

## Playbooks® Reader's Theater Training Outline

### *(Site Staff Training Set-up)*

- Arrange your workshop tables and chairs in a way similar to circle reading time with 6 chairs to a table (minimum 5). Separate the tables from each other as much as possible because groups will be reading and acting and it can get loud and be distracting for groups if they are too close to each other. Set up the chairs on one side of each table facing away from the tables so that all participants are facing you, the Trainer. Then when it's time to work in small groups, those participants simply need to turn their chairs around to face the other 3 people in their group.
- Place one set of the Playbooks® (6 books), costumes, games, etc. in the middle of each table with a large note on them: "Please don't open yet."
- Place one **Student Information Sheet** and one **Recommended Reader Assignment Chart** for the appropriate story designed for that table at each participant's spot so that everybody will have one. Make sure every participant has a pencil with an eraser.

### **Introduction**

- How many are familiar with Reader's Theater? (show of hands)
- Explain that reader's theater is reading like a play without memorization, props, or a stage. Students read aloud in small groups with each student assigned a character role and together they bring the story to life.
- Discuss the advantages of using the Arts in after school programs— after reading all day and working silently, students want fun after school to stay engaged. Reluctant readers will love it (see attached sheet and read highlighted parts about the benefits of using the Arts in after school programs).
- We have purchased for your program the most enhanced format of reader's theater available. Playbooks® Reader's Theater sets are the only materials available with multi-leveled roles and color-coded text that come in all-inclusive sets that you don't have to prepare, sort roles and copy for each reader.

### **In this workshop today, we are first going to....**

1. Watch a Playbooks® DVD that has 2 parts, 1 for you as implementers, (<http://www.playbooks.com/ClassroomImplementationVideo.shtml>) and 1 for you to play for your students <http://playbooks.com/ClassroomImplementationVideoForStudents.shtml> (we're going to watch both parts). This DVD will explain the materials and implementation. (One DVD is included in all Grade Level Kits and can also be watched on the website at the links above).
  - a. Then we will review the story kits and how to assign roles and how to get started using materials in your programs.
2. Then we will break up into small reading groups, just like what you'll do with your students. Each of you will have one or more character roles in the story and you'll read your parts with expression and enthusiasm! **You're going to have fun!**
3. Then we'll have a Question and Answer period

So, let's get started!

## 1. Play DVD, part 1 and then part 2

## 2. Grade Level Kit Review and Role Assignments

*(Open a grade level kit and explain)* The first thing to do with your kits is remove the Teacher Guide, Recommended Reader Assignment Charts, supplements, and Award Charts and one copy of a story from the story packs.

**Next, you will be “Assigning Roles”** *(Note to Trainer: explain the two forms and how to gather student information and assign roles using the following outline **before** you instruct your groups to actually do it. Once you actually ask your groups to begin assigning the roles for the story placed on their table, they become engaged and are no longer listening to you. Trying to get their attention again is difficult once they open the books and start filling out the forms with real information.)*

### **Using the Student Information Sheet**

First, write down on the **Student Information Sheet** the names of all your students and what you already know about them, for example: age, grade, any notes on personality, etc.

Then at your first opportunity, play the DVD for all the students as a group. Tell them you will be reading a reader's theater Playbook® story soon, so it's important that they watch the video. Directly after watching the video, ask your students in a large group with “raise your hands” format,

Who likes to act?

Who likes to read out loud?

Who likes to be a star with a big role that has a lot of lines?

Who likes to be a supporting actor/actress with a smaller role?

Who likes to over-act and be really funny?

*(Do this slowly so you can record what you learn about each student that raises his or her hand for these questions on your Student Information Sheet) **Because you probably do not know each student's reading ability level, the answers to these questions, along with a student's age and grade, will help you designate student role assignments.***

To fill out the Role Level column of this form, determine a Role Level for each student based on their age, grade, gender, and their desires to act, read and assume large or small roles. For example, if your oldest student likes to read out loud, designate them as a H (High) role level. If an older student wants a small role and does not raise his or her hand, designate them an M (Medium) or L (Low) role level. Assign younger children a L(Low) role level until they have shown reading proficiency even if they indicate they like to act or want large roles. Often the main character's role is lower level so students who love acting will still be happy with lower level roles. Completing this chart for all your students becomes easy as you go along using your own practical judgment.

