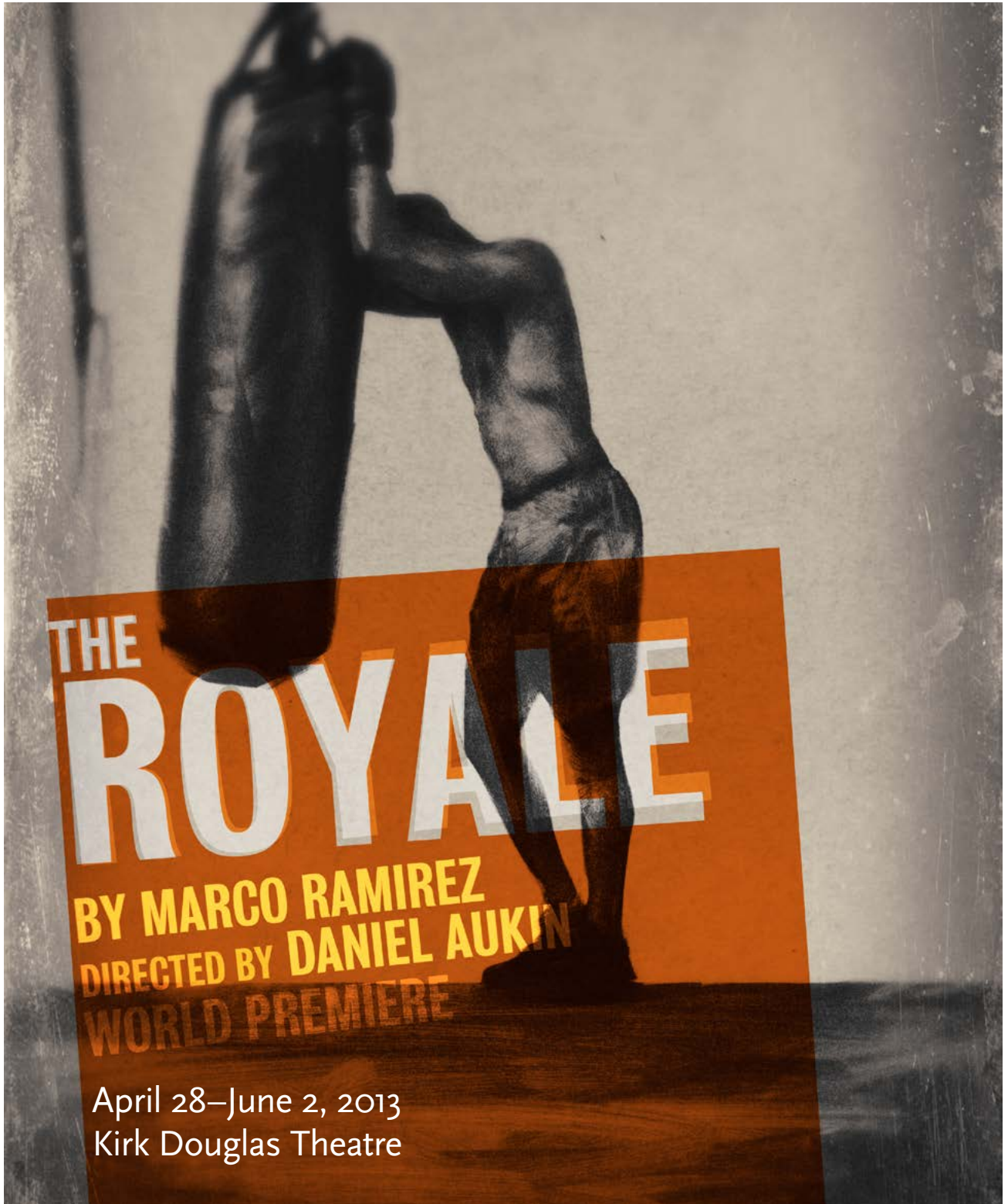




# Educator Resources



UCLA



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# Welcome

## Theatre Educator Resources *The Royale*

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Center Theatre Group is excited to have you and your students join us for *The Royale*. A great play raises questions about the human condition, and a great educational experience allows students an opportunity to reflect upon those questions and begin to discover their own answers. To that end the material in Center Theatre Group's Student Discovery Guide and Educator Resources raise questions: questions about what is worth fighting for, about how to make change happen, the courage to be audacious and about what it means to be a champion. Our goal is to provide you with a variety of entry points into the play so that you can choose what works best for you and your students.

The Educator Resources and Student Discovery Guide are companion pieces that are designed to help you prepare your students to see the play and to follow-up the performance with options for discussion, reflection and creativity.

We have organized the Educator Resources into the following sections:

## Student Discovery Guide

The Student Discovery Guide provides students with background information about the play and the subject matter, as well as questions for individual reflection. Written to be student-driven, the Discovery Guide helps prepare your students for the performance.

## About This Play

This section includes a detailed synopsis of the play.

## Comprehension

This section includes background information about the subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play. This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Student Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

## Connection and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by *The Royale*. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

We know the hard work and dedication that it takes to bring students to see theatre. These materials are designed to support you in making the most of that experience. We applaud your passion for sharing theatre with your students, and thank you for sharing your students with all of us at Center Theatre Group. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre!

