

Building Fluency through **Reader's Theater**

Lessons and Activities

Grades 3-4

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Grades 3–4

Building Fluency
through
**Reader's
Theater**

Grades 3–4
Teacher's Guide



Teacher Created Materials

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What's Included in Each Lesson

Objectives

The objectives state the purpose of each lesson and communicate the desired outcome of the lesson related to fluency and the content area. The objectives are taken from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) compilation of content standards for K–12 curriculum. As stated on the McREL website (<http://www.mcrel.org>), the purpose of the standards compilation is “to address the major issues surrounding content standards, provide a model for their identification, and apply this model in order to identify standards and benchmarks in the subject areas.”

Summary

Within each lesson there is a summary section that describes the script and provides information to share with students to prepare them for the reader's theater performance. To decide which scripts to complete with students, read the summaries to determine how each fits in with your teaching plans. As a convenience, the summaries for the scripts are also provided below.

A Teacher and a Friend—This script is based on the true story of Helen Keller and her teacher, Annie Sullivan. Helen and Annie develop a special friendship as they learn and grow together and teach one another about the world. The language arts connection is related to studying biographies. This script can be used to introduce any biography.

Teaming with Mr. Cool!—In this script, Mr. Cool Coyote is a sneaky character. He continually steals sweet little animals from Farmer Joe and Farmer Jack. On their own, the farmers' efforts to catch Mr. Cool are unsuccessful, but when they work together, the coyote's antics are put to an end! The language arts connection is writing narratives. This script complements the book *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl.

Grandfather's Storytelling—In this reader's theater, a young boy and his family talk about what happened on the night the boy was born as well as how the boy overcame the challenges of blindness. The boy asks his grandfather to retell the stories and to help him remember them so he can carry them with him even after his grandfather is gone. The social studies connection relates to the oral storytelling traditions of the American Indians. This script retells the story shared in *Knots on a Counting Rope* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault.

Two Flat Friends Travel the World—In this script, two friends make themselves flat to take on a tremendous school project. They travel to Egypt and China to learn important details that they can share with their class in a school project. The social studies connection for this script relates to studying different world cultures. This script complements *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown.

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Summary *(cont.)*

The Mathematical Journey of a Lifetime—Three narrators share a delightful tale of a young boy and his friend who come to appreciate the role math plays in their lives as they take the journey of a lifetime. During their journey, they must use their math skills to solve problems. Without math, their incredible journey would not be possible. The mathematical connection is understanding and solving factorials. This script relates to *Anno's Mysterious Multiplying Jar* by Masaichiro and Mitsumasa Anno.

Wigz Will Be Wigz—This script is based on a story about counting money. The Wigz family wants to go to the carnival, but they don't have enough money to pay for food, rides, and souvenirs. They search the house and count the money they find until they have enough to enjoy a day at the fair. The mathematical connection for this is counting money. This script is based on *Pigs Will Be Pigs* by Amy Axelrod.

From the Sun to Beyond Pluto—Luke and Karl have been studying the solar system in school. They have to do a creative project for science class, but they don't have any ideas. One night their dreams take them on the greatest journey of their lives. As they travel, the boys learn many new facts; plus, they come up with a great project. The science connection is the solar system. This script complements *The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Solar System* by Joanna Cole.

The Inventor: Benjamin Franklin—This script is based on the true story of the life of Benjamin Franklin. As a boy, Franklin becomes an apprentice to a printer, but questions about science spark his curiosity. He later becomes one of the most famous and important American inventors. The science connection is inventions and inventors. This script relates to *What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* by Jean Fritz or any other biography of Benjamin Franklin.

Materials

All of the materials needed to complete a lesson are listed in this section to assist you in preparing for each lesson.

Introduce the Literature

Each script in this kit is based on a piece of children's literature. You are encouraged to read the book to your students or have your students read the book during language arts time. If the book is not available to you, this section provides a summary of the literature so you can share it with your students.

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

ELL Support

Reader's theater can be used effectively in English-as-a-second-language classrooms to enhance students' proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Furthermore, the program can be adapted to scaffold and model language usage to meet students' needs at multiple ELL levels. Through this program's ELL support activities and other various components of the lesson plans, students will become actively engaged in authentic language development activities. As a result, students' motivation to utilize the English language will increase.

The drama component of reader's theater helps students feel less inhibited in both speaking and reading the English language, and thus fluency in both areas will increase. In *Stage by Stage: A Handbook for Using Drama in the Second Language Classroom* by Ann F. Burke and Julie C. O'Sullivan, the authors state that "Drama is simply a good way to get students' whole selves involved with language and it is fun" (p. xiii). The authors also emphasize that once students feel less inhibited, their fluency will increase, because within the context of reader's theater there is an inherent opportunity to do repeated readings and practice skills such as pronunciation in an authentic context.

McMaster (1998), in her review of research studies involving literacy and drama in the classroom, states the benefits of drama for emergent readers. Drama provides prior knowledge and rich literary experiences needed for future readers as well as a scaffold for literacy instruction. It helps students develop symbolic representation, new vocabulary, knowledge of word order, phrasing, and metacognition and introduces them to various forms of discourse, all of which contribute to the construction of meaning from text.

Each script in this kit is accompanied by a musical piece as well as a corresponding poem. Both of these components have also been shown to facilitate students' language acquisition. Educator Tim Murphey (1992) analyzed the lyrics of pop songs and found several common language characteristics that would benefit language learners: the language is conversational; the lyrics are often sung at a slower rate than words, and there is a repetition of vocabulary and structures. Moriya (1988) found that music provided Asian learners a forum to practice pronunciation and learn the phonemic differences between Asian languages and English. Speakers of various languages can benefit from the language experience that the music selections will provide.

The poetry component to the program can be used in many creative ways to enhance students' language acquisition in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) assert that using poetry in an ELL classroom provides students with the opportunity to explore both the linguistic and conceptual facets of text without focusing on the mechanics of language. Choral reading of the poem builds fluency and provides practice in pronunciation. Some of the vocabulary words used in the script are reinforced through the poem, providing the opportunity to see the words used in multiple contexts.

