



Class Acts Arts
8720 Georgia Ave Ste 303, Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-588-7525 • 866-458-8966 toll-free
info@classactsarts.org

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Mary Beth Bowen

Storybook Readers Theatre Workshop

OBJECTIVES OF WORKSHOP:

Students will:

- Become more enthusiastic about reading aloud
- Learn acting skills (voice, body, imagination)
- Strengthen ability to listen and concentrate
- Improve ability to work together as a team

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM:

Readers Theatre can motivate young students to read aloud with fluency and enthusiasm. Guided by Ms. Bowen, students read and rehearse a short Readers Theatre script based on a storybook. Each student reads aloud a solo line and lines in unison with the class. During this 50-minute workshop, students learn how to maintain their focus and work together as a team. As Ms. Bowen reads them a storybook, they create gestures and sound effects for the storybook's characters. When they rehearse, they use those same gestures and sound effects, along with expressive voice, body and face, to make the printed words of their script come alive. The workshop culminates with the students performing the script for the classroom teacher.

I. PRE-WORKSHOP

A. The students need no background information to understand and appreciate this workshop.

B. VOCABULARY

Ms. Bowen will teach the vocabulary words below, as she introduces students to the basics of acting.

imagination	The part of your brain you use when you pretend
concentration	When you are so focused that nothing can distract you
cooperation	When you follow directions and work well with other people
cue	A signal for the actor to do something
to gesture	To use your hands and arms to communicate silently

II. WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

The workshop actively involves students every single minute.

Students will:

- Create gestures and sound effects to communicate emotions and actions
- Listen to the teaching artist read a storybook
- Create gestures and sound effects for the storybook's characters
- Read aloud a Readers Theatre script based on the storybook
- Rehearse the script, using the same gestures and sound effects they previously invented, along with voice and facial expression
- Use their listening and concentration skills to say their lines when it's their turn
- Move to the front of the classroom and perform the script for their teacher

III. WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

A. How can your product or skill be applied to the curriculum?

Combining spoken word with gesture is a powerful learning tool. It can increase reading comprehension and help students retain curriculum content information. It can be used with any curriculum, including English language arts, science and social studies.

B. Extension activities to extend this workshop experience into the classroom:

- 1) Students create gestures for historical figures (*e.g. Betsy Ross, Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr.*).

- 2) Teacher writes vocabulary word definitions on board. Teacher asks students to create gestures to act out the underlined words.

Example: “*Natural resources are things like water, land, rocks and wind.*”

- 3) Students create gestures to act out curriculum text.

Example: “*The Indians made good use of the buffalo. They used buffalo meat to eat. They used buffalo fur to keep warm. They used buffalo bones to make tools. And they used buffalo tendons for sewing and mending.*”

- 4) Using the same technique that Ms. Bowen modeled, the teacher reads a storybook or poem with students. Teacher asks students to create gestures, sound effects and facial expressions for the characters or actions.

IV. STUDENT RESOURCES:

- 1) Brown, Margaret Wise. The Noisy Book. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
- 2) Swope, Sam. Gotta Go! Gotta Go!. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004.

V. TEACHER RESOURCES:

Flynn, Rosalind M. Dramatizing the Content with Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre, Grades 6-12. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2007. This book is currently out-of-print, but can be ordered at <https://wwwcreatespace.com/3721357>

Kelner, Lenore Blank. The Creative Classroom: A Guide for Using Creative Drama in the Classroom, PreK-6. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1993

Kelner, Lenore Blank. 1990. Creative Drama in the Early Childhood Classroom. Video Cassette. Silver Spring, Md. Interact Story Theatre.

Kelner, Lenore Blank. 1990. Creative Drama in the Elementary Classroom. Video Cassette. Silver Spring, Md. Interact Story Theatre.