

Pricked Pinkies

A Teacher's Guide

Written by Nancy K. Wallace, author of Readers' Theater



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A Note from the Author

If you haven't introduced your students to Readers' Theater, now is a great time to start! Opportunities for public speaking build confidence and Readers' Theater offers students the security of retaining their scripts throughout the performance. It's an excellent way for kids to comfortably enter the world of theater. Working together also promotes cooperation and a sense of community in the classroom.

Pricked Pinkies presents an updated version of a well-known fairy tale. The script can be used for traditional Readers' Theater, Adapted Readers' Theater—which includes makeup, costumes, and scenery—or even puppetry.

A play makes a great family night program with a guaranteed audience. Parents, grandparents, and other relatives love to see their kids perform! This script includes suggestions for involving as many children as possible in the production.

Enjoy!
Nancy K. Wallace



Character Reading Levels

This play has eight speaking parts, with a wide range of reading levels, offering many opportunities for children to act. There are also four “walk on” roles for party guests. The party is an excellent way of including students who do not want a speaking part. You can add as many additional party guests as you want. Encourage the guests to interact silently to make the scene come to life. The speaking parts are listed here in descending order of difficulty. The reading level is the ATOS level based on the character’s speaking parts and stage direction.

Prince Charming - Reading Level: 4.6

Prince Charming makes a brief appearance at the end. He should be – charming, suave, and sophisticated – a sort of caricature of the traditional storybook prince.

Narrator - Reading Level: 4.3

The narrator is the storyteller. He sits to the side of the stage on a stool, dressed like a commoner. He forms a kind of bridge between the audience and the performers, adding intimacy to the play. In this play, he and the Mouse engage in a constant dialogue. Choose someone with excellent reading skills for this part.

Queen - Reading Level: 3.9

The queen is rather frivolous. Her costume can be over the top. She is not a particularly strong character, although she loves her daughter. A student who has a flair for exaggeration would be perfect in this part.



Lily, the Good Fairy - Reading Level: 3.6

Lily only appears in one scene and speaks only once, however, she changes the course of the entire play by modifying the curse placed on Princess Elizabeth. Lily should appear to be a direct opposite of Esmeralda, in manner and costume. Where Esmeralda is dark and evil; Lily should be full of light and kindness.

King - Reading Level: 3.5

The king should appear almost deliriously happy at the beginning of the first scene. His conversation with his wife about the upcoming party is supposed to be silly. Later, he is quiet and preoccupied when his daughter's life may be in danger. Choose a student who can change moods quickly and smoothly.

Princess Elizabeth - Reading Level: 2.8

Elizabeth appears on stage first as a pouty teenager but her disappointment over not having a birthday party should be real and appealing to the audience. Her innocence should contrast sharply with Esmeralda's evil demeanor.

Esmeralda, the Bad Fairy - Reading Level: 2.7

The student that plays Esmeralda should be able to exhibit an evil side. Her laugh should be a witch-like cackle. Even her body language should suggest her anger and evil intent. This character often speaks in rhyme so make certain you choose someone for the part that is comfortable reading poetry.

Mouse - Reading Level: 2.6

The Mouse has the personality of an over-enthusiastic puppy. Whoever plays this part needs to be full of life and self-confidence. He will need to keep up a constant banter with the narrator and be funny and lovable all at the same time!



Production Tips

At a Readers' Theater production, the performers sit on stools at the front of the room. But, an Adapted Readers' Theater production or a full play requires some sets and props.

Readers' Theater

If you are producing a straight Readers' Theater, you can do this simply by providing stools, cardboard name tags for each character, and scripts.

Inexpensive natural wooden bar stools available at many home improvement and department stores make excellent Readers' Theater stools. If your budget won't stretch to purchase them, use chairs instead. The performers can also stand to deliver their lines.

Adapted Readers' Theater

Adapted Readers' Theater productions can be as involved as you would like them to be. Here are a few options to enhance your production:

Make-up and Costumes

This play offers a wonderful opportunity to use stage makeup to create drama. There are several books that offer step-by-step instructions. We have included some below! By incorporating makeup into your lesson plans in the weeks before the play, students could master the techniques before opening night and produce some spectacular results!

Chris Caudron and Caro Childs. *The Usborne Book of Face Painting*. London: Usborne Publishing, 2007.

Klutz editors. *Face Painting*. New York: Klutz, 2012.

Brian Wolfe and Nick Wolfe. *Fun Face Painting Ideas for Kids*. New York: Impact Books, 2013.