What's Included in Each Lesson (cont.)

ELL Support (cont.)

The accompanying poems can also serve as a model for students to write their own poems. Depending on students' ELL levels, a framework or template can be developed for each poem to structure the writing process and provide students another opportunity to use the vocabulary and word order they have learned from the script and the poem. Additionally, the poem can also serve as a medium for discussion of the themes and concepts presented in each script. Moreover, students and teachers can create action sequences to facilitate visualization and comprehension of the text. Gasparro and Falletta (1994) emphasize that dramatizing poetry enables the learner to become intellectually, emotionally, and physically engaged in the target language; therefore, language is internalized and remembered.

Students' listening comprehension will also develop as a result of using reader's theater. According to Brown (2001), some characteristics of speech make listening difficult, such as clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction. Brown proposes methods for helping second-language learners overcome these challenges. Reader's theater utilizes authentic language and contexts, it is intrinsically motivating, and it supports both bottom-up and top-down listening techniques. Illustrations in the scripts, along with the possible inclusion of realia and gestures, will assist students in understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and idiomatic phrases.

In addition, the professional recording of the scripts on the Performance CD will provide another opportunity for students to enhance listening comprehension and reading ability. The voices on the CD are articulate and expressive, and they serve as models for accurate pronunciation and fluent reading. By listening to the CD, students will be able to practice visualizing text and speech. A Best Practice suggested by second-language teacher-training programs is for the students to hear an oral reading of the piece of literature prior to reading it aloud themselves. The CD can be used for this practice as well.

Reader's theater provides a medium for ELL students to interact with other students in the classroom and will facilitate the development of a strong community of language learners. The experience will increase students' motivation and diminish their inhibitions to learn the new language. The components of the program will provide the necessary support and scaffolding that teachers need to provide effective instruction to ELL students in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The program will engage students and serve as a model for fluency, pronunciation, and overall language usage.

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Involving All Students

Even though each script has only six roles, all students can be involved in each reader's theater performance. Students can be involved in a variety of ways. In this section of each lesson are suggestions for ways to include all students.

Reading the Script

This section of each lesson explains how to introduce the reader's theater script to your students and offers suggestions for introducing unfamiliar vocabulary and understanding the characters. As you read each script with the students, you may try to use the following performance tips.

Performance Tips

Reader's theater performance can be a frightening experience for some students. Assist them by reviewing the following suggestions.

- Relax! Breathe deeply and speak slowly to avoid a quivering or breathless voice.
- Stand with one foot in front of the other and with your weight balanced to avoid that feeling of shaking and trembling.
- Don't rush through your lines or speak too rapidly. Take your time and say each word distinctly.
- Some movement for emphasis or to give you a relaxed look is good, but don't move back and forth or develop nervous mannerisms. Avoid wringing hands, tugging at clothing, or twisting hair.
- A mistake is a normal part of any learning experience. If you make one, correct it and go on.

Getting to know your character will make your performance more believable. Use these questions to get in character as you rehearse.

- How old do you think the character is?
- What kind of voice do you think the character should have? Is the voice soft, loud, high pitched, or low pitched?
- How does the character stand or use his or her hands when speaking?
- Does the character seem happy, proud, or excitable?
- Do you think this character is serious or silly?
- Is the character kind?
- Do you think people would like this character?
- What can you do to communicate this character's personality to others?

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Assigning Roles

Each script contains six character roles. Each of the roles is written for a different reading level. The chart below lists the reading levels for all the characters in the eight scripts.

Script Title	High 2nd Grade 2.5–3.0	Low 3rd Grade 3.0–3.5	High 3rd Grade 3.5–4.0
<i>A Teacher and A Friend</i>	Mrs. Keller Narrator 2	Helen Keller Narrator 1	Captain Keller Annie Sullivan
<i>Teaming with Mr. Cool!</i>	Farmer Joe Farmer Jack	Mr. Cool Coyote Narrator 2	Narrator 1 Narrator 3
<i>Grandfather's Storytelling</i>	Father Aunt	Mother Uncle	Boy Grandfather
<i>Two Flat Friends Travel the World</i>	Dr. Stanley Flats Fred's Mom	Mazu Eman	Willie Fred
<i>The Mathematical Journey of a Lifetime</i>	Adam Genie	Jacob Narrator 1	Narrator 2 Narrator 3
<i>Wigz Will Be Wigz</i>	Mr. Wigz Mrs. Wigz	Peter Penelope	Pepperoni Pineapple
<i>From the Sun to Beyond Pluto</i>	Luke Maude	Luke's Mom Karl	Navigator Ms. Kern
<i>The Inventor: Benjamin Franklin</i>	Deborah Townsperson	Benjamin Mr. Franklin	Narrator 1 Narrator 2

What's Included in Each Lesson *(cont.)*

Assigning Roles *(cont.)*

Reading Levels Correlation Chart

Grade Level Range	Guided Reading	Early Intervention	DRA
2.5–3.0	K–M	20–21	24–30
3.0–3.5	M–O	21–22	30–34
3.5–4.0	O–Q	22–23	34–40

Meeting the Fluency Objective

Each lesson focuses on a specific fluency objective, such as reading with accuracy or reading with expression. This section provides procedures for teaching the fluency objective related to the featured script.

Content-Area Connection

Each reader's theater script focuses on a specific content area: language arts, social studies, mathematics, or science. This section of each lesson explains the content and provides suggestions for introducing this content to your students. The content in the scripts can be quite sophisticated and warrants specific instruction to help your students understand it.

Fine Arts Connection

Each script has a song and a poem to accompany it. Your students will perform these songs and poems at designated places within the reader's theater performances. Your kit includes a Performance CD containing all of the songs and poems related to the eight scripts. This section of each lesson offers suggestions for using this CD to learn the songs and poems.

Teaming with Mr. Cool!

