

## UNIT: INTRODUCTION TO BROADSWORD

DAY ONE:

**Learning Objectives:** Students will

- Learn the three rules of stage combat:
  - Safety first
  - The defending partner is in charge
  - Practice, practice
- Explore fighting with a two-handed blade fighting style
- Learn the different stances, parries, and places of attack
- Practice caring for a partner during the rehearsal process

**Materials Needed:** Broadswords, open space

**Procedure:**

1. Introductions
  - a. Who I am; class expectations, talking about respecting partners and the weapons.
  - b. Name and a Warrior Stance - one by one, students introduce themselves while striking what they believe to be a fearsome warrior's pose. The rest of the class should repeat back both the name and the stance.
2. Warm Ups:
  - a. "Head Forward, Head Back"
  - b. Stretches
3. Talk about the Weapons:
  - a. Show the Broadsword; discuss its name, history, and parts of the blade.
  - b. Talking about sword etiquette  
When presented with a weapon, it is the actor's responsibility to ask if it is a "real" weapon or prop weapon; and then to ask if it has been made safe (in the case of broadsword, has the blade been dulled?), and if not to request that it be made safe. Once handed the weapon, actors should hold it point down, to ensure that they do not poke anyone else around them.
4. Plow and Ox Stance – Students line up in a row, and practice the two fighting stances; first stationary, then adding a pass forward/back.
5. Four Parries
  - a. Parries to protect the right leg (#2); left leg (#7); right shoulder (#3); left shoulder (#4) – These should be practiced first stationary, then with passes back.
6. Four Points of Attack:
  - a. Discussion of targeting and cuing –
  - b. Points of attack: right shoulder, left shoulder, right leg, left leg (stationary)
  - c. In a row practicing passing forward with each cut, emphasizing throwing the cut (use the flicking gum/water image to help illustrate)
7. Practice with "C.R.A.P." (Cue, Reaction Action, Parry)
8. Wrap-Up

DAY TWO:

**Lesson Objectives** – Students will

- Continue to develop skills fighting with a two-handed blade fighting style, focusing on stance, targeting, and telegraphing moves to a partner.
- Execute choreographed broadsword sequences, using C.R.A.P to develop a flow between the movements at a speed that is safe and agreed upon for both partners.
- Begin to weave in acting and character choices that sustain the narrative of the conflict of the fight.

**Materials Needed:** Broadswords, pool noodles, wide open space

**Procedure:**

1. Warm Ups:
  - a. Arm Exercises
    - i. Wrist circles
    - ii. Finger stretches
    - iii. Play piano/speak Italian
    - iv. “Coffee...”
  - b. Stretches
2. Review Weapons Protocol
3. Review Plow and Ox Stance and Parries –
  - a. Practice the two fighting stances; first stationary, then adding a pass forward/back.
  - b. Parries to protect the right leg (#2); left leg (#7); right shoulder (#3);
  - c. Four Points of Attack: right shoulder, left shoulder, right leg, left leg
4. Introduce Head Cuts
  - a. Defending head cuts: Parry 5 and 5A – discuss “revving up the motorcycle” so that students don’t draw the point of their weapon across partner’s center.
  - b. Attacking head cuts: discuss the angled, descending cuts (both for safety and historical accuracy with helmets), as well as the importance of casting the weapon.
  - c. Practice head cuts back and forth, offering adjustments as needed.
5. Expulsions:
  - a. Start with attacking the right shoulder, (partner parries #4). Defender then pushes their partner’s blade off – expulsing it. The push should be a quick, forceful casting of the blade, again, much like flicking water off the tip.
  - b. Repeat with head cut 5.A. Acknowledge that students will be tempted to expulse their partner’s weapon to the side, but they should continue to push it straight off, past their partner, just as they did with the shoulder expulsion.
6. Work Cuts Drill with the addition of head cuts – Right arm cut; left leg cut; right leg cut; left leg cut; Head cut; moulinette; Head cut; expulsion.

7. Choreography: If students are able to execute the cuts drill smoothly, switching back and forth between attacker and defender, and flowing through the cuts, then they are ready to work on their first sequence of choreography:

A attacks Right Arm/ B parries 3; A attacks B's left leg/B parries 7; A attacks head/B parries 5 with an expulsion; switch roles on the counter-attack.

Remind students to first focus on flowing through the sequence with C.R.A.P. and then to begin to add in storytelling, character choices, etc.

8. Fun with Pool Noodles!  
Using pool noodle swords, allow students to explore free-style sparring, with a strict ban on any attacks to the face/head. Ask students to pay attention to specific sensations in terms of weight shift, change in stance, and change in rhythm when they go from practicing choreography to actually simulating a fight. Generally speaking, students will drop into lower stances, and begin to break up the usual 4x4 rhythm that actors can fall into when rehearsing a fight. This also provides a fun way to end the unit.
9. Wrap-Up
  - a. Reflect on fun with the pool noodles
  - b. Remind students of the rules of stage combat
  - c. Salute! (To the heart, to the sky, to the heart with a bow, moulinette and off)