

# **Hoopoe Books Reader's Theater**

*Giving Students a Reason to Read, and Re-Read, Aloud*

## **OVERVIEW:**

- ❖ The reader's theater strategy combines students' desire to perform with their need for oral reading practice. Reader's theater offers an entertaining and engaging means of improving fluency through repetition, reading with expression, and enhancing comprehension.
- ❖ Reader's theater is a way to involve students in reading aloud. In reader's theater, students "perform" by reading the Hoopoe books' scripts created for this purpose. Students can perform the scripts with or without costumes or props.

## **RATIONALE:**

- ❖ Reader's theater is a strategy that combines reading (and re-reading) practice and performing. Its goal is to enhance students' reading skills and confidence by having them practice reading with a purpose. Reader's theater gives students an authentic reason to read aloud.

## **OUTCOMES:**

- ❖ **Re-Reading to Develop Fluency:**  
Reader's theater motivates reluctant readers and English language learners, and provides fluent readers the opportunity to explore genre and characterization. Hoopoe Books Reader's Theater scripts can be used as early as first-grade. Re-reading is a key factor in developing fluency, which is necessary for comprehension. Students don't even realize they are re-reading as they practice the script.
- ❖ **Re-Reading to Develop Understanding:**  
The value of reader's theater is increased when used as a strategy for increasing understanding of what is being read. Students also practice reading with expression when they take on the roles in the script.
- ❖ **Re-Reading to Develop Voice:**  
Reader's theater is a wonderful technique for helping readers learn to read aloud with expression and joy. Performing reader's theater without props allows the readers to learn that the inflection in their voices needs to provide much of the drama of the story.

## **TESTIMONIAL:**

- ❖ *"I love watching my English language learners gain more fluency and confidence as they perform the Hoopoe Books Reader's Theaters,"* says educator and I Have a Dream volunteer, Leanne Lockhart. *"They love hamming it up and making costumes and scenery too."*

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Some students are hams — they just don't know it until they get up in front of the group. There is no risk in reader's theater, because no memorization is required. And, there's opportunity for practice, so struggling readers are not put on the spot.

- ❖ Hand out a photocopied Hoopoe script
- ❖ Assign a part to each child
- ❖ Have her simply read the script aloud and act it out. That's all you have to do.

“Magic” occurs when the students get to be on stage — even if that stage is the floor of the classroom or library. Shy children may blossom, and students develop a strong sense of community.

## **TIPS:**

- ❖ Start slowly so students feel comfortable in the performance mode. Students do not memorize their parts; they always read from their scripts. Provide lots of opportunities for practice.
- ❖ Read the book several times, offering instructional support for new vocabulary, and for understanding the different characters. You can do many other activities with the story to develop understanding before doing the reader's theater. *\*A complete set of lesson plans can be found on Hoopoe's website.*
- ❖ Students simply stand or sit in a semicircle or on a stage, if one is available.
- ❖ Model each character's part and match roles to readers.
- ❖ If you have a larger group than the number of roles, you may have several readers' theater groups going simultaneously.
- ❖ Work with small groups, not with the entire class, if possible.
- ❖ You might invite families or caregivers to a presentation, or invite another class to the reader's theater enactment.
- ❖ You might also video the performance or do a radio podcast.

***~May Hoopoe Reader's Theater enliven your classroom and your students' lives, as well as cement learning that lasts.***