



 TheatreFolk | Jennine Profeta

**Sample Pages from  
Improv Games with Purpose**

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# IMPROV



# GAMES

with Purpose



TheatreFolk®

Jennine Profeta

Improv Games with Purpose  
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Published by Theatrefolk Inc.

e-mail: [help@theatrefolk.com](mailto:help@theatrefolk.com)  
website: [www.theatrefolk.com](http://www.theatrefolk.com)

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# INTRODUCTION

Students are usually drawn to improv because it's fun. It can be witty, funny, and satisfying to participate in theatre without a net. It's unpredictable and on the edge, which can also terrify your most tentative students for the same reasons. This is why it's important not to think of improv as just a bunch of games you do at the end of class. Improv games need to have a purpose, whether that be team building, communication, collaboration, active listening, or character building. When Improv has a purpose, it's a win for everyone. You're teaching skills, and students are learning how to work together rather than go for the individual laugh.

The games in this collection are not new and they're easily googled. But not only do you have all these games in one place, there is an identified purpose for each game, feedback suggestions and questions, game variations, teaching tips, side coaching tips, entry prompts, exit slip questions, and more! It's about giving every single one of your students the best improv experience from the tentative to the outgoing.

Let's say "yes, and" to each other!

Jennine Profeta



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# TOP TEN TIPS FOR TEACHING IMPROV

## Tip #1 – There are no wrong answers.

There are no wrong offers. Sometimes students are reluctant to put something on the table. They're scared that they're not going to say the perfect thing. Don't worry about being perfect. Just put something out there and know that things are going to spin out from it.

## Tip #2 – Improv is overwhelming.

You can choose from anything in the world and students are afraid that they're not going to say that perfect thing, that they're not going to be funny, or that they're not going to be able to contribute anything. We are aware of this and we're going to address this.

## Tip #3 – Improv is a team sport.

We are in it to win it together. We're all friends, we all support each other, we all help each other out. When we do shows, a lot of us have adopted this thing called, "I got your back." We go around and tap each other on the back and say, "I got your back" as a reminder that it's a team sport.

## Tip #4 – Keep physically open.

Students tend to cross their arms and legs. I know I stand in a crossed arm position because it's comfortable sometimes, but it's also defensive and it shuts us down. You're not able to listen as well when your body is crossed. Get them to open up — uncross those arms and legs. Sometimes you have to remind them several times throughout a class.

## Tip #5 – Listen.

It's all about communication and collaboration, so we need to listen to each other. All acting is about reacting and improv is this in its purest form. You have to be able to listen and react to your partner.

## Tip #6 – Focus on the wins and the challenges.

This is an important tip when giving feedback, as opposed to focusing on what is right and wrong. Just focus on the wins. There is no wrong in improv as long as we're listening to each other and supporting each other.

**Tip #7 – Emotion is your friend!**

I like to say that, in life, it sucks to be grieving. It sucks to be sad, to be terrified. But in the classroom, it's a really fun thing to play with. It can inject a lot of energy into your scenes. The more they can embrace their emotions and riff off of them, the more they are going to have in their toolbox.

**Tip #8 – Funny is the by-product, not the goal.**

Humor should be a happy by-product; we shouldn't be standing on the sidelines, thinking about the perfect joke. Improv is all about humor. We just want to start communicating our ideas, working on offers, and listening. Accept the fact that the laughs are going to come as a result of this thing that we're building together.

**Tip #9 – Avoid questions.**

We want to avoid questions in our scene work. Some students don't want to commit to the scene or they think that what they have to say is not good enough. So instead, they go into the scene and say, "So, what are you doing? What's your name? Why are we here?" I stop and say, "Okay, let's reframe it. Instead of a question, let's make it a statement." Say, "We are at..." and then they'll say something like, "Uh... Disneyland." Yes, perfect! That's great.

**Tip #10 – Have fun.**

Every time I hit the stage, I like to play and have fun. In improv, there are often rules and structures that are introduced in a lot of the exercises and games we play. That doesn't mean it's not fun; those are there to help us have fun, to hone in on the points that we want to hit so that we can have a great time and just laugh.