# About *The Royale*

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## Round by Round Synopsis

### ROUND 1

Jay “The Sport” Jackson, Colored Heavyweight Champion of the World has a match with the young fighter, Fish. The action of the scene is not of the fight, but a stream of consciousness portrayal of what is in each fighter’s head. The inexperienced Fish is talking himself into standing tall against Jay. Jay is toying with Fish, joking with the audience, and his trainer, Wynton. Although at first Fish holds his own against Jay, it is revealed that there are important people in the front row watching the fight and in the 7th round Jay gets down to business and finishes Fish with a knockout.

### ROUND 2

In the locker room after the fight. Max, a white fight promoter, and Wynton argue because Max is reluctant to talk to current heavyweight champ Bixby’s people who are in the audience. Max believes they won’t go for the Champ fighting Jay, because Jay is black. Both Jay and Wynton demand that Max at least try to convince them. Max tries to steer Jay toward some other action but Jay won’t be dissuaded. He tells Max to get him the fight or he will find another promoter who will. Max exits. Fish enters. Jay offers him a job as a sparring partner. Fish accepts. Max returns. He has an answer from Bixby’s people. The Champ will fight Jay for an unheard of 90% of the door. Wynton is insulted and shocked, but Jay will do it. Max tries to talk him out of it but Jay will not move. Max is sent to make the call. Wynton, still reeling from the insulting offer, confides in Jay that if he were in Jay’s position he would fight the champ for free.

### ROUND 3

In the gym. Jay and Fish spar while Wynton coaches. The scene transforms as Jay steps out of the action and joins Max at a press conference. Wynton and Fish continue as if Jay is still there while Jay answers reporter’s questions. We find out that Jay was raised by his sister in Jackson, Mississippi, and about his upcoming fight with Bixby. The reporters grill him about the Bixby fight. They bait Jay about racial tension surrounding the fight. He handles them gracefully. The reporters then inform him that an hour before the news conference four men were stopped at the door with guns. Jay takes the blow of the news. He feigns knowledge of the men. No, of course, he’s not worried. No, he’s not scared. He gets punched in the face for a living.

### ROUND 4

A hotel room the day before the big fight. Fish is flabbergasted at the size and luxury of the room. Wynton is all business, ordering Fish to set up the room so that they can train inside, since the crowds downstairs are getting too large to navigate. Wynton notices a box that Fish has brought with him. He looks inside. He is not pleased. Fish explains he just wanted to give something to Jay that reminded him of home. Fish says he’s figured out that Jay is not really from Jackson, but from Cook County and soon he’s going to be famous all over the world and Fish just thought it would be nice if—Fish’s explanation is cut off as Jay storms in yelling at Max about the men with guns. Jay learns that men bringing weapons to

his fights is a common occurrence. Max reminds Jay that it is his job to protect him, keep him in fancy whites-only hotels, keep the machine moving, and that nothing will happen to him. Before he leaves Max tells Jay not to worry and to focus on the fight - Jay has always been the champ and tomorrow he will make it official. Max leaves. Jay stares at Wynton. Something is broken between them. Wynton exits. Jay is alone.

#### ROUND 5

The day of the Bixby fight. Jay shadowboxes. The tension in the room is thick when Fish enters. He talks to Jay about security checking the arena over and the big crowd outside. They have oversold the house by 300; he's even given up his ticket and will be listening to the fight at a bar with "26 kinds of bourbon." He's also seen champ Bixby drive up in a new Tin Lizzy, and he's big. Fish cracks a joke that eases Jay's tension. He then pulls out his gift to Jay, a phonograph. A blues song plays. The men enjoy the music until it is cut off abruptly.

Nina, Jay's sister, stands in the room. The tension returns. Fish excuses himself. Jay gets smaller in his older sister's presence. Nina has traveled a long way to tell Jay a couple of things. First she lets Jay know how proud everyone back home is of him. Then she enlightens Jay about the impact that his victory will have on the black community. If Jay defeats Jeffries there will be violence. The threat of it has already happened. She shows Jay a book her son received in the mail with a disturbing message written inside. Jay promises he will find out who sent it, he will protect Nina. Nina reminds him that he cannot protect them from the whole world. She doesn't want him to lose but he needs to think about what will happen if he wins. Wynton comes in as Nina leaves. Jay tells him what Nina has said. He asks what he should do. Wynton tells him the story of a battle royal he participated in. Jay will have to step into the ring alone, what he does is his decision.

#### ROUND 6

The Big Fight. Max, playing the referee, announces the fighters. A spotlight comes up on Jay. Max announces Champ Bixby. A spotlight comes up on Nina. Jay blinks hard, is he dreaming? The fight between Bixby and Jay is usurped by the long-time-coming battle between brother and sister. As Max and Wynton relay the goings on of the "real" fight, Nina and Jay hash out the reasons for this battle—the sacrifices that will occur, the sacrifices that have occurred, to get Jay into the ring. Jay lets Nina know that he is fighting for her. For the time when he was nine and he found her, with burned skin from ironing her hair to try to look like the white women on the beauty posters. He's fighting so that she will know it is going to be okay. None of it matters, Nina informs him, because a storm is gathering. As Jay beats Bixby, and is heading toward victory, Nina describes several scenes where white men are gathering weapons. A small spotlight comes up on Fish as he sits in the bar listening to the fight. Nina describes him being shot as Jay knocks Bixby down. Fish tastes blood. Jay has done it - he's won, he is the Heavyweight Champion of the World.

END OF PLAY

# Comprehension

Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

This section includes background information about the subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play. This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Student Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

## Boxing Terms And Moves

### **Bare-Knuckle Boxing**

Bare-knuckle boxing, aka fisticuffs, is the original form of boxing dating back to ancient Greece. It's the more savage precursor to the Marquess of Queensberry rules, which mandated the use of gloves.

