



Horror Acting 101

Created by STG Teaching Artist: Nina Williams-Teramachi and Brad Walker

This curriculum is tied to an interactive lesson plan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNBpWpWtYU0>

Description: *Bring the thrills and chills of Halloween to dramatic life with this acting class. Learn some scary improv games, monstrous voice acting techniques, and much more! It'll be a real scream!*

Goal: Learn some basic physical and vocal techniques for horror acting!

Grade(s) /Age(s): Ages 12-18	Video Length: 45 minutes
Materials: N/A	Space needs: Clear as much space as needed for movement

Class Outline:

WARM UP

- **Physical: Shake the Cobwebs** – Count down from 5 from arms to legs, right to left. Get those cobwebs off me!
- **Vocal: Lemon/Lion** – Get those facial muscles ready for a big scream. A classic. Lemon - get as small as you can with your face. Then add the whole body. Add sound. Lion - the opposite, big as big as you can with your face. Then add the whole body. Add sound. Flip back and forth. (Maybe brainstorm a more Halloween-y name for this)
- **Vocal: Tongue Twisters** –
 - Dracula digs dreary, dark dungeons.
 - Ghostly ghouls gather gleefully to golf on ghostly golf courses.
 - Gobbling gargoyles gobbled gobbling goblins
 - If big black bats could blow bubbles, how big of bubbles would big black bats blow?
 - If two witches would watch two watches, which witch would watch which watch?
 - Professional Pumpkin Pickers are prone to pick the plumpest pumpkins.

ACTIVITIES

"Fortunately/Unfortunately" Game

Now that our voices and bodies are warmed up, let's warm up the final tool of an actor: our imaginations. Let's put on our story-teller hats and work together to tell some scary stories around this (digital) campfire!

Discuss quickly what defines a story: beginning/middle/end, the five W's (who, what, where, when, why) and discuss the importance of CONFLICT for our hero(es).

Begin by playing "Fortunately/Unfortunately" -- we take turns adding one sentence to the story at a time, alternating between something fortunate happening for our protagonists, and something unfortunate happening. Keep this in the campfire ghost story genre if you want to make it a scary story!

Find a place as a group to wrap up the story. You can do as many stories as you want!

Ghostly Circus

Guided visualization exercise playing with different environments. Ex: You're exploring outside on a dark hallow's eve and you hear an owl in the distance. You hear footsteps behind you... etc.

Start by making sure you've got as much room to move around as you can. Being mindful of the objects and furniture around you. This is where we start reimagining our environments and look at our spaces with new eyes and context. Nina will be giving you context and your responsibility will be taking Nina's suggestions and applying it to your current environment. You can think of these things that are truths for your character. You can choose to be yourself, or maybe do this activity as a monster, or a vampire.

Our "neutral" will be dropping whatever the situation the character was just in and moving normally - this will be when Nina says "Release, now neutral." Or something to that effect.

- Moving around your space, just on a nice sunny day on the sidewalk.
- It starts to rain and you don't have an umbrella!
- Oh, great. But luckily, there's a bunch of trees nearby in the woods, you make your way there.
- Maybe that'll keep you dry.
- It's starting to get dark outside. What's that sound?
- Is that an owl? Where's that sound coming from? The sound gets louder and you decide to follow it.
- You hear the crunching of leaves (crunch, crunch, crunch) right behind you.
- Maybe you start moving a little faster. And a little faster.
- But luckily, you find somewhere to hide. You find a lake.

- Wading through water about knee high. It seems like whatever was following you lost interest, but just to be safe...
- Wading through water waist high. Better check your surroundings to make sure nothing else is around. How does this change how you move?
- Wading through water up to your neck. Getting awfully hard to move, right?
- Release. Back to neutral. Just moving your way on the sidewalk.
- You continue moving and notice the wind picking up
- Oh, it's getting really windy - like super windy. It's a little scary how strong this wind is, you start seeing stop signs being blown over. Dodge them!
- You keep on the same path and start hearing some interesting sounds in the distance. You can't quite place what it is...
- You get to the end of the block and see an Abandoned house and hearing bubbling cauldron and witches cackle
- Go exploring, peek inside - you see witches gathering and looking your way through the window!
- You get away as fast as you can.
- Once the coast is clear - you return to your day.

