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READER'S THEATER

Collection of Scripts for English and Translation
Classes





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**ТЕАТР ЧТЕЦОВ:
сборник материалов для занятий
по английскому языку и практике перевода**

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Предлагаемое учебное пособие предназначено для занятий по английскому языку и практике перевода со студентами-бакалаврами, обучающимися по направлению «Лингвистика», профиль «Перевод и переводоведение». Материал пособия направлен на формирование навыков чтения вслух. Пособие может быть также использовано всеми, кто изучает английский язык.

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ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Данное учебное пособие раскрывает возможности театра чтецов (reader's theater) – очень интересной, но малоизвестной формы как аудиторной, так и внеаудиторной деятельности в процессе обучения иностранному языку.

Актуальность предлагаемого пособия обусловлена необходимостью поиска новых путей и эффективных способов формирования беглости чтения у студентов.

Чтение – один из видов речевой деятельности, которым овладевают студенты в рамках практического курса по иностранному языку. Обучение чтению – многогранный и многоплановый процесс, одним из направлений, и, соответственно, задачей которого является овладение навыками обращенного выразительного чтения вслух прозаических и поэтических текстов.

Наблюдение за реальной учебной практикой, а также анализ рабочих программ позволяет сделать вывод о том, что на фоне формирования навыков информативного чтения, где главная цель – получение информации для дальнейшего решения задач, в том числе коммуникативных, или научно-исследовательских, работа над учебным чтением вслух занимает сугубо периферийное место. В определенном смысле это объяснимо: предпочтение отдается чтению про себя, так как при этом максимально нейтрализуется внутренняя артикуляция, что позволяет сосредоточиться на восприятии смысловых единиц, составляющих общее содержание текста. Кроме того, чтение про себя позволяет обработать больший по объему материал в единицу времени, в соотношении 1:3. Между тем, исключительная сосредоточенность на чтении про себя приводит к игнорированию огромного обучающего потенциала чтения вслух, которое как вспомогательный вид речевой деятельности может и должен использоваться для поддержания и развития навыков других видов речевой деятельности, прежде всего аудирования и говорения.

Театр чтецов, основная идея которого – это выразительное чтение текста, разбитого по ролям, может стать идеальной площадкой для решения вышеуказанной задачи в рамках практиче-

ских занятий по иностранному языку, а также при организации внеурочной работы студентов. Оригинальность данного подхода заключается в том, что драматизация предложенных текстов является не целью, а инструментом и контекстом для формирования навыков просодически-корректного чтения. В интересной, творческой, ненавязчивой атмосфере преподаватель одновременно решает задачи развития лингвистической, социокультурной, прагматической и переводческой компетенций студентов. Для учащихся же учебные задачи имплицитны: они погружаются в мир литературы – творчества, чтения, создания эмоциональной картины посредством прочитанного слова.

Непосредственному театральному прочтению отрывка предшествует «немое» прочтение текста за преподавателем, прочтение текста с помощью преподавателя или партнера, а также многократное самостоятельное прочтение текста вслух. При этом каждый раз, несмотря на отсутствие игры как таковой, отсутствие костюмов и декораций, чтецы помнят о том, что они должны донести смысл читаемого исключительно просодическими средствами, т. е. с помощью возможностей своего голоса. Таким образом, просодический компонент становится доминирующим, при этом важно отметить, что сам факт неоднократного воспроизведения текста работает на точность прочтения и его автоматизм.

Театр чтецов имеет огромный учебный, воспитательный, развивающий и культурологический потенциал для преподавания иностранного языка. Основные преимущества таковы:

- создание мотивирующей к совершенствованию иностранного языка атмосферы;
- создание условий и реализация на практике сильной психологической, методологической и педагогической поддержки со стороны преподавателя (scaffolding). Наличие текста – основное техническое средство поддержки. Неуверенные в себе студенты получают возможность в максимально комфортных условиях, не грозящих проверкой, тестированием и расспросами со стороны преподавателя, окунуться в атмосферу творческого сотрудничества с остальными членами группы; при этом

возможности для качественной отработки прочтения ограничиваются лишь желанием самого студента;

- наличие площадки для совместной работы студентов;
- реализация принципа многократного повторения и закрепления материала, мотивированное в том числе желанием добиться самого лучшего результата, способствует улучшению интонационно-фонетической базы каждого студента, и, следовательно, – улучшению механизмов внутреннего проговаривания, тренировки различных видов памяти (слуховой и зрительной, кратковременной и долговременной), и опосредованному развитию навыков аудирования и говорения;
- большой потенциал для развития личностных качеств студентов: на этапе подготовки к постановке важны умение договариваться, умение ставить и достигать цели, нести ответственность за свое обучение и за успех группового проекта, тогда как само представление становится решающим для развития уверенности в себе, образности мышления и эмоциональности;
- развитие профессиональных компетенций студентов – будущих переводчиков.

