



Soapbox

# Lesson 7

## Speaking Hands

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1

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### Equipment

- One pen per child
- One exercise book per child
- Flipchart paper
- 15 marker pens
- 30 fun 'prizes'
- Soapbox Challenge score board with 'Team A' and 'Team B' and 'Questions 1–3' written on it Blu-tack

### Commands

- Go
- Freeze
- Countdown
- Hands Up! Rule

## 7.1 Soapbox Challenge Questions (5 Minutes)

- Using the group splitting technique of last lesson, allocate Teams A and B, ensuring the make up of the teams is different from the previous lesson. Each team has 20 seconds to elect a spokesperson who will feed back the teams' answers.
- Using the Go command and Countdown command, you should ask the following questions, keeping careful score of each team's marks:
  - What is Forum Theatre?
  - What does devising mean?
  - What does performance mean?
- You should declare one team the winners and promise a prize at the end of the session.

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## Warm Up

Touch, Roll, Jump (5 Minutes)  
From Lesson 3

Group Sounds (10 Minutes)  
From Lesson 6

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## 7.2 Speaking Hands (10 Minutes)

- Over the previous six lessons you will have covered many aspects of communication, both verbal and physical. Lesson 7 focuses on an aspect of communication which we all do, often without realizing it: sign language or 'speaking hands'.
- Using the Countdown command, bring the group to a standing circle. From here, you should briefly explain this lesson's topic by a simple demonstration of the following actions (you may wish to practise this before hand!):



### 7.3 Speaking Hand Actions

- Peace Sign – two fingers raised in the air, with the back of your hand towards you
- Come Here – beckon with one hand as if calling someone over
- Goodbye – wave a hand
- Stop – hold up one hand vertically as if stopping traffic
- Well Done – thumbs up
- Quiet – index finger over the lips
- Disappointment – thumbs down
- Unsure – hold hand horizontally, and move it up and down
- Sleeping – both hands flat together palm to palm placed on one side of the head and then closing your eyes
- Sleeping Baby – hold your arms as if cradling a baby, and rock gently
- Time – look at right wrist, as if examining a watch

- ➔ After each demonstration, you should ask the participants to tell you what they think you are conveying to them. The group should then repeat the action.
- ➔ Each action should be written down on a piece of flipchart paper with a short explanation accompanying it. When completed, pair the group up using the pairing technique described in previous lessons.

### 7.4 Draw & Sign (10 Minutes)

- ➔ Each pair should be allocated a space in the room and a 'speaking hand' action as well as piece of flipchart paper and a marker pen. Each pair should then sketch out their 'speaking hand' action as big as they can. When completed, Blu-tack each sketch to the wall of the workshop space.

You may have to double up on some of the 'speaking hand' actions or you may wish to add some of your own.

### 7.5 Tell a Story (15 Minutes)

- ➔ Split the class into groups of four or five, directing each to a specific area of the room. You should then ask each group to come up with a short improvisation, using not only the 'speaking hand' language you have demonstrated, but also any other actions they may know of.
- ➔ This is quite a challenging exercise so you should go around each group offering advice and suggestions. It's important that each improvisation has a beginning, middle and end – in other words, that it makes sense and has some kind of story.
- ➔ This will be a challenge for some participants as the dynamic of some of the groups will not always be perfect, so you may need to encourage them, reiterating that teamwork is an important aspect of the project.
- ➔ Just before time is up, number each group 1–5 (presuming the class is an average size of 30). This will be the order in which you will call them onto the stage for the Show Back in the next section.

### 7.6 Show Back (15 Minutes)

- ➔ Using the Freeze command, Countdown command and Go command, bring the group in front of you as a seated audience, ensuring everyone is clear where the stage area is. Position yourself on stage and quickly go over the stage directions once more, before inviting each group to perform their devised 'speaking hands' scene on stage. After each group has performed, ask for feedback from the audience as to whether the piece has worked and made sense. Some groups may also have included their own 'speaking hands' language and feedback should be taken as to whether it makes sense and is easily understood.
- ➔ You may wish to offer prizes to the most inventive pupils at this point.

## 7.7 Final Individual Feedback (20 Minutes)

This should be done straight after the session and, if possible, where the session has taken place.

- Each participant should be given a pen and exercise book and asked to find a space in the room on their own. Each participant should write their name, together with the date and title of the session on the top of the page.
- Final Individual Feedback is incredibly important as, so far, they have worked in pairs, small groups and as a whole, but the final exercise should always be individual as it gives a clear indication of what they have and haven't understood.
- This lesson's feedback section is particularly important as thinking about unspoken language and its use in everyday life will be new to most of the group. It's important they understand that communicating without words can be as effective as using spoken language.
- This section should be led by you with the following as suggested questions:

**What did it feel like to communicate without words?**

**Has this session made you more aware of your body?**

**What was your most successful 'speaking hands' language?**

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### Speaking Hands Outcomes:

- Continued team building skills
- Continued pair work
- Greater understanding of drama techniques and terminology
- Understanding and use of different types of non-verbal communication and their impact

