

 LESSON ONE

Learning Objective: TO UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTERS AND THEMES OF
 SINGIN’ IN THE RAIN.

Welcome to the exciting era of the 1920’s, where there’s a star on every corner and a dream in every heart. Over the next two weeks your students will take a trip down the red carpet and learn about this spectacular musical and the world that surrounds it. We begin this musical journey by meeting the key characters and understanding the story.

Most characters in this iconic musical are bursting with confidence, some more than others as we’re soon to discover! But it’s important that your students feel the same confidence as the legendary Don Lockwood. So what better drama game to start with than ‘I’m a star and so are you!’

**“I’M A STAR AND SO ARE YOU!”**

* Assemble your children in a circle. This could be used with chairs, they could sit on the floor or stand. Have one student or yourself stand in the middle of the circle
* You then say “I’m a star and so are you…” and the rest is up to you. You could finish with “if you like football,” or “if you’ve ever been to Paris,” or “if you love dancing.”
* The children who share that passion cross the circle to find a new place.
* The last child to get there is now the ringleader and they decide what makes a star.
* This is a fabulous ice breaker, makes them feel good about liking what they do, and reflects Don’s very own stardom.

**BUILDING A PICTURE**

It’s important that the young people understand we’re going back to a different time. A time of glitz and glamour. To do this you’re whole class will create three massive pictures of this world.

* The first scene they will create is a fabulous Hollywood party. Talk about what characters might be there. Movie stars, directors, producers, bodyguards, waiters, bartenders, musicians, guests all dressed their best.
* Ask one child to enter the space and strike a pose as this character. Then one by one the children enter the scene and do the same. By the end this blank canvas is now a lavish Hollywood shindig.
* Ask the children to remember exactly where they were and what their pose was. Ask them to leave the space and then give them fifteen seconds to create the exact same image. Once done recall them and do the same with ten seconds, then finally five. Jolly good fun and a great memory exercise.
* Now do the same with a busy movie set. Again discuss types of characters: Movie stars, directors, cameramen, wardrobe assistants, makeup artists, workmen etc.
* Finally a picture of Don’s latest film ‘The Royal Rascal,’ a romantic drama about a brave swordsman. The picture could involve daring swordfights, a fancy ball, damsel’s in distress, villainous rogues etc.
* Once this exercise is complete the children should have a good understanding of where our story takes place.

**MEETING THE CHARACTERS**

Now it’s time for the children to meet the characters that live in this world. All of them are very different and have their own personalities and agendas.

* Using a bell, or tambourine, or just a good old clap, ask the children to move around, filling all the space, constantly moving. Inform them that when you sound the bell or clap your hands you wish them to freeze.
* Once done a few times and they have mastered this, tell them that when they start walking again they must listen to a description of a character that you will read out. After you’ve read the description clap again and they must strike a pose of that character based on the description. The descriptions are as follows:

**Don Lockwood –** The leading man of Hollywood and greatest actor of his time. Cool, charming and confident, Don melts the hearts of fans everywhere with his dashing looks and dazzling smile. **Clap!**

**Lina Lamont** – The leading lady of Hollywood. Although just as popular as Don she is cruel, selfish and arrogant. She may have the looks of an angel but has the heart of a devil. **Clap!**

**Cosmo Brown** – A talented musician and best buddy of Don. He is a real comedian, always happy to lift people’s spirits when they’re down. Bright, witty and just a little cheeky. **Clap!**

**Kathy Seldon** – A newcomer to Hollywood. She is sweet, sincere, warm hearted, and a little bit shy. **Clap!**

**R.F Simpson** – Head of Monumental Pictures, where the movies are made. He is a powerful authority figure and always interested in making money. **Clap!**

**Roscoe Dexter** – A director at the studio and a real hot head. He is a passionate man who is prone to outbursts and losing his temper.

Once this exercise is complete discuss the characters with the children. Which characters do they like and why? Which characters are they keen to learn more about?

Now tell your children to brace themselves as they are now going to perform the entire story through the power of **Cut!**

This exercise is based on the famous drama exercise Whoosh!

