

THE LITTLE PRINCE

LANGUAGE ARTS I: Readers Theater

Students Will

- Read "The Story of the Opera" and "The Characters"
- Practice reading with proficiency and expression as they rehearse and perform Scene 2 from the opera in a readers theater format
- Optional: Draw from "The Story of the Opera" to write a readers theater script for a different part of the opera, then rehearse and perform it for the class

Copies for Each Student

- "The Story of the Opera"
- "The Characters"
- "Tips on Reading" Article
- Readers Theater Script

Copies for the Teacher

- "The Story of the Opera"
- "The Characters"
- "Tips on Reading" Article
- Readers Theater Script

Getting Ready

Decide which section(s) of the lesson you wish your class to complete. Be sure students are familiar with "The Story of the Opera" as it relates to content of this lesson.

Gather materials:

- Pencils & Highlighters
- Blank scratch paper

Instructional Time

One – two 45-minute class periods

Introduction

Introduce the lesson to your class. Review Aaron Shepard's "Tips on Reading" which provides tips on preparing, rehearsing, and performing (<http://www.aaronsherp.com/rt/Tips1.html>). Encourage students to apply these strategies in their preparation and performance. Divide the class into pairs. Provide enough copies of the script and highlighters for all students, or necessary preparation materials if students are writing their own script.

Guided/Independent Practice

Assign a role to each student and pass out scripts or begin the writing process if students are writing their own scripts. Have students highlight their part and get into pairs. Explain that text inside brackets describes action and should not be read aloud. Pairs can then begin reading their scripts aloud. Provide guidance as needed. Once students have read through their scripts several times and have added appropriate expression and intonation, have them start adding stage movements. (If you'd like, you can assign a third student to the pairs as a stage director to give the performing pair stage directions/movement.) After sufficient time has passed, and the students are ready, have them perform their scene for the class.

Evaluation

- Did the students read "The Story of the Opera?"
- Did the students read and apply what they learned from Aaron Shepard's "Tips on Reading" to their scene?
- Did the students perform their scene for each other?

TEKS

English Language Arts and Reading

Grade 5

(1) Reading/Fluency. Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Students are expected to read aloud grade-level stories with fluency (rate, accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing) and comprehension.

Grade 6

(1) Reading/Fluency. Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Students are expected to adjust fluency when reading aloud grade-level text based on the reading purpose and the nature of the text.

Grade 7

(3) Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking--fluency. The student reads grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. The student is expected to adjust fluency when reading grade-level text based on the reading purpose.

Grade 8

(3) Developing and sustaining foundational language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking--fluency. The student reads grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. The student is expected to adjust fluency when reading grade-level text based on the reading purpose.

Theatre**Grade 5**

(2) Creative expression: performance. The student interprets characters using the voice and body expressively and creates dramatizations. (A. C. D.)

Grade 6

(2) Creative expression: performance

The student interprets characters using the voice and body expressively and creates dramatizations. (A. B. C. D. E. F.)

Grade 7 Theatre II

(2) Creative expression: performance. The student interprets characters using the voice and body expressively and creates dramatizations. The student is expected to: (A) demonstrate safe use of the voice and body; (B) define characters by what they do, what they say, and what others say about them; (C) select movements and dialogue to portray a character appropriately; (D) create stories collaboratively and individually that have dramatic structure; (E) apply knowledge of effective voice and diction techniques to express thoughts and feelings; (F) compare and contrast dramatic performances to life; and (G) create improvised scenes that include setting, character, and plot.

Grade 8 Theatre III

(2) Creative expression: performance. The student interprets characters using the voice and body expressively and creates dramatizations. The student is expected to: (A) demonstrate safe use of the voice and body; (B) portray characters through familiar movements and dialogue; (C) create characters, dialogue, and actions that reflect dramatic structure in improvised and scripted scenes, individually and collaboratively; and (D) express thoughts and feelings using effective voice and diction.

Correlates: Music, Drama

Gardner's Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis

Sources:

The Little Prince Libretto by Nicolas Wright

Online Resources:

<http://www.aaronshep.com/rt/>

The Story of the Opera

A young pilot introduces himself to the audience. He explains how grown-ups never really understood him and that now, as an adult, he earns a living soaring through the sky. The stars sing to him as he glides through the air, but, despite the pleasant atmosphere, he suddenly loses control of his plane and crashes into the Sahara Desert.

The pilot looks over the damage and begins to try and fix the plane. But just as he grabs his tools, he's interrupted by a small boy who curiously asks the pilot to draw a sheep. Though confused at first, the pilot comes to know the boy as "the Little Prince," and, slowly, the prince reveals his unusual story.

