Speed Dating

The purpose of Speed dating is to encourage people to meet in large groups. Its origins are credited to Rabbi Yaacov Deyo originally as a way to help Jewish singles meet and marry.

The first speed-dating event took place at Pete's Café in Beverly Hills in 1998. By 2000, speed dating had really taken off, perhaps boosted by its portrayal in shows such as Sex and the City. Supporters argue that speed dating saves time, as most people quickly decide if they are romantically compatible, or not.

Speed Dating can also come in handy for performing artists who want to keep their audition skills fresh. Just as in speed dating, first impressions are often permanent. It's also the perfect place to try out those untested characters.

Level: Beginner to advanced
Number of students: medium to large class

Age group: Young adult to adult
ESP: Artists or non-artists

Language focus: try it with introductions, or any other "life performance" e.g. an interview, asking for a raise, selling a product, making small talk...

Have your students work on their own first impressions:

On a small piece of paper, tell them to invent a character.
Include the following information:

Name	Profession	Age	3 Likes + 3 Dislikes	2 Strengths	2 Weaknesses

Next, give each student a bizarre quirk.*
Use the examples below to help you.

•**You like to smell paper**
•**You need to touch everything**
•**You twirl your hair**
•**You count all the buttons on a person before saying hello**
•**You chew your finger nails**
•**You only like people who bought their clothes on sale.**
•**You over pronounce all words beginning with the letter H.**
•**You won't shake someone's hand until you ask if they've used antibacterial soap.**
•**You have to collect DNA from everyone you meet. (e.g. hair, skin etc.)**
•**You listen to the instructions in your head before answering the questions of your partner.**
•**The person across from you smells horrible but you try to hide your discomfort.**
•**You will only talk to someone if they are on Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, or YouTube.**

Students stand in pairs and take 3 minutes to introduce themselves to each other all the while acting out their bizarre quirk.
Then change partners!
Stay in character!
Students can try to guess the quirks of the others.

* quirk: a strange habit or idiosyncrasy.

(*English for the Performing Arts*. Cagnol, B. 2009)

Scene Directions

The performer requires a great deal of language: rehearsal vocabulary; body parts; emotions; giving and following directions; facial expressions; movements.
Use this activity to help students with the language needed for these areas.

• Split the class into equal groups.
• One person in each group receives a photograph of a scene of a play or opera (you can give everyone the same or different photo).
• One person acts as the choreographer and gives the precise directions as to where the others should stand and what they should do (including body parts, positions, directions, and facial expressions).
• First group to get the picture right wins.
• You, the teacher, can decide how far you want to take it (that's code for: you control how long the activity lasts). So, if you've got five minutes left to spare, or 15, this can work for you.
• Some teachers might want to use this activity during the break, to get the kids / adults moving.

Level: Intermediate to advanced   **Age group:** Kids to adults
Number of students: medium to large class   **ESP**: Artists or non-artists

Language focus: Giving and following directions, body parts, emotions, facial expressions, movements, the *imperative*.

(*English for the Performing Arts*. Leahy, M. 2009)

Analyzing the Script - Pronunciation and Intonation

With your partner, choose who is Michael and who is George and read the text aloud.

Opening image: Michael is an actor. Hi is a very bad actor. George is his agent. In this scene, Michael comes to George's office insisting George find work for him.

George: (*annoyed*) What is it, Michael?

Michael: (*upset*) My competitor, Terry Hamptom is doing the show "Iceman Arrives," right? Didn't you promise to sign me up for that part? Am I wrong? Didn't you tell me I was gonna get that part?

George: Michael…

Michael: Aren't you my agent?

George: The director wants a famous name, Michael.

Michael: (*sarcastically*) Oh, I see, Terry Hamptom is a famous face. Okay (*he turns to leave*)

George: Wait wait wait wait! I'm…you always do this to me, Michael. Lemme start all over again. Terry Hamptom is on a soap opera. Millions of people watch him every day. He's known.

Michael: And that qualifies him to ruin "Iceman Arrives"?

George: The producer and director wanna famous name, okay? I know this is gonna disgust you, Michael, but a lotta people are in this business to make money.

Michael: I'm in this business to make money, too!

George: Really?

Michael: Yes!

