

??? Your Readers Theater Questions K-12



Below are some of the questions I have received from teachers around the globe via email with my abbreviated answers. They are categorized by **General questions, Elementary (Grades K-3) questions, Elementary (Grades 4-6+), Middle School, High School and ESL/ELL questions:**

* General

Q: (Sept. 2012) I am astounded and grateful for your help. I'm thinking I really would like the **audio versions**. Just for a change of pace. Thank you soooooooo much!

A: **Re: Audios**--It really takes me awhile to get them done--especially if I record other readers. So, I'd need at least a couple of weeks notice [from Script Buffet Club members] IF you want something in particular. (I'm trying to concentrate on writing and building our community now; but, I need to help our teachers in whatever they need.)

Your other option is to record them or have students/volunteers record them for your use. Actually, IF the recording was good enough quality I MAY be able to post it online.

When I was in the classroom we had a listening center with a tape recorder/player and 4 sets of headphones. I recorded stories from Readers Digest readers onto the cassette and the students had pages of comprehension questions to answer as they were listening. The questions were in the same order as the story answers. They were given extra time at the end to fill in whatever was missing. I might try some graphic organizers if I did it today.

Q: I am looking for **humorous scripts** that work for a group that ranges from **K-5th grade**. Any suggestions?

A: I have a whole section on humorous scripts, but most of them are in the Script Buffet Club (for paying members). I typically try to include a little humor in most of our scripts. IF you put your younger readers in as Sugar Spies (a chorus), you may find "The Sugar Spies" works. The spies may actually memorize their lines. It's nutrition related, but humorous. I always imagined the Sugar Spies with trenchcoats and sunglasses--even though RT doesn't require costumes. You'll find it under Health in all our indexes.

Keep checking our catalogs and the bottom of the home page for new scripts. I add new scripts monthly based on the needs of our paying teachers.

Q: (Aug. 2012) My **middle school is attempting to start a fine arts program**. I wanted to start the first class with drama. Reader's Theater seemed a good fit for a school with no budget, costumes, props, settings, or curriculum. Your website is great and I am learning a lot so far...

A: Thanks so much for checking out Readers Theater All Year! **I'm trying to build the middle school area** because of several middle school teachers needing scripts. There is such a WIDE range of readability levels needed for middle school, though.

You're right, Readers Theater is perfect for a simple way to incorporate drama into the curriculum, but it's so much more (e.g., cover content areas, character-building...). The most important thing is the choice of scripts. **Boring scripts make it tough for everyone.**

You have a big job starting a Fine Arts program. I used to be in charge of a Fine Arts Festival every spring when we were homeschooling. When I was teaching in the classroom I was in charge of two programs a year. Here are a few tips to consider--especially for drama:

1. Check out the areas of **drama games and drama warm-up exercises**. If you start your classes with drama games and exercises, you'll have more fun and success--especially if your class is longer than 30 minutes. I think it can help with concentration and creativity.
2. Remember you can include a little **pantomime/mime** in your class. I wrote a pantomime once that just had a narrator, music, and student actors. They loved it! You may even have someone read a story while the students take the different roles. (This is sometimes done with Storytelling and Improvisation.)
3. Consider **combining drama/simple choreography with a song**. (Student choreographed?)
4. **Overlap art with drama** by making masks or headpieces.
5. Let the students work in **small groups and write some to their own Readers Theater scripts or other scripts**. Sometimes students can create a **commercial**, then perform it (memorized or RT style).

One free script of mine that has middle school/high school roles that has been popular with downloads is "Dog Jog Adventure" (2 versions). You could do it as CHORAL Readers Theater with a narrator and 2 choruses (guys & girls). You'll find it in the humorous section.

* **Elementary (Grades K-3)**

Q: I am trying to start a **Reader's Theater weekly activity with my first graders**. I am looking for lower-level, easy scripts for students who just need fluency practice. I have taught higher grades and have seen the impact Reader's Theater can have, and would like to try it with my younger group this year. Any help/suggestions would be greatly appreciated!

A: (Sept. 2012) We have several primary teachers using Readers Theater successfully in the classroom. (Our July newsletter showcased one.)

