

Lesson 8: Readers Theater: Practicing with Criteria



CCS Standards

- **RF.2.4:** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- **SL.2.1:** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **SL.2.1a:** Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
- **SL.2.1b:** Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
- **SL.2.1c:** Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can use criteria to practice a Readers Theater play with my group. (SL.2.1, SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, SL.2.1c)
- I can read a Readers Theater script with fluency and expression. (RF.2.4)

Ongoing Assessment

- During Work Time C, circulate to observe students' use of the performance criteria. (RF.2.4)

Agenda

1. **Opening**
 - A. Analyzing a Model: Readers Theater Video (10 minutes)
2. **Work Time**
 - A. Engaging the Actor: Generating Criteria for Readers Theater (10 minutes)
 - B. Shared Reading: Readers Theater Scripts (15 minutes)
 - C. Readers Theater: Rehearsing in Groups (15 minutes)
3. **Closing and Assessment**
 - A. Reflecting on Learning (10 minutes)

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- In Lessons 8–9, students' learning culminates in a Readers Theater. Students work in small groups to practice and then perform scenes based on each of the three schools they studied during the close read-aloud sessions in Lessons 2–7. Not only will students find this task engaging, but it will require them to synthesize the work they have done surrounding the problems and solutions of each school in *Off to Class*.
- In the Opening, students watch a video to build background knowledge of what Readers Theater looks and sounds like, and to develop criteria for their performance of a Readers

Theater script. For the opening, please find a Readers Theater video to play for students. This video should be about 2-3 minutes long, and should allow students to pick out the following criteria: Speaking loudly enough for the audience to hear, reading smoothly and with emotion, and listening to others to keep track of their turn.

- Students watch this video to build background knowledge of what a Readers Theater looks and sounds like and to develop ideas for criteria for their performance of a Readers Theater script.
- In Work Time A, students build criteria for performing the Readers Theater. Taking part in the building of these criteria helps students understand their expectations and holds them accountable for self-assessment throughout the process. Practice with reading in a group allows students to build skills toward speaking and listening standards as well as reading fluency.
- Be aware that although the tone of the Readers Theater plays is fun and playful, some of the subject matter, such as floods and earthquakes, may remind some students of traumatic experiences. Research to make sure the topics are not problematic for students who may have experienced similar events. Consider whether the topic or text is too sensitive for a student to perform in front of the class. Invite students and their families to have private conferences or simply allow students to reflect silently.

How this lesson builds on previous work:

- In Lessons 2–7, students participated in close read-alouds about three schools in *Off to Class*. In this lesson, students have an opportunity to use reader’s theatre scripts about these schools to act them out.
- In the Closing, students revisit two habits of character: perseverance and collaboration. Students review the definitions stated in previous lessons and use classroom examples to illustrate each habit of character. The two habits of character will remain on the Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart for the rest of the year. The chart will be added to in future modules.
- Continue to use Goal 1 Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable conversation.

Areas in which students may need additional support:

- Acting might feel scary to some students. To ensure that all students participate, offer other options to those who may be too shy to read a line (e.g., ask them to make a prop for one of the characters, ask a buddy to chorally read their line with them, ask them to say a shortened version of the line, or ask them to say the line in a home language).
- Readers Theater may be a new practice for many of the students in your class, which may challenge students with new group dynamics. To promote collaboration, allow students to run into problems, and then help them address the problems by asking them to state the problem and think of a way to help solve it. If students need more support, remind them of the work about problems and solutions done in this unit and offer suggestions for solutions that students may choose from to feel comfortable moving forward.
- Consider the reading needs in your classroom. If students need support with decoding or fluency, consider prerecording the script or writing cues into the script to help the student read.
- Based on the needs of your class and the time available, considering extending Lessons 8–9 across three days so students have more rehearsal time.

Down the road:

- This is the first of two lessons that focus on Readers Theater. In Lesson 9, students will resume practicing their scripts and then perform the script for the rest of the class. Consider inviting students from other classrooms to hear the short plays performed.
- This is the first of two lessons that reinforce students' understanding of the schools they have read about in *Off to Class*. Students will revisit these schools in Unit 3 to study the similarities and differences between the schools and their own school.

