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# Foreword

**By Dr. Timothy Rasinski**  
**Kent State University**

I am not ashamed to say that I am a reader's theater nut! I really get pumped when I see kids perform scripts. I am equally excited to see the fire in teachers' eyes when they begin to use reader's theater with their students. Thus, it is no understatement to say that I am thrilled to see Teacher Created Materials publish this fine reader's theater program. Let me explain why I am such an advocate for reader's theater.

As someone who has studied reading fluency, I know that repeated reading is one of the best methods for developing students' fluency in reading. However, it disturbs me greatly to see the manner in which students are often asked to engage in repeated reading. I see students do repeated reading with an aim at improving their reading speed—"Read this one more time to see if you increase your reading rate." To me, this is not a terribly authentic way to engage in repeated readings. As a result of such a focus, I have seen many students develop the idea that repeated reading is done to make them faster readers and that reading fast is what reading is all about. Through such an approach, we run the risk of developing readers who sacrifice comprehension in order to read fast.

To do repeated reading appropriately, students need an authentic reason to repeatedly read or rehearse a text. I think the most natural reason to practice is performance. If you want students to engage in repeated readings, have them perform what they are practicing for an audience. With performance as a goal, students now have a natural reason to engage in repeated readings. Reader's theater is a performance genre—it is a type of reading material meant to be performed. Moreover, because the focus of the practice is to convey a meaningful interpretation of the text to an audience, reader's theater is also a natural vehicle for developing reading comprehension. I believe that reader's theater is one of the best and most authentic ways to engage students enthusiastically in repeated reading to build reading fluency and improve overall reading performance.

My second reason for being a reader's theater nut is easy to express—reader's theater is fun! We all like to be a star at one time or another. Reader's theater is a perfect vehicle for allowing students to become the star. I remember doing reader's theater with the elementary and middle school students I taught. They could not get enough of it. They absolutely loved it. And, as their teacher, I loved it too. I loved to see students perform with their voices, watch their excitement, and enjoy their growth as successful readers.

# **Foreword** *(cont.)*

**By Dr. Timothy Rasinski**  
**Kent State University**

Moreover, through the opportunity to perform and see themselves as successful in reading, many of the struggling readers I worked with began to believe in themselves again. Many struggling readers give up on themselves as they are forced to plod through one unsuccessful reading experience after another. The enjoyment, success, and fulfillment that are part of reader's theater can help to break this cycle of despair and failure in reading for so many students who find learning to read difficult.

Third, reader's theater is a natural way to connect all areas of the school curriculum. Social studies, literature, science, art, and other curriculum areas can easily and effectively be explored through reader's theater. The scripts that are part of this program, in particular, have been developed to make those connections. Students can become so engaged in the process of rehearsal and performance that they may not even be aware that they are learning important content that goes beyond the reading experience!

I know reader's theater works. Nearly every teacher I have met who uses reader's theater on a regular basis feels that it is one of the best and most engaging ways to grow readers, and to instill in them a sense of reading success as they learn important content. I hope you will give reader's theater a try. I know you, too, will become a reader's theater nut!

Timothy Rasinski, Ph.D.  
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# Romulus and Remus

## Lesson Plan

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### Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will use repeated readings to increase reading rate and accuracy.
- **Content Area—Social Studies:** Students will gain a deeper understanding of Rome through an overview of its history, geography, famous leaders, landmarks, and architecture.

### Summary

According to the ancient myth, Romulus and Remus are twin brothers and the founders of Rome and the Roman Empire. A woodpecker and a she-wolf raised the boys until they were adopted by more suitable parents—humans. The odds were certainly stacked against the boys for much of their lives. However, their strength and determination never ceased. Join them on their wild adventure to find where they came from and get to know the land they “discovered” along the way.



### Materials

- *Romulus and Remus* script booklets
  - *Romulus and Remus* Character Masks (pages 86–91 or Teacher Resource CD)
  - copies of the Take-Home Script (Teacher Resource CD)
  - transparency of the song “My Four Little Johnny-Cakes”
  - transparency of the poem “The Early Morning”
  - *PowerPoint*® slide show (Teacher Resource CD)
  - map showing ancient Rome
  - map and/or globe showing modern-day Rome
  - Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers
- .....