### **Marquess of Queensberry Rules**

The Marquess of Queensberry Rules, sponsored by British John Sholto Douglas, 9th Marquess of Queensberry in 1867, became the foundation of modern boxing regulations.

### **The Ring**

The space where a boxing match occurs. The name "ring" comes from the time fights took place in a roughly drawn circle on the ground. The first square ring was introduced by the Pugilistic Society in 1838.

A modern boxing ring is a 16 to 24 foot square enclosed by three to four covered ropes no more than one inch in diameter.

### **Canvas**

The floor in a boxing ring.

### **Wraps**

Wraps are strips of cloth boxers wrap around their hands to protect the bones and nerves.

### **Heavy Bag**

A long, cylindrical bag suspended by a chain, covered with leather, and filled with either a fibrous material or water. They weigh from 50 to 150 pounds. They are used by boxers to practice their punches, footwork and stepping. The heavy bag helps to build muscles in the upper body, wrists and hands. It also helps build endurance. Boxers punch it, move around it, and push it back, just as they would an opponent.

### **Chin**

The chin of a fighter refers to how well he can take a punch. Also referred to as his beard, or whiskers.

### **Spar**

Sparring is when two fighters battle one another in training sessions, typically with extra-padded gloves, and full protective gear.

## Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

### **Exhibition Fights**

A fight that does not go into a boxer's professional record.

### **Rounds**

The structure of the fight. A modern professional fight consists of twelve, three-minute rounds for males, or two-minute rounds for females, with a one-minute rest in between.

### **Punch**

Basic punches in boxing are the jab, straight right (cross), uppercut and hook.

### **Jab**

The jab is the busiest punch in boxing. It's a punch thrown quickly with your leading hand straight from the chin in direct line to your target.

### **Cross**

Fundamentally a power punch, it is also referred to as "straight." The dominant hand is used to deliver this power punch, at the same time the opponent leads with his opposite hand. As the blow crosses over the leading arm, it is called the cross. It is targeted toward the face.

### **Uppercut**

In tandem with the cross, it is considered one of the power punches, as far as statistics are concerned. The technique involves the boxer's fist in a position protecting their face. It is followed by lowering one hand with maximum power and thrust, aiming it straight up to the opponent's jaw. Extending the knees as the body comes up gives the requisite power to the punch. The most important part is that it should be done when the opponent is in close range.

### **Hook**

A hook is an inside power punch. It's a short sideways punch delivered with the elbow bent so the arm forms the appearance of a hook. The temple, side of the jaw, ribs and liver are the targets.

### **One-Two**

The one-two is the jab-straight right combination, the most basic of all boxing combinations.

### **Body Punches**

Body punches, particularly a left hook delivered to the floating rib area (the bottom of the rib cage and towards the side) where the liver is, can stop a fighter if landed perfectly. Body punches delivered repeatedly round after round wear a boxer down. A sore gut and bruised ribs make it hard to breathe.

## Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

### **Bob and Weave**

When a fighter moves their upper body in an up-and-down motion, making it more difficult for an opponent to time correctly.

### **Stick and Move**

Stick and move is when a boxer jabs or uses long-range punches then quickly steps backwards using elusive footwork to evade their opponent.

### **Rope a Dope**

Rope a dope was used by Muhammad Ali in his 1974 fight against George Foreman. It involves lying back on the ropes, shelling up and allowing your opponent to throw punches until they tire themselves out, and then exploiting their defensive flaws and nailing them.

### **Fouls**

Foul are actions by a boxer that the referee doesn't feel meet the standard of a fair blow, or constitutes unsportsmanlike conduct. There are intentional fouls and accidental fouls. The most common fouls are headbutts, holding and low blows.

### **Ring Generalship**

When a fighter dominates the action in the ring.

### **Knockout (KO)**

It refers to a downed boxer who is unable to get up on his/her feet unassisted after the referee has ended the 10 counts.

### **Flat on the Canvas**

To be face down on the floor (knocked out).

### **Purse**

The money paid to fighters for participating in a match.

### **Gate**

How much money an event makes from the ticket sales for the fights.

### **Judges**

The individuals responsible for scoring the bout, and therefore deciding the verdict if there is no stoppage. In professional boxing three judges independently score the bout using the 10-point system.



## Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

### **Referee**

The ref enforces the rules of the fight. They give instructions to fighters at the start of the match. They start or stop the count when a fighter goes down. They call fouls. They have the power to stop a fight if a boxer is likely to get injured.

### **Trainer**

A trainer is responsible for maintaining a boxer's fitness and motivation. They hone and sharpen a boxer's fighting skills. They supervise and prep boxers for fights and choose the appropriate opponents. They also handle contracts.

### **Corner Man**

At the junction of the ropes (a corner of the ring) where a boxer rests between rounds, the corner man advises him, gives him water, tries to reduce swelling and stop bleeding. Also called the Second.

### **Cutman**

The cutman is the boxer's assistant in the corner who takes care of his cuts, and generally his swelling, to try to prevent this from affecting his performance, the judges' opinions of the bout, or from the referee or ringside doctor halting the contest.

### **Fight Promoter**

Individuals responsible for fight planning and organization and invitation of boxers.

## Pace of Change

Black Americans in the early 20th century (1900–1920) fought their status in society. Their fight varied in pace and style.

“The wisest among my race understand that agitations of social equality is the extremist folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing.”