Teamwork Lesson Plan

Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will determine the meaning of text and then participate in an oral reading, focusing on the use of appropriate expression.
- **Content Area:** Students will write their own personal narratives about times they used teamwork.

Summary

In this script, Mr. Cool Coyote is a sneaky character. He continually steals sweet little animals from Farmer Joe and Farmer Jack. On their own, the farmers' efforts to catch Mr. Cool are unsuccessful, but when they work together, the coyote's antics are put to an end!



Materials

- *Teaming with Mr. Cool!* script booklets
- *Teamwork Character Masks* (pages 38–43 or Teacher Resource CD); copied on cardstock
- copies of the *Take-Home Script* (Teacher Resource CD)
- *PowerPoint*® slide show (Teacher Resource CD)
- overhead transparencies of the poem and song
- Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers

Introduce the Literature

This script complements the book *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl. In this script, one of the main characters is Mr. Fox. The characters in this story have many of the same fun and entertaining characteristics as those in Dahl's book. You can use this reader's theater script as an introduction to a unit of study with that book. Or, you can follow up your literature unit with this reader's theater.



ELL Support

The use of slang and figures of speech in this script may confuse your English language learners. To assist them in understanding these words and terms, review unfamiliar words and phrases used in the story, such as *Dag nab it*, *chicken coop*, *bop on the head*, *tail between his legs*, *squawked loudly*, and *pound his hide*.

Involving All Students

While this script has only six roles, there are many ways to involve all of your students. For this reader's theater experience, assign the main roles to six of the students. Then, assign a few coaches to each student with a role, giving each character a support team of coaches. Explain that the job of the coaches is to assist the actor with reading the script and using appropriate and interesting expression. Each actor and his or her coaches should read and recite the lines of the script together. One coach might serve as the reader of other characters' lines. Another coach should listen to the actor's reading of the lines and offer encouragement and suggestions for using expression. Be sure to emphasize the coaches' use of encouragement. It is the job of each coach to ensure the success of the actor.

Reading the Script



1. Provide each student with a copy of the script. You can give the script booklets to students and their coaches, or you can print copies of the *Take-Home Script: Teaming with Mr. Cool!*.
2. Draw students' attention to the list of characters. Point out that three of the roles are narrator roles. Explain that a narrator is not an actual character in the story, but rather tells background information and details about the story.
3. Read the script aloud as students follow along. You may want to first play the recording of the script as students follow along. Then, read the script again and ask students to read it aloud with you. A PowerPoint® presentation of the script is also included on the Teacher Resource CD. You can use this slide show like a big book to review the script with the students.
4. Draw students' attention to new vocabulary and discuss unfamiliar words. Use the glossary at the end of the script as necessary for this discussion. The glossary also has pronunciation for some of the words. Students should use these pronunciations to ensure that they don't fumble over the words in the actual performance.
5. Point out to students that it is important to become familiar with the lines of the script in order to read smoothly. Emphasize expression when reading and point out that different characters have different ways of speaking. For example, each of the farmers might have different accents or drawls. The coyote probably speaks differently than the farmers and the narrators. How might these voices differ from one another? Help generate some ideas for students to use so that they are varying the voices and expressions for each of the narrators and characters.
6. Draw students' attention to the poem and song featured in the script. Read the poem and song aloud or play the professionally recorded versions. While you're playing the CD, display the words to the students using the overhead transparency. Discuss how the poem and song add to the story.

ELL Support



Together, create a character web describing Cool Coyote's character traits. Students can find the words that were used to describe Cool Coyote in the story, or students can come up with words on their own. After each student shares a word, act it out as a class. If a student doesn't know the word about which they are thinking, have them act it out, draw it, or describe it. Once the character web is completed, create a Cool Coyote impersonation by having students choral read each word and then act it out. This same activity can be done with other characters in the story as well.



Teaming with Mr. Cool!

Teamwork Lesson Plan



Assigning Roles

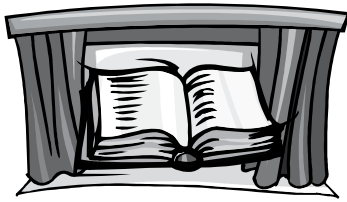
Assign roles to students based on their reading proficiency. It is important to remember that when students practice fluency, they should read materials at or below their reading level. This helps them focus on their accuracy, expression, and reading rate. If a student is reading text that is too difficult, attention will be focused on sounding out words and comprehension, rather than fluency.

These are the approximate reading levels for the roles in this script.

- ❖ Farmer Joe: high 2nd grade
- ❖ Narrator 2: low 3rd grade
- ❖ Narrator 1: high 3rd grade
- ❖ Farmer Jack: high 2nd grade
- ❖ Mr. Cool: low 3rd grade
- ❖ Narrator 3: high 3rd grade

Meeting the Fluency Objective

1. The fluency objective for this script focuses on the use of appropriate expression. Explain to the students that when reading, it is important to use expression. Then, write the following sentences on the board.
 - Ouch, that hurt!
 - It's a beautiful day.
 - That's a really scary movie.
 - I can't wait to go to the zoo.
2. Read each of the sentences using a monotone voice. Then, ask students how they might use expression in their voices to communicate the messages more effectively. Allow students to share their ideas by reading the sentences aloud.
3. Draw students' attention to the difference between the monotone reading of each sentence and the expressive reading of each sentence. Explain that the use of inappropriate expression can be confusing to an audience. We use expression to convey how we feel about something. When performing reader's theater, a person uses expression to communicate the feelings of a particular character.
4. Further illustrate this point by reading the first two pages of the script in a monotone voice. Ask students to comment on this reading. Would this be an enjoyable way for an audience to listen to actors perform the entire script?
5. Read the first page again, using appropriate expression. Then, invite student volunteers to read lines of the second page using the expression they think effectively communicates the message of the script.
6. Allow students to practice reading the script on many occasions to increase fluency. The coaches should encourage the readers to think about the meaning of the characters' words and focus on reading that uses appropriate and entertaining expression. Send home copies of the take-home script and encourage them to get their families to help them practice.



