



# Fields and Fields and Fields:

## Movement notes:

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1. Movement in your Play In A Day performance: a general introduction video
2. FFF video 1: Characters and Food Movement
3. FFF video 2: Further images

## 1. Movement in the 'Play in a Day' performances:

### Transcript of *introducing movement* video

#### Introducing movement:

The movement elements in our plays in a day can seem intimidating, on the page, but I'm here to reassure you that they couldn't be simpler. These sections are about telling the story with the pictures we make on stage, rather than the words we say, and for both primary and secondary age groups it's an ideal way to get ideas across, whilst keeping our school audience attention. And of course they can be great fun for you to lead, and your students will love expressing themselves physically, too.

#### Leading and Teaching movement:

When leading and teaching movement it is important that you enjoy it too – model what you want the students to do, so they can copy you. Make it fun, and use the music included with the play. All our bodies are different, so allow for individual expression, and for students to interpret movement in their own way. Having a clear signal for stopping is also important (a raised hand, a whistle etc.), as these group sections can sometimes be noisy!

#### Fitting it in:

Movement sections are a great way to pick up the energy after lunch, or after a long period of time learning lines. Rehearsing them little and often, as a warm up, is an ideal way to fit them in.

#### Keep it simple:

Even if the movement sections will be different every time you practice them, they will still need some rehearsal, so it is important to keep it simple, and repeat, rather than doing something complex only once – I know from experience, this is where even professional performers forget everything!

#### Its up to you:

I'll give a few options here and there, so if dance, movement or theatre is something you love, or you are just feeling ambitious, then I'll give you ways you can make more of these elements, if you want to give them more time leading up to the Play In A Day performance, but there will always be a simple version too, that will work just as well.

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## 2. Characters and food movement in *Fields and Fields and Fields*

One of the main challenges you will need to tackle when staging *Fields and Fields and Fields* is how to differentiate between the various character groups. These group can be anywhere from 2 to 10 individuals, all moving together. They can split the text between them, or have some, or even a single, spokesperson. This chorus style movement \* (\*group movement where actors have the same or very similar characters and physicality) is very entertaining and effective, and should be good fun for your students, too.

**Scientists:** Are courageous, enthusiastic adventurers. They ZIG ZAG to their place on stage, inspecting mimed/imagined aspects of the world around them. As they are about to speak, they all “Hmmm” together, put their heads in a busy huddle, making urgent whispers and gestures, then they burst out to face the audience, with a loud “ah ha!” and one or more of them speaks... The second or third time they appear, this can happen faster and faster. They may introduce themselves “We are scientists!” - they are an energetic and engaging bunch.

**Farm workers:** till the ground, bent low, with real or imaginary farm implements. They walk slowly across the stage, looking at what they are ‘digging’, or looking up when they pause to ‘wipe their brow’. This can be further stylized by them breathing together, and digging together, along with the music. For very able/ambitious groups you could create smaller groups who each work together to create a workers montage in cannon, where they overlap, and are not all doing the same thing at once. A simple set of movements to learn could go: “dig, dig, wipe brow, dig”, repeat, or “dig, dig, wipe brow, dig” move to another part of the stage, repeat. Perhaps they wear wide brimmed hats to keep off the sun? Musically we will contrast India and Ireland, but also in the colors of the costumes, if possible, and in the speed of the actions; Ireland in the past can be slower, compared to our modern, high demand rice farmers in India, where things are fast, or double time, perhaps even simply more jolly?

**County Mayo farmers:** another option is this group might well use the ‘one potato, two potato’ game, of making the potatoes with their fists, working in pairs, then moving on, to differentiate them from the Indian rice farmers. or a combination of ‘dig, dig, wipe brow, dig’ followed by ‘one potato, two potato’ to create a two phrase sequence.

**Western Supermarket buyers:** stand up very straight, with big smiles AT ALL TIMES! When they are about to speak they all furiously speak into their mobile phones (“Hello? Hello? Yes?”), then quickly shake hands, with another Western Supermarket buyer, then their spokesperson steps forward to speak. They might also, all give each other a round of applause, if they like something, or tut and shake their fingers and their heads when they do not. They move DIRECTLY to where they need to be, and exit DIRECTLY away again...

**Children:** run in a chaotic huddle, screaming and laughing, before they ask, all together, for what they want.

**Parents:** have folded arms, and make a big sigh, before answering their children. For particularly focused groups, parents and children could both be played by the same people, making a clear change from ‘chaotic children, looking upwards to their parents, asking in high, childish voices’, to folding their arms, sighing together, and looking down, as they speak to their ‘now imagined’ children.

**Food movement:** this is a couple of options for this fun section:

Look you Buyers-

- all you over there- you’re made from wheat-
- you- you’re all products of corn-
- You lot: you’re oats...
- And you’re rice...

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The first and most simple option is that, as the GREAT GROWER speaks 'you...' each group holds up a big picture/print out of the wheat/corn/oats/rice

The second and perhaps most interesting option (at least to me) is that the groups have made sets of 'hats' that represent the wheat/corn/oats/rice, to be put on for this moment. As they put on the hats they become the fields, swaying gently in the wind... ready to be gnawed on by the bugs and blights.

The third version is the more ambitious dance version, where Wheat/corn/oats/rice each have a specific movement and body shape attached to them: e.g.: WHEAT jump up in the air, then reach up and sway gently in the wind, CORN claps their hands together, then roll up in balls, like corn on the cob, OATS spin around, then stand back to back with each other, RICE touch the floor, huddle together, like a more densely packed version of the Wheat

You could try all 3 versions with your class and see which they like the most?

### 3: Further images:

#### BLIGHT

To help tell our story it would be great to create some clear images to illustrate:

*And Mary's community continue their story. Words, phrases. The rumors, disbelief... Surely not?  
Not the whole crop- wiped out?*

*Music and movement as something sweeps across the land- again and again and again, year on year on year-*

Here the farm workers potatoes turn to dust (their look at their fists, then open them slowly, showing empty palms - one pair, then another, then the rest, imagining earth and dust being all they can see).

They start to whisper to each other the rumors, the fears of what is happening. Then they all are blown across stage, like a gust of deathly wind, blowing the ashen dust away...

Now for the following section:

*There are broken, fragmentary accounts of the misery. The starvation. And the fields of wheat and corn?  
All bought and paid for by the English markets says the landowner's agent, sounding suspiciously like the person buying the rice.*

*Very sorry and all that. No can do. What Johnny customer wants Johnny customer gets.*

To really bring this image home begin with the ONE POTATO TWO POTATO failing, turning to dust, the fists opening into empty hands, as above. Then the gust of wind, faster this time... then the image of THE LANDOWNERS refusing the group of farmers pleas for help (land owner being played by the Representative of the Western Market).

STARVATION: Mary and her friends and family hungry, leaving, limping off stage, one person collapses, and has to be carried, leaving Mary alone... We could give more detailed choreography here, but I think this is enough at this stage...

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