

Heracles, Omphale and The Lion - Chorus Exercise

This exercise is a fun ice breaker, team builder and warm up, and we often begin workshops with it.

It's a good way of connecting to conventions of Greek theatre, because you can liken it to performing in amphitheatres, where big gestures and vocal projection were some of the many attributes required from actors, to be seen and heard by the audience.

You can discuss with students why this exercise is useful, talk about how acoustics in amphitheatres meant that actors needed strong voices, maybe masks and costume would affect how the audience could hear them.

Working as a team is a good foundation for any Greek chorus, so you can link this game to discussions about the Greek chorus and performing in unison.

This game is also called Wizards, Giants and Goblins, and is similar to paper, scissors, stone, but we have put an Ancient Greek spin on our version with the myth of Heracles and Omphale.



- Split students in to two teams
- Each team stands in a line across the room, facing the other team
- Explain the rules of the game - Like paper, scissors, stone, each team chooses a character and both challenge the other team by presenting their chosen character's movement/sound at the same time. One character defeats the other, or the score is tied if the same character is presented by both teams.
- Introduce the characters and their movements/sounds, and explain which character defeats each one - For example:
 - * Omphale (pronounced Omm-fuh-lai) - One hand up in the air, hip jutted out, with an "ooo" sound (like a girly girl). She's powerful, girl power
 - * Heracles - Two fists in front of your face with a "hurgh" sound (like a gladiator). He's the big guy, he's loud
 - * The Nemean Lion - Crouched down, arms like claws come out toward the other team with a "roar" sound. Brave and brutal

*** Omphale beats Heracles, Heracles beats the lion, the lion beats Omphale**

- Select a team captain for each team - This person will decide what character the group challenges with
- After three, the teams step forward and take up the position/noise of their character
- According to which character the teams choose, declare whether the round is a win, lose or draw
- The game is played three times, with a tie-breaker round added if required

NB: You can change the character movements/sounds to link to different plays to make it more relevant to you.

NB: It's always nice to ask students to read about the myth of Heracles and Omphale at home, for context.

Useful Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vTgb6VfOgQ>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omphale#Heracles_and_Omphale

<https://www.new-atlantis.eu/adivinacion-divination/gods-and-goddesses-greek.html>