

# Reader's Theater



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Putting on a short play, based on a story, where students read from a script is what Reader's Theater is all about. The purpose of Reader's Theater is to practice reading fluency and to have fun! True Reader's Theater uses no costumes or props and focuses on fluency and expression to entertain.

But adding costumes and props is a fun touch!

You can find many pre-made scripts out there or you can create your own. I prefer to create my own so I can tailor the language to my student's reading abilities. It's also a fun guided writing activity to write a script, as a class.

Putting on a Reader's Theater play requires preparation, practice and performance. Here's how we do all 3 in my classroom:

preparation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Find or write a script. **Highlight, ahead of time, the lines for each character on each script.**</li><li>2. Read the selected book to your students.</li><li>3. Show the script to students so they get a sense of how long the play will be. (Using an overhead, document camera or SmartBoard).</li><li>4. Assign or choose roles for students.</li><li>5. Students highlight their lines in their scripts (if they're older).</li></ol>
practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Teacher reads the <i>entire</i> play to show how to use expression when reading. Students follow along.</li><li>2. Teacher reads the <i>entire</i> play again but this time the characters read along.</li><li>3. Same characters meet to rehearse lines together, working on expression and possibly gestures.</li><li>4. Each play (usually 3, so all kids are included) meets to rehearse for the big performance.</li></ol>

1. One play at a time performs for the rest of the class.
  - Remind actors that they need to: read loud enough, keep their script down (not in front of their face), and change their voices (expression) to make the play interesting.
  - Remind the audience that they need to: stay seated on their bottoms, pay attention with eyes and ears and clap at the end.
2. At the end of each play debrief with the audience.
  - Using thumbs up, to the side and down: How did the actors do with reading loud enough? Keeping their scripts down? Changing their voices?
  - "What did you like about the play/What did the actors do a good job of?"
  - "Is there anyway they could make the play better?"

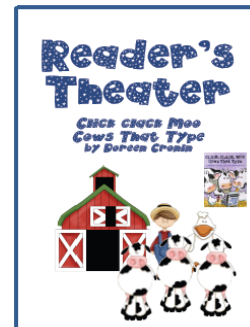
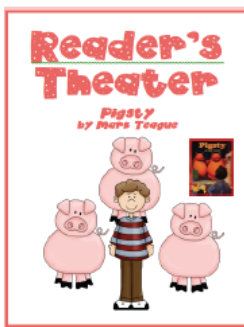
From start to finish this process can take as long as you'd like.

You can split it up over a few days (in the place of Guided Reading, for example) or complete it in an hour. It just depends on your needs, style and time available.

Reader's Theater is so fun and really brings the best out of kids!  
This is also a great thing to invite parents to, so they can watch their kid's reading in action.



Check out these scripts...with more on the way!



I love creating scripts, so if you have a particular book in mind, let me know and I'll create a script for you.