

ACTING

Carnival of the Animals

Performing Animal Scenes:

In this activity, participants will use music from *Carnival of the Animals* as inspiration for creating original animal characters. Then they'll bring those characters to life using short scenes.

Materials Needed:

You will need a piece of paper, something to write with, a device where you can listen to *Carnival of the Animals*, and a scene partner.

Directions:

Step 1: Creating a Character

- Choose an animal from *Carnival of the Animals* to use as your character. There are lions, hens, roosters, donkeys, tortoises, elephants, kangaroos, cuckoos, swans, and fish. When you've chosen one, give your character a name.
- Listen to the music that was inspired by the animal that you chose. [Here's a link to the entire piece!](#) What ideas does the music give you about how your character might move and sound? It may be helpful to write your thoughts down so that you can use them later.
- Introduce yourself as the character you've created. Move and speak the way you imagine that they would. Explore!

“The tortoise is a cautious sort, Not known for being bold, And so the tortoise lives to be Exceptionally old.” - *Carnival of the Animals*, New verse by Jack Prelutsky

Step 2: Selecting a Scene

- Choose one of the two open-ended scenes below to work with. One actor will read for character A and the other will read character B.

Scene 1

A: This is the worst.

B: Mmm I know.

A: There

B: Happy

A: I am now. Yes.

B: Good are you done?

A: OK now your turn.

B: OK no, this is the worst.

A: Mmm I know.

B: There

A: Are you done?

B: Yes

A: Good I thought you said you were done

B: OK OK now anything else

A: Yes, there.

Step 2: Selecting a Scene cont.

Scene 2

A: Shoot!

B: Oh

A: Oh no

B: Can you uh ...

A: No here use this

B: Come on

A: I told you to be careful

B: I was...it just happened

A: There let me see

B: Oh where are you going

A: For help

B: And leave me here? You can't leave me here.

A: You stay here I'm off to get help.

B: No no please one more time try it again

A: Stay here I'll be right back.

B: Ah

- You've probably noticed that these scenes only tell you what words to say. You and your scene partner get to decide how you want to say the words and what you are talking about.
- Read through the scene together. Imagine your animals are the two characters in the scene.
- Decide what is happening in the scene to cause the animals to say these particular words to each other. Here are a few questions to help you brainstorm: Where are they? What are they doing? What do each of the characters want in this scene? What is their relationship to each other? How do they feel about each other and what's happening in the scene?

Step 3: Act It Out

- Now that you've made those decisions, it's time to rehearse! Use the information from your brainstorms to explore what to do with your face, body and voice in the scene.
- You'll also need to work together to figure out your blocking (movement on the stage or playing space).
- Try making different choices and playing with different ideas until you find what works for you and helps tell the story.

Closing:

Present your scene for other people in your house. See if they can figure out which animals you are playing!

Bonus:

Continue to explore your characters with these activities.

- Do the scene again, but switch roles so that you're each playing the character your partner created. You could also try the other scene using your original characters.
- Create a portrait of your character.
- Develop a comic strip that tells the story of what happened in your scene.