

Reader's Theater Exercise I: Inflection

Objective:

In this exercise, the students will explore how a line of text can be given a variety of meanings based on how he or she reads the text using inflection. The students will then adapt the skills learned in this exercise to a Reader's Theater story for discussion and presentation.

Resources/Materials:

1. Slips of paper with Reader's Theater character statements or questions. (See page 2.)
2. Pens/Pencils
3. Paper
4. Classroom Board
5. Reader's Theater Story

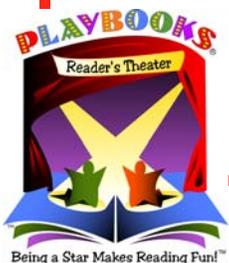


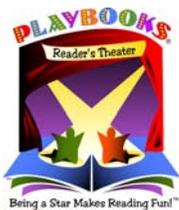
Activities:

1. **Distribute** to each student a slip of paper with one character's statements or questions.
2. **Explain** to the students that inflection is a change in pitch or tone of the voice and can help give meaning to words. By using inflections, students can create context for their lines and give them a wide variety of meanings.
3. **Read aloud in a monotone voice** one sentence such as, "I didn't say she liked him."
4. **Model fluent reading** by rereading the same sentence, "I didn't say she liked him," with vocal variety showing the students how the meaning of the sentence can vary just by changing the inflection of one word in the sentence. (See video demo in October 2007 Playbooks, Inc. E-Burst.) Show how an expressive reader makes his or her voice go higher and lower, faster and slower, louder and softer.
5. **Students Read In Monotone Voice**—Have each student read his or her line aloud using a plain speaking voice.
6. **Students Read with Inflection** — Randomly call students to read aloud his or her line in an individual way. Continue until all the students have read aloud their lines in an original way at least once. Encourage students to be unique by paying attention to their tone, pitch, speed, and pauses.
7. **Class Discussion**—As a class, discuss the various ways each statement was read aloud. What was implied by each version of each statement? How did the readers use their voices to convey additional information about each statement?
8. **Apply to Reader's Theater Project** - Encourage the students to apply this exercise to their character roles in the selected Reader's Theater story.

NOTE: Adapt this exercise to your current Reader's Theater story lesson plan. Have each student pick one line from their character's part in the story and apply steps five through seven.

Continued....





Reader's Theater Exercise I: Inflection (*continued*)

Directions: Make multiple copies of this sheet. Cut the table into eight slips of paper. Distribute the slips of paper so each student receives one.

FAN: I love you, Lee! You're the best! I'm your number one fan!

LEE MAX: I am number one. I am the king. I am the "Best in the West."

CHRIS COLE: I hear you only eat salad. Is that true?

MAYOR CHATTERLY: I am so surprised, that for once, I can't think of anything to say!

PAT O'REILLY: I knew I could do it. I just had to see it. Here I go!

CROWD: Come on, Gregor! Don't give up!

ROBIN BAILEY: What's happening, Chris? Lee Max seems to have come to a complete stop!

SPONSOR: Dare to challenge the leader! Take the taste test!

Source: Character lines from Playbooks® Reader's Theater story, [A Snail's Pace Race](#).