For costumes, students can wear their own fancy clothes. You can get the costume designers and actors involved making their own accessories that were described in the book. Provide the materials below and let them get creative!

pencils
wooden dowels
cardboard
paint
paint brushes

markers
headbands

Sets & Props

Even for a Readers' Theater production, a large mouse puppet is particularly effective in *Pricked Pinkies*. Place a table with a floor length cloth next to the Narrator and hide the puppeteer behind it. All the action can take place on top of the table as the Mouse runs in place, climbs stairs, etc.

Stone walls for the castle can be painted onto cardboard. By dipping a rectangular sponge into gray paint, you can quickly make rows of stones on a cardboard backdrop and then paint the grout lines between rectangles in a darker color. You can also purchase rolled plastic imitation stone walls from online party supply stores. All the scenes in *Pricked Pinkies* take place in the castle. With a few prop changes you can make the action appear to take place in different rooms.

A real spinning wheel will add authenticity to the play. If it is possible to borrow one, remind your students not to twirl the wheel indiscriminately because it tangles the yarn on the bobbin. If a real wheel isn't readily

available, paint one on cardboard.



Lighting

Several inexpensive clip-on flood lights will add professionalism to your stage even if it is just the front of your classroom.

Performance Tips

Once a schedule is set, emphasize how important it is for everyone to be at all the rehearsals. Even if students know their own parts they need to learn to interact with each other as a team. When one student misses a rehearsal it inconveniences the entire cast.

Be sure to emphasize that everyone's job is important. Whether you are a costume designer, an understudy, or a performer, the show can't go on without you.

During rehearsals performers should try to respond immediately to other cast members' lines, eliminating any pauses between lines of dialogue. It is always a good idea to have several understudies prepared to step in if one of the actors is unable to perform.

Have the actors practice moving around with the scripts. Have them practice holding the script by one hand only, leaving the other hand free for acting. Right-handers hold a script with their left hand, left-handers with their right.

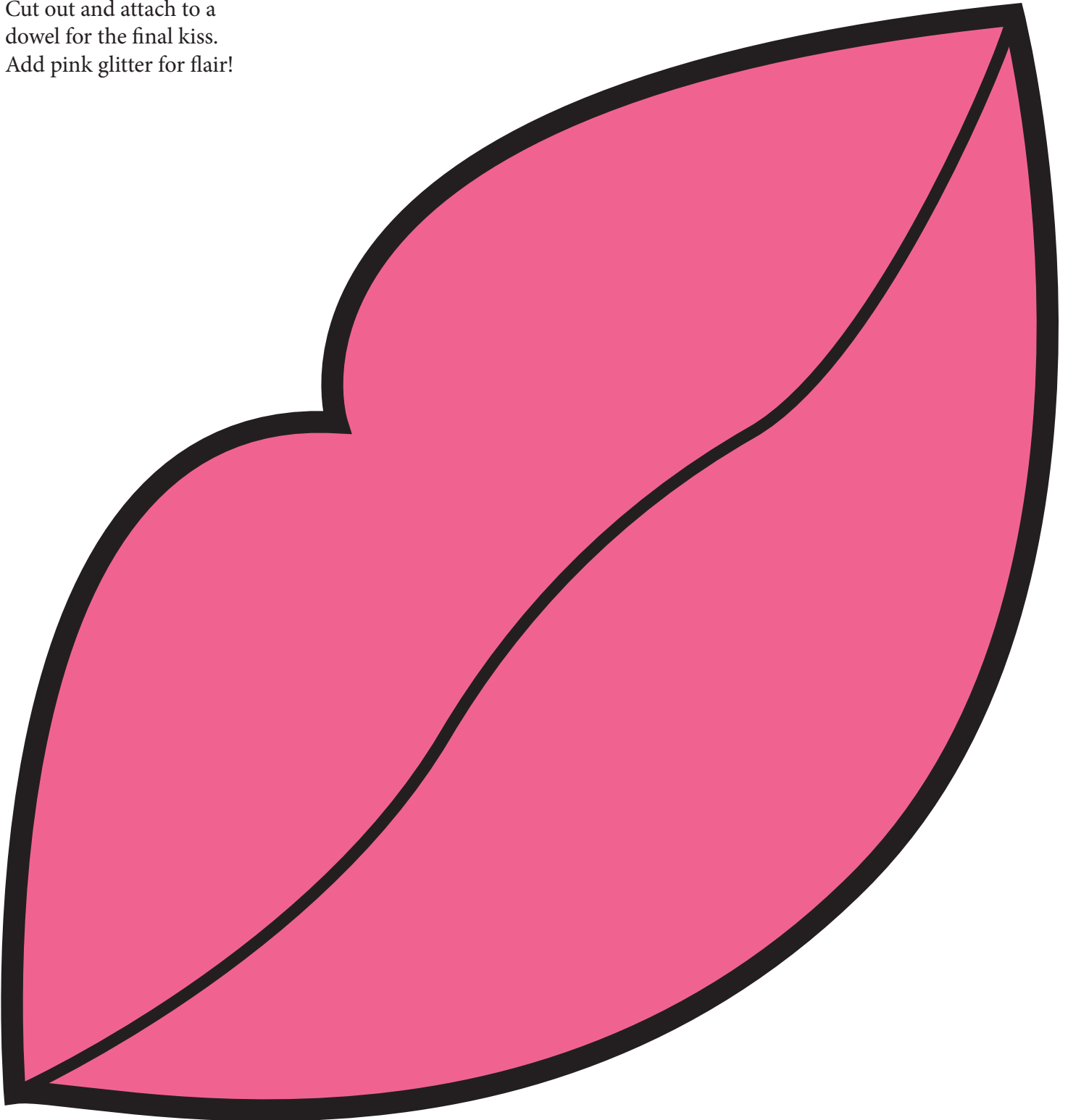
Once the Narrator says "the end" on performance night, have the announcer introduce both the cast and the production crew and let everyone take a bow. This first taste of fame can be intoxicating and a huge boost to self-esteem!



