

THEATRE OF THE ABSURD CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The following are a series of activities to assist students in understanding the themes and ideas in *Endgame* including the cyclical nature of human existence and our purpose in life, decline and endings, human connection and hope. Deconstruct each activity using the questions provided.

ACTIVITY ONE

The class is divided in half. Half the class sit and watch while the other half perform. The students who are performing are allocated into pairs who are each given one of the following actions. Each pair is to find their own space in the performance area, face the audience and repeat their action. They are signalled to start and stop their action by the teacher walking around and tapping them on the shoulder. Keep the activity going for two minutes.

PAIR ACTIONS:

- Mime getting dressed and packing a bag and leaving, but then changing your mind and unpacking.
- Walk backwards and forwards across the stage very slowly.
- Sit on the floor and draw circles with your fingers on the floor.
- Two people eating dinner where everything is done in unison.
- Repeat the phrase by Socrates “To know, is to know that you know nothing.”
- Repeat the phrase “Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.”
- One person is using their phone while listening to music. The other person is trying to get their attention.
- One person is making the ticking sound of a clock. The other person is moving their arms around like a clock.
- Mime turning on a tap, but nothing coming out in unison.

DECONSTRUCTION QUESTIONS:

- How did this short performance make you feel as audience members?
- How did this short performance make you feel as performers?
- How do the actions you saw relate to the world of *Endgame*?
- How do the actions you saw relate to Theatre of the Absurd style and conventions?
- Where are the themes of *Endgame* and more broadly Absurdism present in this piece? Give specific examples.

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ACTIVITY TWO

Divide the class into groups of five. Students are to perform the following scenario. Five people have taken refuge in a bunker after the end of the world. However, there is only enough food and supplies for four people. One person must leave the bunker. Decide who must go outside into the dead world.

Person A: A stay at home mother with a baby

Person B: A retired doctor in his late 80's

Person C: A church minister

Person D: A computer software engineer who does not speak English

Person E: A high school history teacher

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

- Who did you decide must go and why?
- What qualities in a person make them valuable?
- What qualities in a person make them valuable in the event of a apocolypse?
- Are our occupations our purpose in life? Do they give us meaning?