn Detective worksheet) and read aloud the homework instruction (right).
- Each participant should collect 'London's Language'.
- Collected material can be displayed as an interesting wall display in the classroom.
- In this instance it should have a 'manners' focus.



Collect two examples of people talking about **MANNERS**. It might be someone you overhear on the bus, at school, on the street, a character from television or cut out from a newspaper or magazine. It could be something you agree with or something that makes you angry or makes you laugh, essentially something you find interesting.

