

The Princess and the Frog

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.

The Princess and the Frog 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 five main speaking parts with a range of reading levels. The frog chorus should be composed of at least three performers (including Frog #1 and #2) but can be expanded to include as many children as you like. The reading level is the ATOS level based on the character's speaking parts and stage direction. One or two stage crew members can also have walk-on roles as they carry in the sun and the moon.

Narrator - Reading Level: 4.9

The narrator is the storyteller. He sits to the side of the stage on a stool. He forms a kind of bridge between the audience and the performers, adding intimacy to the play. This part requires excellent reading skills. In *The Princess and the Frog*, the narrator is outmaneuvered by the irrepressible frog, who takes over the narration partway into the story. The narrator should appear pouty and annoyed while he sits on the sidelines.

Frog Chorus - Reading Level: 3.9

Include as many students as possible in the Frog Chorus! Have them practice hopping up and down as they sing their frog song.



Frog #2 - Reading Level: 3.7

Frog #2 is also one of the members of the Frog Chorus. He speaks their lines as well as his own. This is a small part that is ideal for a student who wants to speak several lines independently but doesn't want a large speaking part.

Frog #1 – The Director - Reading Level: 3.6

The Director of the Frog Chorus acts as a spokesman for the rest of the frogs. If you want to add something different to his costume, dress him in a black jacket and white shirt but be sure to include frog glasses for his outfit. His baton should still be a stick – he is a frog, after all!

Frederick, the Enchanted Frog - Reading Level: 2.9

Frederick's self-confidence and arrogance shows in everything he says. He is proud to be more than "just a frog." He skillfully asks Princess Lily for more than he wants, so that when he asks for a kiss, it won't seem so terrible. A big wink to the audience when he achieves his goal would be cute. Choose a student who can add swagger to this part, but still be likeable at the same time.

Princess Lily - Reading Level: 2.1

Lily is a typical spoiled princess, used to getting her own way in everything. Rolling her eyes or stamping her foot will add to the part. Make sure the comments of "Ewww!" are drawn out and said with feeling!

Stage Crew Members

The stage crew member who carries on the sun should act annoyed when he has to exchange the sun for the moon on stage. This part can be played by one student or two.



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!

cardboard
long dowels
fake flowers
glittery ball
paint

headbands
brown felt or fake fur
green felt
stick for director baton
construction paper

Sets & Props

Because all of the action takes place in the castle garden, there's more flexibility as far as scenery is concerned. The set can be as elaborate as you like, perhaps including park benches or an arbor with artificial vines and real or artificial potted plants. Multiple flower pots could be circled by cardboard walls to look like flower beds.

Be sure to include a special glittery ball for Lily to play with. The ball should be something she truly doesn't want to lose. The giant lips avoid embarrassment in scenes with fairytale kisses. Make them huge and glitzy so the audience will laugh. The sun and the moon should have faces. Paint them with shimmery paint and attach them to doweling if you feel a paint stick isn't long enough.



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



Flowers

Paste on cardboard
for a garden.

Printable Props (continued)

Smiling Moon

Paste on cardboard, cut out,
and attach to a long dowel.



Printable Props (continued)

Smiling Sun

Paste on cardboard, cut out,
and attach to a long dowel.



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://aaronshep.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>

