

The Tortoise and the Hare

Act I

Characters

Narrator	Hare
Blue Jay	Tortoise
Frog	Porcupine

TCM Sample

Setting

This reader's theater takes place in the woods. The woods are home to many animals. They are filled with trees, plants, and flowers. A long dirt trail runs through the woods.

Narrator: The sun has risen over the woods. Noisy Blue Jay cries out. It wakes the animals from a restful sleep.

Blue Jay: Heere! Heere! Wake up! Wake up!

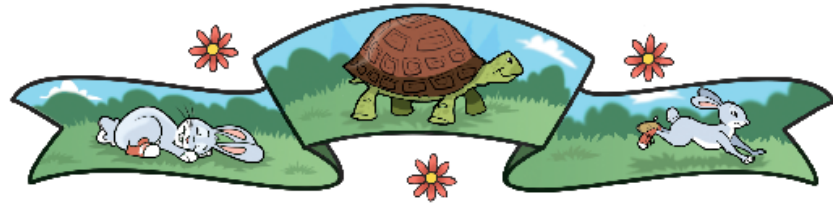
Frog: Yawn! Is it morning already? Ribbit!

Hare: Quiet down, will you? A speedy hare like me needs its rest.

Tortoise: But a tortoise is always happy to wake up and greet the sunrise. Good morning!

Narrator: Hare just wrinkles its nose. Hare doesn't care about the sunshine when it can be sleeping instead.

Blue Jay: It is a nice morning, Tortoise. But sleep is nice, too.

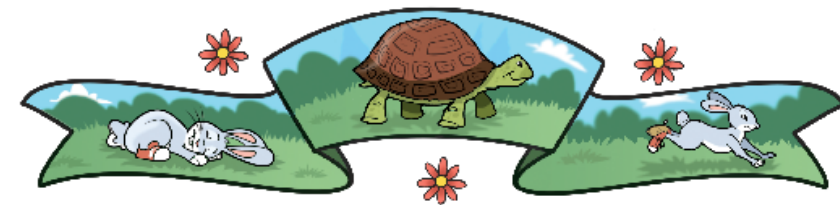


What If the Score Is Against You?

Anonymous

What if the score is against you,
And you know defeat is sure?
Keep giving your best.
Defeat is a test
To see if you can endure.

Come in on your feet at life's ending,
And the past will seem full and fine
There's a healthy glow
Only those can know
In the spur at the finish line.



Are You Sleeping? (*Frère Jacques*)

Traditional

Are you sleeping,
Are you sleeping,
Brother John,
Brother John?
Morning bells are ringing.
Morning bells are ringing.
Ding ding dong!
Ding ding dong!

Frère Jacques,
Frère Jacques,
Dormez vous,
Dormez vous?
Sonnez les matines.
Sonnez les matines.
Din, din, don!
Din, din, don!

Grades 2–3

Building Fluency through Reader's Theater

TCM Sample TABLE
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Teacher's Guide



Teacher Created Materials

Author

Jamey Acosta

Teacher Created Materials
PUBLISHING

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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. And 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, building reading fluency and improving 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 stars at one time or another. Reader’s theater is a perfect vehicle for allowing students to become the stars. 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 I enjoyed witnessing 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!

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The Tortoise and the Hare

Lesson Plan

Objectives

- **Fluency:** Students will deliver oral presentations and read passages fluently, focusing on the use of punctuation as a guide for proper pronunciation, voice, tone, and expression.
- **Content Area:** Students will know there is variation among individuals of one kind within a population.

Summary

This is the famous fable about a race between a tortoise and a hare. Although the hare is the front-runner to win, it's slow and steady that wins the race.



Materials

- storybook version of the fable from your school or local library
- photos of a tortoise, hare, turtle, and rabbit (Teacher Resource CD)
- play clay
- *The Tortoise and the Hare* script booklets
- character masks (pages 27–32 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 song and poem from the script (or Teacher Resource CD)
- Performance CD and CD player or computer with a CD drive and speakers

Introduce the Literature

Tell your students that today is the day of the big race between two animals, a tortoise and a hare. Review important characteristics of each animal. What do they look like? How do they move? Then divide your class into partners, with one partner as the tortoise and the other as the hare. If possible, hold the race outside. Based on what they know/have learned about each animal, have the partners complete the race. Encourage the tortoise to crawl and the hares to hop. Afterwards, discuss the outcomes.

ELL Support



Show your ELL students pictures of a tortoise and a hare prior to race day. Discuss the characteristics of each animal with them. Act out the movements and behaviors of each animal with them. You may want to introduce the fable to them at this point, too.