Most of our early and emergent reader's scripts are in our Script Buffet for paying members. I keep writing more, but since the website isn't paying for itself yet, I can't have everything free. (I've been writing, not advertising.) You may see our new [K-3 Catalog--with Readability Levels](#) for a list of our current scripts.

Although I have several easier scripts for beginning readers in the Script Buffet, I'm thinking of two script for young readers you may access without paying to join:

1. "The Earth Day Hen and Friends" (See Free Scripts>Holidays>Earth Day OR Science>Environmental.)
2. "Hip Hop Water Drop" (One of our early scripts for group participation under Science.)

Also, Mandy Gregory used to teach primary students and wrote about Readers Theater at her website [Tips for Teachers](#).

Q: This sounds wonderful! I have limited time today, but would love to see what you have for 1st grade. I'm a little overwhelmed with all the information on the website. **I teach 1st grade in a home school co-op**. What do you recommend?

A: (Dec. 2013) Great to hear from you! And, thanks for your sweet comments. Readers Theater IS wonderful! :) And, I have helped several homeschooling moms—with and without co-op groups.

First graders have a WIDE variety of readability levels, so it's difficult to know what to suggest. Typically any of our K-2 scripts may work. If you **use the Grades K-3 Readability Catalog** that would be a good place to start. You'll find the link from the general Script Buffet Club Catalog page; but it will take you here:
[https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref="https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20120418](https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref=https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20120418)

Unfortunately, many of the primary level scripts are for paying members only, so you won't have access to them. (That includes our entire series of short-vowel scripts). **If you see this sign ✓ in front of the Script Title you won't be able to see the script**. That means the whole section called "Easy, Emergent, Beginning Readers" will NOT be an option for you (unless you join the Script Buffet Club).

However, most of our holiday scripts are available to all. One of the popular primary scripts is **"The Earth Day Hen and Friends"**—
[https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref="https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20110411](https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref=https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20110411)
Use the easy version and put your BEST reader(s) in as narrators. It also helps to read a script chorally at first with everyone. This one may be too hard for you. But, homeschoolers are often very advanced readers, so hopefully it will work.

A few other free options are the following—if you have some good readers:

- **"The Sower and the Seed"**
[https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref="https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20100806_1](https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref=https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20100806_1)
- **"Goldy Socks and the Three Hares"**
[https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref="https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20100723](https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref=https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20100723)
- **"Hip Hop Water Drop"**
[https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref="https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20100722](https://www.readerstheaterallyear.comhref=https://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/articles/20100722)
(May be used with non-readers because of the repetition. You may model the leader's role and then let students take those roles.)

I hope this helps! If I were you I would ask the moms to tell me the approximate reading level for each child. When I taught our homeschool drama club I only accepted students in grades 3-8 so readability would not be a problem.

It's easy to adapt children's literature to Readers Theater, too—IF you have time.

I honor you for your sacrifices on behalf of the next generations! ...It's a great adventure and Readers Theater makes it much more fun!

Q: I am looking for Readers' Theater selections for the **Bullying Awareness Week** in November. I would especially like something for 3rd and 4th grade students, but if you have anything at the younger level—2nd grade especially, that would be great!

A: I've been thinking about bullying for a LONG time, not knowing quite how to address it in Readers Theater. The closest I've come so far (Oct. 2012) is "Turkey Dreams" in the Script Buffet Club; the crowd is very negative toward Turkey, but not exactly bullying. (See our Store for a preview.)

The problem with bullying scripts is that children are often rehearsing the lines of a bully. I hate for young students to be practicing negative attitudes in a script, so I've avoided it. (Our Script Buffet Club script "The Boisterous Oyster" overlaps bullying somewhat.)

I wrote in our August newsletter "3 Ways to Create Kindness with Readers Theater." There's a script from the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation called "[Too Busy to Care](#)" that has a kind of bully in it. Actually, the story is kind of like The Good Samaritan with a bully.

Q: I am looking for scripts for **3rd grade students**. I am planning on having them do **1 skit a month and performing it** at the end, so something that is not too short, but not too long! Thanks!