Описанный потенциал театра чтецов сделает предлагаемое учебное пособие востребованным при подготовке студентов-бакалавров, обучающихся по направлению «Лингвистика» (профиль «Перевод и переводоведение»), а также смежных направлений. Представленные тексты могут быть успешно интегрированы в уже существующие модели развития навыков чтения.

МЕТОДИЧЕСКАЯ ЗАПИСКА

Идея театра чтецов широко и успешно используется в английских и американских школах в рамках обучения родному языку, как одно из эффективных средств формирования беглости чтения, причем беглость традиционно определяется как способность читать текст с точностью, автоматизмом и просодией (Rasinski, 2007). *Точность* подразумевает правильное фонетическое прочтение слов в тексте. *Автоматизм* – это способность искусных чтецов читать слова в контексте правильно и без напряжения, что создает условия для того, чтобы чтец мог сосредоточиться не столько на графической форме слов, составляющих текст, сколько на значении читаемого. *Просодия* – это способность чтеца передать текст с нужной экспрессией и выражением для того, чтобы донести семантический и синтаксический контекст текста. Беглое устное чтение должно звучать как правильно поставленная устная речь. Считается, что если человек бегло читает вслух, то он также бегло может читать и про себя, решая при этом уже другие задачи прочтения (Reutzel, Jones, Fawson & Smith, 2008).

Ориентация на вышеуказанные параметры беглости во многом вызывает опасения практиков. Они связаны с тем, что школьники, студенты могут читать быстро, но слабо понимать, что они читают, а это приводит к тому, что чтец получает мало удовольствия и удовлетворения от процесса прочтения. Думается, что многие родители, учителя и русского языка, и английского языка с готовностью согласятся с этим наблюдением.

В попытках найти более аутентичный подход, подход, позволяющий сконцентрироваться на *просодической стороне прочтения*, многие практики обратились к контексту литературного, театрального чтения-представления (Rasinski, 2007) – театру чтецов. Готовясь к чтению вслух для аудитории, человек не концентрируется на скорости прочтения как таковой, а скорее, и что более важно, на чтении со значимой экспрессией и выражением с целью помочь аудитории лучше понять читаемый отрывок.

Апробация текстов для театра чтецов, предлагаемых в данном пособии, проходила в группах студентов – будущих переводчиков, обучающихся на кафедре перевода и стилистики английского языка УдГУ. Для устных переводчиков умение говорить громко, с соблюдением всех норм интонационной организации текста является наиважнейшим. Более того, чтение вслух напрямую связано с аудированием, а аудирование лежит в основе устного перевода. Помимо прочего, чтение вслух – это площадка для тренировки памяти – еще одного профессионально-значимого элемента подготовки переводчиков. Развитие навыков аудирования, четкости речи, тренировка памяти не могут быть привязаны лишь к начальному этапу профессионального обучения. Это длительный процесс, который в рамках формального обучения, может быть выстроен в том числе и вокруг театра чтецов, как максимально продуктивной образовательной площадки. При этом для каждой ступени языковой подготовки должны быть выделены и методически обоснованы свои задачи чтения вслух.

Для правильного понимания идеи данного пособия важно отметить необходимость постепенного и постоянного обращения к чтению вслух как на занятиях по практике языка, так и на практических занятиях по переводу. При этом распределение работы по этапам может выглядеть так: чтение вслух для формирования просодически-корректного чтения с интонационно-ритмическим оформлением, развитие артикуляционной памяти (формат вводно-коррективного курса). Далее – чтение вслух как вспомогательный вид речевой деятельности, объективно необходимый для формирования и развития навыков других видов речевой деятельности в пределах одноязычной речевой ситуации: аудирования и говорения. На следующем этапе чтение вслух может использоваться для формирования навыка переключения при аудировании, что является необходимым условием обеспечения межязыковой коммуникации через перевод. Происходит выстраивание параллельных ассоциативных комплексов на синтаксическом и лексическом уровне: через чтение вслух студенты учатся слышать и находить функционально-параллельные модели в языке перевода. На заключительном

этапе студенты продолжают читать вслух для дальнейшего развития уже сформированного навыка переключения со значительным акцентом в сторону языка перевода и верификацией видов перевода: последовательный, абзацно-фразовый, синхронный перевод, а также письменный перевод на слух.

