

# Reader's Theater

## Summary

Students will participate in reader's theater to improve their oral reading skills.

## Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Reading: Literature Standard 2](#)

## Additional Core Ties

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Reading: Informational Text Standard 2](#)

English Language Arts Grade 1

[Speaking and Listening Standard 2](#)

## Materials

Craft sticks with each child's name

- *Houses*
- [Houses Reader's Theater script](#)  
(one highlighted copy per student)

## Additional Resources

### Books

- *Australia: A Cultural Resource Guide*  
, by Nancy Klepper; ISBN 1-55863-152-6
- *Houses*  
, by Marcia Fries; ISBN1-57471-140-7
- *I Dreamed I Was a Koala*  
, by Debra A. Johnson; ISBN 1-56239-300-6
- *The One and Only Special Me*  
, by Rozanne Lanczak William; ISBN 1-57471-142-3

## Background for Teachers

Reader's theater can be spelled many ways (reader's theater, readers' theater, readers theater, reader's theatre, readers' theatre, readers theatre), but it offers students an effective tool for connecting literature, oral reading, and drama in the classroom. Students have legitimate reasons to reread text and to practice fluency. Reading tasks are made more appealing and students are also able to interact cooperatively.

Reader's theater is convenient for teachers. Students need only scripts, voices, facial expressions, and bodies. Costumes, make-up, props, stage sets, and memorization are generally not included in reader's theater. Students can use voice level, stress, intonation, pitch, and movement to vary performances.

Students who participate in reader's theater are subtly learning the following: how language is used in written text, how to communicate to an audience, and how to interpret text. Besides encouraging students to have interest in the text, reader's theater performances can easily incorporate any subject matter, such as multiculturalism. Students learn about other people when reading and performing stories from their cultures.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

6. Communicate clearly in oral, artistic, written, and nonverbal form.

## Instructional Procedures

### Invitation to Learn

Ask students to close their eyes and imagine the house where they live. Tell them everyone's house is different. Ask students to think about colors, materials, shape, size, and location. Ask students to think about a word to describe their houses. Give examples as necessary. Then ask students to open their eyes. Pull name sticks and allow each student to give a one-word answer (e.g., brick, stairs, apartment, windows, brown, wood).

### Instructional Procedures

Show the book *Houses* to students. Ask them to look at the front cover. Ask students to think about the illustration and make predictions about the story.

Read the text of the story. Define words as necessary. Allow time for correction and clarification of predictions.

Revisit each page. Discuss the countries named and allow students to comment on the similarities and differences between the houses. Encourage students to share connections about the different countries mentioned. Ask students if they know why houses look different depending on where they are located.

Explain to students that they are going to perform the book *Houses* as a reader's theater. Pass out a highlighted copy of the [Houses Reader's Theater script](#) to each student. Discuss what a script is.

Give students time to look at their script and silently read what they can.

Ask children if they know why the script is highlighted. Explain the concept of parts.

Model an oral reading of the script. Have students follow along. Use another teacher or a proficient reader, if possible. Or physically move back and forth to mimic the different readers.

Read in a regular, even tone so students may easily follow along.

Read the script again. Demonstrate a non-example by holding the script in front of your face so your voice does not project. Read in a monotone voice with no movement. Ask students how they felt about the performance.

Use their suggestions to reread the script. Use voice, tone, volume, expression, and body movements. Ask students how they felt about this performance.

Have students practice reading their scripts individually, with partners, and in small groups.

When students have had sufficient time to practice their parts (this may take more than one day), teach the concept of alternating parts during the performance. Some students may not be able to add expression at this time.

Allow students time to practice their entire performance, emphasizing voice level, stress, intonation, pitch, and movement. Perform the reader's theater!

## Extensions

### Curriculum Extensions/Adaptations/ Integration

### Materials

- *The One and Only Special Me*
- [The One and Only Special Me Reader's Theater script](#)

(one highlighted copy per student)

Assign heterogeneous groups to certain parts in order for stronger readers to lead and model.

Preview the script with ESL or beginning readers.

Research topics represented in the text.

Create art related to the text.

Modify the reading groups. Make the groups smaller or bigger depending on the number of students in your classroom. Instead of alternating two readers, alternate three or four.

Perform the reader's theater as individual readers rather than groups.

Teach students how to adapt a book themselves into a reader's theater.

#### Family Connections

Some families or family members may have lived in the countries or types of houses shown in *Houses*. Invite them to present to the class.

Have students take their scripts home and perform for their families. Maybe their family members could read the different parts.

Invite families to school to watch the reader's theater performance.

#### Assessment Plan

Listen to individual children read their part of the script. Offer help and feedback.

Take a reading record to track growth in fluency. Reading records could be done before, during, and after students have practiced/performed the script.

Have students complete a K-W-L on the content of the reader's theater.

Have students illustrate the story in their journals.

Teach students how to give an oral retelling of the story. Then ask them to use their journals for a written retelling.

#### Bibliography

Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Reading fluency is the ability to read text in a normal speaking voice with appropriate intonation and inflection. Fluency gradually improves with instruction, time, and practice. Oral reading practice is an opportunity for students to build reading fluency.

National Reading Panel. (2000). Fluency report. Retrieved 1/25/2006 from [National Reading Panel](#)

Fluency is the capability to read text out loud with satisfactory accuracy, speed, comprehension, and expression. Fluent readers read with expression and with minimal effort. Students become fluent, and therefore, better readers by reading and rereading passages orally.

#### Authors

[Utah LessonPlans](#)

[Grace Wayman](#)