## Completing the Recommended Reader Assignment Chart for a Story (Story Character role assignments)

- **First, remember that “role size” verses “role difficulty” are two different things.** A small role can have high-level text and be better suited for an advanced or older reader and vice versa. So be sure to keep this in mind as you assign character roles for each story.
- Next you will use the information on **Student Information Sheet** and the Role Size and Difficulty information found on your Playbook® **Recommended Reader Assignment Chart** to assign roles. You will write in the student names on the Chart using a pencil so you can erase and change your mind, and change groupings later. This chart accommodates up to 5 separate integrated groups of students.
- Consider that many times the star role is the easiest role, which gives a struggling or younger student the opportunity to shine. You will know which characters are the main characters once you become familiar with the stories. Consider assigning girl character roles to girls and boy character roles to boys, however, you can switch this up as often as you want. Kids love to play opposite gender roles.
- Consider giving the main character role, the “starring role,” to your troublemakers and spreading them out into separate groups. This gives them the spotlight from the beginning which tends to eliminate their need for acting out to gain attention from their peers.
- You’ll begin by looking at those that like to act, be funny, or are troublemakers, and assign these students “main character roles” matching readability as best you can. If your story characters are Stage 1, 2, and 3, then match these with Low, Medium and High readers. You’ll write in the students’ names from left to right on the chart. Remember, star roles are not necessarily the largest roles. In many cases they are the easy or medium roles. You can also consider assigning star roles to shy students (to bring them out of their shells) if the role is a small-sized star role.
- Next you will assign your narrators based on those that like to read aloud and those that like big roles, again being sure to match as best you can the readability level of a character to what you assigned to your readers (H/M/L).
- Then you will assign all the remaining easy and small roles to your “L” level readers by filling in their names across (left to right). Lastly, you’ll assign your “M” level readers to the medium roles. You will continue doing this till all your students are assigned a role.
- Now, you’ll go back and look at your groups on the chart from top to bottom (Group 1, 2, etc.) and consider which students would work together best to make a balanced and productive group. Try to group kids that go well together personality wise (try not to mix oil and water). Spread out your extroverts and introverts ... try to avoid grouping them together. Erase names and switch their box space from left to right to get your 5 best reading groups that are shown from top to bottom.
- Keep this completed **Recommended Reader Assignment Chart** for ongoing group rotation purposes for each particular story. Always use a new one for each different story. Two copies of the Recommended Reader Assignment charts are included with each kit, so be sure to copy the second one before completing it for the next story. These can also be found on the internet and printed directly. The web address is on the bottom of the sheets.

### **Review Teacher Guide Highlights**

Be sure you review the Teacher's Guide that comes in your story kit on your own. The teacher guide is the same for each kit and is at the beginning of the pamphlet that includes the Recommended Reader Assignment Charts (*in Grade Level Kits*). It provides helpful information on implementation including performance coaching techniques and suggestions for explaining proper student manners for read-alouds.

### **Supplemental Activity Workbooks**

Each story includes 6 student copies of the Supplemental Activity Workbook along with a copy master for the instructor. These workbooks can also be printed from the Internet. These activities can be given out any time and groups that have read the story can do activity worksheets while other student groups read the story. So you can rotate your groups through different stories and worksheets so that each group is working with a portion of the Reader's Theater program.

### **Performance Award Certificates**

20 Performance Award Certificates are included in each grade level kit. Use these often to recognize students that put extra effort into portraying their character. You can print additional copies off the Internet.

Consider putting on a performance of the student's favorite stories with chosen best performers for parents or other classes. It's up to you if you wish to elaborate the performance with sets, backdrops or costumes. However, reader's theater is still fun to watch without all the fuss because students bring the story to life with their voices and personalities and others enjoy watching them.

### **3. We are now going to break up into small groups, assign roles and read some Playbook® stories.**

*(Consider using.... Ick! I'm Sick!, Mini, the Super Watermelon and The Great Rhyme Travel Machine. These are good stories for workshops and it's usually more fun to have each group reading a different story.)*

- I'm going to assign one leader per group who will take on the role assignment task for the story on your table. This leader needs to gather information about the other people in the group using the **Student Information Sheet** and then assign the roles based on what we discussed and using the **Recommended Reader Assignment Chart**. Now, leaders, pretend that the others in your group are students. Don't let your "students" request specific roles. It's up to you to assign the roles based on what you learned from the information sheet, and your best judgment. In the real situation when you go back to your programs and your real students, it's important that the groups be integrated and balanced and that the roles be assigned based on the student information you gather and not on what students "think" they want.
- Children have a higher listening comprehension than reading comprehension (as many as two or three grade levels higher). This means they can comprehend written material being read to them that is higher than what they can read on their own because they hear it being read "in context" and with projected meaning. This is how they grow in their own fluency and comprehension. So, again, it's important to integrate older and more advanced students with younger or struggling students and to assign the roles to match their reading levels.

- **Groups:** You may need to assign multiple roles or split roles if your number of readers does not match the “recommended number of readers” on your chart.
  - **If you have too few readers,** give more than one role to one or two of the readers.
    - Avoid combining characters that talk directly to each other in the story and assigning them to the same reader.
    - Also, try to combine characters that are written at the same level
  - **If you have too many readers,** split narration among 2 or 3 readers. There are three easy ways to split narration:
    - Narrators alternate by paragraph
    - Narrators alternate by chapter or scene
    - Narrators sandwich dialogue. For example, Narrator 1 reads the paragraph before and after a section of dialogue to both open and close the dialogue chunk. Narrator 2 does the same and they alternate.
  
- After students have read the story the first time, it is best NOT to give them a different role the next time they read the same story. Because “Repeated Guided Oral Reading” is the key to improving reading fluency, repeating the same role and reading the same text is important. Students should read the same text as many as 4 times before switching roles or starting a new story with a new role. Students usually want to read the same role again to improve their performance each time. Reader’s Theater gives students a legitimate reason and an automatic desire to repeat the same text again and again.
  
- AFTER the leader has assigned the roles, he or she will open the package and pass out the books, costumes, etc. You will **all** begin reading the story with the character summary pages in the front of each book and each person will read his or her character summary aloud. **Then begin the story and read your parts with some acting flair, expression and enthusiasm. Have fun with it!** It’s amazing how one person can “turn it on” in a group and it spreads to other readers, making the experience more fun and memorable for everyone. Laughter is infectious and can break down social barriers and create an atmosphere where students who would not necessarily like or associate with other students can become friends.

### **Online Measurement Component**

If you wish to implement a measurement of the program’s effectiveness for your students, you can go to <http://www.readtoachieveinc.org/readtest/readtest.asp> and implement a 2-minute reading level test for each student at the beginning of your program, noting the test result for each student. Then after several weeks of using Reader’s Theater, you can test the students again to see their growth.

## **4. Questions and Answers**

