

# Strengthening Literacy Skills through Readers Theatre

## What is Readers Theatre?

Two or more oral readers interpreting a script for an audience

Scripts may be based upon a variety of genres - such as stories, poems, and diaries

## Why Use Readers Theatre?

- Reading skills are developed in a supportive, cooperative setting.
- The frequent revisiting of text allows children to develop confidence and fluency.
- Numerous opportunities for children to experiment with the rhythm and rhyme of language.
- Emergent readers are supported by the collaborative nature of the task and the frequent modeling.
- Everyone, from kindergarten to high school students, to adults, can participate in and enjoy readers theatre.

A wide-range of literacy skills can be taught through readers theater experiences. These include:

early reading skills      oral interpretation      fluency  
Comprehension      dramatic skills

### Benefits

Supports at risk readers

#### Promotes

Collaborative learning

Confidence and fluency

#### Strengthens literacy strategies

Awareness of rhythm, rhyme and language

Sense of story

Prediction

Comprehension

Phonemic Awareness

#### Models

Reading behaviours

Oral interpretation

#### Builds Personal Repertoire

Stories

Knowledge

Vocabulary



Strategic Teaching - Planning pages Before, During & After Activities to use with Readers Theatre	
Strategies	Activities
(Before / During) Provide & Develop Background Information in Preparation for Reading	
(Before) Preview the Text	
(Before / During) Set Purpose for Reading	
(Before, During, After) Ask Questions & Make Predictions	
(Before, During, After) Visualizing	
(During, After) Monitoring Understanding	
(Before, During, After) Recall Analyze Organize Summarize Information	

## What a child should do / know at age 4/5

Families and communities checklist

### Reading

*Your child...*

- Understands that print goes from left to right.
- Knows the letters and sounds of the alphabet.
- Knows simple words like *the, and, it,* and *is*.
- Starts to read signs, food packages, and other everyday items.
- Likes being read to and has favorite books and stories.

### Writing

*Your child...*

- Uses scribbling, pictures, and some letters and words to tell a story.
- Writes his or her own name and a few simple words.
- Tries to use letters and sounds he or she knows to start writing things such as lists and invitations.

What  
GOOD READERS Do

Before Reading

Build up their background knowledge on the subject

Know their purpose for reading

Focus their complete attention on reading

During Reading

Give their complete attention to the reading task.

Keep a constant check on understanding

Monitor their reading comprehension and do it so often, it

becomes automatic

*Stop to use a fix-up strategy when they do not understand*

After Reading

Decide if they have achieved

What  
POOR READERS Do

Before Reading

Start reading without thinking about the subject  
Do not know why they are reading

During Reading

Do not know whether they understand or do not understand

Do not monitor their own comprehension

Seldom use any of the fix-up strategies

After Reading

Do not know what they have read

Do not follow reading with comprehension self-check

*Begin with a Pattern*

## Summer's Done

by Marilyn Smith

ALL

Reader 1

One, 1,  
summer's done.

ALL

Reader 4

2, two,  
What shall we do?

ALL

Reader 3

Three, 3,  
jump in the leaves.

ALL

Reader 2

4, four,  
pile on some more.

ALL

Reader 3

Five, 5,  
let's take a dive!

## Counting Patterns

<p><b>PATTERN 1</b> (repetitive counting, couplet rhyme)</p> <p>One, one</p> <p>Two, two</p> <p>Three, three</p> <p>Four, four</p> <p>Five, Five</p> <p>Six, six</p> <p>Seven, seven</p> <p>Eight, eight</p> <p>Nine, nine</p> <p>Ten, ten</p> <p>Pattern 1 - Sample Scripts:  <i>School's Begun</i>, pg. 17 – Invitation to Readers Theatre, Celebrating Holidays and other special events ... Raczuk &amp; Smith, 1998</p>	<p><b>PATTERN 2</b>          (Counting up, mixed numbers, couplets...          Reference: 1, 2, Buckle My Shoe)</p> <p>1, Two,</p> <p>3, Four</p> <p>5, six</p> <p>Seven, 8</p> <p>9, Ten</p> <p>Pattern 2 - Sample Scripts:  <i>Countdown to Christmas</i>, page 29, Invitation to Readers Theatre, Celebrating Holidays and special ... 1998 (Raczuk &amp; Smith)  <i>One, Two, Who Are You?</i> page 130, Readers Theatre for Young Children, (Braun &amp; Braun)</p>
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The absence of strong oral language, reading, and word play in the home can lead to reading difficulties and a failure to progress in reading development

.... Hammill, McNutt, 1980  
 ... Scarborough 1986



*Scripted for  
3 voices*

## Greedy Sam

Author unknown  
Scripted by H. K. Raczuk

Reader 3 Sammy Smith would drink and eat  
from morning unto night;  
Reader 1 He filled his mouth so full of meat  
Reader 2 it was a shameful sight.  
Reader 1 Sometimes he gave a book  
Reader 3 or toy  
Reader 2 for apples, cake, or plum;  
Reader 1 and grudged if any other boy  
should taste a single crumb.  
Reader 2 Indeed, he ate and drank so fast,  
Reader 3 and used to stuff and cram,  
Reader 1 the name they called him by at last  
Reader 2 was often  
ALL Greedy Sam.

Scripted  
for 4 voices

## Peter Piper

Traditional Mother Goose  
Rhyme

*Scripted by Helen Raczuk*

Reader 2 Peter Piper picked  
Reader 1 A peck of pickled peppers;  
Reader 3 A peck of  
Reader 1 pickled peppers  
Reader 2 Peter Piper picked;  
Reader 3 If Peter Piper  
Reader 4 picked a peck  
Reader 1 of pickled peppers,  
Reader 3 Where's the peck  
Reader 4 of pickled peppers  
Reader 2 Peter Piper  
Reader 4 picked?

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## What a child should know / do in grade three

### Reading

*Your child...*

Reads many kinds of children's books.

Reads for fun, information, and understanding.

Uses different ways of reading--sounding out words, getting information from the story, and personal knowledge--to understand stories and learn new words.

Understands the themes or main ideas in what he or she reads.

### Writing

*Your child...*

Puts together thoughts and information for writing.

Uses correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure in final work.

Includes main ideas, background details, and words that describe in written work.

Corrects and rewrites work as necessary.



Scripted for  
2 Narrators  
2 Readers

## Belling the Cat

(Reprinted from Fabulous Aesop, by H. Raczuk)

*Aesop*

Scripted by H. K. Raczuk

Narrator 1 Long ago, the mice held a general council to consider what  
measures they could take to outwit their common enemy,  
ALL the c-a-t.  
Narrator 2 Some said this  
Narrator 1 and some said that;  
Narrator 2 but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal  
to make, which he thought would solve the problem.  
Reader 1 "You will all agree,"  
Narrator 2 said he,  
Reader 1 "that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous  
manner in which the enemy approaches us."  
ALL "Definitely. Yes, indeed. Absolutely."  
Narrator 2 squeaked the mice in agreement.  
Reader 1 "Now, if we had an advance warning of her approach, a signal  
of some kind, we would have time to escape from her."  
ALL "A signal! Yes, yes! Absolutely ingenious!"  
Reader 1 "I venture, therefore, to propose that a small bell be procured,  
and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the c-a-t. By this  
means we should always know when she was about, and keep  
ourselves out of harms way."  
Narrator 1 This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse  
got up and said,  
Reader 2 "That is all very well, but who is to bell the cat?"  
ALL The mice looked at one another and no one spoke.  
Narrator 2 Then the old mouse said,  
Reader 2 "*It is easy to propose impossible remedies.*"

## My Otter Notes

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