Опыт использования театра чтецов показывает, что студентам нравится то, что этот формат не подразумевает формального заучивания текста наизусть, а также его полномасштабной драматизации на оформленной сцене с различного рода эффектами, при которых далеко не все участники чувствовали бы себя комфортно. Это другой театр, и другое чтение – чтение не как техническое упражнение, а чтение как искусство и удовольствие. Установка преподавателя при этом, естественно, гораздо глубже чем простое поддержание интереса студентов. За широким спектром решаемых преподавателем задач стоит конкретная психолого-методическая база.

Принцип многократного повторения является одним из основополагающих в обучении иностранному языку в целом и переводу в частности. В повторении же лежит и глубокий психологический контекст – повторение действия в стереотипных условиях ведет к образованию автоматизма. Работая над текстом для театра чтецов, преподаватель и студенты ненавязчиво решают эти задачи.

Кроме этого, исследования показывают, что чтение вслух (для самого себя, или же для кого-то) значительно улучшает *запоминание* материала, укрепляет его понимание и способность к вспоминанию. Чтение вслух дает силу анализа, силу критического мышления, которая часто недоступна при чтении про себя. Это связано с тем, что прочтение про себя в разы ускоряет наше знакомство с текстом, достигается это путем разных техник, в том числе академического чтения, но при этом незамеченными остаются многие слова, а иногда и пласты смыслов. При прочтении вслух человек застрахован от этого, поэтому нельзя игнорировать роль учебного чтения вслух в контексте работы с лексикой, а также при общем литературно-лингвистическом анализе текста.

Помимо *артикуляционной памяти*, которая хорошо тренируется в рамках вводно-коррективных курсов, чтение вслух напрямую связано с *развитием механизмов слуховой памяти* – способности удерживать в памяти определенные отрезки речи. Существует множество методов, способствующих развитию слуховой памяти человека. По мнению многих ученых, благодаря тренировкам можно увеличить объем слуховой механической памяти в среднем в 2–3 раза.

Технология формирования механизма слуховой памяти особенно хорошо известна в школах перевода, где процесс развития слуховой памяти у студентов строится поэтапно, с постепенным укреплением единиц восприятия: слово, фонетическое слово, элементарные модели, сложные модели. В зависимости от уровня подготовки студентов, эти упражнения выстраиваются как на родном языке, так и на иностранном, с последующим переходом к собственно переводу. Тексты, подобранные для «постановки» в театре чтецов представляют собой отличную площадку для реализации описанной схемы развития механизмов слуховой памяти. Так, студенты, работая в парах или группах, начитывают друг другу свои роли (отрывками) по всем просодическим правилам, т. е. с правильным интонационным оформлением, предлагая партнеру повторить услышанное в формате эхо (ревербация) – со всеми логическими ударениями, паузами, изменениями темпа речи в рамках смысловых отрезков речевого произведения.

Отметим, что чтение вслух может быть также использовано для формирования и развития как *кратковременной, так и долговременной памяти*. Дело в том, что при неоднократном собственном прочтении текста вслух, с одной стороны, а с другой стороны, при неоднократном прослушивании ролей других участников, студенты включают в работу все виды памяти, в том числе *зрительную и слуховую*. Отметим, что начиная работать над текстом для театра чтецов, учащиеся не должны концентрироваться непосредственно на задаче тренировки памяти – для них это просто работа над текстом, попытка «примерить» на себя характер персонажа, попытка развить этот характер инструментами голоса в контексте лексических, грамматических и стилистических реалий изучаемого

текста. Причем упомянутые реалии могут и должны становиться предметом обсуждения в группе. Выстраивать эту работу можно по-разному. Один из способов – попросить студентов прочитать небольшой отрывок (длительностью примерно в 10 секунд), а затем задать серию вопросов по идентификации составляющих этого текста: назвать слова, начинающиеся с той или иной буквы, назвать слова, относящиеся к определенной теме, назвать слова, обозначающие цвета, которые прозвучали в этом отрывке, привести примеры повторений и объяснить их стилистическую функцию и т. д. Чтение вслух с последующим контролем усвоения смысла является также одним из способов тренировки восприятия прецизионной информации, а также незнакомых слов в потоке речи, т. е. тех элементов содержания, которые часто вызывают сложности при аудировании, и, следовательно, при переводе.