—Booker T. Washington

“...with permanent legislation into a position of inferiority...black men... are called upon by every consideration of patriotism and loyalty to oppose such a course by all civilized methods...We have no right to sit silently by while the inevitable seeds are sown for a harvest of disaster to our children, black and white.”

—W.E.B. Du Bois

During the 1900's the two dominant strategies on how to change the status of black people in America were: Booker T. Washington's "accommodationist" approach, which advocated that blacks be patient, elevate themselves through hard work and economics, and win the respect of whites to gain full access to citizenship; and 2, W.E.B. Du Bois advocacy for immediate change, encouraging blacks to demand full citizenship via protest, the courts, and social agitation.

# Connection and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by *The Royale*. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

## Cultural Mapping

### Objectives

Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates.  
Students will be introduced to *The Royale* and begin to reflect on the play.

### Exercise

Ask the students to move the desks to the side and stand in a circle.  
Describe the room as a map of the world. Identify Los Angeles in the space.  
Have students who were born in Los Angeles gather in that place. Have the other students group themselves according to their birthplace (north, east, south, or west of Los Angeles). Each group must determine two additional things that they have in common. Report back to the whole class. (Example: The members of the “north” group all like pizza and are the oldest in their families.)

Repeat activity using other divisions such as:

- Oldest, middle, youngest, only child.
- Speak one language, two languages, etc.
- Quotes from the production:  
(Ask each student to stand by the quote that most intrigues them. Discuss in the group why they chose that quote. What intrigues them about it?)
- Quotes from *The Royale*:
  - “We want a good, clean fight.”
  - “That’s somebody son’s face,”
  - “It’s about bein’ champion, period.”
  - “Know why I like boxing? The man most likely to kill you is standing right in front of you.”
  - “I know you’re ready to win. You were ready to take over the world the day you were born. I just don’t think the rest of us are.”

## Artist and Sculpture

### Objectives

Students will practice using their bodies to communicate an idea or theme.  
Students will reflect on the varied interpretations of the theme.  
Students will reflect on *The Royale* through a physical exploration of its themes.

### Exercise

Divide students into pairs. Student A is the artist. Student B is the statue.  
Have student A create a statue out of B on the theme of “the future.”  
Examples: Flying cars, world peace, destroying the environment, graduating from college.  
Statues can be realistic or symbolic, personal or global.

## Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Have each student title their statue and present to the class.  
Repeat this exercise with B as the artist and A as the statue.

Repeat with the themes of **Champion, Fight, Racism, Audacity, Swagger, Sports, Rhythm, Pace, Siblings**. Have each student sculpt an image that represents one of these themes. Discuss what these ideas mean to your students and what these ideas meant to the characters in *The Royale*. Are they similar or very different?

### What would you fight for?

#### Guided Visualization

Close eyes/breathe. What is a freedom, privilege or right that you have because someone else crossed a barrier based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or something else?

Was this someone you know personally? Someone from history? What did they do to cross that line, chip away at that barrier? What did they sacrifice?

Are their ways in which you personally still face or encounter that barrier? How do you cross it? Fight it? Chip away at it? Or do you not know how to make change?

Is it a different barrier that you encounter today? What is that barrier?

Think about “fighting” and the fight(s) underneath the literal boxing matches/fights in *The Royale*. What *would* you fight for? What *do* you fight for?

Who *would* you fight for? Who *do* you fight for?

What does “fighting” look like for you?

#### End visualization

Open eyes.

Share only if you are inspired to. A person who crossed a line for you.

What you fight for? Who you fight for?

## Character Echo

### Objectives

Students will create the end to an improvisational situation.  
Students will practice using dialogue and characterization.

Divide the room into two lines facing each other. Their partner is the student directly across from them. Designate one line Character A and the other line Character B.

Write the first four lines of an improvisational scene on the board.

**Example:**

A: It's time to go  
B: I'm not ready.  
A: But we had a deal  
B: I'm busy.

Say A's opening line. Have the students in line "A" echo/repeat that line. Say B's opening line and have the students in line "B" echo the line after you. Repeat with A and B's second lines.

Practice the first four lines as a group. Ask the students to deliver their lines to the partner across from them.

Next, each A/B pair will individually decide who their characters are, the relationship of the characters and the specific conflict between these two characters. Everyone will use the above four lines to begin their scene and then each pair will add their own dialogue to create their ending.

Have them think about the physicality of their characters (old, young, shy, outgoing etc.) as they rehearse their scene. Ask them to determine the setting—where their scene takes place.

Share the scenes.

Repeat activity with a dialogue or a situation from *The Royale*.

### Example 1

JAY: Who did this?  
NINA: I dunno.  
JAY: We'll find out who-  
NINA: You gon' "box" this  
          problem away?

### Example 2

NINA: This is *downright stupid*, Jay.  
JAY: I want this  
NINA: It's *dangerous*.  
JAY: It's important.

### Example 3

NINA: Have you thought about what  
          you are doing?  
JAY: Of course I have.  
NINA: This doesn't have to be you.  
JAY: Yes it does.

## An Invitation To Play

### Description

Playwright Marco Ramirez describes theatre as “an invitation to play” a game. (See complete interview in *The Royale* Discovery Guide) When the curtain goes up, you tell the audience the “rules” of the game, or the way the characters are allowed to live in this fictional world on stage. Once the characters and the audience know the rules we all agree upon in this world, anything is possible in the story. In this activity, students create a simple theater game in which they can declare their own world and rules. Then they test the game out with fellow classmates.