In advance:

- Predetermine Readers Theater groups of about eight students with an assigned script based on classroom dynamics, student personalities, and reading abilities. Groups will remain the same across Lessons 8–9. Consider assigning parts for each student within their groups based on reading ability.
- Preview the Readers Theater script with students who may need more support working with classmates.
- Prepare:
 - Technology necessary to play “Readers Theater: Building Fluency and Expression” in the Opening.
 - Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart (see supporting materials).
- Review the Think-Pair-Share anchor chart. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)
- Post: Learning targets, Readers Theater: Brainstorm Criteria anchor chart, and Performance Criteria for Small Groups anchor chart.

Consider using an interactive whiteboard or document camera to display lesson materials.

- Consider that YouTube, social media video sites, and other website links may incorporate inappropriate content via comment banks and ads. Although some lessons include these links as the most efficient means to view content in preparation for the lesson, be sure to preview links and/or use a filter service, such as www.safeshare.tv, for actually viewing these links in the classroom.
- Work Time C: Video record students rehearsing to review with students in later lessons as a reminder of what happened. Most devices (cell phones, tablets, laptop computers) come equipped with free video recording apps or software.

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided in part by CA ELD Standards 2.I.A.1, 2.I.A.3, and 2.I.B.5

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with opportunities to practice reading and speaking fluently. Acting out chapters from *Off to Class* will provide students with concrete avenues for comprehending academic content while strengthening English language development through peer interaction.

- ELLs may find it challenging to master speaking with fluency and expression, as some may still struggle with reading and speaking in the language itself. Support students by empowering them to ask their peers for help when they do not understand or have trouble reading. Offer opportunities for them to listen to models of delivering lines of dialogue with expression and prompt them to notice and mimic the tone of voice.

Levels of support

For lighter support:

- During the Mini Language Dive, challenge students to generate questions about the sentence before asking the prepared questions. Example: “What questions can we ask about this sentence? Let’s see if we can answer them together.”

For heavier support:

- On a tablet computer or recording device, work with students to record themselves delivering their lines with a teacher or peer’s support. Empower students to play back and listen to their recordings as they follow along with their scripts and practice their performances. If helpful, work with a group to perform and record an entire performance of the play so they can play it back and follow along as they practice.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation (MMR):** During the Closing, students discuss ways they can persevere and collaborate during Readers Theater in the next lesson. As students share their ideas verbally, it may be helpful to provide a visual reference point as well. Provide alternatives to auditory information by visually displaying their ideas. You can do this by writing their ideas on a whiteboard or chart paper.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** During the Opening, students are introduced to the idea of using *expression*. Students may benefit from isolated practice using expression before they incorporate it while reading from a passage. As you discuss showing feelings with your voice, provide options for expression by inviting students to say the words “Readers Theater” with a variety of different feelings.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement (MME):** During Work Time A, students review performance criteria for Readers Theater. Readers Theater involves reading, speaking, and acting in front of others. Second-graders will have a range of abilities and comfort levels with this task. Create an accepting and supportive classroom climate by acknowledging that performing a Readers Theater play may feel risky and brainstorming ideas to help classmates feel comfortable.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

New:

- Readers Theater, criteria, script, fluency, expression, rehearse (L)

Review

- perseverance, collaboration

Materials

- ✓ “Readers Theater: Building Fluency and Expression” (see Teaching Notes)
- ✓ Readers Theater: Brainstorm Criteria anchor chart (new; co-created with students during Work Time A; see supporting materials)
- ✓ Readers Theater: Brainstorm Criteria anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Performance Criteria anchor chart (new; co-created with students during Work Time A; see supporting materials)
- ✓ Performance Criteria anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Readers Theater Script: Boat School (one per student in this group and one to display)
- ✓ Readers Theater Script: Rainforest School (one per student in this group and one to display)
- ✓ Readers Theater Script: Tent School (one per student in this group and one to display)
- ✓ Performance Criteria for Small Groups (one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart (new; teacher-created; see supporting materials)

Opening

A. Analyzing a Model: Readers Theater Video (10 minutes)

- Gather students whole group.
- With excitement, tell students that they will be doing some acting today with *Readers Theater*! Explain that students will watch a video of other students doing Readers Theater. They will watch that video to get an idea of what to do when they do their own Readers Theater. When students do their Readers Theater, it will be about the schools they have just learned about.
- Tell students that Readers Theater is when actors use expression in their voice to perform parts of a text for an audience.
- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner:
“What does it mean to use expression in your voice?” (show feelings)
- Play about 1-2 minutes of the **Readers Theatre video** you have selected for students.
- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner:
“What is something they are doing that we should remember to do in our Readers Theater?”
“As you speak with your partner, try using expression in your voice.”
- Resume the video for one more minute. Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner about the same questions.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Consider showing the video twice. Students may benefit from watching the video again after having discussed the most important lessons from it. This will allow students to listen actively with purpose and to reinforce their comprehension of the learning targets. (Example: "Now that we have discussed the most important things we have learned from the video, let's watch it again. This time I want you to really listen for the way they actors read with expression.") (MMR)
- When discussing how to show feelings with your voice, provide options for expression by inviting students to say the words "Readers Theater" with a variety of different feelings. (Examples: Say "Readers Theater" using an excited voice, a nervous voice, a calm voice, an angry voice, a happy voice.) (MMAE)