Printable Props

Big Lips

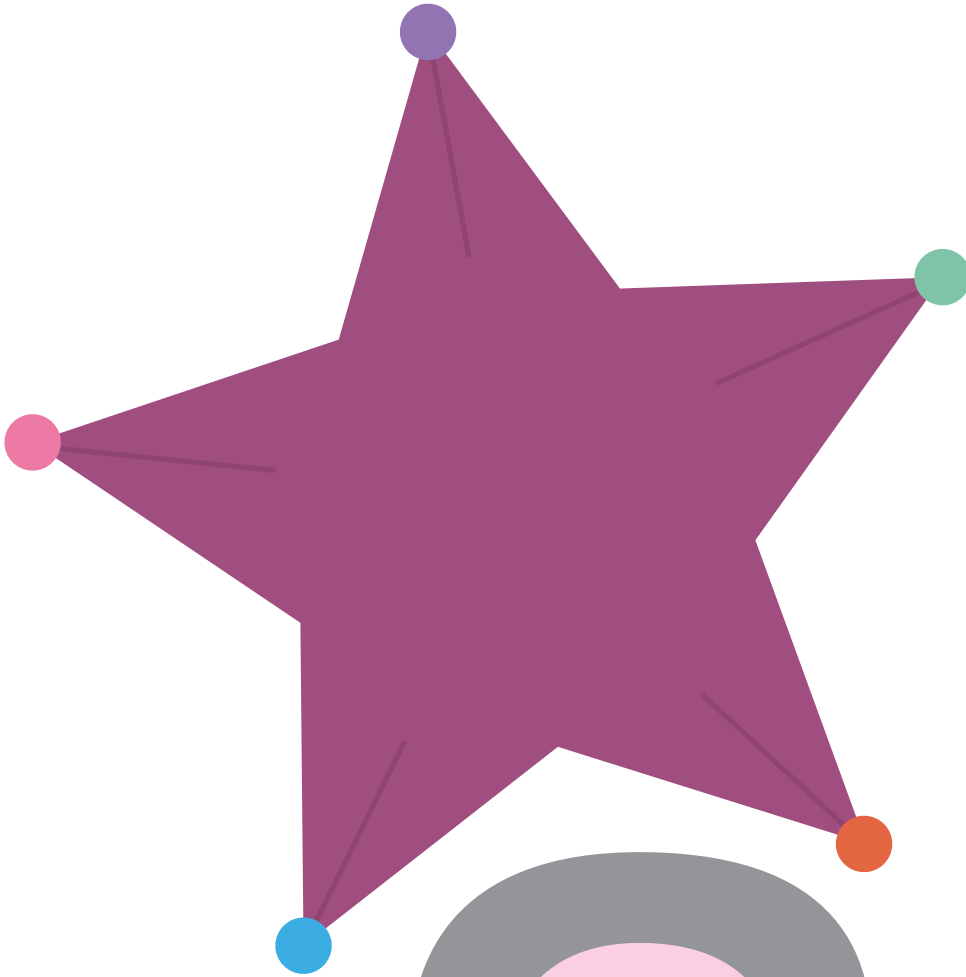
Cut out and attach to a
dowel for the final kiss.
Add pink glitter for flair!