### Introduce the Literature

Write numerals 1–5 on a piece of chart paper. Ask your students if they know what the Roman numerals are for numbers 1–5? Have volunteers come up and write the Roman numeral equivalent next to each number (e.g., 1=I, 2=II, 5=V). Repeat for numbers up to 20. You may need to teach or review some of the Roman numerals. Have each student write his or her age and phone number using only Roman numerals.



### ELL Support

Pair each student with a more proficient classmate. Have pairs complete the activity together. If necessary, write their ages and phone numbers on index cards and have them find and write the corresponding Roman numerals.

### Involving All Students

There are six roles in this script. To ensure that each student is given the opportunity to participate, assign multiple students to each role. Then break students into groups to practice reading the scripts. Each group will perform in front of the class. If you have students in your class with reading levels below those provided in the scripts, give those students one or two of the easiest lines to practice and recite. Do the same for English language learners. Regardless of how many lines students have, they all should be included in the practice and performances.

### Reading the Script



1. The scripts in this program focus on myths from around the world. This script focuses on a myth from ancient Rome. Before reading the script with students, explain that myths are stories told by ancient cultures to explain natural phenomena. Myths were created so that people could make sense of what was going on around them—things they could see but not necessarily explain.
2. Before reading the script, introduce selected glossary words to students. Write the words on the board. Have students help you define them in familiar student-friendly language. Then have students work independently or with a partner to illustrate and/or write a sentence for each word.
3. Play the professional recording of the script. Have students listen, paying close attention to the tone, voice, and expression of each character. Assign each student a role. Play the recording again, only this time students should pay attention to their character's lines specifically. Play the recording one last time and have students chorally read their lines.
4. Why is the story of Romulus and Remus referred to as a legend or myth? Facilitate a discussion on the key elements of a myth. Go through the pages of the script and have students identify the aspects of the story that are clearly not based on historical fact. This could be completed in small groups by assigning each group one act from the script to evaluate.



### ELL Support

Pick an act from the script and complete step 4 in a small-group setting with students. Begin by introducing the terms *fact* and *fiction*. Point out and ask students to underline examples of fiction in the script.



### Assigning Roles

Assign roles to students based on reading proficiency. When students practice fluency, it is important that they read materials at or below their reading levels so they can focus on accuracy, expression, and reading rate. If a student reads text that is too difficult, his or her attention will be focused on decoding words and comprehending the text rather than reading with fluency.

Approximate reading levels for the roles in this script are:

❖ **Romulus:** 2nd grade

❖ **Youth 1:** 3rd grade

❖ **Woodpecker:** 4th grade

❖ **Remus:** 2nd grade

❖ **Youth 2:** 3rd grade

❖ **She-wolf:** 4th grade

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### Meeting the Fluency Objective

The fluency objective for this script focuses on the use of repeated readings to increase reading rate and accuracy.

1. Provide each student with a copy of the script. Tell students to highlight their lines and circle punctuation marks. These visual cues will make practicing easier.
2. Allow students plenty of opportunities to practice reading the script. They can practice with their character groups (all the she-wolves together, all the woodpeckers together, and so on) as well as in their performance groups.
3. Play the professional recording of the script prior to daily practice. Proper pacing, pronunciation, expression, etc., are characteristics of a fluent reader. Hearing the professional recording will provide a model for fluent reading as well as give students a goal to work toward. Encourage students to read their lines chorally with the recording.
4. Divide students into their character groups and have them practice reading only their lines. Tell students to give each other feedback on what they are doing well and what they could do better.
5. As students practice in their character and performance groups, walk around to monitor for participation and accurate readings. If you hear a student struggling, help him or her read the line with you until it is right. This applies to mispronouncing a word, not reading fluidly or with proper expression, etc.



### Content-Area Connection— Social Studies

Students will gain a deeper understanding of Rome through an overview of its history, geography, famous leaders, landmarks, and architecture.