Content-Area Connection— Language Arts

The focus of this narrative script is the theme of teamwork.

Understanding this theme will help your students make sense of the story's purpose. Explain that accomplishing tasks alone can often be difficult, but when people work together tasks are easier to complete. You will also want to explain to students that a narrative tells a story or recounts an event. With a personal narrative, the author tells about a personal experience, describing the event and his or her reactions or feelings about what happened. This script can be studied as a personal narrative by Mr. Cool Coyote.

1. Tell students that a good narrative answers the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?
2. Write these six question stems on the board. Then, ask students if Cool Coyote addressed these questions in his personal narrative. What are some questions using these stems that were answered in the story. Write students' responses on the board under the appropriate question stems.
3. Explain to students that now they will be writing their own narratives about personal experiences that involve teamwork. Ask students to brainstorm a list of these types of experiences (e.g., important sporting events or musical performances). Record student ideas on the board.
4. Emphasize that since a narrative is a story, it should include the following elements: setting, plot, conflict, and conclusion. When students are writing their own narratives, they need to make sure they describe the setting well. They should also be sure to include an interesting plot that contains a conflict and conclusion.
5. The narratives should be well-organized either by the order that the events occur or in some other logical sequence.
6. Suggest that students illustrate the settings for their stories. In addition, each student should draw or even bring in photographs of the key characters in his or her story.



ELL Support

The English language learners in your classroom may have a difficult time

writing an entire narrative on their own. Instead, allow these students to tape record themselves telling the narratives. They can describe the settings and characters. Then, they should retell the events of their teamwork story in chronological order. Once they are finished recording their stories, have non-ELL partners help transcribe the recordings. Then, the ELL students can illustrate their narratives.

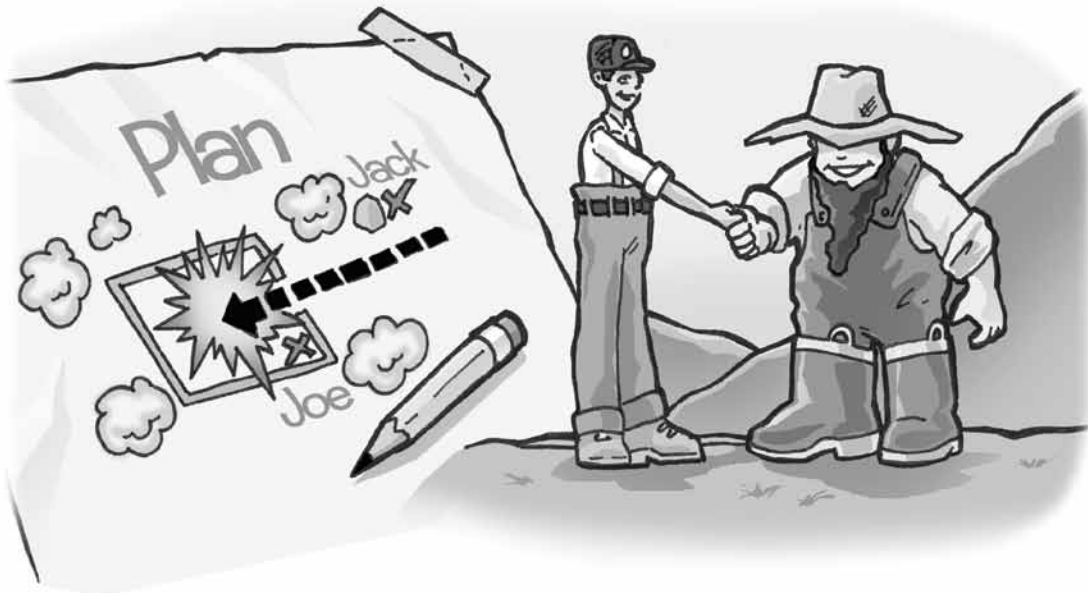


Teaming with Mr. Cool!

Teamwork Lesson Plan

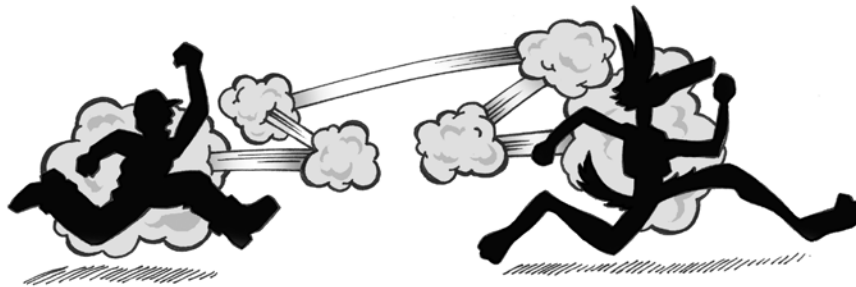
Fine Arts Connection

1. The script contains a song and poem: “Cool Coyote” and “Me, Myself, and I.” This song and poem are directly related to *Teaming with Mr. Cool!* but not limited to use only with this script.
2. Have students draw a portrait (head and shoulders or full-length) of a very cool character. Have them describe their drawings and tell why the character is so cool.
3. Have student groups read the poem “Me, Myself, and I.” Have students discuss the following questions in their groups: Do we need anyone else in our lives? Are we the greatest? Can we do everything ourselves? Should we have everything we want? Have each group rewrite the poem as an opposite idea. For instance, rewrite the first line as, “I need someone else.” Have the groups share their revised and much more humble poems with the class.
4. The “Cool Coyote” song might make a good rap song. Let students practice singing it rap style, complete with arm and hand movements. Don’t forget rhythmic rap sound effects!
5. Cool Coyote’s cousin is Fantastic Mr. Fox, a Roald Dahl character who has also had some strife with farmers. Have on hand a selection of books about animals versus farmers (e.g., Peter Rabbit) for students to read and examine. Have student groups form around their favorites and then have the groups act out their favorite stories for the class.



