

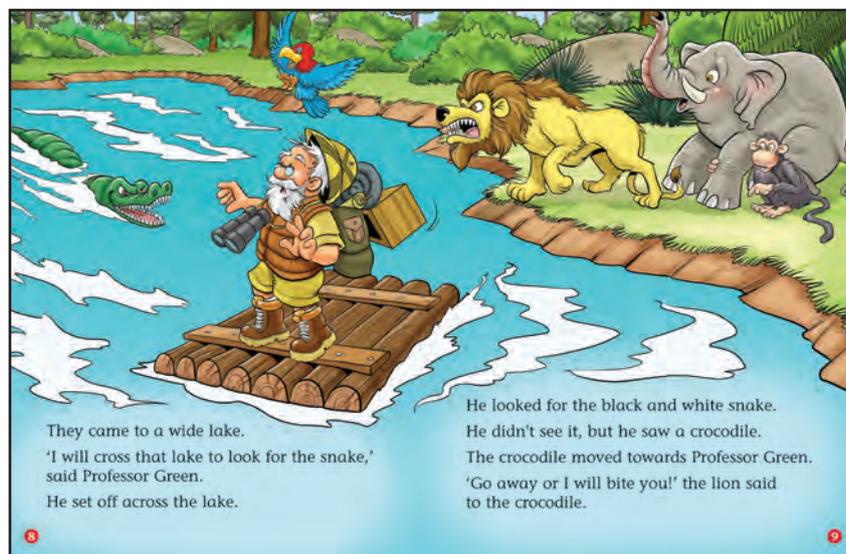
## Sounds and actions

Acting out a scene doesn't always mean speaking lines. The following activities focus on sound effects, expressions and physical actions, rather than the spoken words.

**Sound effects**  (developing and confident readers, aged 6 and above)

**Aim:** to help children to identify locations on an audio recording; to teach children how to visualize a scene and make sound effects.

- 1 Ask children to relax, close their eyes and be very quiet. Then ask children to think about (but not talk about) the sounds that they can hear outside the classroom.
- 2 After a minute, ask children to open their eyes. Discuss the sounds they have heard and make a list on the board.
- 3 Select a story with plenty of sound effects. For example, this scene from [Professor Green and the Snake](#) (*Explorers Phonics*, Level 1) contains splashes, a crocodile and general jungle sounds.



**Professor Green crosses the lake.**

- 4 Ask children what sounds they might hear in this scene. Then ask them to make the sounds.  
For example:
  - Children make the sounds of the animals they can see.
  - Children clap their hands to make the sound of the crocodile snapping.
  - Children sway to and fro and make the sound 'shhh' to represent the lake.
  - Children make animal and bird calls to represent the sounds in a jungle.

**Extras** (developing and confident readers, aged 6–12)

**Aim:** to teach children how to use their imagination and improvise dialogue: to get children used to acting, moving and making sound effects.

- 1 Choose a scene in your Reader where the action takes place in a busy location, such as a busy city, a park, a sports event or a fair. For example, you could use the park, street or ferry boat scenes below from [New York: Adventure in the Big Apple](#) (*Macmillan Children's Readers*, Level 5).



**New York: Adventure in the Big Apple**

- 2 In L1, remind children that in scenes from films, you can see and hear lots of things in the background as well as the actions and words of the main actors.
- 3 Tell children that you are a film director, and you are going to recreate a busy scene. Some of the children in the class will create sound effects, and others will be extras.
- 4 Choose one picture from the story which has a lot of background action. In Readers with factual information, such as titles from *Macmillan Children's Readers*, this can also be a photo from the factual pages. In L1 brainstorm the kind of sounds that children might hear in this place, and the kinds of things that extras might do or say. For example, a street scene in New York might contain the following:

*Silent parts*

- People walking along or crossing the street
- Someone jogging
- Someone pushing a pram

*Parts with actions and sound effects*

- People driving cars (and making their sounds)
- A person riding a bike or motorbike

*Speaking parts*

- People calling for taxis
- A hot-dog seller calling 'hot dogs'
- A person asking someone for directions

- 5 Divide the class into groups. Children assign roles and practise their parts.
- 6 Groups take it in turns to perform their actions and recreate the scene.

**Still life** (developing and confident readers, aged 10–12)

**Aim:** to increase children's awareness of body language; to teach children about stage directions.

Although this activity doesn't involve any speaking, it does involve a lot of coordination on the part of the actors. For that reason, this activity is best done with older children.

- 1 Divide the class into groups. Select illustrations from the Reader that show several story characters doing something together, and ask groups of children to choose one of these illustrations each.

The illustrations selected should show the characters (including any animals) moving and interacting, as in this illustration from [Endangered Animals: A Safari Adventure](#) (Macmillan Children's Readers, Level 3).

- 2 Tell children they are going to use their bodies to reproduce the scene in the illustration as closely as they can. Explain that when children have got into position, they mustn't move. They are frozen in time, like the characters in the illustration.
- 3 Allocate one extra person to each group. This person is the director, who helps to get their group into the right positions.
- 4 Groups of children take turns to reproduce the scenes in their illustrations. The rest of the class watches.

You can also use this activity to discuss the story together as a class. Choose one illustration where two or three characters are doing something which is important for the plot of the Reader. Then ask two or three children to create a 'still life' for the rest of the class. While these actors hold their positions, ask a few quick questions to the rest of the class, such as:

- What are the characters doing?
- How are they feeling?
- What will they do next?



**Endangered Animals:  
A Safari Adventure**