

Readers Theatre



National Share-a-Story-Month 2026

Readers Theatre converts an extract from a novel into a play script. Children are each given 'parts' to read from the script. They do not need to learn the words but they will read and reread to practise phrasing, intonation and rhythm. This approach is often used in classrooms because research suggests that it can be an effective way to improve reading fluency. It also helps to build enjoyment and confidence in reading and can be used successfully outside the classroom too. As children bring their roles to life, they will naturally become immersed in the story.

Ten top tips for conducting a successful Readers Theatre

1. Choose a passage that the children are familiar with, one worth spending time on.
2. Prepare a script in advance, highlighting the different roles in a different colour. Decide who will be reading what and who will be the narrator (this might be you). Everything not in speech marks is narration, including phrases like 'she said'.
3. Practise reading the script aloud yourself in advance.
4. When you introduce the activity, read the passage aloud to the children. Your reading will model phrasing, expression, dynamics and intonation.
5. Give the 'performers' a chance to read the script to themselves when you hand it out. Remind them that they do not need to learn the words by heart.
6. Make space for discussion by asking open-ended questions. How does the passage make them feel? What are the characters like? How might they speak?
7. Give each of the readers the role you have decided on earlier.
8. Read the script together at least twice. The first time the children will be practising fluency and getting to know their character. The second time they can hone their performance. Don't overdo the re-reading. Aim for engagement in the story rather than perfection.
9. You could add sound effects and props and invite an audience to listen. But you don't need to do either. The dramatic reading is primarily for the enjoyment of the participants.
10. Get creative and have fun! Model enjoyment through your own enthusiasm.