

# Monkey Breath

Developed by: Jonathan “John Laughsalot” Mincks (hotshot@hotshotperformer.com)  
Artform(s): Drama, Storytelling

## Games at a Distance

### Game #1: Superhero Showoffs (good for all ages)

This game is suggested in the story when the monkeys realize banana tree leaves (masks) make them look like superheroes.

#### Directions:

- Gather students safely either in a circle on the floor or at their desks. Follow school guidelines on social distancing.
- Explain the rules of the game:
  - The Superhero cannot use words. No talking. Sound effects are OK.
  - The Superhero gets 15 seconds or so before classmates start guessing. Control the guess time by saying, “You can’t start guessing until I clap.” This allows thinking time for each Superhero.
  - Classmates should only guess out loud if they think they know who or what power is being shown.
- Allow time for students to take turns. Props are OK. It is also OK for the student to move around the classroom instead of being at the front of the room or center of the circle to take pressure off more timid students.

### Game #2: Monkey See, Monkey Do (best for ages 5 and up)

This is a drama-based game that asks children to mirror a partner’s movements. It builds coordination, concentration, and observation skills.

#### Directions:

- Divide group into pairs.
- Ask each pair to sit safely distanced, facing each other.
- One child is the “leader,” and one is the “follower.”
- The leader makes a slow movement with their body. The follower tries to mimic the leader’s movements. For example, if the leader raised their right hand, the follower would raise their left.
- Allow three minutes for each child to be a leader.
- It might take some practice. This can be difficult with Pre-K and kindergarten students. Slow calming music helps.

### Game #3: What Am I Doing? (best for ages 5 and up)

This game uses pantomiming. Pantomime is a complex motor skill that helps develop creative thought and problem solving, as well as spatial awareness and fine and gross motor skills. As an example, eating a banana can start with holding an imaginary banana and taking a bite. A pantomime can start with climbing a tree, then picking the banana, peeling it, and finally eating and disposing of the peel. The detail of things like how the banana is held (with or without space in fist for the imaginary banana or how many details of the action are included, e.g., swallow, bite, etc.) can help understand developmental range, emotional expression, and level of spatial awareness. Spatial awareness is an exceptionally important cognitive skill, resulting in increased dexterity, sense of balance, flexibility, and body strength.

#### Directions:

- Using *Monkey Breath* for inspiration, act out an action taken by the monkeys in the story. Examples might be washing, playing, eating a banana, swimming, climbing a tree, etc.
- Ask one student to act out an action they recall from the story.
- Allow time for students to guess what the action is.  
Remind students that the guessers do not have to get it exactly right, just close, i.e., eating pizza and a sandwich is similar.

- Action students cannot talk. Sound effects are OK, but it might be even more challenging without them.
- No one can start guessing until the teacher directs the class to raise their hands if they have an idea. This will give the action student time to get into it. Usually only one or two minutes is needed.
- Encourage fun and play. Try to suggest simple actions at first.