

## Readers Theater

From: Talking to Learn by Jennifer Glass, Joan Green and Kathleen Gould Lundy, pg. 72

Readers Theater is a strategy that relies on the power of the story and the skills of the readers to fully engage the audience in a reading of a piece of text.

Readers Theater encourages risk taking and reflection as students work collaboratively and make artistic choices so that the reading has a dramatic impact. Make sure to give students plenty of time to rehearse before presenting to the class.

Readers Theater does not involve costumes, sets, props, or movement. The readers generally stand while reading, using their **voices** to bring the action of the scene to life.

Some parts of the text may be read alone, and some in unison with either the whole group or part of the group. This strategy is beneficial for readers of all levels and it releases the pressure of reading alone out loud.

1. Get into groups of 5 to 10 people.
2. In solo's, pairs, small group or large group read the passage below using the following vocal elements:

| <b>Volume</b>                                                                                                      | <b>Tempo</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Emotion</b>                                                                               | <b>Sound and Silence</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Voice</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>-Vary the volume from loud to soft or from soft to loud.</p> <p>-Try presenting the whole text in whispers.</p> | <p>-Vary the tempo from slow to fast or from fast to slow.</p> <p>-Play with the beat and rhythm of the text. Use body percussion (hand clapping, finger snapping, foot stomping), or musical instruments.</p> | <p>-Experiment with different emotions such as: sad, happy, grumpy, tired, excited, etc.</p> | <p>-Try using silence- leave out words or even full lines to see what effect this has on meaning.</p> <p>-Add sound effects such as:<br/>rain, wind, car horns, barnyard noises, etc.</p> | <p>-Experiment with combinations of voices such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solo, duet, trio</li><li>• Whole chorus in unison</li><li>• Cumulative reading (begin with a few voices and gradually increase the number of voices)</li></ul> <p>-Alternate reading (1<sup>st</sup> girls, 2<sup>nd</sup> boys 3<sup>rd</sup> altogether, 4<sup>th</sup> one line solo, etc.)</p> |

3. Be ready to present to the large group. HAVE FUN!

**Passage from “The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian”  
by Sherman Alexie, pg. 5:**

I draw all the time.

I draw cartoons of my mother and father; my sister and grandmother; my best friend, Rowdy; and everybody else on the rez.

I draw because words are too unpredictable.

I draw because words are too limited.

If you speak and write English, or Spanish, or Chinese, or any other language, then only a certain percentage of human beings will get your meaning.

But when you draw a picture, everybody can understand it.