Performance CD

Description	Track	Time
Reader's Theater Theme Song: "Curtain Time"	Volume 1, Track 01	1:03
Tips for Rehearsing Reader's Theater and Tips for Performing Reader's Theater, pages 2–3	Volume 1, Track 02	2:05
Script reading, pages 4–6	Volume 1, Track 08	2:44
Poem: "Me, Myself, and I"	Volume 1, Track 09	1:11
Script reading (<i>cont.</i>), pages 7–14	Volume 1, Track 10	7:54
Song: "Cool Coyote"	Volume 1, Track 11	1:54
Script reading (<i>cont.</i>), pages 15–21	Volume 1, Track 12	8:06



Teacher Resource CD

Description	File Name
Teamwork Character Masks	masks_Teaming with Mr. Cool.pdf
Take-Home Script: Teaming with Mr. Cool!	THS_Teaming with Mr. Cool.pdf
PowerPoint®: Teaming with Mr. Cool!	PP_Teaming with Mr. Cool.ppt
Poem Transparency: "Me, Myself, and I"	poem_Teaming with Mr. Cool.pdf
Song Transparency: "Cool Coyote"	song_Teaming with Mr. Cool.pdf



**TEAMING WITH
MR. COOL!**

Sarah Kartchner Clark

Language Arts



Sarah Kartchner Clark, M.A.

TIPS FOR REHEARSING READER'S THEATER

BY AARON SHEPARD

- Make sure your script doesn't hide your face. If there is anyone in the audience you can't see, your script is too high.
- While you speak, try to look up often. Don't just look at your script. When you do look at the script, move just your eyes and keep your head up.
- Talk slowly. Speak each syllable clearly.
- Talk loudly! You have to be heard by every person in the room.
- Talk with feeling. Your voice has to tell the story.
- Stand or sit up straight. Keep your hands and feet still if they're doing nothing useful.
- If you're moving around, face the audience as much as you can. When rehearsing, always think about where the audience will be.
- Characters, remember to be your character even when you're not speaking.
- Narrators, make sure you give the characters enough time for their actions.

TIPS FOR PERFORMING READER'S THEATER

BY AARON SHEPARD

- If the audience laughs, stop speaking until they can hear you again.
- If someone talks in the audience, don't pay attention.
- If someone walks into the room, don't look at them.
- If you make a mistake, pretend it was right.
- If you drop something, try to leave it where it is until the audience is looking somewhere else.
- If a reader forgets to read his or her part, see if you can read the part instead, make something up, or just skip over it. Don't whisper to the reader!
- If a reader falls down during the performance, pretend it didn't happen.



TEAMING WITH MR. COOL!



Characters

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Narrator 3

Cool Coyote

Farmer Joe

Farmer Jack

Setting

This reader's theater takes place on the farms of Farmer Joe and Farmer Jack.



Act 1

Narrator 1: You've heard all about Fantastic Mr. Fox, the smartest fox around.

Narrator 2: And you've heard of the Big Bad Wolf . . .

Narrator 3: But let us tell you about the . . .

Narrator 1: smartest,



Narrator 2: sneakiest,

Narrator 3: and fastest . . .

Narrator 2: coyote in the West!

Cool Coyote: That's me! Mr. Cool Coyote! I'm the smartest coyote around. Why, I am just as smart as my cousin. You've probably heard of him. His name is Fantastic Mr. Fox. Have you read his story by Roald Dahl?

Narrator 1: You better believe that Mr. Cool Coyote was the sneakiest coyote around. Why, he was very long and slender for a coyote. He could fit into any hole. He loved to hunt rabbits and chickens.

Narrator 2: And the fastest?

Cool Coyote: Quicker than quick . . .

Narrator 1: Bam!

Narrator 2: Boom!

Narrator 3: Bang!

Narrator 2: The job was done.

Cool Coyote: And so smooth, you'd never even see me!
Magnificent! Glorious! Intelligent!

Narrator 3: And there's no doubt Mr. Cool Coyote was the strongest coyote around. He carried rocks up and down the mountain just to keep fit. That way, the chickens and rabbits he took from the farmers didn't feel heavy as he ran away.

Cool Coyote: No one else can carry as many rocks as I can.
Just call me Macho Man. I never drop even one!

Narrator 1: In fact, some people said that was his problem.
He was just too smart, too sneaky, and too fast!

Poem: Me, Myself, and I



Act 2

Narrator 2: Mr. Cool Coyote's problems started when he stole one too many rabbits and chickens from Farmer Joe and Farmer Jack.

Narrator 3: Farmer Joe was the best chicken farmer in these parts. His prized chickens were the talk of the town. He even sang to his chickens. He thought that made their feathers grow softer.

Narrator 1: If he ever saw one of his hens laying an egg, he would make everyone freeze and be silent so they would not disturb the chicken. But night after night, Farmer Joe's chickens were disappearing one by one. Farmer Joe tried to stay awake to catch the culprit, but he wasn't fast enough. Or, he would fall asleep.
(Make snoring sounds.)



Narrator 2: One time, Mr. Cool Coyote dug an underground tunnel. The tunnel went right up to the floor of the chicken coop on Farmer Joe's farm. Mr. Cool simply removed the floorboards and climbed right in.

Narrator 3: That coyote hid out in the chicken coop for three days before Farmer Joe realized what was going on.

Narrator 1: That's right. Farmer Joe lost five chickens that time.

Farmer Joe: Those poor chickens never had a chance! But I fixed him. I built a new chicken coop with a cement floor. There's nothing better than cement.

Narrator 2: Another time, Mr. Cool Coyote broke into the chicken coop in the middle of the day.



Cool Coyote: That was sure sneaky of me, wasn't it? I'm one great trickster. Simply brilliant!

Narrator 3: Hold on a minute, Mr. Cool. It may have been sneaky, but you almost got caught.

Narrator 1: That's right. It just happened to be the same day that Farmer Joe was watering his vegetable garden.

Narrator 2: He had his watering hose. And, it was loaded with freezing cold water.

Narrator 3: Farmer Joe glanced back at the chicken coop while he was working.

Narrator 1: He noticed a set of ears through the window of the chicken coop.