A: Doing one script a month works, but you may want to consider the group size. I used to have 4 groups--each working in a different corner of the room to practice.

Most of the free scripts are in the section on holidays, but there are others scattered in the [K-3 Catalog--with Readability Levels](#). If you want the scripts less than 5 minutes look at titles with FF in the front (i.e., short Friday Fillers). If you want scripts longer than 5 minutes skip ALL the FF scripts OR do more than one script. Approximate times are at the end of each listing.

If your group size changes or you have a large group, you may want to try CHORAL Readers Theater or a script with a Chorus (CH).

A lot of teachers have downloaded "The Sugar Spies." (See Health, Humorous, Mysteries in the Index.)

If you're interested in character building you may want to check out "Back-to-School Team vs. Salamander Sly". (See Holidays>Back to School OR Sports.)

Q: I am looking for things to read with third graders using Skype as a way to connect with other classes. So things not too childish, with two-four speakers. I want to share with our Skype teacher and then as we meet for our Skype conference we can read the selection as a large two class group and then have a meaningful discussion about the topic. I have chosen [your script] "Wanted to Say" as a beginning selection. I will share your script with the other teacher this weekend. We will work with our students and have our conference October 3 using "Wanted to Say." Thanks. I would love to have something interesting on elections for our November conference.

A: Skype with Readers Theater? What a brilliant idea!

Some of our Choral Readers Theater may work for you, too. Also, "Dog Jog Adventure" can be done with three parts.

We now have a new free script for elections (and character building) called "The Tiny Crooked Crack." You may want to check that out. And, I'm working on "The Boisterous Oyster" for our Script Buffet.

Also, "Sack Lunch Flying" works for Veteran's Day in November and many use Thanksgiving scripts.

You will have a LOT more choices with the full Script Buffet (e.g., Kit Carson...).

* **Elementary (Grades 4-6)**

Q: Do you have any **biographies for around 5th grade**? Our curriculum requires us to find one to pair with literary nonfiction.

A: (Oct. 2012) The only biography I have for free is "Harriet Tubman, Alias Moses: Joe's Journey" from the Underground Railroad Story Harriet dictated to Sarah Bradford (no readability level computed yet because it's an early script). I know most of my fourth graders would have been able to read it.

Most of our other biographies are in our Script Buffet Club for paying members. We have several fifth-grade teachers needing biographies, so I will continue to write RT biographies. Research takes a bit of time, though. Check our [Grades 4-8+ Catalog--with Readability Levels](#) for our current list of biographies in the Script Buffet.

Q: "...I need RT scripts that would work with **Native Americans, Explorers, The Revolutionary War, The Civil War, and both World Wars**. In addition, anything 5th

grade science related..."

A: (Oct. 1, 2012) I wrote down what you need, but it may take awhile since I have a list of topics to help other teachers. (Research is fun, but it slows down the writing.) Step by step we make progress and add to our Readers Theater script library.

When you log in to the Script Buffet check our [Grades 4-8 Catalog--with Readability Levels](#). **That will give the current list of scripts** in the areas you need. For now we have the following:

Re: **Native Americans**--"Squanto's Squash" is it so far (under Holidays>Thanksgiving) It may be too easy for your crew, but could be performed for younger students with audience participation.

Re: **Explorers**--I have a set of 3 scripts based on Kit Carson's own book (under Biographies), plus one on Columbus--private school and public school versions--under Holidays.

Re: **Revolutionary War**--"The Betsy Ross Story" (well researched) (See Patriotic section.)

Re: **Civil War**--Part 3 of Clara Barton's life has a little about her battlefield nurse experience and Red Cross founder story. Also, that may be a good time to cover The Underground Railroad with a whole section of scripts under Black History.

Re: **WWI & II**--Nothing yet, except the biography of Walter Alvarez (scientist who helped with The Bomb). Walter reasoned that less people would die with a bomb than a full war. That could be a BIG discussion. (See Biographies or Science.)

Re: **Current Events or Science**--Neil Armstrong recently passed away and there are often topics in the news related to Space or the Moon. See our "Moon Talk" scripts, taken from the **official NASA transcripts** under Science in the Index. These are cross-curricular scripts cover history and science.

