Mark-Up Scripting

Readers’ Theatre Information Sheet

1. Silently read the story assigned to your group.

2. When everyone has finished the 1st reading, work as a group and identify the character parts in the story.

3. As a group, decide which sections of the story can be cut, without losing meaning. With a pencil, cross out these sections.

4. Some of the language may seem too formal. Identify overly formal language try inserting some contractions (I am becomes I'm, do not becomes don't, etc.).

5. Highlight your own lines and write your character's name in the left margin.

6. Write the names of the other characters in the left margin, but do not highlight these lines.

7. As a group, read through your script and decide on the music or ambient sound effects you will use.

Indicate where the music/SFX begins and where it ends.

8. Do a test reading. If something doesn't work just the way you want it to, make changes as needed.

9. Rehearse and perform your script for the class.

10. Rehearse in a setup as close to the performance setup as possible.

11. Use gestures, facial expressions, simplified costuming,

12. In rehearsal, refer to the character when making a suggestion, not the actor.

13. In rehearsals, work on improving the performance—facial expressions, posture, pronunciation, etc.

14. If the performance is for an audience, actors should speak to the audience. This may help with projection. If the performance is to be recorded, the actors should speak to the microphone.

15. Scripts may be placed in folders, adding an element of formality to the performance. Three ring binders are the simplest and they make page turning easy. Students can also create their own binders. The folders may be placed on music stands or held so that the reader’s facial expressions and speech are not blocked from the audience.

Some Readers' Theatre Scripting Problems and Suggested Solutions: Problem: Your story doesn't have enough parts for the readers in your group.

Solutions: Have more than one narrator.

Make two characters out of one, or add a character and write his/her dialogue. For instance: Look in the narrative sections for language that “tells” what a character did or said. Bring these sections to life by writing a dialogue scene that “shows” what was said or what happened.

Problem: You don't have enough actors to perform all the parts.

Solutions: Assign an actor more than one part, making sure that an actor doesn't read more than one part in any one scene.

Sometimes a character can be eliminated and that character's lines assigned to another character.

Problem: The story has “he said” and “she said” phrases throughout the story.

Solution: Cut these.

Problem: The story contains many archaic and unfamiliar words and phrases.

Solution: Rewrite these passages substituting more familiar language.

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