Необходимо также подчеркнуть тот факт, что чтение вслух направлено на *синхронизацию активности правого и левого полушария головного мозга человека*. Основным принцип этого процесса – совмещение слова и образа, когда через эмоциональное прочтение текста создаются яркие образы. В контексте традиционного образования, когда основная учебная деятельность обращена лишь к функциям левого полушария, возможность предоставить студентам шанс для развития их эмоционального интеллекта (т. е. развития эмоциональности, образности, управления своими эмоциями, умения передавать эти эмоции другому, в том числе с помощью прочитанного слова, соответствующей интонации) кажется очень ценной.

Как упоминалось выше, чтение вслух *напрямую связано с другими видами речевой деятельности*, в частности с особенностями аудиального восприятия текста. Аудирование и чтение – одинаково рецептивны, они опираются на восприятие языковых знаков путем сличения с теми эталонами и моделями, которые находятся в нашей памяти. Эти модели формируются и поддерживаются в самих процессах речевой деятельности человека, в частности при чтении и аудировании.

Известно, что в процессе восприятия речи функционирует *механизм внутреннего проговаривания*. Аудирование станет

невозможным, или крайне затрудненным, если внутреннее проговаривание осуществляется медленно. Именно чтение как вид речевой деятельности предусматривает как внутреннее, так и внешнее проговаривание. Эффект чтения вслух наилучшим образом способствует формированию обобщающих артикуляторных схем и является основой формирования внутренней речи, что способствует автоматизации процессов при любом восприятии текста – графическом или аудиальном.

Особенно важна роль чтения вслух и аудирования с точки зрения формирования моделей и эталонов, о которых шла речь выше, в условиях отсутствия языковой среды, т. к. и чтение вслух, и аудирование обеспечивает развитие артикуляционной памяти и в определенном смысле имитирует говорение. При чтении вслух работа органов артикуляции во время проговаривания контролируется и закрепляется через слух: читающий слышит себя, проговариваемые ритмические синтагмы. Внутреннее проговаривание при аудировании, осуществляемое на уровне определенных ритмических, смысловых групп, также обеспечивает своего рода контроль, когда воспринимаемый слуховой образ подтверждается уже имеющимся в памяти артикуляционным. Таким образом, правильное ритмическое оформление текста при чтении вслух, когда имеет место визуальное восприятие, обеспечивает закрепление через внешнее озвучивание корректного артикуляционного слухового образа вариантов ритмических групп с последующим их узнаванием при аудиальном восприятии.

Завершая описание психологических и методических аспектов театра чтецов, суммируем основные преимущества этой формы работы в рамках изучения иностранного языка и подготовки переводчиков:

- *возможности для обучения фонетической стороне речи.* Театр чтецов обеспечивает контекст для тренировки фонетической грамотности и беглости за счет многократного повторения текста. При этом решаются важнейшие задачи тренировки ритма, интонирования, громкости чтения (а следовательно, и говорения), акцентов в синтагмах.

- *возможности для обучения лексической стороне речи.* Студенты получают возможность для закрепления уже усвоенных лексических единиц, а также узнают новые. Широкий репертуар театра чтецов (тексты традиционного американского и английского фольклора, отрывки из художественной литературы, поэзия и т. д.) дает возможность для выявления нового лексического материала на уровне моделей словообразования, многозначности, синонимии и антонимии, сочетаемости, фразеологии, а также лексико-стилистических особенностей английского языка в его жанровом многообразии.
- *возможности для развития социокультурной компетенции.* Студенты знакомятся с историческими реалиями, традициями, фольклором разных стран. Особое место занимают тексты, отражающие разные стороны повседневной жизни школьников и молодежи в англоговорящих странах сегодня. Среди текстов, представленных в данном пособии, имеются и образцы классической литературы, и образцы фольклора, и юмористические тексты современных авторов, в том числе авторов-студентов (носителей языка), которые сами разрабатывали тексты для театра чтецов. Знакомство со столь разнообразным материалом способствует расширению горизонтов студентов, воспитанию их толерантности и поликультурной грамотности.
- *возможности для развития личностных качеств студентов:* самостоятельности, ответственности, навыков самоуправления (постановка цели, управление временем, самомотивация), готовности и умения работать в команде.
- *возможности для развития профессиональных компетенций,* в том числе переводческих. Помимо тренировки памяти, внимания, механизмов переключения и психологической устойчивости, студенты получают возможность сравнивать известные (и новые) переводы с их оригиналами, анализировать их.