Farmer Joe: No chicken of mine ever had any ears!

Narrator 2: Farmer Joe sprinted back to the chicken coop with his hose blazing.

Narrator 3: Water was flying everywhere . . .

Cool Coyote: Brrr! I got out of there just in the nick of time. If there's one thing I detest, it's freezing cold water!

Farmer Joe: Ha, ha! Yep, I about froze your tail off.

Narrator 1: But the last straw was when Mr. Cool Coyote tried to hypnotize Farmer Joe's chickens.

Cool Coyote: Ha, ha, ha! The only one that fell for that trick was the young spring chick. She never knew what happened! Ha, ha, ha!



Act 3

Farmer Joe: “Dag nab it! That coyote got one of my sweet chicks again! How could this possibly happen?”

Narrator 2: He had had it! Early the next morning, Farmer Joe marched over to his friend's farm. Farmer Jack and Farmer Joe had known each other for a long time.

Farmer Joe: “I am ready to catch this thief! That dirty rotten scoundrel!”

Narrator 3: Farmer Jack was busy building a new row of rabbit hutches. Farmer Jack was a good farmer as well. He raised prized rabbits. He entered his bunnies in the state and county fairs each year. He won the “Best of Show” each and every time.

Narrator 1: It wasn't unusual to see Farmer Jack brushing the fur of his rabbit friends morning, noon, and night.

Narrator 2: Farmer Jack had his share of problems with Mr. Cool Coyote as well.

Narrator 3: He sure did. Mr. Cool's favorite meal happens to be rabbit stew.



Cool Coyote: Oh yeah! I just love the way the meat falls off the bones. It makes me hungry just thinking about it. Mmmmm!

Narrator 1: Early one morning, Farmer Jack took all of his rabbits out for a walk. You see, he was trying to build the muscles of his prized rabbits.

Narrator 2: Mr. Cool Coyote could hear all the hopping going on, and he just couldn't resist.

Narrator 3: Mr. Cool snuck up behind a row of rabbits and scooped them into a basket.

Narrator 1: Farmer Jack heard the screeching of his rabbits and whirled around in time to see Mr. Cool Coyote dash into the woods.

Narrator 3: Farmer Jack ran after the coyote but got so lost it took him five hours to find his farm again.

Cool Coyote: Ha, ha, ha, ha! I ran around in circles so fast, there was no way he was going to catch me! No sir! Not today! I got out of there lickety-split!

Farmer Jack: It breaks my heart just thinking about those sweet rabbits. Those adorable little rabbits are my pride and joy.

Narrator 1: So, when Farmer Joe came up to the chicken coop that morning, Farmer Jack was more ready than he had ever been before.

Farmer Joe: "Hey Jack! Hello? Hello? Are you in there?"

Farmer Jack: "Why, yes, Joe, I am. What do you need? What's wrong? You sound furious!"

Farmer Joe: "That clever coyote has eaten his last chicken dinner. I need some help. Mark my words! That coyote will never eat a chicken again. Not if I can help it. Will you help me catch him?"

Farmer Jack: "Yes, I think I can! I've tried and tried to catch him on my own. I've set traps, but none of them have worked. He is too thick-skinned. Mr. Cool Coyote is just too smart, too sneaky, and too fast!"

Farmer Joe: "But if we put our strength and brains together, I think we can catch that sneaky coyote!"

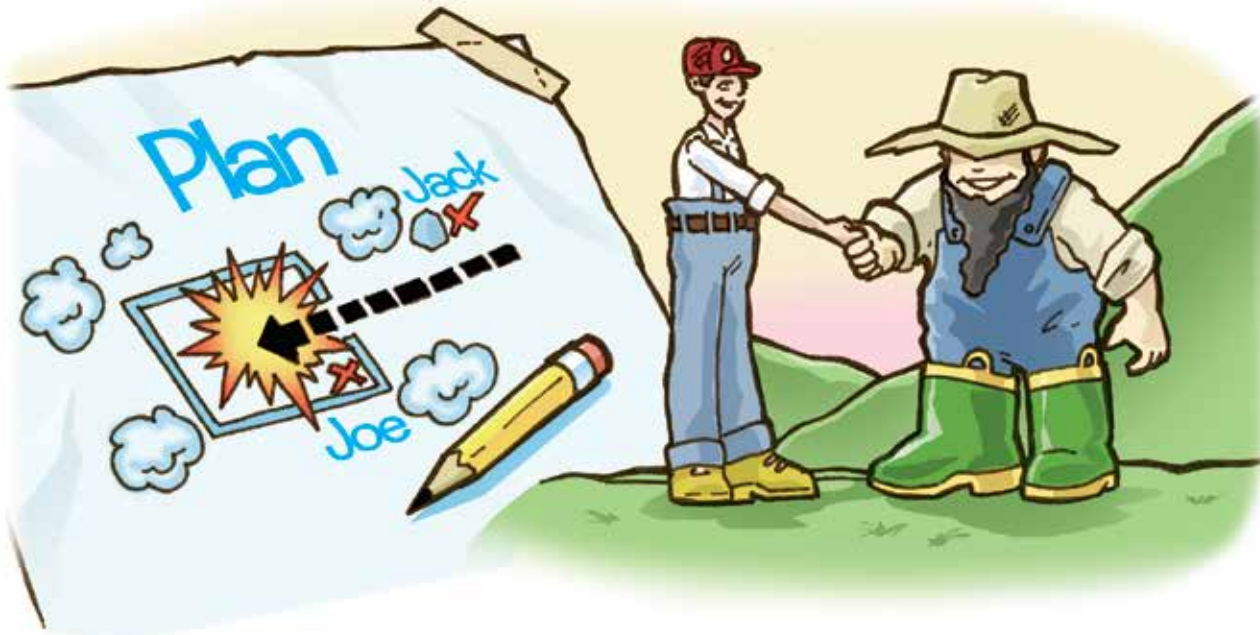
Narrator 3: The farmers shook hands and began to whisper back and forth.