We learn the prince was once the proud owner of a tiny asteroid, where he cared for a lovely rose whom he adored but who was also very difficult to please. She challenged him to leave his home and gain more wisdom in order to be able to take care of her better, and so... he set out to visit some neighboring planets. During his travels he met several strange adults, including a king, a vain man, a drunkard, a businessman, and a lamplighter. After meeting these men, the Little Prince—not quite satisfied with what he'd discovered so far—decided to journey to planet Earth.

The prince continues his story while the pilot listens. On Earth, the prince says, he met a slithering snake who claimed that his deadly poison could "ease" all the prince's worries. The Little Prince then encountered a garden full of roses and cried at the thought that his own rose might merely be one out of a million other common flowers.

The prince resumes his tale. Soon after meeting the roses, he adds, he was comforted by a friendly fox. The fox, who begged the prince to tame her and make her his own, gently explained that everything worthwhile is invisible and that such things cannot be touched, but can only be felt with the heart. She also told him that the bonds of love are what make all things—including ordinary flowers—uniquely special.

The pilot then cuts off the prince's story, saying that the two of them will need water if they are to continue to survive in the desert. Exhausted, they travel to a spot directly beneath the prince's planet (which sits high in the night sky) and discover a well. As they collect cool water from the crystal-clear well, the pilot realizes his friendly affection for the prince and begins to understand the fox's message.

Still, the prince longs to return to his rose as he has promised. Will the tired and weary Little Prince make it home? Will the pilot be able to keep the prince's lessons in his heart if the Little Prince disappears?

Synopsis Courtesy of Washington National Opera

The Characters

The Little Prince (Asteroid 612): A little boy who leaves his home planet and his beloved rose, to journey around the universe, ending up on Earth. There, he meets a pilot and tells him of his journey to several planets and the characters he has encountered along the way.

The Pilot: A young pilot who suddenly loses control of his plane and crashes into the Sahara Desert. While stranded in there trying to fix his plane, he is approached by the Little Prince.

The Rose: A single rose who is the object of the Little Prince's affection on his planet. She challenges him to leave his home and gain more wisdom to be able to take care of her better. Throughout his travels, she is always in his thoughts and heart.

The Fox: The Little Prince meets the fox in the desert on Earth. She is a wise creature, who teaches the Little Prince about the essence of life. After they become friends, the fox asks the Little Prince to tame her, which he does.

The Snake: The first living creature that the Little Prince encounters on the planet Earth is a snake, who speaks in riddles. The snake claims that his deadly poison could "ease" all the Little Prince's worries.

The Water (*off-stage singing*): When the Little Prince and Pilot travel through the desert, they hear singing coming from water in a well they discover.

The King: (Asteroid 325*): A resident of the first planet that the Little Prince visits after leaving his own planet. The king demands that his authority be respected and does not tolerate disobedience.

The Vain Man (Asteroid 326*): A conceited man living on the second planet the Little Prince visits. The vain man insists that everyone else admire him. He does not listen to anything but compliments and expects the Little Prince to shower him with praise.

The Drunkard (Asteroid 327*): Inhabitant of the third planet the little Prince visits. When the Little Prince asks the drunkard what he is doing, the drunkard tells the Little Prince that he is drinking to forget that he is ashamed of drinking.

The Businessman (Asteroid 328*):

The businessman lives on the fourth planet the Little Prince visits. The businessman always sits and counts stars on his planet. He thinks that he owns the stars, making him rich. The Little Prince explains to the businessman that he is of no use at all to the stars that he owns.

The Lamplighter (Asteroid 329*): A resident of the planet the Little Prince visits after leaving the businessman. On this planet, the lamplighter's job is to light and put out a lamp. He thinks that he has a terrible job because he must light the lamp once every minute so that his planet can make a complete turn every sixty seconds. The Little Prince, however, admires his dedication.

**Planet names found in the book that will not be named in the opera*

“Tips on Reading”

By Aaron Shepard

Preparing

First, here are instructions your readers can follow to prepare their scripts and get familiar with their parts.

- Highlight your speeches in your copy of the script. Mark only words you will *speak*—not the identifying role tags or the stage directions. (Yellow non-fluorescent marker works best.)
- Underline the words that tell about anything you’ll need to act out—words in either the stage directions or *other* readers’ speeches. If you’re given extra stage directions later, write them in the margin in *pencil*.
- Read through your part silently. If there are words you don’t understand or aren’t sure how to pronounce, look them up in a dictionary. If there are words you must remember to stress, underline them. If there are places you’ll need to pause between sentences, mark them with a couple of slashes (//). For instance, a narrator must sometimes pause to help the audience know there’s a change of scene or time.
- Read through your part out loud. If you’re a character, think about how that character would sound. Should you try a funny voice? How would the character feel about what’s happening in the story? Can you speak as if you were feeling that?
- Stand up and read through the script again. If you’re a character, try out faces and movements. Would your character stand or move in a special way? Can you do that? If possible, try all this in front of a mirror.

