

Activity: Living Line

(Beginner level)

Goal: Deepen understanding of rhythm and iambic pentameter.

Steps:

1. 10 volunteers are asked to stand in a line, shoulder to shoulder.
2. Each are given a syllable from the line "I went to town to buy an ice cream cone."
3. Students recite the sentence, each saying their word in order, going down the line.
4. The instructor points out that this line is in iambic pentameter and explains the pattern used in this poetic form.
5. The first, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth students are now the unstressed syllables. They are asked to sit or squat in their current location.
6. The remaining students represent the stressed syllables.
7. Students are asked to repeat the line, syllable by syllable. But this time the students representing "unstressed" should underplay vocally, while standing students should really hit the stress and jump while saying their syllable. Students can go through the line until it flows and each student is engaged.
8. Then have students work with Shakespeare.
 - a. From *Romeo and Juliet*: "but **SOFT** what **LIGHT** through **YON**der **WIN**dow **BREAKS**?"
 - b. From *Twelfth Night*: "if **MU**sic **BE** the **FOOD** of **LOVE** play **ON**."