

Reader's Theater Exercise VIII: "Over-Acting" With a Reading Buddy

The following exercise will allow your students to practice their expressive reading in a comfortable one-on-one situation. Provided on the following pages are scenes from the Playbook® story, *The Ice Cream Dream*. The scenes have been somewhat modified to accommodate only two readers per scene (except a narrator which can be read by the higher reader or the teacher).

Although this exercise can stand by itself, students will enjoy reading the entire Playbook® story first. This would also give them a better understanding of the characters and the scenes. You can download and print the story in color or black and white for free from the following link:

www.playbooks.com/freeicecreamdream.html. Assign roles for the story based on student reading abilities (high/medium/low), and in small groups, have students read the story in a traditional reader's theater format where they read with the personality and expression of their assigned character role.

For the "over-acting" exercise, reassign roles using the following chart for each of the 6 scenes provided. For a large full class, you may have as many as 18 pairs. Review the scenes and the over-acting examples, and divide your class into pairs based on what you know about the students, their personalities, and friendships. Be mindful to pair students that will be comfortable with each other. Pairing higher and lower level readers together is most beneficial, since the more fluent reader can help the lower level reader with more difficult words and the lower level reader may have the better aptitude for creative expression and may help the higher level reader with adding more drama to the scene.

Scene	Character	Level	Buddy Group 1	Buddy Group 2	Buddy Group 3
1	Mr. MacRicee	Lower			
	Store Clerk	Higher			
2	Chocolate	Lower			
	Vanilla	Higher			
3	Mr. MacRicee	Lower			
	Vanilla	Higher			
4	Chocolate	Lower			
	Strawberry	Higher			
5	Mr. MacRicee	Lower			
	Store Clerk	Higher			
6	Chocolate	Lower			
	Vanilla	Higher			

Pass out a copy of one of the two scene pages to each student. You can print these pages in either color or black and white. Instruct your students to circle the scene they are to read and let each know who their buddy reader will be.

Discuss “over-acting” with the students and read the examples below to them, performing them yourself if you are comfortable. Emphasize focusing expression with the voice, body and face, and how all can change even when you focus on one. Encourage students to exaggerate their voices, body movements, and facial expressions in order to portray the emotions and characters listed in the funniest way. Discuss how laughing with (not “at”) other students represents a positive and supportive audience.

Allow students to spread out and practice quietly in their pairs. Encourage **all** students to help their buddies with both reading and overacting, giving each other ideas for making the scenes more fun and representative of the emotions and characters listed. The expressiveness of the scenes will be challenging, and students may need time to learn how to combine sounds with words and motion while coming in and out of character, but students will have a blast! Once the students have practiced and perfected their overacted lines, have each pair perform their short scene for the class or for small groups within the class. With a large class, you'll have 2-4 pairs of students acting the same scene, but have them all take turns. The best sequence is for the first 6 pairs to perform the 6 scenes in a row which results in a little mini play rather than random scenes. Then have the next 6 pairs perform the 6 scenes again in their own way, and so on. This may result in the play being read a total of 2 or 3 times for larger classes. **Laughter is sure to be heard during all stages of this fun and useful classroom activity!**

Over-Acting Examples *(Read these aloud to students.)*

Examples of possible ways to over-act emotions and character types while reading aloud:

Take the Spotlight with Your Voice[™] *(Focus on vocal expression.)*

Sleepy owl: Make “hoot” sounds in between the words you are saying in your lines. Close your eyes a little bit and slowly bring your voice down at the end of your “hoot” sounds as if you are falling asleep.

Bored singer: Sing all your lines, but with a flat voice without any energy, sighing between words, and rolling your eyes.

Take the Spotlight with Your Body[™] *(Stand up and focus on body movement.)*

Happy reporter: While saying your line, smile very big showing as many teeth as possible, be perky and full of energy, and pretend to be holding a microphone in your hand. Put it in your partner's face when he or she speaks.

Hyper photographer: While saying your line, jump around and get into your partner's way, and pretend to click your camera snapping lots of pictures.

Take the Spotlight with Your Face[™] *(Focus on facial expression.)*

Bashful monster: Scrunch up your face and show your teeth, put your hands up by your face as if you were showing claws, and growl a little bit between the words you are saying in your lines. But then, turn your face away and cover it with your claws. You could also use a shy voice when you are not growling.

Hungry dog: While saying your line, stick your tongue out a little, open your eyes wide, and move your head around. Also, sniff and whine as you read your lines.