### Materials

Tennis balls, Giant yoga balls, large swatches of colorful fabric, chairs, giant swimming pool noodles, yoga mats, frisbees, giant post-it notes, markers, and a large playing space like a gym or grassy area.

### Introduction

To start, play a few simple theatre games like zip-zap-zop, duck-duck-goose or Boal’s “Big Chief.”

Following the warm-up games, continue with a guided conversation that BRIEFLY explores the following questions:

What is a game?

What does “the object of this game” mean?

What does it mean to win/lose?

What is a rule?

What is fair/not fair?

What is an easy game/a hard game?

What makes a fun/boring game?

Define differences/similarities of these game types: board, online, theatre, sports. In theatre, we look for the 3 P’s (People, Places, Problems). Do the 3 P’s exist in games?

### Main Activity

Students form groups of three. Each group will create a simple game for the class to play. There are only two rules for this activity:

Make the game as fun as possible.

You can’t hurt anyone’s feelings or body.

The group has 20 minutes to decide the goal or objective of the game. What do the players do to win or reach their objective?

## Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Students are allowed to use any materials or none at all. Remind the class of the theatre games that were played at the beginning of class or perhaps simpler versions of classic sports games like soccer, basketball or hockey.

After 20 minutes, reconvene the class. Each group presents, teaches and plays its new game with volunteer classmates.

### Closure

A quick group popcorn conversation to identify the 3 P's (People, Place, Problems) in the worlds of these newly created games.

## An Invitation To Playlist

### Description

Before Playwright Marco Ramirez creates the rules and world of a new story he's working on, he does a little sound design. He says he puts together "a two or three hour playlist" which he labels with the name of the new play he is writing. So before writing this boxing play, he created a playlist called *The Royale* and he filled it with music that helps tell the story of the play. Basically, he creates an imaginary soundtrack for the show.

In this activity, students create and play a soundtrack that can underscore the world of the theatre game they created in the activity above.

### Materials

Paper, pens/pencils, Music CD's from school/public library or iTunes access, blank CD's, computer access to create and burn playlist, a CD/MP3 player, portable speaker.

### Introduction

First, play a few song excerpts from Marco Ramirez's *The Royale* soundtrack. Artists include BB King, Lil' Wayne, Drake, Jay-Z, Nas, and the blues artist Son House. Play Lil' Wayne's "A Milli" and Kanye West's "Power" in their entirety.

### Discussion

Marco Ramirez says "This play is as much about boxing as it is about hip-hop." After listening to a little of the soundtrack, how does this music connect to the 3 P's (People, Place, Problems) of *The Royale*?

At the end of "Power" by Kanye West, he sings "This will be a beautiful death." How does this specific lyric line connect to the story? (Ramirez sampled two lyric lines from this song in the last scene. Another option is for students to try to identify the lines when they see the show.)



## Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

### Main Activity

Students reconvene in their original groups from the previous activity. As a group, the students identify the 3 P's in the world of the game they created together. Next, the group brainstorms and collaboratively builds a playlist soundtrack of three songs:

Song 1: Introduction music for the start of the game

Song 2: Music to underscore the game while players are trying to problem solve

Song 3: A closing song to celebrate a victory or a defeat (the choice of the team)

### \*Advanced Variation

If the students in your class happen to be skilled at sound design already, then encourage them to mix and edit a sampled soundtrack playlist. Or have them audio edit a continuous sound collage to underscore the game while it's being played.

Playwright Ramirez points out “It’s a major element of hip-hop: sampling. Sampling is when you take a little part of an old song and you use it, you loop it, once or twice in a song. So my integrating all this other stuff was just organically part of the play. If it’s a play about boxing and hip hop, I should sample. I should reference. It should feel like it was written by committee in a way. It shouldn’t feel like it’s entirely mine.”

After 30 minutes, reconvene the class. Each group presents its playlist. If time permits, play a few games with the newly created soundtrack playlists.

### Closure

A quick group popcorn conversation to identify if and how the added element of music and sound design inspired and contributed to the world of the game.

## Hip Hop: Outside The Box

One of the greatest legends and pioneers of Hip Hop, rapper KRS 1 (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone) states in his book *The Gospel of Hip-Hop: First Instrument, for the Temple of Hip-Hop*:

*“We (Hip Hop) belong to no political, religious, financial, or educational institution or group in the world...for a culture with no central home base, no financial backing, no religious affiliation, no political organization, not even a race or ethnicity to call its own; this culture Hip Hop created out of the historical activities of America’s inner cities has risen up and has completely established itself in the minds of youth everywhere and has completely side-stepped the entire World system and ways of achieving success and stability in the world.”*

This quote captures the essence of Jay from *The Royale* as well as real-life athlete, Jack

## Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Johnson on whom the character was loosely based. Jay grew up dirt poor during the Jim Crow Era where racism plagued daily life. Jay created his own way in the world against the odds. Despite the bigotry and racism that defined those times, he approached the sport of boxing from a human standpoint.

### **In and Out the Box**

Ask students to move about the room. Instruct them to embody how their body and face change when they feel judged or “put in a box” based on their gender, race, ethnicity, etc. After exploring physically, have students create a tableaux or frozen picture of this situation.

Next, ask students then move about the room and think of a song that expresses freedom and the feeling of being outside of any box, label or judgment. Ask them to move through the space physically embodying the music and the feelings it produces. Have them freeze in a picture or tableaux that captures that feeling of freedom.

### **Writing Exploration: Connections and Commonalities**

The principals of Hip Hop embrace people uniting regardless of differences and put the focus on commonalities. What do we all have in common as human beings? What connects us to each other regardless of race, religion or class?

