

URBANGATEWAYS

THE MAKE 'EM UPS CHICAGO IMPROV PRODUCTIONS



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Part history lesson, part improv workshop, part writing tool, and all around fun, Chicago Improv Festival Productions use improv games to teach students the history of improvisation and its ties to Chicago; the rules of improv; and how to create characters, settings and stories. It's the actors who are performing, but the students who shape the improv games with their suggestions.

By exploring how actors can make up stories on the spot, the students get to see some of the basic principles of improv theatre, which also translate into valuable lessons for everyone to learn.

MEET THE ARTISTS

Chicago Improv Productions (CIP) is a collective of improvisational performers under the direction of Cari Maher.

CIP is a diverse ensemble of professional actors, improvisers, musicians, and performance artists whose collective credits include: The Blue Rider, Congo Square Theatre, Goodman Theatre, iO, Local Infinities, Lookingglass Theatre, Redmoon Theater, The Second City, Steppenwolf Theatre, Teatro Vista and Victory Gardens Theatre among others.

The company's core philosophy is to educate audiences of all ages, artists, and Chicago area students about improvisation, a Chicago-born art form.

Chicago Improv Production's Website: chicagoimprovproductions.org

VOCABULARY

ACTOR

A person who portrays a character on stage.

BLOCKING

Where an actor moves on stage.

CHARACTER

A person in a story or play.

CHARACTER TRAIT

A quality which describes someone's behavior or physical appearance.

COSTUME

What an actor wears to make him or herself look like their character.

CUE

The line, sound or action which signals the performer to begin speaking or moving.

DIALOGUE

What the characters say to each other.

DIRECTOR

A person who tells the actors where to move on stage and create the shape of the play.

SETTING

Where and when the story or play takes place.

SCRIPT

The text of the play that an actor uses.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Specific instructions written by the playwright telling the actor that to do or where to move; also, specific areas of the stage (see upstage, downstage, stage right and stage left).

RESOURCES

Improv 4 Kids: games and educational material: <https://goo.gl/16rNQX>

The Second City Website: history of improvisation in Chicago and how the iconic improv club got its start: <https://goo.gl/ta9qJk>

For older audiences, watch clips of Whose Line is it Anyways (episodes available on YouTube)

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Have a discussion about how improv is different than scripted dialogue.
2. Provide some background information on the history of improv and the role that the city of Chicago played in improv development and growth to a popular theater form. Use the resources provided as a guide.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Play a few improv games with students. For a list of games, visit Improv 4 Kids website listed under Resources.
2. Have students work with a partner to create a mini-play. Give students these 6 basic lines of dialogue and encourage them to use elements like setting and character to create a unique story.

A: Hi.

B: Hi.

A: How are you?

B: Fine, thanks. How are you?

A: I am going okay.

B: Okay, bye.

Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Scope and Sequence

Skill Development

(IL 25A, 26A, 26B; Nat'l 1, 2, 4)

- Enter into a make believe (pretend) situation as if it were real.

Terms and Tools

(IL 25A, 26A, 27A)

- Identify the primary tools of the actor (body, voice,
- Identify story elements, including plot, character, setting, conflict, and message.
- Distinguish between improvisation and scripted drama or comedy.

Interpretation & Evaluation:

(IL 27A; Nat'l 7)

- Express reactions to live theater.
- Develop appropriate reactions at given moments in a classroom sharing or theatrical performance (listen, laugh, applaud).

Making Connections

Personal Connection (Nat'l 8)

- Experience live or recorded performances.