Have your children sit in a huge circle. You are about to read to them the synopsis of singin’ in the rain. As you do whenever a character is mentioned you ask a child to walk into the performance space and act out what you are saying. You could do it one child at a time going round the circle, or do it by volunteers. Whenever you say Cut (in a dramatic director voice naturally) they sit back in their places to make way for new actors. The synopsis is just below. Lights, camera, ACTION!

**Hollywood in the late 1920’s. It’s a big night. The premier of the Royal Rascal, the long anticipated Don Lockwood and Lina Lamont movie. There scene is bursting with excitement. There are fans eagerly awaiting the stars to arrive. Photographers circulate and snapping the best shots and police are there to keep things under control. Dora Bailey, a famous reporter, welcomes the stars one by one down the red carpet. In walks R.F Simpson, producer of Monumental Pictures, followed by the famous director Roscoe Dexter and the whacky Cosmo Brown. Now in walks Don Lockwood and Lina Lamont, the crowd goes wild. They pose for pictures and thank everyone for coming out tonight.**

**CUT!**

**The film is a resounding success but it’s all too much for Don who is hounded crazy fans. He bumps into Kathy Seldon, a newcomer to Hollywood. He pretends she is his girlfriend and that he is not Don Lockwood. After the fans clear, Don thanks Kathy for her help. Kathy tells Don that he is not a real actor, only a shadow on film. This hurts Don’s feelings and he is confused as he’s not used to being spoken to like that.**

**CUT!**

**The scene moves on to a big party thrown by Simpson for the success of the Royal Rascal. The stars are all there as is Dexter and Cosmo. Lina is being tended to by many servants. Don arrives, upset at what Kathy said. Simpson informs his guests that he has a surprise for them all. A big cake is wheeled in and out pops Kathy Seldon. Don and Cosmo find this hilarious. Don makes fun of Kathy. In anger she grabs a cake and hurls it at Don. Don ducks just in time and the cake slams into the face of Lina Lamont who is furious! Kathy flees in embarrassment and Don chases after her.**

**CUT!**

**We are now on the movie set. Crewmen are fixing the stage, wardrobe assistants making costumes and the actors are preparing. Don is very upset about what happened. Cosmo tries to cheer him up with little success. Simpson enters in a panic. He is worried as a rival studio are making a ‘talking picture,’ a movie with sound. He tells them all they are going to make their new film as a talking picture.**

**CUT!**

**A singer and dancers are performing their new song for the film ‘Beautiful girl.’ Kathy is among the dancers. Simpson and Don enter. Don is thrilled and Simpson is impressed with her dancing. After the dance Simpson offers her a bigger part in the film. Don and Kathy decide to become friends.**

**CUT!**

**And so Monumental Pictures make their new film ‘The Duelling Cavalier’ into a talking picture. Sadly the film is a flop. Lina has a hideous voice which irritates the fans. Don, Kathy and Cosmo enter all upset as they feel they will lose their jobs. Cosmo has a brilliant idea! As Kathy has such a beautiful voice they will use her to be the voice for Lina’s character. The film is saved and there is much cheering!**

**CUT!**

**We are now in the office of R.F Simpson. Simpson and his assistants are all trilled the film is now a smash hit. Lina bursts in and threatens Simpson. She says that Kathy can be her voice for all her films but nothing else. She will never amount to anything else. If these demands are not met then Lina will sue the company for all its money. Simpson begs Lina to be reasonable but she won’t listen.**

**CUT!**

**A cinema where they show the premiere of their latest picture which is another roaring success. There are many fans sitting in the audience. Behind the wings are Don, Simpson, Kathy and Cosmo. Kathy is upset as she is not getting the credit she deserves. Lina demands that Kathy sing so Lina can pretend it’s her beautiful voice. While Kathy reluctantly sings and Lina mimes it, Cosmo has another brilliant idea. He pulls the curtains ropes which reveals to the audience that Lina has been lying all along and Kathy is the true talent. The audience burst out laughing. Lina flees in utter humiliation. Don declares his undying love for Kathy.**

**The end.**

Although brief, this exercise teaches the students the entire story of Singing in the Rain.