

DRAMA IN ACTION

Exercise: Move Like A...

Grades: PreK and up!

Time: 15 minutes

Set-Up: Open space

Supplies: Speaker and music (optional)

In A Very Electric Christmas, the actors use very specific movements to show their character and how they feel. We can do this too, even without costumes and lights!

Instructions: With or without music, the students will safely walk around the space, changing how they move based on what the teacher says. The goal is to connect their understanding of movement, emotional expression, and character.

- The teacher begins by explaining how we can safely walk around the space and be aware of our bodies, not running into anyone else or any objects in the room, then has the students start walking around in their neutral walking bodies.
- The teacher suggests different emotions for the students to walk around portraying, like:
 - How do you walk when you are happy? Sad? Confused? Annoyed?
- The teacher then suggests different types of characters, like:
 - How do you move as a Grandparent? A soldier? Cat? Bird?
- The teacher finally suggests combinations of emotions and characters that the students have previously tried, like:
 - How do you move like a Happy Soldier? An Annoyed Grandparent? A Confused Cat? A Sad Bird?
- After a few combinations, have students sit down and ask for reflections about what it felt like to move like those characters, and what they noticed watching their peers. This is a great opportunity for student discussion about how movement can connect to showing character and emotion on stage.
 - *Note:* If students have already seen the show, ask if any of the emotions they just practiced moving as were things they noticed in *A Very Electric Christmas*.

Variation: For younger students or if moving without structure is a concern, this same activity can be done in a more controlled “cross the room” way, instead of walking freely around the space. Have students start on one side of the room and cross to the other, doing the movement the teaching artist suggests, stopping on the other side between each suggestion.

Reflection Questions:

- What did you notice about how the body’s shape, size, and level changed when showing different emotions?
- How did your movements change from character to character?
- Were there any pairings of emotions and characters that were particularly fun to act out? How about any that were difficult to act out?
- Why is it important to show emotions physically as an actor?