### **Writing Exploration: Examining Differences**

Identify what makes people different from each other. Where are these differences celebrated in our society and where do they create separation or barriers? Share specific details about this.

### **Improvisation; Creating a Scene**

Brainstorm with the class scenarios Jay may have dealt with living in such a segregated society. For example, perhaps Jay can't enter through the front door of the hotel he is staying in because of the laws of segregation. What do you imagine he may have said to the people working at the hotel? What do you think the hotel workers would have said to Jay? Create the dialogue of this interaction.

Ask students to reflect on a time they were in a group where they felt there weren't commonalities. Next, ask them to think about a situation where they did find commonalities where they thought they wouldn't?

Ask them to reflect or write about the following questions: When have you experienced or witnessed racism? When have you encountered or witnessed gender discrimination? Ask them to write a dialogue using any of the above scenarios.

Note to teacher: Give students the option of using a personal example or a situation they witnessed or heard about to create this scene.

## Something Out Of Nothing

Boxing, Hip Hop and Theatre can be achieved with little to no resources. Jay had a calling to be a boxer. He was able to achieve this goal with hard work and determination. He faced many obstacles on his path, including poverty and racism.

*Oldest sport in the world, ain't it?  
Poorest sport at least.  
Don't need no ball, uniforms,  
All you need is two fists and even then I seen a man fight with less.*

—Jay, *The Royale*

Discuss with your students the following questions: Do you have a calling? What will it take to nurture this calling? Does it feel doable? What resources do you need? What are the obstacles?

## Mind Over Matter

In *The Royale*, Jay works hard to keep his mind focused in order to achieve greatness. He interacts with the crowd. He repeatedly keeps his mind steady to always win. He works hard to keep focused regardless of outside circumstance. When he does become worried he brings himself back quickly. This shows the power of the mind and inner life. Those who achieve greatness in any area from sports to the arts and everything in between, send themselves positive messages in order to stay focused, confident and achieve the goal. At times we all feel defeated and tell ourselves defeating messages. Through practice we can learn to focus on more positive messages in order to not be negatively influenced by outside circumstances. This practice can create a confidence that becomes a “swagger.” “Swagger” is a confident way of carrying yourself and can be helpful in keeping your inner world more predominant than the outer world.

### **The Swag**

Students walk about the room as if they are not confident, shoulders slouched, head down, defeated posture. Students then practice walking about the room with a “swagger” that exudes confidence, strength and pride.

### **Affirmation**

Affirmations are statements that confirm the way you wish to feel and what you wish to achieve. For example, Jay’s affirmations might include “I am the best boxer in the world”, “No one can fade me”, or “I was born a winner.”

Make a list of affirmations that empower you. If the circumstance does not yet exist, you can call it into existence. For example if your sports team has not yet won and you want

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to win, you could state, “My team wins every game.” Your affirmations can be simple. If you want to improve your diet you can say, “I eat healthy foods.” Let your pen flow and make a list of at least five affirmations.

### **Visualization**

Visualization is when you picture something in your mind in order to achieve it. Visualization is a powerful tool in achieving any goal.

Ask your students to close their eyes and guide them through a visualization of something they want to achieve or become great at. For example, you can guide them through picturing their college graduation. Ask them to imagine receiving their college diploma, seeing all details including the color of their gown, family members and friends, the expression on their face as you come to the podium to receive their diploma. Have your students create their visualization in writing. Remind them to use all of their five senses to make the scene come to life. Encourage them to choose something that really speaks to them; something they truly wish to experience or achieve.

### **Inner Voices**

Make a list of positive voices that run in your mind. Perhaps this list might be similar to what a trainer would say to a boxer. Next, make a list of defeating voices that run in your mind. Allow a dialogue between the voices. What do they say to one another? What intentions do they have? How does the empowering voice “win”?

### **Here is a sample**

A: You can't get that job.

B: Oh yes I can.

A: You are not qualified.

B: I am qualified and the very best person for the job.

### **Page to Stage**

Allow the opposing voices to engage in a scene. Chose two actors to create an improvisational dialogue based on the different voices. What would they each say to each other? Direct the actors to establish a beginning, middle and end of the scene. Watch this interaction and notice how the dynamics shift throughout the scene. See what happens when the empowering voice wins.

You can also conduct interviews with the different voices and ask key questions such as “Where do you come from?” “What do you want?” “What is your greatest wish?” “What is your greatest fear?”

## Ensemble Building: The Nuts And Bolts Of A Team

In *The Royale*, Jay and his trainer Wynton have a strong working relationship. Although boxing looks like a one man sport, it is nevertheless a team sport with the trainer playing a key role in the boxer's work in the ring. The trainer is the "team behind the man". Theatre is similar since building an ensemble is essential to the work it takes to create a production. Actors must work fluidly together; listening, cooperating and working as parts of a whole. It's important all parties are focused and "tuned in" to the task at hand. It's important the individual stays strongly connected to his/herself in order to best honor and connect with the collective.

Structure and discipline allow for freedom. This is how something very difficult can be made to look easy. This is the goal of any collective: to be so connected and grounded in structure, there is freedom to fly!

### **Flocking**

Warm-up. The group gathers in a formation much like a flock of birds. One person leads doing slow and fluid motions while the rest of the group mirrors the actor's movements, moving in unison. Another actor takes over the lead and the rest of the group follows. The activity is done in silence. The group moves as a cohesive unit.

