

PRE- PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP

TEEN AMBASSADORS
ACROSS EUROPE

TE
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THEATRE
EUROPEAN
ENGAGEMENT
NETWORK



Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union

PRE- PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP



This resource has come out of the **TEEN Ambassadors Across Europe** project which was co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union. During the project, it was discovered that pre-performance preparation and expectation offered an important way of ensuring teenagers were able to fully engage with a Theatre performance. The Project Partners gradually experimented with new tools and techniques for pre-performance activities with our inspiration coming both from discussions with teenagers themselves (through the TEEN Kitchen Table Methodology) and an Academic Literature Review. And with that – this workshop was born! This workshop is designed to suit and support Teachers, as well as Creative Professionals & Artists, to run a session with their teenage participants. However, it is completely adaptable to your own needs and contexts – and there are many other approaches that we are sure would be equally (if not even more) fun, informative and engaging!

Reflections from Teenager participants in the TEEN Project

»If you go to the Theatre completely alone, you'll be alone in your head there. It's definitely a different energy if you go alone or with other people«

»The Performing Arts has its own language«

A GUIDE TO QUESTIONING

This workshop encourages the Teenagers to be active and critical questioners. As such, it may help them – and help you too – to explore some of these different approaches to asking questions about Theatre.

- **Detective:** Approach the theatre with questions about ideas, methods, choice of story etc.
- **Anthropologist:** Specific questions about the performance, its context, its direction, the stage design or costuming etc.
- **Captain:** Questions regarding concrete action plans etc. What do you bring with you from this performance – how does it change how you will feel and act tomorrow?
- **Futurist:** Questions regarding future possibilities, developments, improvements to the performance etc.

It can also help to discuss with the group what it means to ask an **'Authentic Question'**:

- Authentic questions are questions you do not know the answer to until you have asked the other person.
- Authentic questions are based on the experiences of the person being asked and the view that "they are their own expert about their feelings and experiences".
- Authentic questions are open and curious.

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Production:

Teacher/ Facilitators:

Date:

Session Duration: 1 Hour

Please note that these timings are indicative only and can be adapted to suit the allocated time that you have.

Resources / Materials needed

Post-it/Sticky Notes, Pens, Flip-Chart Paper, Ball or Bean Bag, Printouts of the Expectation Cards

Aims/ Learning Outcomes

- 1 For the Teenagers to individually reflect on their expectations about the performance.
- 2 For the Teenagers to discuss the performance they are going to watch with confidence.
- 3 For each Teenager to proactively participate in the workshop (either in pairs, small groups and/or to the whole group).



DIALOGUE
THE COMMUNITY
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The Norwegian Network
for Performing Arts
for Young Audiences



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Timing
5 Min.

Activity
Welcome and Introduction to the Workshop

Make Group Rules

The first time you discuss a performance with your group, it can be useful to develop some ground rules to outline expectations around behaviour.

These ground rules should be set so that all of the Teenagers feel comfortable to express their thoughts in the workshop freely and fully.



If you already have ground rules in place for other group activities, it may be useful to ask the Teenagers if they think any changes are required so as to suit the needs of this specific workshop.

The rules, for example, may include:

- We listen and respond to everybody.
- Everybody in the group has valuable ideas to share.
- Everybody's opinions and feelings are valid.
- Only contribute something if you think it will be constructive.
- What everybody does impacts the whole group – so make it good!
- What makes sense to you might not make sense to somebody else.
- Make sure everybody has the opportunity to contribute.
- There are no right or wrong answers.





5 Min.

Energiser - Venga, Venga

- Set up: Group stands in a circle.
- The game works as a call and response.
- Leader demonstrates a call and teaches a response.
- Possible actions (the group can create and add more):
 - Call: "Venga, Venga"
→ Group Response:
"Hula, Hula"
 - Call: "Pineapple"
→ Group Response:
"Pumpkin"
 - Call: "What's The Time?"
→ Group Response:
"Mr Wolf"
 - Call: High [Physically Jump High]
→ Group Response:
Low [Physically Crouch Low]
 - Call: Clap [Clap Once]
→ Group Response:
Clap Clap [Clap Twice]



5 Min.

Performance Trailer & 'Pass the Ball'

- Show the Trailer / Poster / Description of the Performance
- This is a good opportunity to hear the Teenagers' first impressions and their initial reactions to the publicity materials of the performance they're going to see.
- Ask the Teenagers to begin by individually reflecting on their first impressions before asking them to share these ideas with the person next to them.
- To ensure that everybody feedbacks their ideas to the wider group, pass a ball around the circle in any order (whilst making sure that everyone has a turn).
- When the ball is passed to someone, the person who receives it should share what they think the performance will be about.
- If some of the Teenagers are struggling a little, it may help to ask them encouraging questions such as: What message or moral do you think the performance explores? Where do you think the performance is set? What do they think you will see, hear, feel, smell? etc.

