

Reader's Theater Exercise IV Varying Tempo and Rhythm

The following is a passage from the newest Playbook® Reader's Theater story, **The Great Rhyme Travel Machine**, which we featured in this month's e-newsletter. (Please refer to the newsletter or our website for the complete synopsis of this imaginative story about two students' invention.) There are five character parts in this passage. The reading level for each character part is identified below. Use this as a guideline for assigning the character parts to your students.

Kelly – Stage 2
Marcus – Stage 3
Melinda – Stage 4
All – Stage 4
Narrator – Stage 5

The students are to read through the passage aloud twice. For the first reading, they should read it mechanically at one pace. Before they read the passage a second time, instruct the students to mark their pages where they'd like to change the tempo of certain words. They can use dashes (- - -) between the letters of the word, arrows (←) below the word, or they can underline the word (___) to remind them where they want to slow down or speed up. After they read the passage aloud the second time, ask them which time they most enjoyed listening to the other readers. During which reading did they want to learn more about the story? This experience will convey the importance of changing the tempo or adding rhythmic variety to their reading skills.

Marcus Wait! That's way too confusing! Let me put it into simpler terms. "We read a special rhyme from a Rhyme Travel book. It brings back a famous kid from history." That's easier.

Melinda We do have huge imaginations!

Narrator Suddenly, the main lights in the classroom flickered off. Oddly, the string of old lights on the ***Rhyme Travel Machine*** flashed to life, glowing in the darkness. The classroom desks rattled along with the machine.

All Readers *(All readers stomp their feet loudly for several seconds.)*

Beep, Bop, BING, BANG ... BOOM!

Narrator The earthquake continued as the students stood in shock. After a few moments the familiar sounds of the school building returned and the classroom lights came back on. Then Melinda and Marcus heard a beeping sound again. It sounded far away and close at the same time.

Continued....



Reader's Theater Exercise IV Varying Tempo and Rhythm (*continued*)

- All Readers Beep, Bop, BING, BANG ... **BOOM!**
- Marcus What's that?
- Melinda (*in disbelief*) **I think it's coming from our project!**
- Narrator They both listened. Their twin eyes blinked wildly. They could hear the sound very clearly though it was a bit softer now.
- All Readers (*softer*) **Beep, Bop, Bing, Bing ... Bop!**
- Narrator Kelly was walking down the hall from Miss Chalk's office just as the machine made one last "beep."
- All Readers (*very softly*)**Beep.**
- Kelly Are you guys okay? Miss Chalk sent me to check on you, and then the power went out.
- Marcus Kelly, you can't fool us! How did you get those sounds to come out of our machine?
- Melinda That's a pretty fancy joke, even for a skilled prankster!
- Kelly What joke? I was helping Miss Chalk.
- Melinda (*alarmed*) **Oh my! There's a silver book beside our machine! I'm not kidding. Look!**
- Kelly Wow! Where did that come from?
- Marcus Read what it says on the cover, Melinda. It didn't *appear* until the lights went out. You're pretty smooth, Kelly.
- Kelly I did not put that there!
- Melinda It says: **Rhyme Travel Instructions**. Please read carefully.
- Kelly Read it! I want to hear it!
- Marcus I'll go along with the joke *if* we can all read it together.
- Narrator The thick silver book was carefully opened. Inside, the writing appeared to float across the pages like words on a computer screen. The kids were stunned! Finally, they all took a deep breath and read the first part together.
- All Readers Greetings, students from the past;
We've found your Rhyme Machine at last.
Using future technology,
We've made it work, as you'll soon see.

