Elements of Performance

1. **Characterization**
   a. **Definition**: The personality a character displays. Done through the character's actions, choice of words, how he/she thinks, and how others react to this character.
   b. **Posture**: Are you showing the age, emotion, and energy of the character?
   c. **Gestures**: Are your gestures exaggerated? Are you acting or reacting to something?
   d. **Voice**: Are you displaying emotion, an accent, proper tone, age, mood, proper volume to be heard, and are you understandable?
   e. **Choice of Words**: Do your words fit your character? You would speak differently if you were a gentleman rather than a three-year-old child.
   f. **Personality**: Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Do you like people? Are you active or quiet?
   g. **Body Movement**: Can others tell what you are doing? Are your body movements concise? Does your body movement reflect many of the attributes listed above?
   h. **Show of Emotion**: Are you happy, sad, angry, or tired? Does your face show what you are thinking and how you are reacting?

2. **Stage Presence**
   a. **Credibility**: Is your character believable?
   b. **Projection**: When you speak, can the audience hear you?
   c. **Position**: Are you stage front? Where is your back? Center Front–A good place for a performance versus in a back corner.
   d. **Speaking, Movement and Reaction**: Is the speaker moving in some way so the audience can tell he/she is speaking? Are the others still (unless movement is part of the story)? Do the actors cross behind another person instead of crossing in front of them?
   e. **Audience Involvement:** When people speak, do they turn toward the audience? That way it appears as if the team is including the audience as an extra person.

3. **Story Development**
   a. **Beginning**: Initial Situation
   Does the group give the details of the situation? Does the audience understand the situation? Is it clear and concise?
   b. **Middle**: Progression of Story
   Does the story flow and move forward? Does it include complication and suspense?
   Are there situations, conflicts, or obstacles to overcome? Are the situations still clear to the audience?
   c. **End**: Conclusion - Resolution of Conflict - Ending
   Is the conflict resolved? Does the story have a clear ending? Is the resolution clear to the audience?

4. **Improvisation Skills**
   a. **Consistency:** Do the objects that are mimed have definite size and shape so the audience will know what the team member is doing?
   b. **Exaggerated Resistance**: Is the resistance against an object, such as a door, or an action, such as sewing, exaggerated? Are there precise, concise, definite movements so the audience will know what the team member is doing?
   c. **Exaggerated Expression and Gestures:** Are the actors displaying emotions in an exaggerated manner so the audience knows what the team member is feeling?
   d. **Simple Story Lines:** Is the story simple without too many details?
   An Exaggerated Conflict/Problem is very humorous/dramatic/sad–this is what makes Improv so much fun to watch.
   e. **Participating in a scene**: Are all actors acting or reacting to the action on stage?
   f. **Team effort**: Are all team members contributing to the story line? Are all team members helping a member get out of a "dialogue dead-end" or filling in if another member forgets his lines?

5. **Props**
   a. **Importance in *Team Challenge***: Are props important in a *Team Challenge*? How important is the size of the prop? How many props are needed? Are the construction and the material important?

Module: Performance Skills

b. **Importance in Performance-Based *Instant Challenges:*** Is it important for provided or imaginary props to be used in Performance-Based *Instant Challenges?* How should the props be used?

c. **Importance in Task-Based *Instant Challenges*:** Is the manipulation of materials important in Task-Based *Instant Challenges*? How can teams use materials wisely?

d. **Thinking tools:** How can generating and focusing tools help make creative props?

e. **Creative Props:** How can teams design creative props?

f. **Managing Time:** How can a team decide on prop usage when their Performance-Based *Instant Challenge* allows or requires the use of Props? How can the team learn to allocate its time for both generating the ideas and making the prop/costume during an *Instant Challenge*?

6. **Music and/or Special Effects**
   a. **Music:** Will the use of music improve our performance? Can one or more of the team members become a "musical background" during our *Instant Challenge*?
   b. **Special Effects:** How can sound effects be used to enhance a performance? How can special effects be used in an *Instant Challenge*?