- *возможности для поддержания и развития интереса к английскому языку и мотивации к учебной и внеучебной деятельности.*
- *возможности для развития артистических навыков, базовых способностей анализировать возможности сценических приемов и техник и правильно выбирать средства для вербального и невербального общения с аудиторией.*

Театр чтецов как форма учебной деятельности несет в себе большой потенциал для групп, занимающихся изучением иностранного языка. Осознание и последовательная реализация на практике всех возможностей, описанных выше, сделает предлагаемый вид работы одним из самых любимых и студентами, и преподавателями. Театр чтецов возвращает нас к лучшим традициям семейного чтения вслух (которое, нужно отметить, никогда не ограничивалось чтением взрослыми детям, а напротив, изначально было ориентировано на взрослый досуг) и погружает в контекст нового тренда – создания социальных некоммерческих проектов (например, фондов «Германия читает вслух», «Польша читает вслух»), целью которых является возрождение доброй традиции чтения вслух. В России эту функцию берут на себя библиотеки, редакции радио и телевидения, которые приглашают известных людей, актеров, авторов, или просто интересных собеседников для прочтения произведений или их отрывков вслух. В таком формате чтение вслух осознается, прежде всего, как радость от звучания любимой или новой книги, радость от фразы, стиля, возможности поделиться впечатлением от прочитанного с другими, подарить им свое прочтение, или же принять такой же подарок. К счастью, возможности предмета «иностранный язык» во всем его многообразии, позволяют создать эту атмосферу в рамках аудиторной и внеаудиторной деятельности.

ЭТАПЫ РАБОТЫ В ФОРМАТЕ ТЕАТРА ЧТЕЦОВ

Театр чтецов может позиционироваться как совершенно отдельный вид деятельности в рамках рабочей программы по дисциплине, или же интегрироваться в уже существующую модель развития навыков чтения, как одного из видов речевой деятельности.

Начнем с того, что каждый педагог может выбрать свой способ ввода текста для театра чтецов. Это зависит от стиля текста, его основной темы, особенностей постановки и т. д. Вводя текст, педагог может решать задачи развития навыков языковой догадки в целом, и в частности, антиципации смыслов лексических единиц. По названию предлагаемого текста, студенты могут высказать свои предположения, или задать вопросы относительно содержания. Таким образом, подготовительный этап работы с текстом театра чтецов несет в себе такой же потенциал для стадии предпрочтения, как и традиционный формат, делая само первое знакомство с текстом активным и мотивированным со стороны студентов.

После первого прочтения текста (вместе с учителем, или про себя), преподаватель проверяет понимание текста, делает нужные комментарии относительно лексической стороны, культурологических элементов текста.

Далее начинается этап совместного чтения текста вслух и распределения ролей. Данный этап, в зависимости от психологической и академической зрелости участников группы, может представлять или не представлять определенные трудности. Процесс распределения ролей – критический для диагностики сформированности навыков продуктивного сотрудничества, навыков совместного достижения общих целей. Этот этап – прекрасная возможность организовать целенаправленную работу по улучшению этих навыков в контексте подготовки общего «спектакля». Здесь особая роль ложится на преподавателя.

Когда роли распределены, следует первичное и последующие чтения текста вслух по ролям; каждый студент работает со своей ролью. Роль преподавателя на данном этапе – поддерживать внимание «артистов» на четкости артикуляции и просодических элементах каждого отрывка, снимать индивидуальные трудности и организовывать работу в группах / парах с той целью, чтобы исполнители настроились друг на друга.

