

WHY READER'S THEATER?

Reader's Theater is a fun and easy way to make any fiction text come alive. Characters can speak their own dialogue; an assigned narrator or narrators can read the exposition. Feel free to add some costumes, props, and special sound effects and your readers are good to go.

Stone Arch Books has created a few examples of Reader's Theater scripts using selected scenes from their high-interest fiction.

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

Kids not only love reader's theater, but the experts do, too. Here's what a few of them have to say:

“Readers’ theater provides readers with a legitimate reason to reread text and to practice fluency. Reader’s theater also promotes cooperative interaction with peers and **makes the reading task appealing.**”

- (from *Put Reading First*, U.S. Department of Education (2001))

According to *The Fluent Reader* by Timothy Rasinski (Scholastic Professional Books, 2003), when students **hear a text that sounds like natural speech**, they naturally bring their own experience to the learning process and begin to **build their reading comprehension.**

Studies show that re-reading is a strong strategy in building a student's fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. According to a study published in *The Reading Teacher*, 52 (1999) titled “I Never Thought I Could Be a Star: A Readers Theatre Ticket to Reading Fluency,” **even short amounts of using a reader's theater approach can greatly enhance a student's vocabulary skills, as much as a year's growth!**

Reader's Theater works. Jennifer O. Prescott, the managing editor of *Instructor*, reports in the January/February 2003 issue about the amazing gains of a fourth-grade class in Asheville, North Carolina. The students in Lorraine Griffith's classroom, after just 10 weeks of RT, **jumped a full grade level in reading!**