Involving All Students

There are six roles in this script. So that everyone can participate, assign a few students to each role. Break the students into groups to practice reading the scripts. Each group will perform for the class. Students with reading abilities below those provided in the scripts can be given a few of the easiest lines to practice and recite. Regardless of how many lines students have, everyone should be included in the practice and performances.

The Tortoise and the Hare

Lesson Plan

Reading the Script



1. Begin a discussion with your students, asking, “What is a fable?” Explain to your students that fables are short stories featuring animals, insects, forces of nature, and/or inanimate objects that are given human characteristics and abilities, such as thinking and speaking. In addition, each fable includes a moral lesson. After reading the script, encourage the students to figure out the intended moral. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups, independently, or with a partner. The moral of this fable is *slow and steady wins the race*.
2. Before reading the script, introduce new vocabulary words to your students. Start by using the words in the glossary. Write the words on the board. Have students help you define them. Then have students work independently or with a partner to write a sentence for each word.
3. Repeat step 2 using any grade-level appropriate, high-frequency words found in the script.
4. In order to deliver an accurate performance, a reader must understand the point of view and feelings of each character as well as be able to recall details about the plot, setting, and sequence of events. Complete the following reading comprehension tasks with your students:
 - Have students work in small groups to answer at least five comprehension questions about the story. Encourage them to refer to the text if necessary.
 - Have students work with partners to retell the story and discuss the sequence of events. You can have them illustrate what happens in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
 - Write each character’s name on the board. Using the text, have the class describe each character’s personality. There are many adjectives used in the script. For example, *grumpy* and *crabby* describe the hare. You can also suggest descriptors not found in the script and allow students to draw relevant connections.
5. Play the professional recording of the script for your students. Ask them to pay close attention to the tone and expression used by each character. Play the recording again, and have students follow along in their copies. Encourage students to recite their assigned character’s lines chorally with the recording.



ELL Support

Work with your ELL students in a small group. Write each glossary and high frequency word on an index card. Have students read each word with you. Together, come up with a sentence for each word. Write each sentence on the board or a sentence strip, and have your students read the sentences with you chorally. Then allow extra time to illustrate each word or sentence.



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 that they can focus on accuracy, expression, and reading rate. If a student reads text that is too difficult, attention is focused on sounding out words and comprehension rather than fluency.

Approximate reading levels for the roles in this script are as follows:

- ❖ **Blue Jay:** high 1st grade
- ❖ **Hare:** 2nd grade
- ❖ **Narrator:** 3rd grade
- ❖ **Frog:** high 1st grade
- ❖ **Tortoise:** 2nd grade
- ❖ **Porcupine:** 3rd grade

Meeting the Fluency Objective

1. Play the professional recording of the script for your students. Have them follow along in their copies. Ask them to pay close attention to each character's recitation of the lines. What types of tone, voice, and expression is each using?
2. After listening to the script at least two times, write each character's name on the board. Have students work with partners to come up with a few sentences that describe each character based on the way the character's lines were recited. You could pick one character from the script to use as a model for this activity.
3. Explain how punctuation marks help a reader understand the intended mood, voice, and expression for each character. Write the following lines from the script on the board:

Blue Jay: Heeere! Heeere! Wake up! Wake up!

Frog: Yawn! Is it morning already? Ribbit!

Hare: How? Just watch me! I'll show you how, you old slowpoke.

Porcupine: Hello there! What are all of you doing?

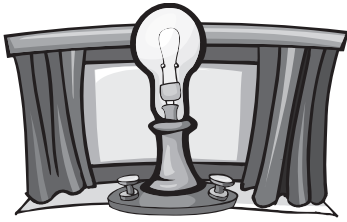
Tortoise: I don't mind slow! Fast or slow, I am glad to see you.

Have students volunteer to read the lines. Remind them to pay attention to the punctuation marks, even commas. If necessary, you can model how to read the lines based on the type of punctuation marks used.

4. Give students some time to circle the punctuation marks in their copies of the script using a red pencil or crayon. This will provide them with a visual reminder to pay attention to how they recite their lines each time they practice reading the script. You can have them do this independently or in their character groups.

The Tortoise and the Hare

Lesson Plan



Content-Area Connection— Science

Students will know there is variation among individuals of one kind within a population.