* **Middle School**

Q: I am a **5th/6th grade social studies teacher [in a middle school with grades 5-8]**. I just found your 9/11 reader's theater. So excited to use it in my classroom and at our Literacy Night Celebration Tues night. I would be interested in anything related to **history, geography, government, and economics**.

I have a wide range of reading abilities throughout my school day. About 30% are well below grade level in reading. Around 20% are G/T and the rest fall somewhere in between. Challenging...

Anything on Native Americans, Explorers, Colonial Period, Pioneers, WWI & II, and Depression would be super.

A: (Sept. 2012) You will find a lot of free Readers Theater scripts related to holidays that may overlap some of your Social Studies. I also have some in Black History. But, most of the scripts in Social Studies are in the Script Buffet for paying members. You'll find the current list for you in the Script Buffet General Index or in the [Grades 4-8 Catalog--with Readability Levels](#).

I'm sorry, I don't have anything in geography or government, yet. Maybe you could have your students write one? But, there are some scripts in history (e.g., Black History, Biographies, History...) and I have **one in economics on entrepreneurship** in the Script Buffet called "Turkey Dreams." (Now in our Store with Flexi-Curric™: added thinking questions, printable worksheets, and extension activities.)

Re: **Depression**--Did you see our Depression era script based on a true story, "Fuzzy, Pal, and Darrel"? There are more coming because I have more stories.

Re: **Colonial**--Not much yet, but most of that currently is under Patriotic (e.g., Betsy Ross's story was well researched and tells about George Washington meeting with her about the flag).

Re: **Pioneers**--Nothing yet unless you count Kit Carson's biography; but he was more of a pioneer explorer.

Re: **WWI & II**--Nothing except the biography of Walter Alvarez (scientist who helped with The Bomb). Walter reasoned that less people would die with a bomb than a full war. That could be a BIG discussion.

Re: **Native Americans**--"Squanto's Squash" (under Holidays>Thanksgiving) is it so far. I may make a more difficult version if teachers want; but as it is it could easily be performed for a younger class.

* **High School (Grades 9-12)**

Q: Our very small private Christian school is looking for a Reader's Theater script for **6 High school students** who are experienced actors to serve as a piece for **competition**.

We are interested in maybe a patriotic theme but are open to any ideas. It must be **at least 10 min.** in length. Do you have many high school scripts in your Script Buffet Club if we were to join? Thanks.

A: (Oct. 2012) We have more elementary teachers currently using the site than high school teachers, so the focus is on grades K-8+. The best thing to do is take a peek at our [Grades 4-8+ Catalog-with Readability Levels](#) and see which ones look long enough and have a more difficult readability.

In that catalog I'm thinking of a few scripts, but if your actors can play more than one part each you'll have more fun options that could be performed for younger grades (e.g., "The Sugar Spies," "The Bremen Town Detective Band I, II").

Currently here are four scripts that you could consider:

1. **"Amos Root's Eyewitness Account of the Wright Brothers' Flight"**--based on his actual words. 11 1/2 min., 5+ parts (includes a chorus that could be one person). It's for Script Buffet Club members only, but you have a week to "taste" the Script Buffet before any charge is made. So, you could review as many scripts as you wanted.
2. **"Never, Never, Never Forget 9/11"**--told from the perspective of Lady Liberty (the statue), about 10 1/2 minutes with 5+ parts (includes a chorus that could be one person). This is a free Readers Theater script under Holidays>Remembrance Day OR under Patriotic.
3. **"Moon Talk--from Apollo 11"**--based on NASA's transcripts of historic conversations from the Moon. Three versions: Quick = 13 minutes, Shortened = 19 minutes, Long = 21 minutes. This is a free script under History and Science.
4. **"Kit Carson...Parts I, II, III"**--based on his own book and found in the Script Buffet. Put all three parts together for a longer script.

Q: "I am having a hard time finding scripts for readers theater that would be appropriate for high school. Any suggestions?"

"Thank you!"