George: I will not get sucked into this conversation, Michael. I will not.

Michael: Look, I don't wanna argue about it, okay? I want you to sign me up for anything - I don't care what it is! I will do dog commercials on television! I will do radio voice-overs!

George: I donno, Michael. I can't sign you up for any of that.

Michael: Why not?

George: Because no one will hire you. That's why.

Michael: Oh, that's not true!

George: Yes it is! A director has got four weeks to put on a play - you think he wants to sit and argue about whether or not the main character, Victor Hugo, should walk when he's drinking, or walk when he's speaking, or consider sitting when he's walking!

Michael: Oh, please, that was *two* years ago, and the director was an *idiot*.

George: They can't all be idiots, Michael - you argue with everybody! You've got one of the worst reputations in this town, Nobody will hire you!

Michael: (*slowly, as he processes this*) Are you saying that nobody in New York will work with me?

George: Oh no, that's too limited. Nobody in *Hollywood* wants to work with you, either. I can't even give you a commercial - you played a *tomato* for thirty seconds. They went a half a day over schedule 'cause you didn't sit down.

Michael: Yes. It wasn't logical.

George: (*shouting*) YOU WERE A TOMATO! A tomato doesn't have logic! A tomato can't move!

Michael: (*angry*) That's what I said! So if he can't move, how's he gonna sit down, George? I was a stand-up tomato, a juicy, sexy tomato! Nobody does vegetables like me!

George: *(at the end of his rope)* Michael, I-I'm trying to stay calm here. You, uh - are a wonderful actor.

Michael: Thank you.

George: Get some therapy.

Analyzing the Script - Phonetics and Intonation

Syllable Stress
Read the words from the script aloud. Put a dot above the correct syllable that receives the stress.

Example: unbelievable ●

competitor	promise	agent	famous	director	commercial
producer	business	money	disgust	logical	anything
conversation	argue	radio	consider	qualify	character
second	vegetable	wonderful	reputation	ruin	idiot

Informal contractions are individual words formed from two or more words.

Can you find all of the examples in the text that mean:

1. going to   4. want to
2. let me   5. a lot of
3. don't know

Screenwriters often include these contractions in scripts.

Phonemes
Using the list of phonemes on the right, write the correct sound (or number) that corresponds to the underlined vowel sound (which is not always the stressed vowel). Many of these words came from the script.

Example: die = 4 or [ai]

better	quicker	higher	second	idiot
greater	sucked	promise	radio	sweater
live (verb)	rhyme	hurdle	sign	agent
famous	million	business	money	said

1 = [ei] *make*
2 = [ə] *bird*
3 = [^] *cup*
4 = [ai] *pie*
5 = [e] *bed*
6 = [i] *keep*
7 = [I] *hit*

Emotions
Study the script and decide which feelings are present in the scene. Remember: answers may vary according to each person's interpretation and visualization of the scene.
Label sentences or sections in the script which depict these emotions.

Anger	Happiness	Frustration	Annoyance	Tired
Sarcasm	Frightened	Determination	Worried	Fed up
Blasé	Surprised	Contempt	Sadness	Aggression

Read the sections you labelled according to their emotions.
Do your opinions change as you say the sentences aloud?

Choose three of your favorite sentences in the script and
try saying them using all of the emotions listed above.
For example:
The director wants a famous name, Michael. annoyed / blasé
Aren't you my agent?   surprised / sadness

Did you know: a famous soap opera star would always think, "Did I leave the iron on?" to get the perfect worried tone in her voice and facial expressions. It worked every time!

✓ Tip: Always play around with the emotions when you encounter a new scene. Have fun with it!
✓And remember: each person's interpretation will be different.

Audience Etiquette

Epinions.com **posted the top commandments for audiences.**

☑ **Thou shalt do your homework and read the story/synopsis beforehand.**
☑ **Thou shalt not drink too much or have a big meal just before coming to the opera. So many people, so few bathrooms, such long queues...**
☑ **Thou shalt not wear cologne or perfume.**
☑ **Thou shalt arrive early.**
☑ **Thou shalt turn off all things that beep, ring, chime, bark, moo etc. (watches included!)**
☑ **Thou shalt not eat in the theater.**
☑ **Thou shalt clap when the conductor enters the pit and after the music has stopped after a spectacular aria or ensemble piece. After the music has stopped, please!!**
☑ **Cheering is OK.**
☑ **When possible, stay for multiple curtain calls. Walking out during the first bow is quite rude.**
☑ **Thou shalt not record a performance!**
☑ **Thou shalt not take flash photos during the performance. It distracts the performers.**
☑ **Unwrap all candies, cough drops and tissues before the performance begins.**
Can you think of any more?