Примерно к четвертому или пятому прочтению выбранного текста в идеале студенты должны подойти к так называемой «генеральной репетиции», когда все лексические трудности сняты, все понимают смысл текста, в том числе и его глубинные смыслы, знают и владеют просодическими способами донесения этих смыслов до аудитории. Многократное повторение текстов должно обеспечить все параметры беглого чтения: точность, автоматизм и соответствие просодическим нормам. Студенты должны быть готовы к представлению.

Важно, чтобы этап представления – чтения вслух каждый раз находил свою аудиторию. Опыт показывает, что это могут быть представители своей группы (если внутри группы одновременно готовятся несколько представлений), студенты других языковых групп, участники групп дополнительного образования, друзья, родители, преподаватели и все желающие. Главное – относиться к описываемой форме работы как к таковой – как к театру, театру со своими зрителями, своим репертуаром, и со своими сценическими находками, обусловленными особым форматом данного вида театра.

Отдельно отметим возможность создания текстов для театра чтецов самими студентами. Когда студенты понимают суть описываемой формы работы, когда они начинают чувствовать себя комфортно в данном виде драматизации, преподаватель может предложить им самим создать или адаптировать текст для театра чтецов: в рамках изучения какой-то темы, или на основе художественного текста. В таком формате студенты сами творят текст: выстраивают сюжет вокруг прямой речи, разбивают текст на роли, прорабатывают рифмы, добавляют повторы, прописывают слова автора, продумывают и реализуют дополнительные

выразительные средства для сценической постановки текста. Таким образом, преподаватель организует работу по развитию навыков письма как вида речевой деятельности. Далее работа выстраивается таким же образом, как и при разработке готового текста для театра чтецов.

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- Carol Montgomery Readers Theater All Year: <http://www.readerstheaterallyear.com/>
- Aaron Shepherd’s RT site: www.aaronsherp.com
- Rick Swollow: <http://www.timelessteacherstuff.com>
- The Best Class: <http://www.thebestclass.org/rtscripts.html>
- Reader’s Theater Scripts and Plays <http://www.teachingheart.net/readerstheater.htm>
- Busy Teacher Cafe: http://www.busyteacherscafe.com/literacy/readers_theater.html

The Legend of Slappy Hooper

an American Tall Tale

Slappy is the world's biggest, fastest, bestest¹ sign painter, but he's too good – his pictures keep coming to life.

READERS: 8

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
Slappy	
Miss Rose Red	
Mr. Baldwin Eagle	
Mr. Ray Sunshine	
Michael	

NARRATOR 1: You've heard about Paul Bunyan, the greatest lumberjack of all time.

NARRATOR 3: And you've heard about Pecos Bill, the greatest cowboy.

NARRATOR 2: Now let us tell you about the world's

NARRATOR 1: biggest,

NARRATOR 2: fastest,

NARRATOR 3: bestest

NARRATOR 2: sign painter.

SLAPPY: *(proudly, to audience, in booming voice)* That's me! Slappy Hooper!

¹ A word that is better than best. Exemplifies that someone/something means a lot to you and are better than the best.

NARRATOR 1: You'd better believe Slappy was biggest! Why, he was seven feet tall with shoulders to match, and he weighed three hundred pounds, even without his cap and coveralls and brush and bucket.

NARRATOR 2: And fastest?

SLAPPY: Just give me an eight-inch brush! (*slaps paint on a wall*)

NARRATOR 1: Slip!

NARRATOR 2: Slop!

NARRATOR 3: Slap!

NARRATOR 2: The job was done.

SLAPPY: And so smooth, you'd never see a brush stroke.

NARRATOR 3: And you bet Slappy was bestest! That was on account of his pictures.

SLAPPY: No one else ever made them so true to life!

NARRATOR 3: In fact, some folks said they were too true to life.

NARRATOR 1: Slappy's trouble started with the huge red rose he painted on the sign for *Rose's Florist Shop*.

ROSE RED: Slappy, it's so real!

NARRATOR 1: ... said Miss Rose Red, the owner.

ROSE RED: Why, I can just about smell the fragrance!

NARRATOR 2: But a week later, Rose Red fluttered into Slappy's sign shop.

ROSE RED: Slappy, that sign of yours was too good.

SLAPPY: (*puzzled*) Too good?

ROSE RED: That's right! The bees got wind of it and swarmed all over that rose, trying to get in. They scared away all my customers! That was bad enough, but wait till you see what's happened now!

NARRATOR 3: When they reached the florist shop, Slappy saw that the bees were gone. But the rose had withered and died!