Printable Props (continued)

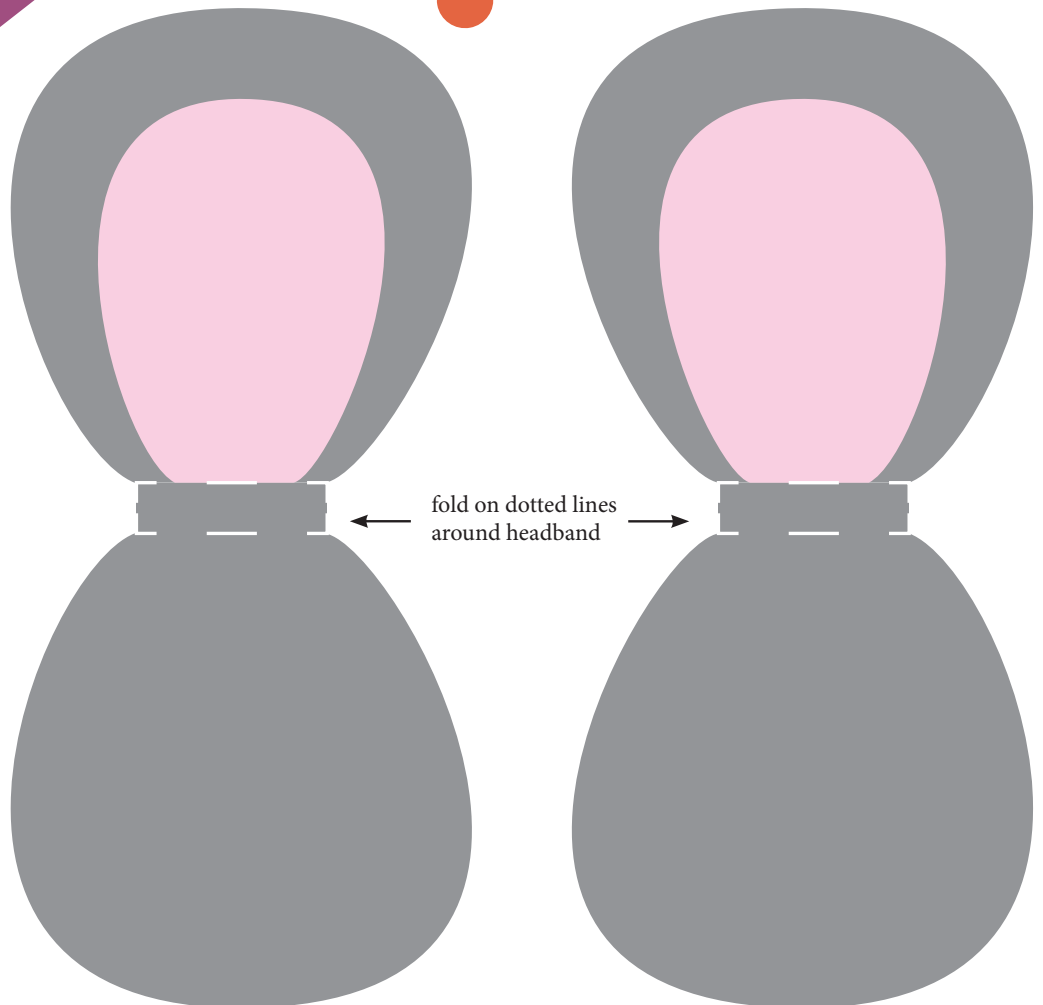
Lily's Wand

Paste on cardstock and cut out. Then attach to a dowel. Add glitter or ribbons for flair!



Mouse Ears

Paste on cardstock and cut out. Then fold around a headband and glue them in place.



Readers' Theater Rules

1. Be respectful and arrive on time.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
3. No talking while there is a performance.
4. Be responsible and bring the items needed for rehearsal.
5. Follow adult directions.



Additional Resources

Here are some other great resources about Readers' Theater:

Aaron Shepard's Readers' Theater Guides

<http://aaronsherp.com/rt/>

Conducting Readers' Theater Resources

<http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/carrick/>

The NWT Literacy Council's Readers' Theater How To

<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/howtokit/theatre/theatre.pdf>

Readers' Theater Scripts from Pinellas County Schools

<http://it.pinellas.k12.fl.us/Teachers3/gurianb/ReadersTheater.html>