Work Time

A. Engaging the Actor: Generating Criteria for Readers Theater (10 minutes)

- Refocus whole group and select volunteers to share out.
- As students share out, capture their ideas on the **Readers Theater: Brainstorm Criteria anchor chart**.
- Prompt students to share more by asking question such as:
 - *"Did you notice anything special about their voices?"*
 - *"How were they reading the script?"*
 - *"How did the actors show you how they were feeling?"*
- After capturing a variety of ideas, direct students' attention to the learning targets and read the first one aloud:
 - *"I can use criteria to practice a Readers Theater play with my group."*
- Point out to students that they just developed *criteria*—or something people use as a guide or model—for Readers Theater during their brainstorm.
- Tell students that to help them do their best, you would like the class to have three really clear and specific criteria to help everyone know what it looks and sounds like to perform their Readers Theater scripts well.
- Look back at the list and star any comments that talked about speaking loudly enough. Say:
 - *"I can see that you think it is important for actors to speak loudly enough for the audience to hear, so let's use that as one of our three."*
- Add "I can speak loudly enough for the audience to hear me" to the **Performance Criteria anchor chart**.
- Repeat this process with:
 - "I can read smoothly with emotion."
 - "I can listen to others to keep track of my turn."
- If students did not offer any ideas on the Criteria Brainstorm anchor chart to match these performance criteria, invite students to agree with you while you notice things about the actors from the video. (Example: "Tell me if you agree, but I also saw the actors keeping track of their turn. Did you notice that?")

- Invite students to chorally read the three criteria on the Performance Criteria anchor chart.
- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner:

“Which criteria are you going to work really hard to accomplish today?” (Responses will vary.)

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Ask students about the word *loudly*. Point out the *-ly* suffix and discuss that it is used at the end of words that describe the way an action is done. Invite students to demonstrate speaking loudly and quietly. (Examples: “Why do you think this word has an *-ly* at the end? What does it mean to speak loudly?”) (MMR)
- As you discuss the Performance Criteria for Small Groups, create an accepting and supportive classroom climate by acknowledging that performing a Readers Theater play may feel risky and brainstorming ideas to help classmates feel comfortable. Say: “Performing a Readers Theater script involves reading and acting in front of others. That’s a lot of things to do at once! Some of you may feel very comfortable performing in front of others, and some people might not feel as comfortable. That is okay. What are some ways we can support all our classmates to feel comfortable taking a risk and trying Readers Theater today?” (MME)

Work Time

B. Shared Reading: Readers Theater Scripts (15 minutes)

- Direct students’ attention to the learning targets and read the second one aloud:
“I can read a Readers Theater script with fluency and expression.”
- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner
“What do you think a script is?” (text actors read in a play or movie)
- Underline or circle the words *fluency* and *expression*. Remind students that those words explain how we read and they work on that in the K-2 Skills Block as they practice decoding words and reading fluently.
- Say:
“Reading with fluency means that your voice sounds natural, nice, and smooth. Reading with expression means that your voice shows feeling by going up and down, just like how we talk to each other. These words fit with our second criteria, ‘I can read smoothly and with emotion.’”
- Demonstrate one example and one non-example of reading fluently and with expression, or invite students to act out examples.
- Tell students they will get a chance to read through each Readers Theater script as a class before they practice reading for fluency and expression in small groups.
- Display the **Readers Theater Script: Boat School**. Invite students to follow along, reading silently in their heads as you read the script aloud.
- Repeat this process with the **Readers Theater Script: Rainforest School** and **Readers Theater Script: Tent School**.

