

AFFECT YOUR PARTNER

Category: Emotion Exercise

Age Group: 8+

Duration: 10-20 mins
depending on the number of students

OBJECTIVE:

This exercise teaches students how to evoke emotions in others through subtle, indirect actions, developing their understanding of nuanced character interaction and emotional influence.

MATERIALS:

- A list of emotions (e.g., happy, sad, nervous, excited, angry)
- An open space for pairs to practise without distraction

STEP BY STEP GUIDE

1. DIVIDE INTO PAIRS:

- Pair students and ensure each pair has enough space to work privately without distractions.

2. INTRODUCE THE FOCUS ON INFLUENCING EMOTION:

- Explain that Student A's goal is to subtly influence Student B to feel a specific emotion without displaying it themselves.
- Student A will receive an assigned emotion and must evoke it in Student B using indirect actions.
- Emphasise that actions should be subtle, relying on body language, tone, and interaction rather than obvious expressions.

3. PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE:

- Demonstrate an example:
 - Emotion: Sadness – Student A could begin by ignoring Student B, using slight teasing or disinterest to evoke sadness.
 - Highlight the use of nonverbal cues like eye contact, body posture, and tone of voice.

4. BEGIN THE EXERCISE:

- Assign Student A an emotion from the list without revealing it to Student B.
- Allow pairs 60–90 seconds for Student A to influence Student B through their actions.
- After the first round, switch roles so both students experience influencing and being influenced.

5. PERFORM FOR THE GROUP:

- Invite the pairs to demonstrate their interaction in front of the group without revealing the assigned emotion.
- The audience guesses the intended emotion and discusses which actions were most effective.

6. MOVE TO SCENARIOS:

- Introduce specific scenarios where emotions may conflict (see examples below). Assign roles and emotions to each student in the pair:
 - *Sad vs. Excited*: A is moving away and wants to evoke sadness in B. B wants to evoke excitement in A by surprising them with tickets to a concert.
 - *Frustrated vs. Calm*: A has lost B's phone and is trying to make them feel frustrated about it. B has just returned from a yoga retreat and wants to evoke calmness in A.
 - *Nervous vs. Confident*: Friends heading to their first day of college A wants to make B nervous, B is trying to make A feel confident.

7. REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

- Gather everyone to reflect on the exercise. Ask:
 - How did it feel to influence your partner without directly showing emotion?
 - Which actions were most effective in evoking the intended emotion?
 - How did your own emotions shift during the exercise?

TOP TIPS!

Focus on Subtlety:

Encourage small, intentional gestures rather than big or obvious actions.

Stay Observant:

Students should carefully watch their partner's reactions and adjust their actions accordingly.

Maintain Respect:

Remind students to approach the exercise with sensitivity, especially when exploring intense emotions.

Use Empathy:

Encourage students to imagine how they would feel in their partner's situation to guide their actions.

Experiment Freely:

Allow students to try different techniques to see which actions are most effective.

ACTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Improved Emotional Influence:

Students learn how to affect others' emotions through subtle, indirect actions.

Strengthened Nonverbal Communication:

They develop greater control over body language, tone, and facial expressions.

Heightened Awareness of Subtext:

Understanding how to imply emotion without overt displays deepens their grasp of character work.

Increased Empathy and Sensitivity:

Exploring how actions impact others encourages a more nuanced, empathetic approach to acting.

Improved Focus and Adaptability:

Students sharpen their ability to observe, react, and adjust based on their partner's responses.

Have fun with it!

