1. Create a character analysis of each role. Consider their past, present and future. Start with age, occupation and where the character lives, and move on to likes, dislikes, appearance, personality, ambition and opinions on topical issues.

2. Act out an alternative ending.

3. Pupils hot-seat each other, responding as the characters.

4. Act out the script using only mime.

5. Take out the stage directions and get pupils to add their own, or limit pupils to only adding two stage directions to encourage them to make their directions more considered.

6. Design costumes and discuss the lighting. Get pupils to discuss in pairs or groups what effects they would want to create and how they would achieve their aims. Label scripts with lighting ideas and key lines.

7. Create an aerial stage plan with entrances, exits, levels, props, and label where the audience would be.

8. Explore a text using different levels of volume, pitch, pace and expression or emotions. Pupils should explore how the meaning of a line changes if they say it quietly, miserably etc.

9. Research and write about the social background or cultural features of text.

10. Write or improvise the characters’ horoscopes.

11. Perform the story of the script using only sound and rhythms: e.g. tapping foot, coughing.

12. Tell the story to music, you can choose the music (dramatic classical works well) or pupils can choose a piece (those without lyrics work best).

13. Get pupils to write a rap or song to convey a story.

14. Write a monologue for one of the characters and include it in the script to show character development.

15. Forum theatre: get the audience involved by asking them to suggest ways of changing the performance. Explore different uses of movement and voice. Suggestions could include ways to improve the piece or might simply explore the alternatives. Could also try this with audience members swapping roles and demonstrating how their suggestions would work.

16. Take the characters from a script and perform a balloon debate (in which the characters are in a plummeting balloon and must decide who is to be sacrificed for the greater good of the others). This should encourage discussion about the characters’ strengths and failings and highlight particular details and or ambiguities from the text.

17. Give the pupils the stage directions from a script they’ve not seen and get them to write the lines.

18. Improvise a scene from the characters’ lives after twenty years have passed. Pupils could reflect on what has happened or focus on the effects of various events on their character and demonstrate how these events have changed their character’s life.
19. Perform in traverse theatre arrangement (audience on each side) and in the round. Pupils could perform in the middle of the audience. How do different arrangements make the performance different for both the performers and audience? What are the audience responses? Which do they prefer? What other arrangements can the performers or audience think of? Explore why they chose a particular design and what the effects are.

20. Pupils partner up and instruct each other on how to position their arms, legs and change their posture, stance and gestures to make them look how they imagine the character in the script to be.

21. Teacher in role with one of the parts.

22. Perform one of the scenes from the characters’ past or improvise the scene just before the scripted action started.

23. Sum up a scene or whole play in three or four tableaux. Get one member of the group to be a director. After the tableaux are arranged, encourage the director to take on the role of narrator. Discuss the role of the narrator. He or she can push the action on or can be used to provide a comment or opinion. Practise and perform the piece again but this time allowing the narrator to provide comments or opinions on the action.

24. Director or teacher instructs the performers to complete a list of actions in role. For example: eat, sleep, brush hair, sit down, walk, think, miss the bus.

25. Add thought tracking to the tableaux so that when the action freezes, the characters step out of it and explain what’s going through their mind.

26. Perform a scene in a different style e.g. as a children’s nativity, model catwalk, western film, musical or ghost story.

27. Pupils choose a key line in the scene, say the line and then improvise other directions the plot could take.

28. Perform a TV report or chat show based on an event that takes place in the script.

29. Swap roles so that each performer can get a new perspective on the other characters and help each other by showing different interpretations of each character.

30. Create a sound circle for one of the locations in the script. Each member of the group introduces a noise that creates or adds atmosphere to the location. Keep bringing in the sounds until everyone is repeating theirs at the same volume. Take out the sounds in the same order and then discuss how atmosphere was created. How could that be included in a performance?

31. Groups perform a scene from the script for each other. Groups then give feedback, providing both positive feedback and targeting areas to work on.

32. Discuss the importance and effect of using silence during a performance. Encourage pupils to read through a page or two of their scripts and give them three silences to add. The length of the silence is up to them. Listen and discuss whether it was difficult. Why and how did the silence change the meaning of the piece?

33. Put the characters into different situations and improvise what would happen. For example: a broken lift, a bad party, the doctor’s surgery.