# THE FOUR PILLARS OF IMPROV

- Establish your “Who/What/Where”
  - Who/What/Where are the anchors of all scene work.
- Make strong choices
  - There is no such thing as wrong choices, only strong choices.
- Raise/explore/heighten a scene by implementing emotional stakes
  - Emotions raise the stakes of whatever is going on and make scenes more interesting.
- Listen & respond to your scene partners
  - What you need “to do” to succeed at improv.



# Teaching Resources

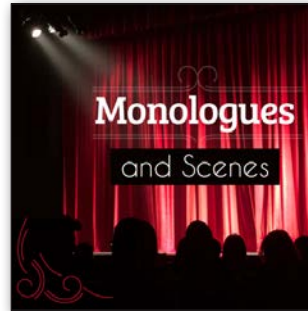
Quality resources to use in your drama classroom



## The Drama Classroom Companion

*The Drama Classroom Companion* is filled with articles and exercises to build the skills needed for theatrical performance as well as real world skills like creative thinking, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

[theatrefolk.com/companion](http://theatrefolk.com/companion)

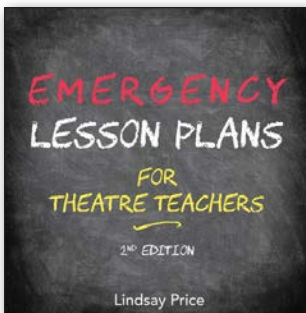


## Monologue and Scene Collections

Whether it's for classwork, competitions or auditions, these collections of student-appropriate monologues and scenes can help you find what you're looking for.

All monologues and scenes come from published plays and include running-times, descriptions, character notes and staging suggestions.

[theatrefolk.com/collections](http://theatrefolk.com/collections)



## Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers

*Emergency Lesson Plans For Theatre Teachers, 2nd edition* gives you the tools and resources you need to confidently leave your class in the hands of a substitute teacher. Customize your lesson plans to suit the specific needs of your class when you can't be there.

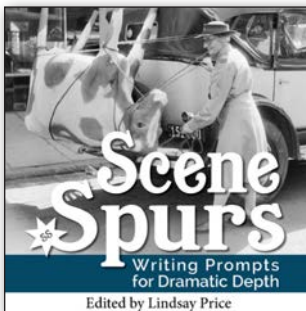
[theatrefolk.com/elp](http://theatrefolk.com/elp)



## The Student Director's Handbook

Help students take their show from first audition to opening night with *The Student Director's Handbook*. This easy-to-use ebook is full of guidelines, tips and templates designed to help students create a vision, circumvent problems and organize rehearsals on their way to a successful production.

[theatrefolk.com/student-director](http://theatrefolk.com/student-director)



## Scene-Spurs: Writing Prompts for Dramatic Depth

*Scene Spurs* is a collection of photo-based writing prompts developed by playwright Lindsay Price. The set includes 35 different Spurs along with an instruction guide to integrate them into your drama classroom.

[theatrefolk.com/spurs](http://theatrefolk.com/spurs)

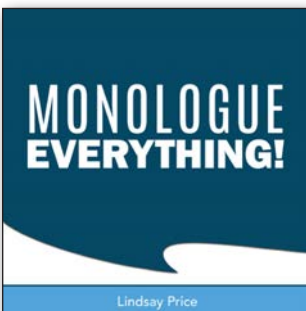


## Write Your Own Vignette Play

Your students want to write and perform an original play. You want to include a playwriting unit in your program. But where to start? What if your students have never written a play before? What if you've never written before?

*Write Your Own Vignette Play* will answer all your questions and more

[theatrefolk.com/write\\_vignette](http://theatrefolk.com/write_vignette)



## The Monologue Everything Program

Want your students to write their own monologues? Have you tried to incorporate monologue units into the classroom with less-than-satisfactory results?

[theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything](http://theatrefolk.com/monologue-everything)



## Competition Material

Plays, monologues, and scenes for drama competitions including royalty information and exemptions.

[theatrefolk.com/competition](http://theatrefolk.com/competition)



## Practical Technical Theater: The Complete Solution for Technical Theater Classrooms

This series of instructional DVDs is perfect for the teacher who feels more at home with a prompt book than a hammer, and would welcome a new, visually oriented teaching tool for their tech classes and production crews.

[theatrefolk.com/ptt](http://theatrefolk.com/ptt)



[www.theatrefolk.com/resources](http://www.theatrefolk.com/resources)