Activity 1: Classic Character

Performance and Character Chart

Character	Haggard Old Man	
Posture	Bent over Head down	
Gestures	Slow Unsteady	
Voice	Shaky, raspy Soft spoken	
Choice of Words	Thoughtful Kind, supportive	
Facial Expression	Smiling Understanding	
Personality	Kind Endearing	
Body Movement	Slow Cautious	
Show of Emotion	Smiling, gracious Gentle	

Choose a Character

Hatching Chicken	Colorblind Florist	Aching Gymnast	Impatient Zookeeper
Bumbling Detective	Inquisitive Alien	Excited Musician	Grumpy Waiter
Clumsy Painter	Imaginary Friend	Dieting Elephant	Absent-Minded Scientist
Frolicking Kangaroo	Marathon Runner	Singing Bus Driver	Angry Customer

Module: Performance Skills

Choose a Character

Play charades with a purpose! There are at least two ways you can use the cut-apart rectangles below; you will probably think of others. First, put the slips of paper in a container, then have a team member select a slip randomly.

Option 1: Focus on the Overall Believability of the Character
To focus on creating a believable character, the team member applies one or more Characterization Tools (Character, Posture, Gestures, Voice, Choice of Words, Facial Expression, Personality, Body Movement and Show of Emotion). The goal is for the character to become real to the audience, who must guess who the character is.

Option 2: Focus on Awareness of Specific Characterization Tools
To focus on creating an awareness of specific Characterization Tools, have the acting team member choose his or her own Characterization Tool(s), with team members guessing which ones were used. Debrief afterward, discussing some other Characterization Tools that could be used.

Slithering Snake	Ferocious Dog	Hungry Baby	Hatching Chicken	Colorblind Florist
Excited Coach	Aching Gymnast	Sleepy Farmer	Frolicking Bear cub	Running Lion
Impatient Zookeeper	Lost Child	Hopping Kangaroo	Bumbling Detective	Forlorn Scarecrow
Cowardly Gorilla	Stressed Student	Adoring Grandma	Anxious Pilot	Nervous First-time Parent
Impatient Person	Magical Unicorn	Inquisitive Alien	Sleepy Watchman	Loving Grandparent
Tired Salesclerk	Concerned Parent	Angry Customer	Cowboy on Horseback	Excited Musician
Kind Teacher	Grumpy Waiter	Confused Weatherman	Lonely Woman	Hopping Frog
Embarrassed Student	Clumsy Painter	Grumpy Neighbor	Imaginary Friend	Dieting Elephant
Absent Minded Scientist	Joking Clown	Marathon Runner	Clueless Detective	Singing Bus Driver

Character Generating Tool

Need to develop an interesting character? Using the table below, write specific words or phrases explaining how the category could assist in making the character become real to your audience.

Character	
Posture	
Gestures	
Voice	
Choice of Words	
Facial Expression	
Personality	
Body Movement	
Show of Emotion	

How Can Performance Skills Be Evaluated?

Teams: (steps to stronger Performance Skills)
1. Watch performances.
2. Discuss WHAT the actors did, HOW they sounded, HOW they moved.
3. Discuss what specific techniques your team members can develop to make their own performance skills better.
4. Practice those skills.
5. Debrief:
   - In what ways were you better than the last time?
   - In what ways might you improve?
   - Are you characters "believable?"
   - In what ways might you improve your overall performance?
6. Practice, Practice, PRACTICE some more.

Appraisers: (steps to consistent appraising of performance)
1. Decide on some specific criteria you are looking for in a performance. Do this BEFORE the first team in each Level presents.
2. Watch the performance carefully. Be alert. You will only see it once!
3. Note WHAT the actors did, HOW they sounded, HOW they moved.
4. Evaluate their performance:
   - Did you understand it?
   - Did it make sense?
   - Was the point clear?
   - Were the actors convincing?
   - Did you enjoy or appreciate the performance?
5. Jot down some personal comments as you watch a performance to help you in your final evaluation.

Keep your appraising criteria and point values (given for certain criteria or personal comments) consistent throughout the entire Level.