ROSE RED: No one buys from a florist with a withered flower on her sign. That's the last thing you'll paint for me, Slappy Hooper!

NARRATOR 1: The story got around, but most folks just laughed, and they still wanted Slappy to do their signs.

NARRATOR 2: His next job was to paint a billboard for the *Eagle Messenger Service*. Slappy painted an eagle three times larger than life.

BALDWIN EAGLE: Amazing!

NARRATOR 2: ... said Mr. Baldwin Eagle.

BALDWIN EAGLE: It's so real, I could swear I saw it blink! Wait a minute. I did see it blink!

NARRATOR 3: Then the bird flapped its wings and flew right off the billboard!

BALDWIN EAGLE: That sign was too good. That's the last time you'll work for me, Slappy Hooper!

NARRATOR 1: Folks were getting scared to hire Slappy. But at last he got a job from the *Sunshine Travel Agency*.

NARRATOR 2: The billboard was to show a man and a woman on a beach, toasting under a hot sun. Slappy painted it the day after a big snowstorm.

RAY SUNSHINE: Wonderful!

NARRATOR 3: ... said Mr. Ray Sunshine.

RAY SUNSHINE: Why, that sun makes me feel hot! And look! The snow on the sidewalk is melting!

NARRATOR 3: But a couple of days later, Slappy got a call.

RAY SUNSHINE: Slappy, your sign is too good. Get down here right away!

NARRATOR 1: When Slappy arrived, he saw that the sidewalk and the street in front of the billboard were covered with beach chairs. People sat around in swimsuits and sunglasses, sipping lemonade and splashing suntan lotion.

RAY SUNSHINE: They're blocking traffic, and the mayor blames me! Besides, they won't need my travel agency if they take their vacations here! You've got to do something, Slappy.

NARRATOR 2: So Slappy set up his gear and got to work. He painted the sun on the billboard much hotter. Before long, the crowd was sweating buckets and complaining of sunburn. Then everyone packed up and left.

RAY SUNSHINE: Good work, Slappy! (*gasps and points*) Look at that!

NARRATOR 2: The man and the woman on the billboard were walking off, too!

NARRATOR 3: Just then, a lick of flame shot up the wall of the building across the street. Slappy's sign had set it on fire! In a few minutes, fire trucks clanged up and firefighters turned hoses on the flames.

RAY SUNSHINE: Slappy! Try something else!

NARRATOR 1: Slappy got back to work. He painted a storm cloud across that sun. But he had to jump clear when the cloud shot bolts of lightning!

NARRATOR 2: Then the storm broke.

NARRATOR 3: Slappy's cloud rained so hard, the billboard overflowed and flooded all of Main Street!

RAY SUNSHINE: Never again, Slappy Hooper!

NARRATOR 1: After that, no one on earth would hire Slappy. It looked as if his sign-painting days were done.

NARRATOR 2: Slappy felt so low, he made up his mind to throw his paint kit in the river. He dragged it onto the tallest bridge in town and was just about to chuck it, when a voice thundered out beside him.

MICHAEL: Don't dump that gear, Slappy. You're going to need it!

NARRATOR 3: Right next to Slappy stood a man almost as big as Slappy himself. He wore paint-splotted white coveralls and a cap with two little angel wings sticking out. He carried an eight-inch brush.

SLAPPY: Who are you?

MICHAEL: I'm Michael, from the *Heavenly Sign Company*. The Boss has had an eye on you for some time, Slappy, and He likes your work. He's got a job for you – if you don't mind working in the rain.

SLAPPY: Tell me about it.

MICHAEL: We need someone to paint a rainbow this Wednesday. Most of the time, we handle all the rainbows ourselves. But it's going to rain in a bunch of places Wednesday, and we could sure use some help.

SLAPPY: I'm your man.

NARRATOR 3: ... said Slappy.

NARRATOR 1: That Wednesday morning, Slappy rented a cannon, and set it in a big cow pasture. He tied two ropes to his scaffold, then ran the other ends through a couple of skyhooks. Then he loaded the skyhooks in the cannon and shot them straight up.

SLAPPY: BOOM! (*looks up*)

NARRATOR 1: Sure enough, the skyhooks caught on the sky.