Voice Acting Techniques and Monstrous Voices

We will go through the basics of altering your voice for different kinds of characters/monsters.

REGISTER: higher or lower in your voice. Larynx goes up and down, higher makes higher pitches.

RESONANCE: chest, mouth, nose... more or less nasal? More or less booming?

PLACEMENT: forward or backward in the mouth... to the side of the mouth? Use your articulators... lips, teeth, jaw... just moving your lips to the side or moving them forward...

We will then apply these concepts to different monster archetypes: **vampire, witch, Frankenstein's monster, goblin, werewolf, etc.**

Monster Movement Game:

The audience or leader calls out different types of monsters that everyone must move like. If they call Frankenstein's monster, hold out your arms. **Frankenstein, Vampire, Witch, Werewolf, Goblin, Mummy, Ghost, Zombie, Big Spider.**

Variation could be the classic 0 to 10 - Have a monster and show what it would be like at a 3 (so, a little monster-ish, but not a lot). Fun time to explore physical specificity. Add sound for extra fun.

CLOSING

Shouts of Affirmation: If you're doing this lesson with another person, be sure to tell each other something that they did that you both enjoyed that the other did. If you're doing this by yourself, be sure to remember to be kind to yourself and think about one thing that you did today in this lesson that you thought was awesome. Maybe show what you did or learned to a friend or adult later!

Scream! On the count of 3, let's give out a scream to celebrate our work! *(if you're in a space/place where it's okay to scream and people around you know that you're safe and going to make a loud sound).*

BONUS GAME

Scary movie in a Minute: Have people you're playing this game with write names of scary stories, movies, shows, etc. down on pieces of paper and then fold those papers up and put them in a hat or type of container to draw from. Get into small groups or pairs and take turns drawing a paper from the hat/container. The actors then act out that story in one minute. Then they must act out the same thing in 30 seconds. THEN they must act it out in 10 seconds. Audience members can watch and try to guess what story they were acting out!

REFLECTION

- Homework – **Practice your monster physicality and voices at home!**
- Celebrate yourself for allowing yourself to explore your impulses in a creative way. This can be in form of a self-hug, air high five, or just a smile!
- Keep doing these activities as much as you want.
- Push yourself outside your comfort zone and remember to ALWAYS HAVE FUN!

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

We appreciate and welcome your feedback! You can share your experience from any of our pre-recorded video sessions with us in this anonymous survey - <https://www.tfaforms.com/4765455>

SHARE A PHOTO/VIDEO

If you tried any of these activities, please feel free to share a photo or a short video! We'd love to share what people are doing via our socials!

- Instagram @stgpresents
- STG facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/stgeducation>

ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTISTS

Brad Walker



Brad Walker is an actor, director, and teaching artist. Seattle born and raised, he is an alumnus of the University of Washington, where he studied Theatre and Communications. Brad has directed shows with Second Story Rep, Pork Filled Productions, Burien Little Theater, and school plays at Bryant Elementary and Sacajawea Elementary. While Brad loves to direct, he works predominantly in theatre as an actor. He has performed with Seattle Children's Theatre, Book-It Rep, Taproot Theatre Company, Village Theatre, Harlequin Productions, and StoryBook Theater. He currently teaches with Seattle Theatre Group and Studio East and collaborates with educators to create sustainable theatre arts programs. www.walkerbrad.com

Nina Williams-Teramachi



Nina is a Japanese-American multidisciplinary artist and educator originally from Sapporo, Japan and Portland, Oregon working in Seattle. Nina recently worked on multiple shows as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Dublin Fringe Festival in the UK and had their Off-Broadway debut with the Obie-Award winning production, *Suicide Forest*. Nina also works with students from on a variety of different styles of theatre and visual art all across various residencies across Washington state. Nina believes that students of all backgrounds should be represented in the materials and be presented an opportunity to create their own stories and let their lives inform their work. www.NinaWilliamsTeramachi.com