

A decorative banner with a black and white checkered pattern at the top. The word 'LESSON' is written in orange, stylized letters across the top. Below it, the number '2' is written in a large, purple, stylized font. The banner has a yellow and white striped background.

Concentration

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Identify concentration.
- ◆ Understand the importance of concentration in theatre.
- ◆ Participate in concentration activities.
- ◆ Concentrate on physical detail.
- ◆ Demonstrate self-confidence using your concentration.
- ◆ Work on problem-solving activities, individually and cooperatively.

Warm Up



Why is it difficult to concentrate in class? In your journal, list reasons you have difficulty concentrating in class.

You have been told to concentrate most of your life. This is a skill that was probably difficult for you as a child because your attention span was so short. You may still have trouble concentrating today because there is so much happening around you, and you do not want to miss any of the action.

Concentration is an important skill for you to develop. With concentration you become a disciplined actor. To concentrate, you must pay close attention to people and objects in your environment and you must remember what you observe. You must also learn to focus in on your thoughts and feelings.

You have played concentration games throughout your schooling. You had to rely on your memory so that you could match math cards, vocabulary cards, or picture cards. You succeeded in those concentration games when you did not let anything else interfere with your goal of concentrating. You remembered what was happening, and you did not let anyone break your concentration. You must maintain the same kind of focus when you are rehearsing or performing onstage. Do not let anything or anyone block your concentration on the character or actions you are portraying.

ACTION



Focus on your goal, whether it's the bulls-eye or learning a certain number of lines each day.

- 1. Table of Concentration.** Your teacher will place fifteen to twenty different items on a table. Look at the items carefully, and concentrate on what they are. After a few minutes, your teacher will cover the items with a cloth. List the items on a sheet of paper. Check to see how well you concentrated. Try to draw a map of the tabletop, recalling in detail where all of the objects are in relation to each other.
- 2. Staying in Character.** Bring a magazine, book, or comic book to theatre class. Your teacher will assign a character for you to become while you are reading the material you brought to class. Concentrate on how this character would read the material. How would that reading affect your body? Don't let anyone distract you. Possible characters for you to become are a cowboy, nurse, hippie, five-year-old girl, Girl Scout, eighty-year-old man, politician, lawyer, or preacher.
- 3. Who's Conversing with Whom?** Try to carry on a conversation with two people at the same time. For example, talk about a language arts assignment with one person and a football game with another, or talk about what happened during lunch and your plans for the weekend. Focus on your purpose, and concentrate to keep the conversations moving and making sense.
- 4. Concentration Relay.** Your teacher will divide the class into teams of three. Each team will have to concentrate to win. The first team member carries beans in a spoon and drops them in a bucket. The object is to concentrate and not drop any beans on your way. The second team tosses beanbags into a trash can. The object is to hit inside the can as many times as possible and to concentrate on how many times the beanbag goes in. The third group hits a birdie into a bucket with a badminton racket and must concentrate on how many times the team makes the bucket. This concentration game is a relay race, but the object is to keep count of all that is going on and to concentrate on doing the best job as a team.
- 5. Concentration Paper Fold.** Pick a partner to work with for this exercise. Challenge yourself to work with someone you have not worked with before. Sit or stand back to back with your partner. Each student needs two sheets of paper. The first student folds the paper in a particular way and then instructs the second student on how to fold his or her paper

the same way. The goal is for the second student to fold his or her paper correctly by following the verbal directions, without looking. After the concentration activity, the partners turn around to see how well they followed directions. Now switch roles and repeat the activity.

6. Director, You Said What? Choose a partner. One student becomes the director and the other student the actor. It is the director's job to give the actor directions for an action onstage. The directions should include several stage movements that would take place in the front, middle, or back of the stage (for example, crossing to another actor, sitting on a couch, and picking up a magazine). The actor then follows the director's directions. Then the partners reverse roles and do the activity again. The actor needs to concentrate in order to do everything the director asks. After you and your partner have each had a turn, discuss how it felt to have to give clear directions.

7. I Can Make You Smile! Your teacher will divide the class into two teams—team A and team B. Each team faces the other team, forming two lines. The first member of team A steps to the front of the class and faces the first member of team B. Team member A tries to make team member B laugh or smile. You may not touch the other person while trying to make the person laugh. You may make faces, sounds, or be creative to make team member B laugh. If team member B smiles or laughs, then team member B must join team member A and both go to the end of the line of team A. The first member of team B goes next and the process continues until all team members have had a chance to concentrate in front of the others and not break concentration. Remember if any team member breaks concentration, that member joins the other team.