Over-Acting With a Reading Buddy - Student Exercise - Page 1

Act out one or more of the scenes below as assigned by your teacher. Talk with you buddy about the funny ways you can both express your emotions and character types. Be sure to focus your expression on your voice, body or face depending upon what is shown below, but feel free to change any of the others, too. For example, when you focus on your facial or body expressions, your voice will change, too. That's what makes it fun!

Changed Scenes from Playbook® story, The Ice Cream Dream

1. Take the Spotlight With Your Body™ (Stand up and focus on moving your body.)

Perform the part of the **Store Clerk** as if you were a **friendly octopus**.

Perform the part of **Mr. MacRicee** as if you were a **happy monkey**.

Store Clerk Well, hello there, Mr. MacRicee. What kind of ice cream cone will it be this time?

Mr. MacRicee Let me see. I like Vanilla, Chocolate, and Strawberry.

Store Clerk So, what do you think? What kind do you feel like tonight?

Mr. MacRicee Oh! I will have *all* of them.

Store Clerk Three scoops, eh? Very good!



2. Take the Spotlight With Your Face™ (Focus on your face.)

Perform the part of the **Vanilla Ice Cream Cone** as if you were a **squirrel with a mouth full of nuts**.

Perform the part of **Chocolate Ice Cream Cone** as if you were a **smiling tiger**.

Narrator Mr. MacRicee soon decided that three scoops were always better than just one, so from then on he started to order triples. The day soon came, though, when other flavors were getting his attention.

Vanilla Choose me! I'm Rocky Road. I'm filled with walnuts and marshmallows.

Chocolate No! Choose me! I am Butter Pecan. I have a nutty taste.

Vanilla Choose me! I am the best flavor!

Chocolate No! Choose me! I am the best!



3. Take the Spotlight With Your Voice™ (Focus on your voice.)

Perform the part of the **Mr. MacRicee** as if you were a **giggling pirate**.

Perform the part of **Vanilla Ice Cream Cone** as if you were a **proud singer**.

Mr. MacRicee I love ice cream after dinner.

Vanilla But you also like it after lunch and for a snack. That is true, isn't it?

Mr. MacRicee Yes, it is true.

Vanilla And you also like it after breakfast. That is true, isn't it?

Mr. MacRicee Yes, but the Sweet Treat Shop is not open for breakfast.

Vanilla Then you need to go to the store!

Over-Acting With a Reading Buddy - Student Exercise - Page 2

Act out one or more of the scenes below as assigned by your teacher. Talk with you buddy about the funny ways you can both express your emotions and character types. Be sure to focus your expression on your voice, body or face depending upon what is shown below, but feel free to change any of the others, too. For example, when you focus on your facial or body expressions, your voice will change, too. That's what makes it fun!

Changed Scenes from Playbook® story, The Ice Cream Dream

4. Take the Spotlight With Your Body™ (Stand up and focus on body movement.)

Perform the part of the **Strawberry Ice Cream Cone** as if you were an **excited cheerleader**.

Perform the part of **Chocolate Ice Cream Cone** as if you were a **tired jogger**.

Narrator When Mr. MacRicee arrived home from the store, he could hardly fit all the ice cream cartons he had bought into the freezer section of his refrigerator.

Strawberry You don't need those vegetables. Get rid of them!

Chocolate You don't need that meat. Get rid of it!

Strawberry You don't need those frozen dinners. Get rid of them!

Chocolate Then you can fit in more ice cream!



5. Take the Spotlight With Your Face™ (Focus on your face.)

Perform the part of the **Store Clerk** as if you were a **lizard with a sore tongue**.

Perform the part of **Mr. MacRicee** as if you were a **sad blow fish with puffy cheeks**.

Narrator A week later, at the grocery store, the clerk did not recognize Mr. MacRicee because he was so much fatter.

Store Clerk Mr. MacRicee, is that you?

Mr. MacRicee Yes it is!

Store Clerk Oh, I'm sorry. You look different.

Mr. MacRicee What do you mean?

Store Clerk Well ... bigger? I like your shirt.

Mr. MacRicee It is new. All my shirts are new, and my pants, too.

6. Take the Spotlight With Your Voice™ (Focus on your voice.)

Perform the part of the **Chocolate Ice Cream Cone** as if you were a **shy ghost**.

Perform the part of **Vanilla Ice Cream Cone** as if you were a **scared snake**.

Narrator The next day, at three in the morning, a terrible thing happened. The electricity went out on Mr. MacRicee's street.

Chocolate The ice cream is *very* soft!

Vanilla It's not just soft. It's runny!

Chocolate It's not just runny. It's melting!

Vanilla It's all over the floor!

Chocolate It's all over the rug!

Vanilla It's running down the stairs!

Chocolate It's running out the door!