

All About Reader's Theater Exercise 13:

Reading and Song



This month's Reader's Theater activity coincides with the winter holidays, often a musical time of year, and focuses on using song in Reader's Theater! Music and song have long been employed as tools for learning everything from the letters of the alphabet to the 50 states! The rhythm and melody of music helps students remember what comes next in the lyrics. **The added associations of melody and rhythm help to consolidate the student's memories of the words or information they are learning.**

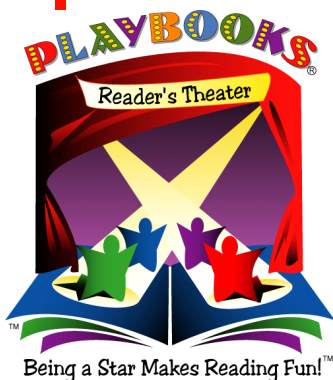
Some studies show superior reading fluency gains when students read passages of song lyrics repeatedly (Patel and Laud, 2007). **The students' CWPM (correct words read per minute) rates increased more when the passages were song lyrics than when the passages were prose.**

In addition, the simple fact that children enjoy music and singing will multiply the productivity of the reading activity!

Teacher Instructions: The following pages contain **scenario suggestions**—fictional situations about which students can write simple Reader's Theater scenes. **The twist is that the scenes must be written in lyrical form, to be sung aloud to a familiar tune.** The tunes of several well-known songs are suggested; students may choose which tune to use for their scenes.

First, divide the class into groups of three or four students. Pass out a copy of the scenario and tune suggestions to each student. **Direct the groups to each choose one scenario and song as the basis for writing their scenes.** The number of speaking characters in the scene should correspond to the number of students in the group. Each student may write his or her own role, or the group may collaborate to decide on each character's dialogue. Before the students begin, have them read the sample Reader's Theater scene on the third page of this document.

When the groups have completed their scenes/songs, have them each perform their scenes for the class. If desired, groups can trade scenes and perform a different group's scene instead of their own scene. In that case, make sure all students know the tune to which the scene is designed to be sung, and that there are the right number of characters in the scene for the number of readers in the group.



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Build a Song!

Scene Suggestions



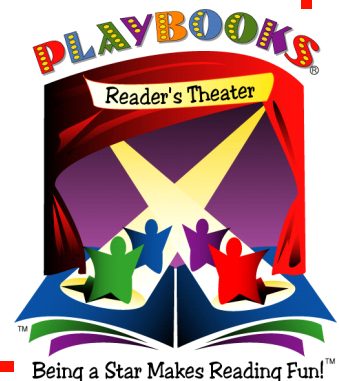
Directions: With your group, choose a scene idea and a tune from the lists below. On a separate sheet of paper, write a Reader's Theater scene that can be sung to the tune of a song! Each group member must have a character part. When you are done, your teacher may ask your group to sing your scene for the class. Have fun with your scenes and be creative!

1. Several children, brothers and/or sisters, are baking gingerbread cookies with their mom or dad. The children are decorating the cookies with frosting and sprinkles and talking about how they will make each of their cookies special. Maybe one of the children could get into a little bit of trouble and spill ingredients, but it turns out to be fun for everyone even with the mess!
2. Several children are telling each other about their favorite sports to play. Possible sports to include are soccer, basketball, gymnastics, running, swimming, martial arts, or anything else you can think of!
3. Students are practicing for a spelling bee. They are testing each other on words such as "musical," "delicious," "joyful," and "holidays." You may also choose different words if you prefer.
4. There is a new student at school, and other students are helping him or her and showing him or her around the school. They could also be getting to know him or her and become friends.

Tune Suggestions

- Frosty the Snowman
- Row, Row, Row Your Boat
- Jingle Bells
- Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
- Mary Had a Little Lamb

(sample scene on next page)



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Sample Reader's Theater Song Scene

(Sung to the tune of Frosty the Snowman)

- Child 1 I like gymnastics,
I can tumble, jump and flip.
- Child 2 When I play my game I will run and kick
the ball into the goal net.
- Child 3 I am a dancer,
My joy is in spinning.
- Child 4 And my favorite thing to do outside
is to skateboard down the street.
- Child 1 When I do a cartwheel
I feel like I can fly!
- Child 2 I love to pass the ball to my friends
so they will all get a chance for fun!
- Child 3 I must remember
to always point my toes.
- Child 4 But I never ride my skateboard down
without protecting my head!