The class overview of Rome's history should include, but is not limited to, the topics below. These are just a few ideas to get you started. You may add to or take away from the list as needed.

1. Build students' knowledge about Rome.
  - Locate ancient Rome on a map.
  - Point out major rivers, such as the Rhine, Danube, Tiber, etc.
  - Find Rome on a globe.
2. Discuss the Roman Empire. Refer to the map of the Roman Empire. What countries were considered to be part of the Roman Empire?
3. Introduce and discuss famous Romans. What did they do? How were their roles pivotal in Rome's rise? Rome's fall?
  - Augustus (Octavian)—first emperor
  - Julius Caesar—general; politician
  - Constantine the Great
  - Nero
4. Introduce and discuss famous Roman landmarks. When and how were they built? What type of actions and events took place there? Can you visit them today?
  - Roman Coliseum
  - Roman baths
  - Circus Maximus
5. Introduce and discuss the Roman advances in architecture (columns, arches, domes, use of brick and concrete, etc.). Use books, magazines, and the Internet to show students pictures of the fascinating architecture the Romans are known for.



### ELL Support

Help students with step 1. Let them touch and manipulate the globe. Have a few students

point to where they live and point to Rome. Is Rome nearby or far away? What bodies of water are between them? Show the group pictures of Rome (landmarks, architecture, etc.). Encourage them to discuss what they see. Would they want to travel there? Why or why not? How would they get there (airplane, train, car, ship, etc.)?

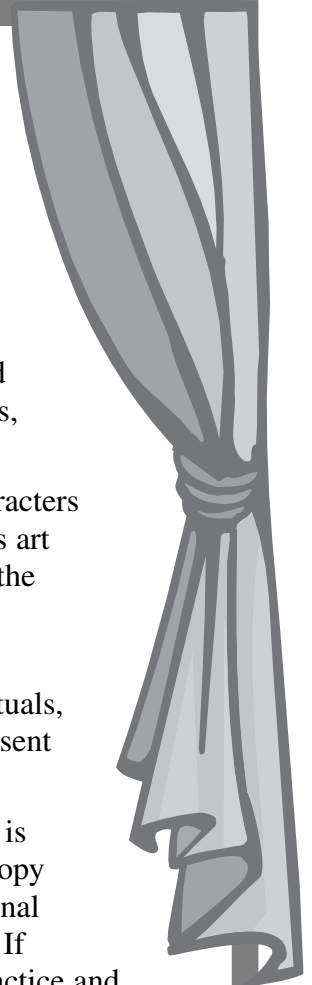
### Fine Arts Connection

1. The script contains a song and a poem: “My Four Little Johnny-Cakes” and “The Early Morning.” Both the song and the poem are directly related to the *Romulus and Remus* script, but they are not limited to use only with this script.
2. Using old shoeboxes and other art supplies, have students make dioramas of their favorite scenes from the script. It is important that the setting and characters are portrayed accurately. Students can present their finished projects to the class. Display all the dioramas around the room for students, staff, and visitors to see.
3. Make props for the performances. Have students make props for their characters and for the scenery. Students can be creative and make items using various art supplies, bring in appropriate clothing from home, use various items from the classroom, etc.
4. Have students work in small groups to research aspects of Roman culture. Groups can study food, social classes, religion, art, architecture, clothes, rituals, holidays, etc. Groups will create posters to illustrate their findings and present the information to the class.
5. “The Early Morning” is a great poem for students to recite individually. It is short and, for most students, simple to read. Provide each student with a copy of the poem and use the transparency for daily practice. Play the professional recording for students so they can hear proper use of tone and expression. If necessary, English language learners and below-grade-level readers can practice and recite the poem as a group.