### **Group Poem**

Ask the students to reflect on the idea of team or ensemble. What does it mean to them? Pass a pad of paper around the room. One at a time, each student contributes a line to the poem. Ask them to read closely what was written previously and to keep it cohesive. A small group may want to pass the poem around twice and a larger group only once. Once complete, a student can read the poem aloud.

### **Group Discussion**

What is it like to work as a team? What are the challenges? What do you enjoy most?

### **Ensemble Building**

Have the students walk around the room and freeze on cue. The physical activity increases blood flow and enhances their ability to take in information. Using the word "freeze" instills cues, structure and focus.

Have the students continue to move through the space, making eye contact with each person they pass (this is a non-verbal activity). Next, have the students make physical contact as they pass another person in the space (usually we see high fives abound). Then ask them to make physical contact without the use of their hands. Finally, have them to go back to just eye contact. This simple ensemble warm-up increases awareness of others in the room and can take the focus off of themselves.

## Central Questions

**What would you fight for?**

**Has anyone/anything ever held you back?**

Have the students freeze back-to-back with a partner. Ask them one of these central questions. Ask them to take time and reflect on their answers. Tell them when you count to three they will turn around and share their answers with their partner. Have them decide who will answer first and who will listen first. Have each student ask their partner if they have permission to share what they hear.

Circle up and ask the students to recall what answers resonated for them. Remind them to only share if their partner gave them permission. Not everyone has to share back.

## Tempo

This activity explores rhythm, the pace of change and the impact we have on each other. Have the class form a standing circle. Ask the students to slowly shift their weight from left to right. Ask them to slowly increase their tempo as a group until they are jogging in place. On a scale of 1-10, set tempos. Have the group explore how fast they can possibly go and how slow.

After exploring in place in the circle, have them walk on an imagined grid on the floor. Tell them that every time they pass between two people, it is a doorway. When they pass through one of these doorways their tempo must change. Let them play with this idea for awhile, with and without coaching.

Have them partner with their partner from the leading questions activity. Have the partners stand as far away from each other as possible.

Ask them to imagine that their partner is the most important person in the world to them. If they don't get to them, they will never see them again.

When you say "Go" they will try to get to their partners before you say "Freeze". For the first round, say freeze well before they can get to each other. Remind them of the importance and need to reach each other.

Reset and repeat this. After they freeze far away from each other, say "Go" again. This time let them reach each other.

### **Discussion**

What was it like to really need someone and to have to work physically to be close to them? Does your inner tempo match your outer tempo? Did you get to them as fast as you wanted to? Did you move faster or slower than you thought you could?

## Bottle Game

This activity allows us to explore barriers and fighting in a stylized non-violent nature. Place a plastic bottle in the center of the room. Use the already established partners to play the game. Have them stand on opposite sides of the bottle equal distance away from it. Establish two start lines they have to stand behind. When you say go they have to get the bottle before their partner does. If they get it past their line without getting tagged they get 2 points. If their partner tags them their partner gets one point. You play until one player gets ten points.

### Discussion

How did you win? Did your strategy change? Did your opinion of your partner change? Did you change?

## Ringside on the Radio

By the late 1890s and early 1900s radio was becoming a way to experience an event when you couldn't attend. Major sporting events were broadcast and by 1921 the "... largest audience in history," the 300,000 estimated to have heard one of the first radio broadcasts of a special event was the outdoor heavyweight championship boxing match between Jack Dempsey and French challenger, Georges Carpentier. Boxing brought sports to radio in a very big way. ([www.PopHistoryDig.com](http://www.PopHistoryDig.com))

Playwright Marco Ramirez writes in his stage directions:

"In production, the SOUNDS, should be made organically, from the actors onstage. CLAPS from the ensemble should come mostly from those not actively in the scene at hand—serving as punctuation. LAUGHTER, OOHs, and AAHs can sound a little more realistic, but are still punctuation. The RINGSIDE BELL is live."

While our playwright suggests a style for the play with sounds serving as punctuation, let's go further and create the sounds of the boxing match as if we were hearing it over the radio! Let's create an audio boxing match!

Sample Script for Teachers:

Prepping for the match:

- a. Start with a guided meditation: Seated or laying on the floor is great.
- b. Close your eyes
- c. Breathe in...and...breathe out a sigh of relief
- d. Again, take a deep breath and allow a sigh of relief
- e. As you know you are among your classmates, allow them now to transition with you to an event
- f. You enter an arena...notice...what is the lighting like...what do you see?

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What do you smell?

- g. You find your seat from there you see the boxing ring right in front of you
- h. As the arena fills with people, the excitement grows. What do you see and hear now?
- i. A referee enters the ring and the crowd starts to cheer
- j. The lights get brighter signaling the event is about to start
- k. Suddenly, a trainer enters the arena and the boxer who is the challenger enters and the crowd goes wild! (What are the fans yelling?)
- l. The announcer introduces the boxer's name as he/she enters the ring
- m. Then, another trainer enters the arena followed by the defending champion
- n. The crowd goes even more wild! What are the fans yelling now?
- o. The announcer introduces the boxer's name and title as he enters the ring
- p. The defending champion raises up his/her arms to gesture that he/she is the champ and the fans cheer out of control. Then he/she goes to his/her corner.
- q. The referee signals the boxers to come to the center of the ring and speaks to the boxers
- r. The boxers glove bump
- s. The ringside bell sounds and the fight is on!
- t. The boxers dance and duck and throw punches
- u. The crowd reacts. What do you hear from the crowd?
- v. The bell sounds and the first round is over! The boxers return to their corners
- w. With each bell the boxers come back to the center and the referee starts each round
- x. Then, finally, as the boxers show more and more fatigue, one of the boxers throws and lands a powerful punch and the other boxer goes down. It is a knock out!
- y. Who do you imagine wins? The challenger? Or will the defending champion reign?
- z. The fight comes to an end and the winner is officially announced and the crowd reacts. What do they say now? How loud is it?
- aa. The boxers leave the ring with their trainers
- ab. The arena slowly empties and you sit ringside allowing yourself to breathe and notice all that has happened
- ac. Now, transition back into the room and slowly open your eyes

