

# Reader Idols

## Fourth Grade + ELA and Drama

Adapted by Jennifer Nelson and edited by Cristi Clark

### CORE SUBJECT AREA

ELA

### ART FORM + ELEMENTS

Drama

Reader's theater

### DURATION

Five 45 minute sessions

### MSCCR STANDARDS

RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.5, RL.4.10, RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RL.4.5, RL.4.10, RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RI.4.4, RI.4.8, RI.4.10, RF.4.4, RF.4.4a, RF.4.4c, W.4.1, W.4.1a, W.4.1b, W.4.1c, W.4.1d, W.4.2, W.4.2a, W.4.2b, W.4.2c, W.4.2d, W.4.2e, W.4.7, W.4.8, W.4.9, W.4.9a, W.4.9b, SL.4.1, SL.4.1a, SL.4.1b, SL.4.1c, SL.4.4, SL.4.5, SL.4.6, L.4.3, L.4.3c, L.4.4, L.4.4a, L.4.6

### MSCCR CREATIVE ARTS STANDARDS

TH: Cr1.1.3c Collaborate to determine how characters might move and speak to support the story and given circumstances in drama/theater work

TH: Cr2.1.3b Compare ideas with peers and make selections that will enhance and deepen group drama/theater work

TH: Cr3.1.3a Collaborate with peers to revise, refine, and adapt ideas to fit the given parameters of a drama theatre work

TH: Pr1.1.3a Apply elements of dramatic structure to a story and create a drama/theatre work

TH: Pr6.1.3a Practice drama/theatre work and share reflections individually and in small groups

### VOCABULARY

Podcast

Reader's Theater

### OBJECTIVES

Students have an opportunity to create an outstanding Reader's Theater performance within groups to compete for the title of Reading Idol.

Students are given scripts to practice their roles within Reader's Theater.

Throughout the week, groups practice repeatedly until the performance day.

On the performance day, students take turns performing and evaluating their own work and the performances of other groups before voting on a winning performance.

All groups are required to create a podcast of their performance.

The Reading Idol winners are also recorded by video and uploaded to the teacher's website for others to view.

#### Students will:

Increase their fluency and comprehension through repeated readings and practice of Reader's Theater scripts.

Increase their engagement by participating in a competition where students vote on one winner, who is given the title of Reading Idol.

Increase their excitement and motivation through use of technology by creating a podcast or a video of their final performance, which will be posted on the teacher's website.

Experience a variety of literature, including fiction and nonfiction, in the form of Reader's Theater scripts.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

Copy of the book *Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch*,

Highlighters

Page protectors (optional),

Microphone (optional)

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### FEATURED RESOURCES:

*Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch script:* This script for *Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch* can be copied into a Word document and then adapted to fit your classroom needs.

### Reader's Theater Student Self-Assessment:

The Reader's Theater Student Self-Assessment rubric provides each student with guidelines for self-assessment.

## LESSON SEQUENCE

### SESSION 1:

On the first day, read the book *Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch* aloud to the class. Make sure to use different character voices to show how a Reader's Theater performance would sound. Talk about the characters and the fact that there are two separate stories going on. Talk about how changing the voice for different characters can help make the story easier to follow.

Introduce Reader's Theater in a general way. Discuss the difference between a play and a Reader's Theater performance. Explain that the goal of Reader's Theater is to increase fluency (through automaticity, accuracy, and prosody).

Create an anchor chart of the "Vote for Your Reading Idol!" rubric so students understand exactly what is expected and how they will be graded on their group work and performance.

Pass out the scripts and highlighters. When students see the part they have been given, they need to find the other students who are also playing that part, so they can highlight the words they will speak. Working with other students who share their role helps students tackle difficult vocabulary and practice lines together.

Students can spend any remaining time practicing their scripts with a partner who shares their same role.

Collect the scripts at the end of the session. Keeping the scripts in a central place and allowing students to check them out to practice during the school day is a great way to get in extra rehearsal time.

### SESSIONS 2 AND 3:

To begin each session, review the goals of Readers Theatre and talk about why it is important to students' reading. Discuss the Vote for Your Reading Idol! rubric and talk about your expectations. Remind students that the group with the highest number of points will get to perform on video. All other groups will create a podcast of their performance.

Pass out the scripts and allow students to meet with their performance groups. (Session 2 is the first time they are meeting with their performance groups.)

Have each group sit in a circle and practice reading through their scripts.

As students read, you can go from group to group to observe and give tips. Talk about voice inflection and expression. Students should be encouraged to try out different voices for different characters.

