

## Reader's Theater—From Story to Script

1. Almost any story can be performed, but some are easier and work better than others. In general, look for stories that are simple and lively, with lots of dialog or action and with not too many scenes or characters.
2. Start by seeing what speaking parts or *roles* are in the story. There are two kinds: *Narrators* tell the story. *Characters* are *in* the story. Another way to say it: Character parts are in quotation marks, narrator parts are outside.
3. Match the roles to your readers.
  - If you have too many readers:
    - You can have two or more narrators.
    - Some characters too can be split into two parts.
    - Or you can have people who act but don't say anything.
  - If you don't have enough readers:
    - Some readers can be more than one character—but not at once!
    - Or you can take out characters, or combine two into one.
    - Or the characters can be narrators too.
4. Feel free to take out parts of the text to make your script livelier, simpler to understand, or just easier to perform. But make sure the story still makes sense! Here are some things you might want to “cut”:
  - “He said” and “she said” lines (called *tag lines*).
  - Long descriptions.
  - Characters or scenes that are less important.
5. Other kinds of changes you might make:
  - Add speeches for characters who have few or no lines.
  - Convert narrator comments to stage directions.
  - Simplify language by replacing difficult words and splitting sentences.
  - Replace language that is sexist or demeaning.
  - Add reading aids—word stresses, commas, interpretive stage directions.
6. Format the script so it's easy to read, with big margins and some space between the lines. Readers can highlight their own speeches and write extra stage directions in the margins in pencil.

### Team Scripting Exercise

1. Read through the story silently.
2. As a group, identify the roles in the story and divide them among you.
3. Go over the story together, deciding who will read what and also what to cut. On your own sheet, in pencil, cross out the cuts and underline your own speeches. (You don't need to mark the speeches of others—but if you want to anyway, then put a circled name, initial, or number above where each reader will start.)
4. Try out your script by reading together. Go back and change it as needed.

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