



Internet

Get Into the Act

Reader's Theater is a wonderful opportunity for students to become actively involved in literature. Many great works lend themselves to dramatization. If the script is based on a book, students will be motivated to read that book. Reader's Theater is simpler and easier than a full-scale stage production. Memorization of scripts is not required; students hold scripts during the performance and read their lines. Costumes and stage sets are not used. Actors do not move about on a stage; it is the narration that provides the dramatic action. This lesson will give students the opportunity to research Reader's Theater on the Internet and work cooperatively in a group to put on a Reader's Theater production. Students will select a script, interpret the roles, develop oral reading skills, perform a play for the class, and offer their personal responses to the performances of others.

Learning Goals

- Research on the Internet in order to determine the main ideas of Reader's Theater and find the answers to questions.
- Read literature and discriminate among various choices to select scripts to interpret and perform.
- Work effectively in groups in order to plan and perform a Reader's Theater production.
- Develop dramatic oral reading skills in order to portray characters who interact with others in scenes.
- Express and compare personal responses to a Reader's Theater presentation.

Warm-Up

1. Ascertain by a show of hands how many students have seen a play production.
2. Lead students in a discussion of the elements of a play, including costuming, stage sets, scripting, actors, and directors.
3. Ask students what they feel is most important in the success of a play. Elicit from them that without a good script and good acting, a play is bound to be disappointing.
4. Introduce the term Reader's Theater, and ask students to share any experiences they have in putting on a play in this form.
5. Discuss the basic traits of a Reader's Theater production.
 - Scripts are read, not memorized.
 - There are no elaborate costumes or sets.
 - Narration provides the dramatic action.
 - Stress the importance of oral speaking skills in the interpretation and dramatization of a role.

Web Work

- Invite students to learn more about the basics of a Reader's Theater production.

- Have students access the following Web site.
Aaron Shepard's Reader's Theatre Page
URL: <http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt/>
- Ask students to turn to the Reader's On Stagesection, an online guide to scripting, staging, and performance.
- When students are finished reading on the Internet, use the following questions as discussion starters:
 - What are some of the basic styles in the staging of a Reader's Theater production?
 - What are the two basic types of roles? Describe some of the different ways these roles can be used to accommodate a particular story.
 - What are some techniques you can use to prepare and rehearse for a Reader's Theater performance?
- Students should now be ready to begin a Reader's Theater production. Have students work in groups to plan and present their productions.
 - Students may choose scripts from the Reader's Theatre Editions page from the Aaron Shepard's Reader's Theatre Page listed above. This site has scripts for students that can be downloaded and printed.
 - The following Web site has additional scripts and a Teacher's Guide that provides teaching techniques for organizing Reader's Theater productions in your classroom:

Lois Walker's Take Part Read-Aloud

URL: <http://www.loiswalker.com/catalog/>

- After the group has selected a script, members need to choose the roles they will perform in their production. One student can serve as the director.

Wrap-Up

1. Allow groups time to rehearse their Reader's Theater productions. Provide assistance where needed.
2. Set aside a special day for group performances.
3. Allow groups to offer their personal responses to each other's productions.
4. Arrange to have a Reader's Theater presentation for a younger audience.
 - You may want to invite an elementary school class to the production.
 - Students may also enjoy putting on a performance for younger siblings.