Discuss with the class the sounds and sights they imagined. Identify the major components: **(1) crowd reactions for one boxer, (2) crowd reactions for the defending champion, (3) announcer's voice, (4) the bell, (5) the boxers punching and breathing, (6) the referee, (7) the trainers, (8) and their promoters.**

Take these sound elements and divide the class into these eight groups. Each group creates the sounds they will need to fulfill their part.



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For example, to be **the crowd**, the fans, this group might practice cheering, clapping, and even sounds of surprise and disappointment. Another group is **the crowd in favor of the opposing boxer**.

Have another group create what **the announcer** would say and take turns being the announcer. They might practice introducing the two boxers of the match. They can create names and decide who the challenger is and who the defending champion is. They should also practice announcing the winner.

Have another group be the sounds of **the boxers** complete with punch sounds and the vocal reactions from the jabs and upper cuts, etc. They can imagine what each boxer is going through to help them create the necessary sounds for the audio match. Two other groups can create what **the trainers and promoters** might be barking during the match and during breaks between the rounds.

As the instructor, you can provide **the sound of the bell** and **the radio announcer** who describes the action, so you can monitor the rhythms of the match and how it unfolds. If you have a confident and/or more experienced student, have them be the referee and announcer and he/she can bring his/her classmates through the story.

Then, have the students sit in a circle with their groups, and utilize the guided meditation as a framework and allow the sounds to be a part of the story as it unfolds. Have fun and encourage the students to be committed and passionate about the sounds they are providing for the storytelling and the ringside radio match will unfold!

## Being Champion

**“Ain’t about being Heavyweight Champion of the White world.  
It’s about bein’ Champion period. —*The Royale***

In *The Royale*, we witness Jay, the heavyweight boxer, with his self determination, his talent, and his intelligence struggle to get the opportunity to win the Title of Heavyweight Champion of the World in boxing. Throughout the telling of this story, we ask, what will power does it take to be a champion? What does it take to *get the opportunity* to become a champion? Who is the champion, really, and what price is paid for being the champion?

Jay has a team around him; the trainer, the promoter/referee, including a family member that comes to see him, a young amateur boxer, and the audience. Characters support each other, others pull each other down, some are there watching, waiting, witnessing, but all participate as a part of the situation, the culture, the society. We can feel everyone’s presence and the impact it has on the character who might emerge as the champion.

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In theatre, we work as a team to build and tell stories and we create a sense of connection in order to do so successfully. The team connects to tell the story and the characters connect to live out the story.

In the movement game below, the students will have the opportunity to develop a sense of connection and work together to physically improvise and build a story as they live out the results of the game, “The Champion.”

### **The Champion: A Movement Improvisation Game**

This exercise is a movement metaphor that parallels the rise of Jay in *The Royale*, i.e. getting to the top, while working with others, and the individual experience amidst a group situation.

\*This is best played in a large open gymnasium or activity room, where any tables, chairs, or bags are all cleared out of the way for safety and there is plenty of room to move. Divide the class into teams of approximately eight players/students (depending on the size of your group of students). If there is more than one team, the others teams witness while a team is playing the game.

Explain the rules of the game:

- a. This is a non-verbal movement game.
- b. All players eventually become contenders.
- c. All players **must move in slow-motion** the entire time. Players develop physical stamina and discipline with this movement style.
- d. All players must be connected or touching another player at all times. For example, you can have your hand on another player’s arm, or back, etc.
- e. If you change and decide to be in contact with a different player, you must make contact with them first before releasing contact with the previous player.
- f. You can also be in contact with more than one player at a time.
- g. As a group of players, while staying connected, you must move from one end of the room to the other .
- h. All players begin the game on the floor lying down face up or face down.
- i. They find a connection with a fellow players and when the monitor rings the bell (an actual bell or by making a vocal sound like a bell), the players begin their journey across the floor.
- j. They can change levels as they move and must negotiate staying connected.
- k. Once the players reach the half way point across the space, the monitor announces, “A champion will emerge by the time you reach the other side. You are all contenders now to become the champion. Whoever reaches the finish line first, strikes a victorious pose and is the Champion!”
- l. All contenders continue across the floor, in slow-motion, to reach the

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finish line and eventually a champion emerges with a champion's stance by the end.

- m. Give each group a chance to journal about their experience. Then, hold a larger class/group discussion:

What was it like to have to stay connected?

How was it moving in slow-motion?

Did you want to be champion? If so, what happened? If not, how did you feel? If not, did you want a particular person to be champion? How did you support them?

Did your sense of connection change throughout the game?

For those witnessing, what was the story that unfolded?

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**Center Theatre Group's mission** is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Center Theatre Group's education and community partnership programs advance the organization's mission in three key ways:

**Audiences:** Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives;

**Artists:** Investing in the training, support and development of emerging young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

**Arts Education Leadership:** Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.

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