

## *Get into the ACT! Reader's Theatre--An immersive and interactive story experience!*

*"Too often, children read a story and only understand it at its most superficial literal level. With Reader's Theater, they're not just reading a story; they're living it." –Judy Freeman, Literature Consultant*

So what is Reader's Theatre?

In Reader's Theater, students "perform" by reading scripts created from grade-level books or stories -- generally without benefit of costumes and props. The goal is to enhance reading skill and confidence through practice with a purpose.

The wonderful thing about Readers Theatre is whether you're a creator on a school visit or a teacher in a classroom, your students can have an immersive, interactive and FUN story experience by creating a Readers Theatre.

### **How?**

- Picture Books make for a **perfect theatrical experience**. Stories have characters, dialogue and setting.
- And to me the **strongest benefit of Readers Theatre** is how it may enhance a student's level of comprehension. **Reader's Theatre appeals to different learning styles—visual, auditory and kinesthetic**. This applies, especially, to students who have difficulty sitting still or focusing. Students get to **act** the characters in the story. That process includes movement and acting the emotions of the characters.

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- In the end, Readers Theatre may offer a deeper and lasting effect in understanding the story.

### **Everyone can participate:**

- Writers: Students can write the play by using the story and dialogue for inspiration.
- No memorization of lines is required. Along with casting the lead roles, one can also have a Greek chorus, so that all the students have speaking roles.
- Sound effects: students can create sounds like wind/rain, animal sounds, planes/trains, clapping/knocking or footsteps.
- Not needed, but one could create simple costumes: handheld masks or props.
- Make a movie by filming it using any smart device. It's fun for students to see their production.

Master teacher Susan Finney shares these characteristics of "Reader's Theater" activities:

- Students do not memorize their parts; they always read from their scripts.
- A stage is unnecessary, student simply stand or sit in a semicircle.
- The script is treated like a new story, in that instructional support may be needed for new vocabulary and understanding of characters.
- Give the readers opportunities for practice.

Suggested Readings:

Creative Drama in the Classroom by Nellie McCaslin

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Jackie Azúa Kramer earned her Masters of Education from Queens College. She is a member of SCBWI and has written for the SCBWI Bulletin. In 2014, she was invited to be a member of the Bank Street Writers Lab, Bank Street College. In 2015 Jackie was a presenter at the 1st nErDCamp Long Island. Her picture book, *The Green Umbrella* (North South Books) debuts February 2017 in English/German. Out soon --*The Boy and the Eight Hundred Pound Gorilla* (Candlewick Press, TBD) and *If You Want to Fall Asleep* (Clavis Books, Spring 2018) in English/Dutch. Visit her at [jackieazuakramer.com](http://jackieazuakramer.com) Twitter @jackiekramer422 and Instagram jackieazuakramer.