

Programme examples

Acting exams for groups

INITIAL TO GRADE 3



This resource has been designed to guide and inspire text choices when preparing candidates for Trinity Group exams and offers example programmes from Initial through to Grade 3.

These examples are intended for Trinity's Group Acting exams, however, several of these examples could be adapted to be used in the Performance Arts Group exams and in some cases the Musical Theatre Group exams.

Teachers may find that they need to make cuts in the text to adhere to exam timings. Please note the minimum as well as maximum timings – arrival, set-up and exit must be managed within the maximum timing, so make sure the groups have their props ready and can move any furniture needed swiftly.

INITIAL & GRADE 1

At Initial and Grade 1 this will often be the candidates' first experience of an exam. The performance times for these exams is 8 mins for Initial and 10 minutes for Grade 1.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME 1

Number of performers/characters: 5-7 | Narrator(s) x 1-3 / Mother / Old Man / Giant

WHAT

Jack and the Beanstalk – Simple adaptations of the story are available online, or create an original devised version with the group.
Split the story into five short scenes (eg Off to Sell the Cow, Mother's Fury, Climbing the Beanstalk, Stealing the Golden Hen, Chopping down the Beanstalk).

WHY

There are opportunities for physical and vocal work to define the different characters, direct audience communication from the narrators, physical motifs when climbing the beanstalk, and moments of suspense when the Giant chases Jack. A simple story with a clear structure works well for this age range.

STAGING SUGGESTIONS

This age group will enjoy dressing up. Simple costumes would give the candidates a sense of performance.
Separating areas of the performance space for action inside the house, the outside world and the giant's castle means that scenery should not be necessary. Puppets could be used to denote the cow, the golden hen and the growing beanstalk.
Stylised movements and sound effects from the other cast members would create a sense of drama when climbing up the beanstalk.

EXAMPLE 2

Number of performers/characters: 6 | Mouse / Fox / Owl / Snake / Gruffalo / Narrator

WHAT	WHY	STAGING SUGGESTIONS
<p><i>The Gruffalo</i> by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffer.</p> <p>A well-known children's storybook, written as dialogue.</p> <p>Split the dialogue amongst the characters and use one or more narrators for the narrative moments.</p>	<p>Written in rhyme which will assist learning, and with a humorous feel which the candidates will enjoy. Opportunities to work on animal voices and physicality, and to create the imagined environment of the wood. Simple costume could be used, particularly for the Gruffalo itself.</p>	<p>Creating a winding path on the floor using pieces of painted card to denote paving stones or logs will mean that the whole space can be used as the Gruffalo stops at different places to meet each of the animals.</p> <p>Encourage the children to work on their animal movements.</p> <p>Use simple head pieces or tails as costumes.</p>

EXAMPLE 3

Number of performers/characters: 11-30 | Anansi / Anansi's wife / Rabbit / Monkey / Tortoise / Hare / Squirrel / Mouse / Fox / Pig / Narrator(s)

Characters can be adapted for the number of performers in the group eg Anansi (his legs could be operated by multiple performers).

WHAT	WHY	STAGING SUGGESTIONS
<p><i>Anansi Stories – Why Anansi has Thin Legs!</i></p> <p>The Anansi stories are full of imaginative opportunities for young people. Create a devised version with the group of this story where Anansi goes greedily into other houses to try and eat multiple dinners.</p>	<p>These amusing stories about a Spider from the Caribbean captivate children across the world. This is a fable, which teaches children life-lessons. Anansi visits lots of animals house and greedily tries to get extra food by tying threads to his legs so that he can be alerted when each meal is ready. As they tug on the threads his legs are stretched thin! Scope to work on the physicality of the animals, and use the whole of the space as the different homes of animals.</p>	<p>The story line naturally lends itself to Anansi's home being in the middle of the stage and the other animals living around the periphery. Simple props such as cooking pots and small rugs will delineate the different spaces.</p> <p>Children will enjoy building these environments and working out a way to attach the threads to Anansi's legs to pull them.</p>

GRADES 2 & 3

At Grades 2 and 3 candidates are growing in confidence. The performance time increases to 12 minutes for Grade 2 and 14 minutes for Grade 3, which allows for more characterisation and dramatic development.

EXAMPLE 1

Number of performers/characters: 9-15 | Cinderella / Magic Fairy / Prince / Ugly Sisters x 2 / Jam-maker / Narrator(s) / Rat(s) / Courtier(s)

WHAT	WHY	STAGING SUGGESTIONS
<p>'Cinderella' by Roald Dahl (from <i>Revolting Rhymes</i>).</p> <p>A pantomime story with a twist, incorporating humour and gory beheadings!</p> <p>Make your own adaptation or for Performance Arts or Musical Theatre look at the musical versions of <i>Revolting Rhymes</i> published by A&C Black.</p>	<p>A larger-than-life piece of storytelling, that is written in rhyme and contains both narrative and dialogue. Humorous, and with some surprising moments, the candidates could explore the use of mime, movement, props and puppets to create the environments.</p> <p>There is scope to embellish the writing or edit it as necessary.</p>	<p>For the set pieces such as going to the ball, work with the candidates on creating the carriage by using a bench which doesn't move but using simple movements to suggest the motion and twirling umbrellas as the wheels. Simple stylised movement works best for larger groups.</p> <p>Make use of shadow puppetry behind a simple piece of cloth for the beheadings and use cabbages for the heads.</p>

EXAMPLE 2

Number of performers/characters: 5 | Jelly / Jonjo / Mum / Policeman / Aunt Leina OR Jelly / Jonjo / Aunt Leina / Rennie / P.A-lien

WHAT	WHY	STAGING SUGGESTIONS
<p><i>How To Spot an Alien</i> by Georgia Christou.</p> <p>Either scenes 1-4 for Grade 2 or scenes 11-16 for a slightly longer performance at Grade 3.</p>	<p>An amusing adventure story, written in an accessible and colloquial style that will appeal to younger candidates. The story focuses on two children whose Mum goes missing. They are adopted by a previously unknown aunt who turns out to be an alien.</p> <p>The style of writing requires some direct audience communication and some dialogue between characters. There are opportunities to use physicality and sound effects to create the environments.</p>	<p>As the characters move from scene to scene, a minimal set is all that's required.</p> <p>A few chairs which can be moved to suggest the different environments should be sufficient. Encourage the candidates to be responsible for moving anything during the performance but keep that to a minimum.</p> <p>Help the candidates to create the sense of claustrophobia when they are shut in the cupboard.</p>

EXAMPLE 3

Number of performers/characters: 15-30 | **Characters can be adapted for the number of performers in the group and the scenes chosen.**

WHAT

A reduced, devised version of *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* performed as an ensemble piece.

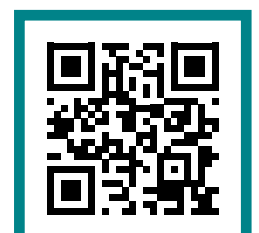
Using narration, freeze-frames and an episodic style, the group could work on a few scenes such as inside the chocolate factory or tell the entire story in bold brushstrokes.

WHY

A creative exercise to work on across a series of lessons with a large group. First identify the important scenes and moments. Next reduce them to single freeze-frame pictures, expanding them to three pictures to illustrate the moments before and after and, finally, add links of dialogue. Work on physical characterisation to make the characters distinctly different and immediately identifiable to an audience. Make imaginative use of physical theatre exercises (eg creating machines) and games to create the different environments and form an ensemble performance.

STAGING SUGGESTIONS

Invite the children to build a machine together, adding a movement one by one, and then adding sound effects. This could be used every time Willy Wonka moves into a new part of his factory.



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