



EduTrend Contents

W4C · PERFORMING ARTS · HIGH SCHOOL

Directing and Staging

Block a scene for different stage configurations

Ages 15–18

Level: Advanced

75 minutes

Groups of 4–5

Activity 05

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 05 · AT A GLANCE

Directing and Staging

Students compare proscenium, thrust, traverse and in-the-round stages, learn stage directions, and explore proxemics. Groups direct a short scene, block it for two configurations, rehearse, and justify how staging choices change what the audience sees.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- describe common stage configurations and their effects;
- use stage directions accurately;
- block a scene using proxemics to show relationships;
- justify directorial choices for an audience.

KEY WORDS

proscenium · thrust · traverse · in-the-round · blocking · upstage · downstage · proxemics · sightlines

CURRICULUM LINKS

Drama and theatre studies: directing and design. English: interpreting scripts. Art: composition and space.

1**WARM UP**

Body and voice

2**EXPLORE**

Play and try

3**CREATE**

Devise and shape

4**REHEARSE**

Practise and polish

5**PERFORM**

Share with an audience

6**REFLECT**

Feedback and improve

Materials

- A cleared space with chairs to mark audience positions
- Masking tape to mark stage areas
- Short scene extracts for 3–4 actors
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Tape out a nine-area stage grid.
- Prepare scene extracts with clear relationships.
- Plan chair layouts for two configurations.
- Prepare images of each stage type.

SAFETY

Keep aisles and exits clear when rearranging chairs. Lift chairs safely and in pairs if stacked.

ACTIVITY 05 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Moving the audience is the key moment: students suddenly see how sightlines change every decision.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Show the same moment staged end-on and in-the-round.	<i>"What changes for the audience?"</i>
10–20 min Teach	Stage configurations, nine stage areas and directions from the actor's viewpoint.	<i>"Where is downstage left?"</i>
20–30 min Proxemics	Pairs explore distance and levels to show power and closeness.	<i>"What does distance say about the relationship?"</i>
30–60 min Direct	Groups block the scene for two configurations and rehearse.	<i>"Can every audience member see the key moment?"</i>
60–75 min Present	Groups perform both versions and justify choices.	<i>"Which staging best served the scene?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Direct and block a short scene for two stage configurations and justify how each staging communicates the characters' relationships.

ACTIVITY 05 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The performance craft in brief

In a proscenium or end-on stage, the audience faces the stage from one side. A thrust stage has the audience on three sides, traverse on two opposite sides, and in-the-round on all sides. Each configuration changes sightlines, intimacy and how performers must move.

Stage directions are given from the actor's viewpoint facing the audience: stage left is the actor's left. Upstage is away from the audience and downstage towards it, terms that come from raked stages that sloped towards the audience. Proxemics, the use of space between people, helps show power, status and relationships.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Stage left is the audience's left." It is the actor's left facing the audience.
- "Actors should always face the audience." In the round, they must share focus in all directions.
- "Blocking is just where people stand." It creates meaning, focus and rhythm.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use a single configuration and a script with blocking prompts.

Stretch

Add a lighting or sound concept and explain how it supports the staging.

WORKSHEET 1

Stage configurations

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Compare stage types.

Comparison

Configuration	Audience position	One advantage	One challenge
Proscenium			
Thrust			
Traverse			
In-the-round			

WORKSHEET 2

Blocking plan

Plan movement for two configurations.

Ground plans

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a dashed line, intended for drawing ground plans. It occupies the central portion of the worksheet below the 'Ground plans' heading.

Draw two ground plans. Mark actors, moves and the audience.

WORKSHEET 3

Director's justification

Explain your choices.

How proxemics showed relationships

Which configuration served the scene best and why

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Describes configurations	Uses stage directions accurately	Justifies directorial choices

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Directing and Staging is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Performing Arts programme (high school, level: advanced). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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