Narrator 1: The farmers worked on their plan to catch Mr. Cool Coyote until well into the night. The sun was just starting to come up over the horizon when they finished. Both farmers stood up, stretched, and shook hands again.

Joe and Jack: “Here we come, Mr. Cool Coyote! You better run, and you better hide. We take no prisoners!”



Song: Cool Coyote



Act 4

Narrator 2: So, the farmers had formed a team to “outfox” Mr. Cool. They set their plan in motion right away.

Narrator 3: Farmer Jack and Farmer Joe prepared for Mr. Cool to eat his breakfast. The coyote usually started his morning meal with a nice, juicy chicken leg.

Narrator 1: Meanwhile, Mr. Cool Coyote had just woken up. He stretched long and hard and said to himself,

Cool Coyote: “Why, I feel hungry this morning! I think I will go and get myself one of those fine lookin’ chickens from Farmer Joe.”

Narrator 2: Farmer Joe had just crawled inside the chicken coop dressed in a chicken costume. He knew he couldn't stop Mr. Cool Coyote from getting into his chicken coop. But, he could stop the coyote from inside!

Narrator 3: Farmer Jack was hiding behind a rock with a big stick. His part of the plan was to bop Mr. Cool Coyote on the head as he ran out of the coop. Farmer Joe just knew that Farmer Jack would send Mr. Cool Coyote running away with his tail between his legs!

Farmer Joe: "Pssst! Hey Jack!"

Narrator 1: Farmer Joe was checking to see if Farmer Jack was in position.

Farmer Jack: "I'm here and I'm ready to go. Let's get this coyote before he knows what got him. He won't be bothering us anymore!"

Joe and Jack: (*whispering*) "Let's go."

Narrator 2: Mr. Cool Coyote snuck out from behind a big oak tree and looked both ways for Farmer Joe. He didn't see him. So, he went inside the chicken coop.



Narrator 3: Mr. Cool Coyote was too fast. Before Farmer Joe could jump up and grab him, Mr. Cool was taking his first bite.

Farmer Joe: "Bawk! Bawk!"

Narrator 1: Farmer Joe squawked loudly like a chicken. He was flaming red with anger, and he was determined that Mr. Cool Coyote would not get another chicken. He hollered for Farmer Jack to come clobber the sneaky coyote.

Narrator 2: Farmer Jack heard the scuffle inside and came running from his hiding place. He was holding his stick in his hand. He stood by the door, just waiting for the coyote to run out of the chicken coop.

Narrator 3: Feathers were flying everywhere. It was hard to see the difference between the coyote and the chickens. Mixed in with the animals was Farmer Joe as he scrambled to get ahold of the coyote.

Act 5

Narrator 1: Farmer Jack could see the commotion inside the coop, but he couldn't tell which one was Mr. Cool Coyote.

Cool Coyote: "Yikes! I've got to get out of here! Help! Call 9-1-1!"

Narrator 3: He made a run for the door and bolted right through it.

Narrator 1: Or did he?

Narrator 2: Mr. Cool Coyote bolted again, but he just couldn't fit through the door. He was too big! He had gained too much weight in the last few days with his diet of chicken legs and rabbit stew.

Joe and Jack: "What?!"

Narrator 3: That's right. Mr. Cool Coyote couldn't fit through the door. Each time he tried, Farmer Jack would bop him on the head. This would send him flying back in where Farmer Joe would shove him back towards the door.

Farmer Joe: "Clobber him again, Jack. This is our only chance. You can get him! Hit him harder!"

Farmer Jack: "I'm trying to, Joe, but he's not coming through the door. Where is that coyote? I'll give him something to consider! Yesiree!"

Cool Coyote: "I can't fit! Oh, how embarrassing! It must be all of Mama's good cooking."

Narrator 1: He whined and whined as he jiggled and wiggled.

Farmer Jack: "So what do we do?"

Farmer Joe: "Let's see . . ."

Narrator 2: Farmer Joe and Farmer Jack set up a new plan. Things had certainly not gone as they planned. They wanted to trap that old coyote for sure, but like this? Inside the chicken coop? It seemed too pure and simple. The first step was for Farmer Joe to remove all of his chickens.



Narrator 3: And try as he might, Mr. Cool could not leave. He sat back and awaited his fate.

Farmer Joe: “We could kill him you know, but that just doesn’t seem right.”

Farmer Jack: “Why, that’s what we planned to do all night!”

Farmer Joe: “We worked as a team, and we caught that sneaky coyote. Certainly, we can think of something to do. Let’s think up a new plan together, and see if we can’t solve our dilemma . . .”

Narrator 1: and he started to grin.

Narrator 2: So, the farmers sat down and discussed all the options. They realized Mr. Cool Coyote was only trapped for now. He would escape once he lost the extra weight. But, working as a team, they got creative.

Farmer Jack: “We’ll hire Mr. Cool Coyote as our watch dog. We can feed him all day and all night. He’ll be so stuffed with food; he won’t ever touch our animals again. He’ll be so gorged; he’ll wish he could starve.”

Farmer Joe: “But, we’ll only feed him ice cream, soda, and pizza! He won’t lose weight with that as his diet. Our plan is superb.”

Narrator 3: Mr. Cool Coyote kept his weight on and even gained more. His job was to yell each time that he heard an intruder outside. This gave the farmers plenty of time to catch the thief before any damage was done.

Narrator 1: Each time he heard something outside, the coyote let out a nice long howl. The next time you hear a howl in the night, think of Mr. Cool Coyote with his new job. Certainly you’ve heard him, but do not worry. He’s joined up with the farmers and became part of their team.

Cool Coyote: “Somedays, I wonder if this is all a dream.”

Narrator 2: We’ve come to the end of our story, dear friends. But remember the lesson we shared. It’s “cool” to work as a team, you know. It’s better to share and to care. So the next time you have a problem to solve, don’t face it alone. Ask your friends to work as a team!

ME, MYSELF, AND I

I don't need anyone else.

All I need is me.

I'm the best. I'm the greatest.

