

Expressive Oral Reading Packet For Grades K-3

This packet provides guidelines and fun exercises for introducing expressive oral reading to younger students as a simple performing arts activity, or as preparation for a reader's theater program. As you read the instructions for each exercise, refer to the corresponding handouts.

Exercise 1: "Change the Way You Say It" With Mini Costumes (Form 8A)

Cut out the sentence cards on Form 8A. Ask for volunteers to each pick a sentence card to read aloud in front of the class without any props or costumes. Then, have the same students, in turn, read the same sentences again while each wearing or holding a different costume piece or prop (microphone, dog ears, cowboy hat, princess crown, etc.). Hopefully, the volunteers will naturally show (without coaching) that when you put on a costume and take on another identity, it's easy to get into character, change your voice, and use a different emotion, attitude, or body language.

Exercise 2: "I Didn't Say She Liked Him" (Form 9A)

Vocal expression has a 38% impact on human communication, while the actual words we use only have a 7% impact. This activity is designed to show how others interpret what you say based on how you say it. Ask for six volunteers to read the sentence "I didn't say she liked him," out loud in front of the class. Each volunteer will read the sentence emphasizing a different word (bolded and underlined on the handout), demonstrating how bringing your voice up or down on certain words can project completely different meanings for the sentence. *Volunteers take turns reading the sentence (they do not all read at the same time)*. Explain to students after the exercise that this proves that it's not what you say, but how you say it that counts!

Exercise 3: Overacting With Volunteers (Form 10A)

With most anything, when we "overdo" something at first, it makes it easier to do again more naturally. This holds true for acting. When we can "overact" (or watch someone else overact), it makes reading expressively become easier and more natural. Ask for three volunteers to overact the sentences provided using the character suggestions given (cut along the dashed line on this activity sheet to distribute the three examples to volunteers). Explain that overacting means using exaggerated expression with your voice, face, and body language. Have the other students try to guess the designated character and problem or emotion. Read the directions on the cards aloud if younger students need help.

Exercise 4: Overacting With a Reading Buddy (Form 11A)

Pair up students and assign one of the three mini scenes to each pair. Students will be reading their part in the mini scene as if they were the character type listed. Encourage **all** students to help their buddies with both reading and overacting, giving each other ideas for making the scenes more fun and representative of the emotions and characters listed. Similar to a restaurant where people all talk at the same time yet don't hear those at other tables around them, students will have safety in only performing for their reading partner in a non-threatening way. Before beginning the exercise, tell students you'll be asking for volunteers to read their scene for the class. Then, at the end of this exercise, ask for pairs to volunteer to stand at their table and perform their overacted mini scene to the larger group for everyone to enjoy.

Ready for Small Group Reader's Theater

After students experience all the above opportunities to be expressive, they are now warmed up and have established some courage and confidence for reader's theater. Each student is then assigned a role in a reader's theater story and reads it aloud with expression only in front of their peers in their small non-threatening group. Each small group brings a different story to life while sitting in a circle at their own table.

Finally, everyone gets the opportunity to perform their reader's theater story for all groups together, or for a larger audience, after repeated small group practice. Each student should have the opportunity to read their role at least 3-4 times with their small group before having to perform in front of a larger audience. Students will beg to read the stories again and again. Reward students for excellent expression and performance with the Awards Certificates provided.

Review: Building Confidence Step by Step

- Courageous volunteers set example for others with easy expressive and overacting exercises they perform in front of the class.
- All students are assigned different overacting roles in pairs and students perform at their own tables simultaneously, and volunteer pairs perform for the whole group at the end of the activity.
- Each student is assigned a role in a story and reads it aloud with expression only in front of their peers in their small, non-threatening group while they all sit in a circle at a table.
- Students get the opportunity to perform a story for a larger audience after repeated small group practice. Certain students can be selected to perform the favorite story for a much larger audience such as additional classrooms, parents, or even the community.

Exercise 1: Change the Way You Say It

**We are all sick.
We feel very tired.**

**From now on I drink water.
I will not drink pop.**

**Why, thank you, dear friend.
Can you call me again?**

Exercise 2: Vocal Expression

It's not what you say, but how you say it that counts!

I didn't say she liked him.

I didn't say she liked him!

Exercise 3: Overacting With Volunteers

We do not get to do this at home!

Say the line above as if you were a....

Dog with fleas

(focus your expression on your body and voice)

*(Don't say your character type aloud.
Let the audience guess)*

Cut Here

I do not like bugs! That is what I say!

Say the line above as if you were a....

Dizzy ballerina

(focus your expression on your body and voice)

*(Don't say your character type aloud.
Let the audience guess)*

Cut Here

I am very sad!

Say the line above as if you were a....

Sneezing pirate

(focus your expression on your body, face and voice)

*(Don't say your character type aloud.
Let the audience guess)*

Exercise 4: Overacting With a Reading Buddy

Adapted Scenes from Playbook® story, The Ice Cream Dream

1. *Stand up and focus on moving your body.*

Perform the part of the **Store Clerk** as if you were a friendly octopus.

Perform the part of **Mr. MacRicee** as if you were a happy monkey.

Store Clerk Well, hello there, Mr. MacRicee. What kind of ice cream cone will it be?

Mr. MacRicee Let me see. I like Vanilla, Chocolate, and Strawberry.

Store Clerk So, what do you think? What kind will you have?

Mr. MacRicee Oh! I will have *all* of them.

Store Clerk Three scoops, eh? Very good!

2. *Focus on your voice.*

Perform the part of the **Mr. MacRicee** as if you were a giggling pirate.

Perform the part of **Vanilla Ice Cream Cone** as if you were a proud singer.

Mr. MacRicee I love ice cream after dinner.

Vanilla But you also like it after lunch.

Mr. MacRicee Yes, that is true.

Vanilla And you also like it for a snack.

Mr. MacRicee Yes, but the Sweet Shop is not open yet.

Vanilla Then you need to go to the store!

3. *Focus on your face.*

Perform the part of the **Store Clerk** as if you were a lizard with a sore tongue.

Perform the part of **Mr. MacRicee** as if you were a sad blow fish with puffy cheeks.

Store Clerk Mr. MacRicee, is that you?

Mr. MacRicee Yes it is!

Store Clerk Oh, I'm sorry. You look different.

Mr. MacRicee What do you mean?

Store Clerk Well ... bigger? I like your shirt.

Mr. MacRicee It is new. All my shirts are new, and my pants, too.