### Performance

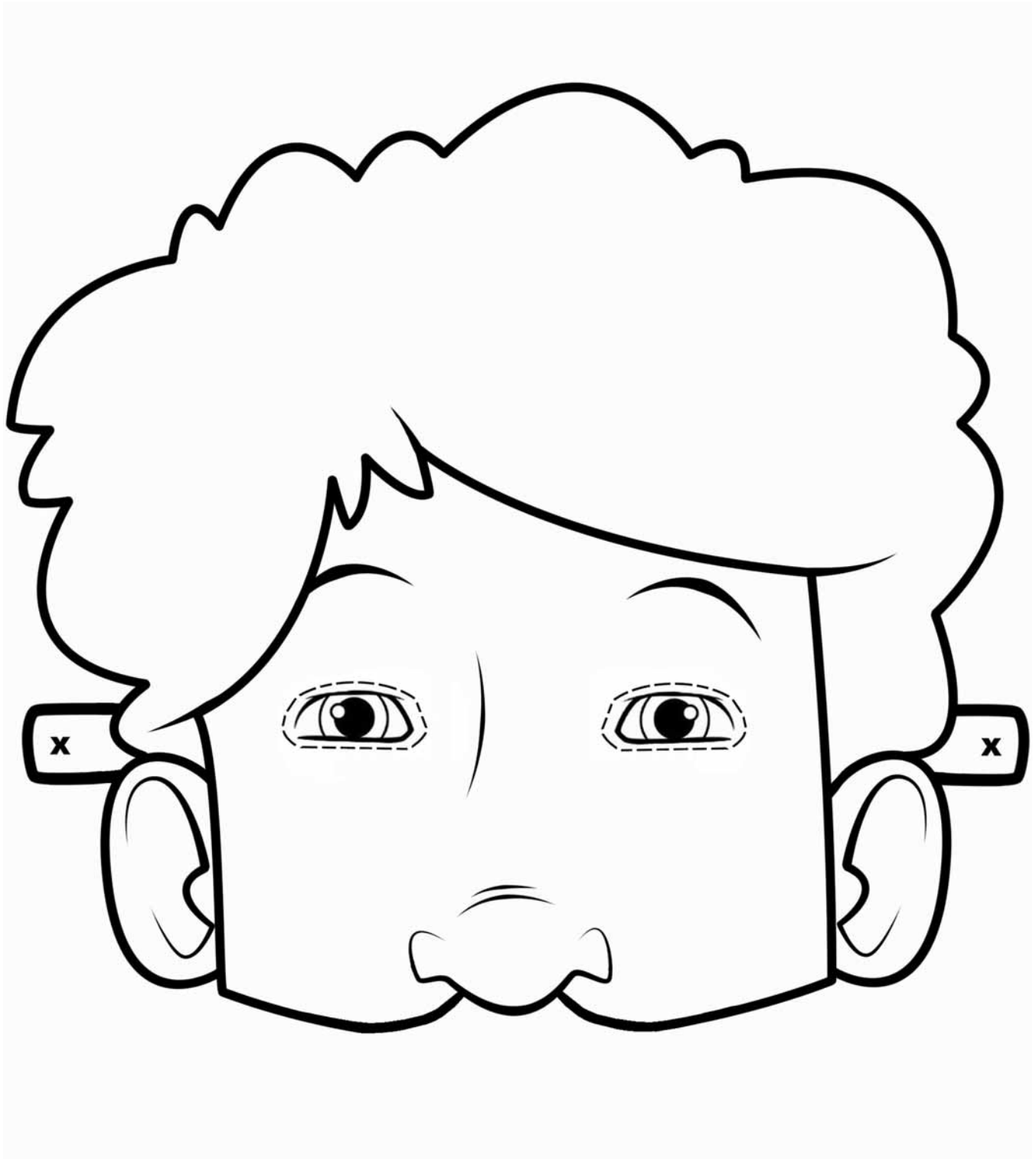
Students may perform their renditions of the script for the class or for a larger audience. If desired, allow the audience to share in the reader’s theater experience by reciting the poem and singing the song at the appropriate places. Display the song and poem for the audience to follow, using the provided transparencies.

The performers may also wish to prepare masks for their parts, which are included within this lesson. Allow students to color their masks. Cut out the eyeholes, punch holes at the Xs, and attach string to tie the masks to the performers’ faces.





# Romulus



# Remus

