

How and Why Tales

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Welcome to this Reader's Theatre Theme Collection. Each collection in this series offers thematically linked Reader's Theatre scripts that build fluency, comprehension and content knowledge based on common curricula. This type of Reader's Theatre is unique in offering multi-levelled scripts that allow students at different reading levels to collaborate to build reading skills.

The Research Behind Reader's Theatre

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and with appropriate expression and phrasing. Fluency is important because it is directly related to comprehension. Research has shown that fluency develops gradually over considerable time and through substantial practice. Students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and feedback become better readers. Studies have shown that reader's theatre can effectively enhance reading fluency and, subsequently, comprehension.

How to Implement Reader's Theatre

The Reader's Theatre Theme Collections make it easy to use reader's theatre in your classroom. Each script comes with the following teacher support:

- Literacy and content-area objectives
- A script summary
- A list of characters by level to help you assign the right roles to each student
- Background information to help you relate the script to content-area concepts and/or literary genres
- Staging and performance suggestions
- Literacy extensions including research, role-play and writing activities
- Content connections
- Character education connections

Using a 5-Day Approach to Reader's Theatre

To make the most of your reader's theatre experience, try a 5-day approach, providing opportunities for students to become familiar with the text, and read it multiple times to build fluency and comprehension. A suggested pacing plan is provided on the next page.

Five-Day Lesson Plan for Using Reader's Theatre

Day	Focus	What to Do
1	Introduce the Script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give each student a copy of the script. • Have students skim through the text looking at the organisation and the illustrations. • Share the background information provided, as needed, to prepare students to read.
	Introduce Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the words and definitions in the glossary for the script, and ask students to use the words in sentences.
	Model Fluent Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to listen and follow along with you as you read the script aloud to model fluency and expression.
2	Build Fluency: Echo-Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the script aloud, and ask students to echo-read, or repeat, the lines after you. Stop when necessary to explain vocabulary. • Call attention to the different types of punctuation marks and model how to read them.
	Build Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students understand the ideas in the story, as well as character development, by involving them in a discussion. For example: <i>How would you describe the characters?</i> <i>What was the play mostly about?</i> <i>How did the characters change?</i> <i>What happened when ... ?</i>
	Build Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure students fully understand the glossary terms.
3	Assign Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the reading levels provided for each script to help you assign roles that support or challenge each student appropriately.
	Choral-Read for Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve students in a choral-reading of the script to reinforce fluency. Remind students to use dramatic expression to bring each character's mood or personality to life.
	Rehearse the Script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use small-group time for students to rehearse their script. Monitor students as they rehearse, and offer suggestions for expression, voice and characterisation.
4	Rehearse the Script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use small-group time for student rehearsal. Do not interrupt this second rehearsal, but simply observe students as they read. • Use the assessment rubric on page 72 to monitor students' rehearsal behaviour and reading fluency.
5	Staging and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on a stage area, how students will be positioned, and whether props or movements will be added. See Staging and Performance Suggestions provided for each script.
	Perform the Script	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite students to present the script to an audience of other class members, students from other classes, school staff members and/or parents. • Use the assessment rubric on page 72 to monitor students' rehearsal behaviour and reading fluency.

Assessing Student Progress

The Reader's Theatre Assessment Rubric on page 72 helps you evaluate student progress in all areas of fluency. Included on the rubric is a rating scale for assessing:

- Phrasing and Fluency
- Intonation
- Listening
- Pace
- Accuracy
- Characterisation
- Behaviour

Literacy, Content and Character Education Connections

Each story has script-specific literacy and content extension activities based on the script. Select the activities that will benefit your students the most.

Most scripts also have a character education connection. Some of the core concepts and ethical values addressed within the scripts are listed here:

- **Trustworthiness:** integrity, honesty, reliability, loyalty
- **Respect:** tolerance, acceptance, non-violence, courtesy
- **Responsibility:** accountability, perseverance, self-control, does the right thing
- **Fairness:** open-minded, just, shares, plays by the rules
- **Caring:** kind, considerate, compassionate, helpful, charitable, expresses gratitude
- **Citizenship:** involved in school and community affairs, volunteers, cooperates, respects authority, protects the environment

Why the Moon Changes in the Night Sky

Summary

In this myth-play, the sun shines during the day, but there is no moon at night. Princess Jasmine is unhappy because she can't see her garden in the darkness. King Goodwin asks the Astronomer to solve the problem. When he fails, John the Gardener suggests that the princess ask the Apple Tree to produce a shining, golden apple to light up the night. She does, and she is happy for a short time. Then John discovers that each night the golden apple gets a bit smaller because three animals are eating it. So John throws the shining apple into the sky where it orbits Earth. This shining apple continues to wax and wane (change its size) each month. But the princess isn't unhappy because she loves John and he loves her. They marry and garden happily ever after.



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Characters	Reading Levels
Bat	F
Squirrel	F
Apple Tree	G
Beetle	G
Astronomer	H
Princess Jasmine	I
King Goodwin	K
John Blossom	L
Narrator	M

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