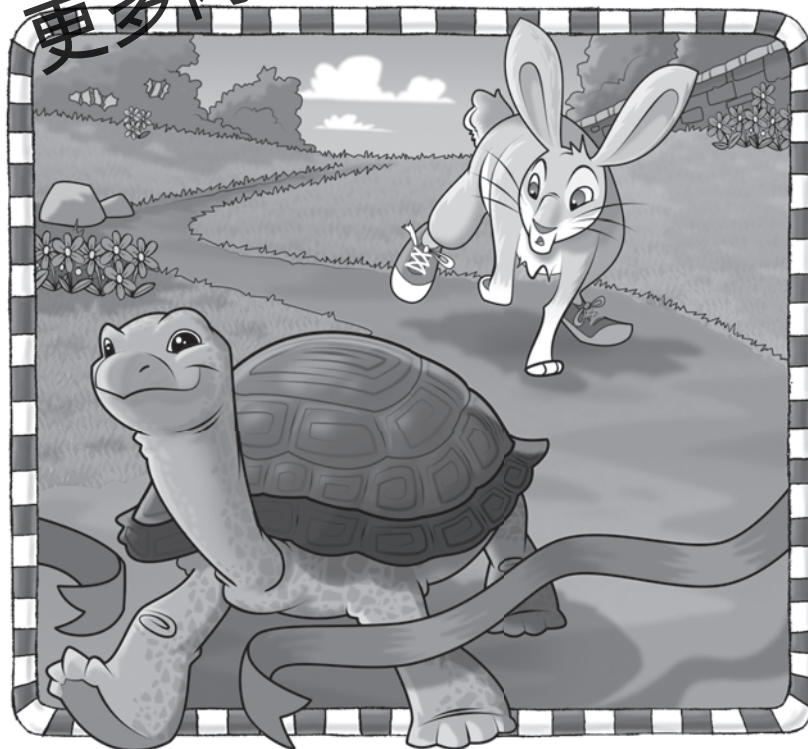
1. As a whole class activity, use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast turtles and tortoises. Have students draw a picture that illustrates the information recorded in the diagram. You could also have them write words or sentences describing two ways the reptiles are similar and two ways they are different.
2. Repeat step 1, only this time compare and contrast rabbits and hares. Have students complete the task in small groups or with a partner.
3. Have students create posters for each of the animals and reptiles above. The posters should illustrate physical and habitat/environmental characteristics.
4. Ask the class if they can think of any other animals, reptiles, rodents, etc. that they can compare and contrast. Write their ideas on the board. If you have time, have them write a paragraph detailing the similarities and differences of the animals they listed.



ELL Support

Provide ELL students with pictures of a tortoise, turtle, rabbit, and hare before introducing this lesson. Encourage them to share what they notice about the pairs of animals. How are they similar? Different?

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The Tortoise and the Hare

Lesson Plan

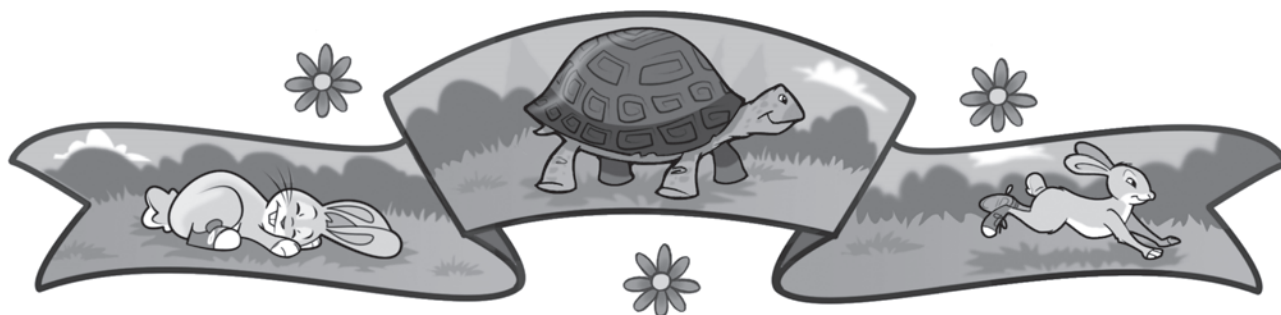
Fine Arts Connection

1. The script contains a song and a poem: “Are You Sleeping?” and “What If the Score Is Against You?” This song and poem are directly related to *The Tortoise and the Hare* but are not limited to use with this script.
2. Tell students that they will be making a large mural illustrating the setting of the story. Before they get started, discuss some key elements of the setting that should be included on the mural. For example, students should include the starting line, finishing line, bleachers filled with animal spectators, characters from the story, trees, etc.
3. Provide play clay for your students. Have the students use it to create a sculpture of their favorite animal character from the story.
4. Break the class into pairs. Have them choose two animals to race each other. Partner teams will need to act out a race between the animals that they have picked. Before racing, they will need to explain which animal is likely to win and why. Students can create props and costumes for their performances, if time permits.

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 overhead transparencies.

The performers may also wish to prepare masks for their parts, which are included within this lesson. Allow the 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.



Narrator



Porcupine



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