Just you wait and see.

I can do most anything.

I don't need your help.

I can give it all I've got.

You won't hear me yelp.

I want this, and I want that.

Give it all to me.

I can do this by myself.

Just you wait and see.

I don't need anyone else.

All I need is me.

It's just me, myself, and I,

The most amazing three.

Watch me run, and watch me hide.

Catch me if you can.

I can do it all alone.

I'm my biggest fan.



COOL COYOTE

Cool Coyote sneaking around,
stealing from the farmers without a sound.
Until one day they said, "We're through
working alone to capture you."

You may be clever, you may be strong,
you may be fast it's true.
But, now that they are working together,
"We can be sneaky, too."
"Watch Out!"

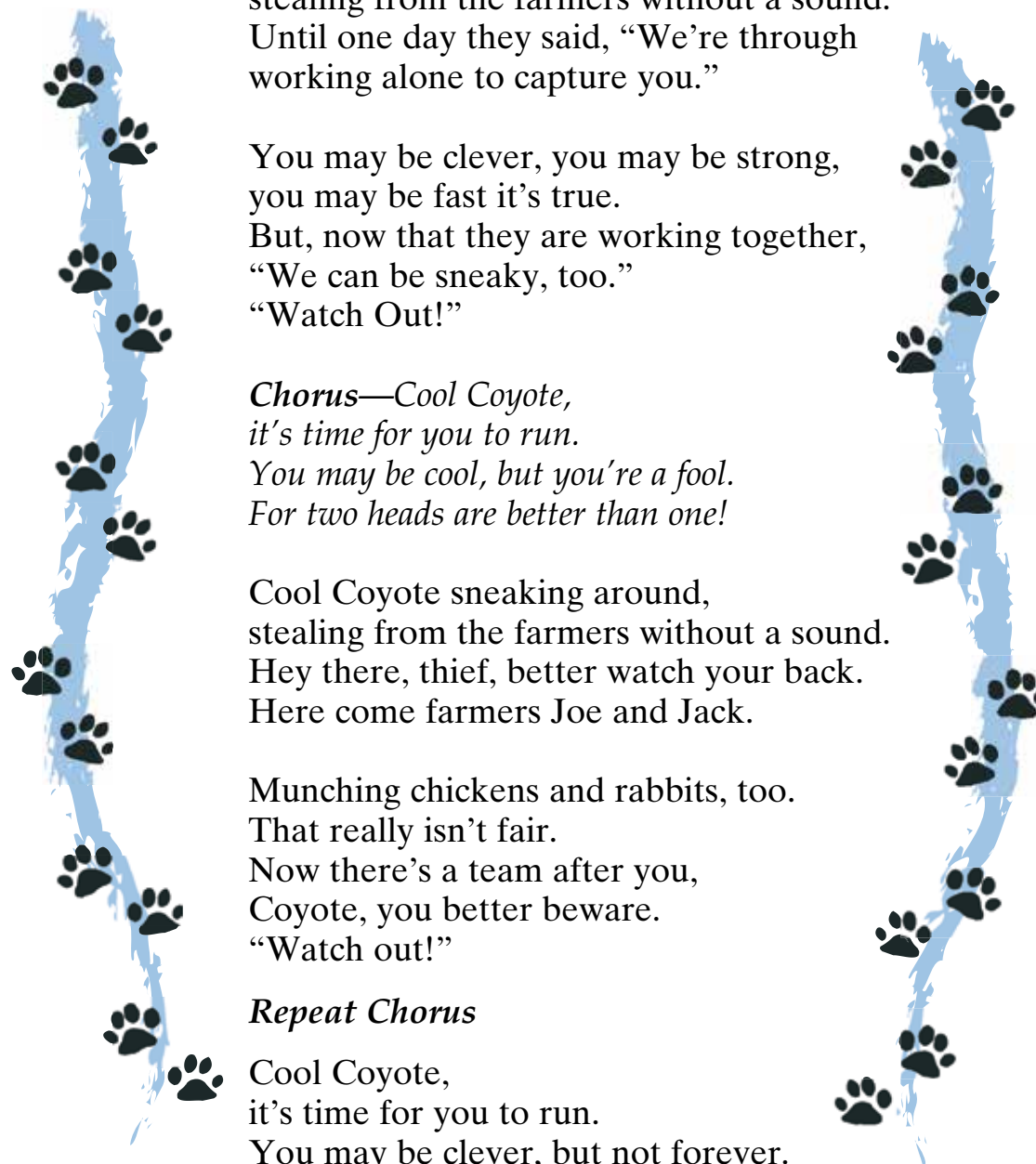
*Chorus—Cool Coyote,
it's time for you to run.
You may be cool, but you're a fool.
For two heads are better than one!*

Cool Coyote sneaking around,
stealing from the farmers without a sound.
Hey there, thief, better watch your back.
Here come farmers Joe and Jack.

Munching chickens and rabbits, too.
That really isn't fair.
Now there's a team after you,
Coyote, you better beware.
"Watch out!"

Repeat Chorus

Cool Coyote,
it's time for you to run.
You may be clever, but not forever.
For two heads are better than one!
"Watch out!"



GLOSSARY

chicken coop—cage or small building for chickens

clobber—to hit over and over again

commotion—(kuh-MO-shuhn) disturbance or confusion

culprit—(KUHL-pruht) someone who is guilty

dag nab it—darn it

fate—expected result

gorged—to fill completely

hutches—cages or pens for animals

hypnotize—(HIP-nuh-ties) to make someone go into a dream-like state

intruder—(in-TROOD-uhr) someone who is unwelcome

lickety-split—(lih-kuh-tee-SPLIT) very fast

macho—a lot of power or strength

magnificent—(mag-NIH-fih-suhnt) incredible or wonderful

Roald Dahl—(ROW-all DAWL) author of *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and other books

scoundrel—(SKOUN-druhl) someone who is mean or dishonest

screeching—crying or screaming

scuffle—(SKUH-fuhl) struggle

superb—(suh-PERB) excellent or brilliant

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