

Reader's Theater

What is Readers Theater?

Readers Theater is a dramatic presentation of a written work in a script form and is very effective when you use a simple story that involves repetition or a predictable pattern. Readers read from a "script" and reading parts are divided among the readers. No memorization, costumes, blocking, or special lighting is needed.

How much work is it to plan a Reader's Theater Lesson?

Presentations can easily be done in a classroom without much preparation ahead of time because scripts are held by the readers and lines are not memorized. The focus is on reading the text with expressive voices and gestures, which makes comprehending the text meaningful and fun for the student.

How can I get all of my students involved?

You will need to move chairs around and organize the students in order to help control the flow. Everyone can be in charge of a sentence strip or a single character and you can use very minimal props. You can also have the members of the class who are not playing a particular role serve as the chorus to say a repeating part on cue. Having students help think of the simple actions each character can make and very simple ideas for costumes and props (even a yellow scarf for a canary, etc.) deepens their comprehension greatly.

OBJECTIVES COVERED IN THE LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES LANGUAGE ARTS AND READING

2. The student will apply strategies and skills to comprehend, respond to, interpret, or evaluate a variety of texts of increasing length, difficulty, and complexity.

d. The student will analyze, interpret, compare, or respond to increasingly complex literary text, literary nonfiction, and informational text, citing text-based evidence.

(DOK 3)

1) Interpret text through moving, drawing, speaking, acting, or singing.

Resources: Readers Theatre Scripts and Plays
<http://www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm>

DREAMS

Langston Hughes/Martin Luther King

Dreams Deferred: What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly

Bring me all your dreams you dreamers
Bring me all your Heart melodies

MLK: I have a Dream...that all men are created equal

LH: What happens to a dream deferred?

MLK: I have a Dream...that we will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

LH: Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

MLK: I have a Dream...that children will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

LH: Hold Fast to Dreams, For if Dreams die

MLK: I have a Dream...that we will join hands and walk together as sisters and brothers.

LH: Life is a Broken-winged bird that cannot fly.

MLK: I have a Dream...the rough places will be made plain, the crooked made straight.

LH: Bring me all your dreams and your dreamers.

MLK: Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado
Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California
Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia
Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee
Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi.

LH: Bring me all your Heart melodies

MLK: When we let freedom ring...we will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last!! Free at Last!! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!!"

THE MIGRATION

Letter from Mississippians (1916-1918)

Reader's Theatre

Marcel, MS 1917: Dear Sir: Although I am a stranger to you, but I am a man of the so called colored race and can give you the very best reference as to my character and ability by prominent citizens of my community by both white and colored people....

Brookhaven, MS 1917: (Chicago Urban League) – Sirs I am reading in the defender that there are good opening for Men in small towns near Chicago and would like to know if they are seeking laborers...I am a man of family, don't think that I am picking my Job as any position in any kind of shop.

Granville, MS 1917: I want to come north some time soon but I do not want o leave here looking for a job where it would be in doors all winter. I know all about the grading of lumber. I have been working 25-27 years. My wages are \$3.00 a day and there are women cooking for \$1.50-2 a week...

Pelahatchee, MS: I want a good paying job that I may be able to educate my children.

Starkville, MS: I am a man of 40 years and a barber of 20 years experience. I have a wife and seven children and I would like for my children to have the advantage of good schools and churches...

Brookhaven: Gents: There is a great many race people around here who desire to come North, but have waited rather late to avoid car fare – if the railroad company would run a low rate excursion they would leave that way. Please answer.

Collins: Please sir, will you please send me transportation for me and my wife. I am willing to work anywhere you put me. Please answer soon.

From The Great Migration and The Harlem Renaissance Interactive/Interdisciplinary Thematic Unit Teacher Guide and Materials by Althea Jerome and Kathryn Lewis, Teaching Artists

For more information, contact

For reservations or additional resources, contact