- Considering finding fun ways to split up the class to read through the scripts, as time allows (e.g., boys and girls, rows on the rug, partner read per line, etc.)
- Encourage students to do a cheer or give a round of applause after reading the scripts.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Mini Language Dive. Ask students about the meaning of this sentence from the script: "Even if it rains during school, we will still be able to get home too." Ask:
 - “What does this sentence mean?” (The children can get home when it rains because they will be in a boat.)
 - “Why will they be able to get home when it rains?” (They are in a boat school.)
 - “Why did the person speaking use the phrase ‘even if’?” (to say a problem that could stop them from getting home, but will not)
 - “How does this sentence show perseverance?” (It shows how they have a problem, but they will still succeed because they solved the problem with the boat school.)
 - “What are some problems that could stop you when you read your script, but won’t? (Answers will vary, e.g., trouble reading, trouble speaking fluently.)
 - “Can you use the structure of this sentence to talk about how you might persevere? ‘Even if____, I will still be able to ____.’?” (Even if I forget how to read a word, I will still be able to persevere and read fluently.)

Work Time

C. Readers Theater: Rehearsing in Groups (15 minutes)

- With excitement, announce that it is time to start rehearsing!
- Call on volunteers to explain the word *rehearse* (practice for a performance).
- Display the Readers Theater Script: Boat School and focus students on the actors’ box.
- Tell students that once they are in groups, they should all pick a part. The group needs to agree on everyone’s part and write the name of each student down on their paper.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “What should you do if two group members want the same part?” (rock, paper, scissor; make a deal; choose another part)
- Distribute and display the **Performance Criteria for Small Groups**. Tell students they should use the criteria to help them remember what to practice as they are working in groups.
- Move students into the predetermined groups and assign each group to a different part of the room.
- Distribute pre-assigned scripts.
- Invite students to begin working together to choose parts and read through the script.
- Circulate to support students as they assign parts and read the script:
 - Support students through any social struggles by starting a conversation with the group about the problem and ways they may be able to work through it.

- For students who may need additional support with decoding, encourage them to use strategies from the K-2 Skills Block, such as segmenting the word or looking for smaller chunks within the word, to help them.
- After most groups have read through their script a couple of times, invite students to reflect together using the Performance Criteria for Small Groups: What did they do well? What can they improve upon next time?

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Place students in small groups according to language proficiency. Ensure that beginning and intermediate ELLs are grouped with advanced and proficient students. If possible, consider grouping students who speak the same home language together. If students are able, invite them to interpret parts of the script in their home languages. (MMAE)
- For ELLs: Some students may be nervous or need additional support with the speaking skills necessary for reading their parts. Allow students to observe and repeat interactions according to their comfort and ability level. Consider allowing two students to share the same part to scaffold participation. Encourage students to participate even if they are uncomfortable, but refrain from pressuring them. (MMAE)
- As students choose parts in their groups, provide graduated levels of support and differentiate the reading task for students by offering structured choices. Offer a choice of parts with fewer lines or less complicated vocabulary to developing readers. (Example: "Kylie, you are in the boat school group. Would you prefer to be Student 1 or Student 5?") (MMAE)

Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning (10 minutes)

- Refocus students whole group.
- Invite students to Think-Pair-Share with an elbow partner:
"What do you remember about the words perseverance and collaboration?"
- Share with students that they have been working to find examples of perseverance and collaboration in the text *Off To Class*, but you also have seen examples of those habits of character right in the classroom!
- Display the **Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart**.
- Tell students that this anchor chart will stay up in the classroom for the year to help them develop mindsets and skills to help them in school, in college, in their careers, and in their life.
- Give an example of a student who used perseverance or collaboration during the small group practice time. (Example: "I saw Madison using perseverance when she came to a hard word in her script, but she didn't give up.")
- Invite students to share examples of perseverance or collaboration they have seen from their classmates.

- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner:
“When can we work to show perseverance during our Readers Theater practice in the next lesson?” (I can show perseverance when I am stuck on a word.)
“When can we work to show collaboration during our Readers Theater practice in the next lesson?” (I can show collaboration to help a group member with a tricky word.)
- If productive, cue students to expand the conversation by giving an example:
“Can you give an example?” (Responses will vary.)
- Encourage students to whisper a response into their hand and ask:
“What is one thing you are excited about doing in the next lesson with Readers Theater?” (Responses will vary.)

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Invite students to use the structure examined during the Mini Language Dive to share how they will persevere during the practice. (Example: Even if I get stuck on a word, I will still be able to read my part with expression.)
- As students share goals for perseverance and collaboration during Readers Theater, provide alternatives to auditory information by visually displaying their ideas. You can do this by writing their ideas on a whiteboard or chart paper. (MMR)