



READERS' THEATRE TEACHERS NOTES

Introduction

The Readers' Theatre is a collection of plays that are associated with the books in the GFI series. Each play features characters from one of the books and the story is presented dramatically. Adaptation of the stories to play form means that some do not strictly follow the story in the book.

"Becoming" a character in a play is an effective way of getting involved in reading, interacting with other class members and, especially for shy students, gaining confidence in public speaking. The Readers' Theatre plays also help reluctant readers and NESB students increase their fluency and reading speed, build their skills in confidence and word recognition, and extend their vocabulary in a fun and engaging way.

How to use them in the classroom

- Read the associated story (or stories) in the GFI series.
- Discuss the topics and issues related to the story.
- Discuss the characters, their development, and relationships in the story. (See GFI teachers' notes.)
- Let students indicate which character they would like to play.
- Explain the importance of becoming that character by using appropriate voice, expression and body language.
- Distribute copies of the GFI Readers' Theatre play.
- Have students read the whole play through silently to themselves.
- Assign students to each of the roles in the play.
- Go through the play with each student reading his or her part as the remaining students in the class listen.
- Emphasise the importance of "flow" and students being ready to read their part.
- Discuss improvements that can be made.
- Students decide whether they want to present the play:
 1. as a live performance or
 2. as a visual presentation.
- Rehearse and perform the play with the rest of the class as the audience.

Follow-up suggestions

- Discuss how the individual students felt playing their character. In what ways did they develop a better understanding of that person? Would they themselves have reacted in the same ways as their character did in the play?
- Ask students to write a “personal” description of their character, considering what their character looks like, his/her personality, how he/she thinks and feels about things etc.
- Ask students to draw their character, showing what their character looks like (clothes, hairstyle, etc.) as well as his/her interests, thoughts etc.
- Using a flow chart, students show how their character changes or develops during the story.

Taking the play to a wider audience

- Discuss who the audience may be: other students, parents/caregivers, the general public.
- Decide who will be the producer and director of the play.
- Discuss venue, scenery, props, costumes, lighting and budget.
- Students need to learn their lines “off by heart”.
- Establish a rehearsal schedule.

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