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30 Min,

Expectation Cards (these are included later in this workshop plan, with more detailed instructions attached to them)

- Ask everyone to sit alone and think about what it's going to be like watching this performance. Some may even like to close their eyes and visually imagine what they think it is going to be like.
- Then ask them to read through the 'Expectation Cards'.
- They should choose a card, spend some time thinking about how they will respond to it, and then write or draw their response.
- You might model one of the questions as an example to give them an idea of the types of responses that they may have.
- Ask the Teenagers to complete as many of the card questions as time allows.
- In pairs or small groups, ask the Teenagers to tell each other about their reflections. It is important that each Teenager gets to express themselves while the others listen.



10 Min,

Preparing for the Event – Going into the Building

- Ask the Teenagers what they think going to the actual Theatre venue is going to be like and how they might prepare for the event. For example: How they might dress? Do they want to bring anything else with them? Who else might be at the Theatre? How do you think you should behave at the Theatre? Will we eat food whilst watching the performance? What is normal Theatre etiquette? What can I do if I get bored? Will there be a commercial break?
 - Using Post-it/Sticky Notes the Teenagers should reflect (either alone or in pairs) on these questions and then write down their ideas/answers before sticking them up on a dedicated wall in the room.
 - When they have shared their Post-it/Sticky Notes, read these out loud and see if there are any repeated ideas and themes.
 - Ask the Teenagers to discuss in smaller groups what they have just heard, whether they agree or disagree with any of the comments, or if anything surprised them.
 - Ask for feedback from each group.



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5 Min.

Weather Check-Out

A simple way of describing feelings metaphorically.

- Go around in a circle ask the participants to describe how they are feeling using a type of weather.
- For example, they may say they are "Sunny" if they are feeling happy and bright, "Foggy" if they are feeling tired, "Thundery" if they are feeling restless, or "Cloudy" if they are feeling sad.
- You can use this as a way of asking participants about their emotions generally or about something more specific – for example, how they are feeling about what they did during the workshop.



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Dialogue
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APPENDIX: EXPECTATION CARDS BEFORE THE ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE

This material is for Teenagers who participate in a performance activity as part of an artistic programme at school, or who experience a performance together outside of the school environment. The cards are a simple tool for Workshop Facilitators and Teenagers with the purpose of creating dialogue about performance expressions, forms, possibilities, and meaning - helping structure a process of reflecting upon, and understanding, an artistic experience. By asking open questions (where no answers are implied) of the artistic experience pre-performance, the Teenagers get the opportunity to express themselves, reflect, and listen to the answers of the others. We hope that the cards can help create a room of reflection and learning in relation to an artistic experience.

Remember that there are no right or wrong answers – the Teenagers are competent consumers of Art and Culture and are therefore experts on the answers themselves.

It is also important to point out that disagreement is valuable – you don't necessarily need to be building consensus. Remind the Teenagers that hearing other people's views on the matter helps to sharpen their own experiences and recognise that the world is diverse.

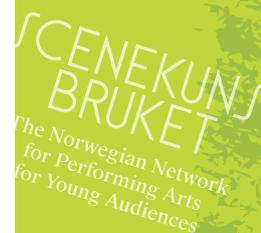
You can print the cards from this guide to use in the workshop and have the Teenagers write down their

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reflections. Or the Workshop Facilitator could read them aloud and lead a verbal discussion.

The Experience Cards have been adapted for the Workshop Plan from the work by LMS (Live Music in Schools), Teatercentrum (DK) and Dansehallerne (DK) in collaboration with teachers under the arrangement of Kulturpakker (www.kulturpakker.dk).



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EXPECTATION CARDS

– PRE-PERFORMANCE PREPARATION

What do you think of when you hear the word, 'Theatre'?	What do you think the performance will contain based on its title?	What do you think of when you see the poster for, or a picture from, the performance?
What do you think you are going to experience?	What do you think will happen?	What do you expect to see? Hear? Feel?
What is the name of the performance you are going to see?	What do you know about the performance beforehand?	Why are you going to see this performance?