

IMPROMPTU THEATRE

Introduction

This game is all about spontaneity, acting out (in a good way), and having a great time. While it's difficult for a lot of people to leave their comfort zone and play this game, once they have, they have a blast! It's a friendly random-draw charades competition, reminiscent of skits and bits from Vaudeville and live comedies.

Overview

Players take turns acting randomly-generated scenes and receiving a score from the other players. The highest score after the designated number of rounds wins!

Components and Requirements

- Includes 3 decks of 54 cards each (Beginning, Middle, End)
- For 4 or more players, ages 12 and up
- 30-60 minutes

Setup

You will need a "stage" where players can act out scenes, as well as seats where the other players can see the whole scene play out. Set out the 3 decks so that the Judges can reach them easily. You will all be getting scores, so you will need a way to keep track of scores. You can have one score-pad, or everyone has their own pad and pencil, or whatever you all agree on. You will then need to decide the scale you'd like to use. Will it be out of 5 stars? Out of 6 thumbs up? All players agree on the rating scale, and then that's all you need for setting up.

Gameplay

This game is incredibly simple to play. It is a great party game, youth group game, or family game-night game (or any kind of event that has more than three people attending). I will use just four players to demonstrate how to play, but the game becomes far more enjoyable with more players. There are two roles to fill. Everyone will get to play in both roles. The first is the **Actor**. Each turn, there is only one **Actor**. The other three players act in the role of **Judge**. One **Actor**, three **Judges**. The reason there are three **Judges** is because there are three decks: A **Beginning** Deck, a **Middle** Deck, and an **End** Deck. Each deck contains words which form a very general sentence. Each **Judge** will draw the top card from the deck before them. The **Judges** will use the words to create a sentence which the **Actor** must...well...act out. You are given three key words, but you must fill in the other words (and we leave these spaces open for you because there are so

many possible sentences to create from just three main words). After deciding on a sentence, one **Judge** says the sentence and the **Actor's** turn begins.

Once they have finished acting out the sentence, the **Judges** write down scores for how well they think the **Actor** did with their sentence. Then, the turn shifts. The **End Judge** becomes the **Actor** and the **Actor** becomes the **Beginning Judge**. You can have **Actors** act one sentence or ten sentences before you tally up the scores. It's entirely up to you how long you want the game to run and how many chances the **Actors** get. Place the words in discard piles by each draw pile. If you so desire, you may shuffle the cards back in to recreate random sentences with now-familiar subjects.

That's it for the basics! Now for some additional/optional rules. 1) It is best to play without do-overs, but if you have really shy players, you may want to allow X number of do-overs (decide as a group or roll a die). 2) The **Actors** may use words, sounds, actions, props, whatever. Their goal is to act out the sentence as best as they possibly can in order to out-act the other **Actors**. This becomes difficult because each person gets a different sentence to act and some sentences may be easier than others. This game is more about having a good time than about winning, so 3) be flexible with players. If they want to modify the rules a bit so they have more fun in the experience, talk about with the others players and come up with a solution that works for everyone. 4) Because some sentences are more difficult to act out than others, **Actors** are permitted only one re-draw for the entire game – use it wisely! If they use this, redraw from each pile, not just one word.

If you have more than four players, the fifth and following players become the **Live Audience**. If they want to be **Actors**, they form a line of seats to the left of the **Beginning Judge** and slide over until it's their turn. If they do not wish to act, they do not have to. They can, however, help vote. When you have this number of people, you don't have three separate scores, but a single vote. Everyone agrees on a number that seems averaged and fair for that **Actor's** performance.

Winning the Game

Once everyone has taken a turn in acting and you have finished the number of rounds you agreed-upon previously, tally up the final scores. To get the final score for each **Actor**, add up each round's scores (e.g., 3 out of 5 + 4 out of 5 + 3 out of 5 = 10), then add up all the totals from all of the rounds (e.g., 10 + 9 + 12 + 9 = 40 total points for the game). The **Actor** with the highest total score wins the game.

That's it! If there are any uncertainties about how to play, democratically decide how you would like to proceed. Now gather your friends and family together and go have some fun! Or should I say, "Break a leg!"