After the initial read-aloud, have each group stand in a row facing a different wall to practice so, they can get the feeling of how they will be positioned during the performance. Facing the wall allows the noise level to go out rather than in and keeps the disturbances down for the other groups.

During each session, allow time for students of two of the groups to use two workstations that highlight online tools. The other two groups should complete their workstation tasks in the following session.



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The first is the Character Trading Card interactive tool. Students should complete a Character Trading Card for the character they will be portraying. The Character Trading Card creator is a wonderful online tool to help students think through the attributes of their character, some of which they will know from the book, and some of which they will have to decide for themselves.

The second workstation should be the Comic Creator, an online tool that can be used to retell the story of the book in students' own words. For further engagement with the text, encourage students to retell the story but with a different ending. Both the Character Trading Card and the Comic Creator online tools can be printed out when students have completed them. You can hang them around the room so that students can see how their peers interpreted the story and the characters.

At the end of each session, instruct students to write in their reading log about what their Readers Theatre group was able to accomplish. If you do not use reading logs, have student use a piece of notebook paper instead to keep track during the different sessions. Collect reading logs at the end of each session.

#### SESSION 4:

It's Reading Idol performance day! Use the anchor chart of the Vote for Your Reading Idol! rubric made during the first session to remind students of what to look for during the performances.

Pass out group evaluation sheets before the performances begin. These should contain both the Vote for Your Reading Idol! rubric and the Reader's Theater Student Self-Assessment rubric.

If possible, give 5–10 minutes for last-minute practices. When practice time is up, begin the performances. You could start by doing your best impression of Ryan Seacrest: "This is . . . Reading Idol!"

Begin with the first group. When they finish, give students time to evaluate the group using the Vote for Your Reading Idol! rubric. Make sure they have the right group number on their evaluation sheets. The performing members should take this time to evaluate themselves and their own performance on the Reader's Theater Student Self-Assessment rubric.

Continue with as many groups as time allows. If you need to continue on a following session, collect the evaluation sheets to redistribute on the next performance day.

After all the groups have performed, collect the rubrics and add up the points.

#### SESSION 5:

Announce the winner of Reading Idol! Allow each group to practice for their recorded version. (You may want to line up some help for the actual recording day.) The winning group will be recorded on video, and all other groups will create a podcast. For additional assistance with creating podcasts, you may want to provide students with copies of [Podcasts: The Nuts and Bolts of Creating Podcasts](#) before they begin to create their own recordings. All performances are then posted to the teacher's website, if possible.

Allow students time to see and hear some examples of other videos and podcasts. You could allow your students to check out any postings available online, either on your website or on other websites. Be sure to review other websites ahead of time so that you can censor questionable content.

Give the groups time to decide what will make their performance sound the best and to practice again.

When a group is ready, take them to a quiet room to be recorded. Make a sign for the door that says, "Reading Idol—On Air!" so, people don't interrupt the performance.

Students might need a couple of times before they get it just right. Allow for mistakes and corrections to get a final product everyone can be proud of.

Note: It has taken some trial and error to post to my website in the way that I desire. In my quest, I have found many helpful articles on [ReadWriteThink.org](#) and elsewhere online. You may want to take some time to browse and see what you can find to help you with your website set-up.



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## EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Have students find other books that they would like to see become a Reader's Theater script. A great extension is to allow students who feel ready to create their own script to perform. Now Showing...Reader's Theater offers extensive scripts and ideas.

Have each group perform for a younger class at your school or even on morning announcements. These performances can be great practice for the final performance for podcasts and video.

Use the Vote for Your Reading Idol! rubric to have students evaluate other podcasts and Reader's Theater performances. Have students share what they think makes a performance work for an online audience.

In the higher grades, students can even have the chance to direct their own podcasts! They can choose to find additional technology to add to the performance, such as sound effects and introductions.

## SOURCES

Lesson written by Jennifer Nelson; [readwritethink.org](http://readwritethink.org); Lesson edited and updated by Cristi Clark.

## TIPS + FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS:

Observe students during group work to facilitate cooperation and teamwork, which ensures that they are increasing their fluency and comprehension through repeated readings and practice within their groups.

On performance day, collect the Vote for Your Reading Idol! rubric and the Reader's Theater Student Self-Assessment rubric. Both of the rubrics are used to increase student engagement since every student has a way to give their opinion of each performance. Review them to find the areas that need to be addressed during the next round of Reading Idol.

Collect and review the reading logs and printed Character Trading Card and Comic Creator pages to see students' workstation accomplishments.