A: (Nov. 2013) Thanks for writing! **Most of the free scripts in Readers Theater All Year are for the holidays.** We have some high school teachers in our caring community, but I'm not sure what they all teach. **I know some have taught ELL or remedial students so they don't want the readability level to be too hard.** Some of our middle school teachers have actually ASKED for scripts with readability levels for 4th-6th grade to ensure successful performances. Unfortunately for you, **most of our middle school level scripts are for paying members of our Script Buffet Club.** (I try to help our paying members as much as possible.)

High school has such a broad range of abilities and needs. What topic and readability level were you looking for? I have nothing above a readability of grade 7 or 8.

Without knowing WHAT you really need I have **3 suggestions of free scripts that may work for high school:**

1. **"Never, Never, Never Forget 9/11"** in our index under Holidays>Remembrance Day or under Patriotic
2. **"Moon Talk--From Apollo 11"**, based on actual NASA transcripts of the historic conversations from the Moon. Three versions of different lengths under History or Science.
3. **"Dog Jog Adventure--Advanced,"** a humorous story based on a true story. This could be done as Choral Readers Theater and used as a launching pad for students writing their own Readers Theater scripts. You'll find it under Humorous.

(Note: I'm leaving the links off intentionally to make sure this email gets through the cyber-barracudas and you can become familiar with the catalog.)

There are more options in the Script Buffet Club for paying members (e.g., **"Chanticleer's Friends and the Fox" based on Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale" from Canterbury Tales**), but some of them were for high school students to perform for younger classes.

I'm sorry I have not done the research online to find high school scripts. You can **check your local library in the play section, too. Or, perhaps your school drama teacher will have some suggestions?**

Let me know if there's anything else I can do for you. I try to write short custom scripts for paying members of the Script Buffet Club (first-come, first-served) and share them with the members; but I have a short waiting list so I won't be working on any new assignments until 2014.

P.S.

One other option is to have small groups of students adapt excerpts of literature into a Readers Theater script (e.g., for a "radio theater" type of performance). Then, you may put the scripts together with transitions for one long performance or keep them separate for a

variety of shorter performances. Keep me posted on what works and I'll share it with our caring community of teachers!

* **ESL/ELL**

Q: I am teaching **Readers Theatre grades K-5**. So, many students will not read at all. Most classes will have between 25-30 students. I will be teaching 8 classes that **only speak Chinese!!** :(I'm sure by now you can see that I need HELP.

A: July's newsletter has the feature article based on an email I received from a first grade teacher in an international school in China. I think some her ideas may help you.
[Newsletter forwarded to her. Newsletter article will soon be on our blog soon at www.LeadershipCastle.com.]

Our [K-3 Catalog--with Readability Levels](#) will be most helpful to you. You may want to start with "Easy, Emergent Readers" section because those will be the easiest scripts. (Most of these are for paying members of our Script Buffet Club.)

Also, any script that is done chorally you should be able to use for an entire class. Any script that has a chorus you should be able to do with a large group OR a whole class. If you want, rotate the individual speaking parts or assign "buddy readers"--two at a time reading the same part.

You may also think about song lyrics--read aloud and listened to. When I was in the classroom sometimes the students learned better with things put to music. Some simple folk songs may work (e.g., Row, Row, Row Your Boat).

I have 3 scripts so far on audio, but I intend to record more. Here's what I have so far:

1. **"Noodle Strudel"** (Readability = grade 1.9?) It could be read chorally. (See Humorous section of Script Buffet.)
2. **"Goldy Socks and the Three Hares"** (Readability unknown because I didn't know how to compute it then.) (See Literature>Tales.)
3. **"The Beaver and the Lumberjack"** (Readability unknown for now.) This could easily be read chorally because there are only three parts. Many of Aesop's Fables could be read chorally.

If I were you I would start with Choral RT. Model. Give examples. Here's an article by Reading Specialist Gregory Brown on Choral RT: ["Character Education & Choral Readers Theater--A Proposal."](#)

I used to have 4 groups of students each rehearsing RT in a different corner of the room at the same time. Then, later in the week they performed for each other. Sometimes we did a parent's performance. Put the best reader as the student director--or bring in older students or volunteers to help.

Narrator parts are very important, but may be divided and assigned to more than one student.

You may read a single script several times by changing parts, changing voices (e.g., high/low, old/young...), changing interpretation of the characters...