Discuss: Have you seen audience members break these sacred rules? When? Where?

Debate

Did you know: Canadian soprano Alexandra Deshorties was repeatedly booed during her opening night as Konstanze in her Metropolitan Opera performance of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* on Jan. 20, 2003.

The booing came from a male audience member seated in the middle of the orchestra section. Metropolitan Opera security guards threw him out during the intermission.

"I understand people who boo us. It's like going to a Broadway show, you pay for your tickets and expect to be entertained. When you're not, you have a right to complain."
- Sparky Anderson -

Fluency & pronunciation**: Have you ever been impressed by one performer in particular? In English, it is not unusual to use long adjectives to describe a wonderful performance. Can you think of any?**

Look at the list below. Notice how many compliment adjectives are more than 2 syllables long.
Use a dictionary to mark the syllable stress on each word below. The first two have been done for you.

Write a paragraph complimenting your favorite performer. Imagine your partner or coach is this person and read your compliments to them. Try not to look at your notes.
Example: *I adored your performance. It was riveting!*

Add more emotion to your compliments by inserting *positively*, *just*, *truly* before each adjective.
Example: *I adored your performance. You were positively outstanding!*

<u>fa</u>bulous!	inspiring!	breathtaking!	exquisite!	elegant!
<u>stun</u>ning!	sensational!	astonishing!	astounding!	majestic!
riveting!	tremendous!	first-class!	superb!	remarkable!
splendid!	marvelous!	exceptional!	outstanding!	unforgettable!
delightful!	magnificent!	spectacular!	brilliant!	incomparable!

✓ Be sure to have a few of these adjectives on hand next time you meet the artist back stage!

(*English for the Performing Arts*. Cagnol, B. 2009)

Discussion:
Are you a fan of online social networking?
What social networks do you use? Why?
Can you think of any examples of how technology has changed the arts?

B B C

Opera being composed on Twitter

The Royal Opera House is to stage an opera created through social networking site Twitter.

Members of the public have been invited to submit their "tweets" online - messages of up to 140 characters - which will form the new libretto.

The first scene of the as-yet-untitled work has already been completed and features a man who has been kidnapped by a group of birds.

Excerpts will be performed at the Royal Opera House in September 2009. The opera will be set to original music by composer Helen Porter along with some more familiar opera tunes.

The project was launched as part of the Royal Opera House's (ROH) Ignite season and aims to get more people involved in the creative side of opera. Alison

Duthie, head of ROH2 said: "It's the people's opera and the perfect way for everyone to become involved with the inventiveness of opera as the ultimate form of storytelling. "Expect the unexpected - who knows how the story will evolve, but get tweeting and you can play your part in your opera."

The Royal Opera House blog gave a precis of Act One, Scene One: "William is languishing in a tower, having been kidnapped by a group of birds who are anxious for revenge after he has killed one of their number.

"Hans has promised to rescue him. The Woman With No Name is off to her biochemistry laboratory to make a potion to let people speak to the birds."

Contributions can still be made to the libretto on ROH's Twitter feed.

a. What was Alison Duthie's rationale behind the opera?
b. What do you think will be the title of the opera? (check online for the answer)
c. When will the opera be performed?

What do you think about this modern platform for the arts? Divide into two groups and debate the points of view below.

Jeremy Pound: the *BBC Music Magazine's* deputy editor, thinks the exercise "was an accident waiting to happen". "Whenever there is a new fad you know somebody in the art world is going to grab hold of it by the horns...They should be careful that it doesn't overtake the serious stuff they do."

Jonathan Lennie: *Time Out*'s classical music critic: "Opera belongs to everyone. This is good because it is experimental. It demystifies the process of creating opera."

(*English for the Performing Arts*. Cagnol, B. 2009)