

# Stratograms

A Publication of the Belton #124 School District  
Special Services Department



## Readers Theatre Creates Interest in Reading

Readers Theatre is a strategy to help students develop an interest in reading. The focus is on reading. It helps improve students reading skills by giving them a reason for reading practice and it also helps improve their understanding of what is being read. At least two readers read aloud and use their voices, facial expressions and gestures to interpret a story. It is meant to be non-threatening because the readers have a script and they get to practice repeatedly before performing. In addition to being non-threatening, Readers Theatre also helps improve oral language skills from the repeated reading aloud, and it helps improve the reader's confidence, self-esteem and reading fluency.

Choose scripts that:

- are fun
- are interesting to the readers and listeners
- are easily read
- contain lively dialogue
- are age, grade and reading level appropriate for the readers and listeners



How to use the Strategy:

Day 1

Copy scripts and give each student a copy.

Read the title and author and talk about the background that is related to the story.

Encourage the students to make predictions about the story and talk about the characters, the plot, the setting, etc.

Read the script aloud to the students as they follow along.

Ask for comments: How did you like the story? Revise any prediction. Ask the students to make connections to the text based on their own experience.

Make a list of vocabulary words from the script with the students help. Refer to the list daily and focus on the meaning and pronunciation of those words.



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## Day 2

Divide the students into pairs. Students should take turns reading every other entry in the script. While students are reading the script, the teacher should walk around and offer assistance in correctly pronouncing words and reading with feeling and emotions and reading at an appropriate rate and volume.

## Day 3

Continue reading in pairs and the teacher circulating and modeling as needed. This should be done until the entire script has been read by all students. Have other reading give positive feedback to their classmates.

## Day 4

Once the students are familiar with the script, they can begin working in groups of three or four with each student reading an assigned role. Conduct a rehearsal, reminding the students of the expectations.

## Day 5

Perform the Readers Theatre for classmates, or for other classes, or for administrators, or other guests. A student can read more than one part if there are several smaller parts. Everyone should have an equal chance to read as much of the text as possible. This is to ensure that students with smaller parts do not see themselves as poorer readers and lose interest or enthusiasm.

The following is a Readers Theatre Presentation Rubric that can be used to help students see their particular strengths and weaknesses.

This particular strategy can be linked with the Depth of Knowledge Chart (DOK) in the following ways:

DOK 1: The student tells about the character(s), plot and setting of the script.

DOK 2: The student uses the context to help identify the meaning of any new vocabulary words.

DOK 3: The student uses his/her voice appropriately to the purpose of the script and the audience.

## References

Carrick, Lila. **Internet Resources for Conducting Readers Theatre.** Retrieved July 24, 2008, from <http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/carrick>

NWT Literacy Council. **How To Kit Readers Theatre.** Retrieved July 14, 2008, from <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/amlit/howtokit/theatre/theatre.pdf>

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