Even before you give your readers their scripts, you can help them by reading the script to them or its source story. Effective modeling will give them a head start against any difficulties. You might also want to discuss the difference between characters and narrators. (“In the story, character parts are *inside* the quotation marks, and narrator parts are *outside*.”)

Rehearsing

Here are pointers your readers should remember in both rehearsal and performance.

- Hold your script at a steady height, but make sure it doesn’t hide your face. If there’s anyone you can’t see in the front row of the audience, your script is too high.
- While you speak, try to look up often, not just at your script. When you do look down at it, keep your head up and move just your eyes.
- S-L-O-W D-O-W-N. Say each syl-la-ble clear-ly.
- TALK LOUD!
- *Speak with feeling.*

- Stand and sit straight. Keep your hands and feet still, if they're not doing anything useful!
- Face the audience as much as you can, whether you're moving or standing still. If you're rehearsing without an audience, pretend it's there anyway and remember where it is.
- Narrators, you're important even when the audience isn't looking at you. You control the story! Be sure to give the characters enough time to do what they must. And remember that you're talking to the audience, not yourself.
- Characters, you give the story its life! Remember to *be* your character even when you're not speaking, and be sure to react to the other characters.

To help your readers get full vocal power, have them check their breathing. To do this, they should place their hands on their stomachs and inhale. If they're really filling their lungs, their hands will be pushed *out*. (The diaphragm muscle gives the lungs more room by pushing down on the stomach, making it expand forward.) If their hands move *in*, it means they're filling only the top parts of their lungs.

Tongue twisters and other vocal exercises can help your readers speak more clearly. You might even warm them up with such exercises before your rehearsals and performances.

To help your readers hold themselves straight, ask them to imagine a string tied to their chest, pulling up.

Performing

Before an actual performance, discuss with your readers the "what-ifs."

- If the audience laughs, stop speaking till they can hear you again.
- If someone talks in the audience, don't pay attention.
- If someone walks into the room, don't look.
- If you make a mistake, pretend it was right.
- If you drop something, try to leave it at least till the audience is looking somewhere else.
- If a reader forgets to read, see if you can read their part instead, or make something up, or maybe just skip over it. But *don't* whisper or signal to the reader!
- If a reader falls on their bottom, pretend they didn't.

Finally, a couple of reminders for the director: Have fun and tell your readers what they're doing well!

Source: <http://www.aaronshp.com/rt/Tips1.html>

Readers Theater Script

The Pilot and The Little Prince Meet

The Pilot has crashed in the Sahara Desert. There, he meets the Little Prince. However, he is unsure that the Prince is real because he fears that he is hallucinating as he becomes dehydrated and overheated due to the hot sun.

Scene 2

Pilot: *[wiping sweat from his forehead]*

Sky. Sand. A blazing sun.

I'm a thousand miles from the nearest town, my plane is wrecked, and I've got water, water for eight days. Still, I'm alive. Am I really alive, or am I dreaming?

The Prince:

Please... Draw me a sheep. Draw a sheep.

Pilot:

But... What are you doing here?

The Prince:

Please...draw me a sheep.

Pilot:

It's no use asking. I can't draw.

The Prince:

That doesn't matter. I need a sheep to take back home. Please, draw me a sheep. I need a sheep. Draw me a sheep. Please draw me a sheep!

Pilot:

All right! I'll do what I can. *[draws a sheep quite poorly]*

The Prince:

This one is already quite sick. Draw me another.

Pilot:

What about this?

The Prince:

You can see for yourself that's not a sheep, it's a ram, it has horns.

Pilot:

Is this one better?

The Prince:

That sheep's too old. Draw me another! I want a sheep that will live for years. Draw me another one.

Pilot:

One more try.

This is the crate. The sheep is inside. Take it or leave it. I've work to do.

The Prince:

This is just the kind I wanted! Look!

Pilot:

If you're good, I'll draw you a rope to tie him up.

The Prince

He's sleeping, what a funny idea!

Pilot:

He might get lost. He might run away.

The Prince:

Where I live, he couldn't go far. It's all so small.

Pilot *[to audience]:*

That's how I met the Little Prince. It took me days to find out more. He never answered questions. He didn't even hear them. It was the things he said by chance that bit by bit revealed the truth.