NARRATOR 2: Slappy felt the first raindrops. He piled all his paints and brushes onto his scaffold, climbed on, and hoisted himself up, up, and up! He kept going till he was just under the clouds. Then he tied his ropes and started to paint.

NARRATOR 1: Slip!

NARRATOR 2: Slop!

NARRATOR 3: Slap!

NARRATOR 2: He had only just finished, when the sun popped through the clouds and lit up what he'd done.

NARRATOR 3: There never was a finer rainbow! It had every color you could imagine, each one blending perfectly with the next.

SLAPPY: (*proudly, looking over his work*) And not a brush stroke in sight!

NARRATOR 1: Just then, Slappy felt a big jolt. He looked up to see what had caused it.

SLAPPY: Oh, no!

NARRATOR 1: The sun had run smack into his skyhooks!

NARRATOR 2: Slappy shut his eyes and waited for the long drop to the ground. But it never came. When Slappy looked again, he saw why.

SLAPPY: (*amazed*) For heaven's sake!

NARRATOR 2: Slappy's hooks had caught on the sun itself! And the sun was pulling his rig across the sky!

NARRATOR 3: Now, another sign painter might have been frightened. But not Slappy Hooper! He was enjoying the ride!

NARRATOR 1: He'd covered a good distance when Michael appeared on the scaffold beside him.

MICHAEL: *(thundering)* The Boss liked your rainbow, Slappy.

SLAPPY: You mean, it wasn't too good?

MICHAEL: If it isn't too good, it's not good enough! That's how we figure. Anyhow, now that you're here, the Boss has another job for you, if you don't mind working odd hours.

SLAPPY: Tell me about it.

MICHAEL: It's the sunrise and sunset. I guess you know, the Boss Himself has been painting them since time began. But He's done it so long, He'd like to give someone else a chance.

SLAPPY: I'm your man.

NARRATOR 3: ... said Slappy Hooper.

NARRATOR 1: Slappy's been up there ever since.

NARRATOR 2: Of course, you can't see him, with the sun so bright, but he's there all the same.

NARRATOR 3: Night and day, the sun pulls Slappy and his rig around the world. And every time Slappy comes to a horizon, he reaches up with his eight-inch brush.

NARRATOR 1: Slip!

NARRATOR 2: Slop!

NARRATOR 3: Slap!

NARRATOR 2: The job is done.

SLAPPY: *(to audience)* And never a brush stroke in sight!

The Baker's Dozen: a Saint Nicholas Tale

by Aaron Shepard

Van Amsterdam the baker was well known for his honesty as well as for his fine Saint Nicholas cookies. He always gave his customers exactly what they paid for – not more and not less. So, he was not about to give in when a mysterious old woman comes to him on Saint Nicholas Day and insists that a dozen is thirteen! The woman's curse puts an end to the baker's business, and he believes it would take Saint Nicholas to help him. But if he receives that help, will it be exactly what he imagined?

Find out in this inspiring legend from Dutch colonial New York about the birth of an honored American custom.

READERS: 4

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
Baker	
Woman	

NARRATOR 1: In the Dutch colonial town later known as Albany, New York, there lived a baker, Van Amsterdam, who was as honest as he could be. Each morning, he checked and balanced his scales, and he took great care to give his customers exactly what they paid for – not more, and not less.

NARRATOR 2: Van Amsterdam's shop was always busy, because people trusted him, and because he was a good baker as well. And never was the shop busier than in the days before December 6, when the Dutch celebrate Saint Nicholas Day.

NARRATOR 1: At that time of year, people flocked to the baker's shop to buy his fine Saint Nicholas cookies.

NARRATOR 2: Made of gingerbread, iced in red and white, they looked just like Saint Nicholas as the Dutch know him – tall and thin, with a high, red bishop's cap, and a long, red bishop's cloak.

NARRATOR 1: One Saint Nicholas Day morning, the baker was just ready for business, when the door of his shop flew open. In walked an old woman, wrapped in a long black shawl.

WOMAN: I have come for a dozen of your Saint Nicholas cookies.

NARRATOR 2: Taking a tray, Van Amsterdam counted out twelve cookies. He started to wrap them, but the woman reached out and stopped him.

WOMAN: I asked for a dozen. You have given me only twelve.

BAKER: Madam, everyone knows that a dozen is twelve.

WOMAN: But I say a dozen is thirteen. Give me one more.

NARRATOR 1: Van Amsterdam was not a man to bear foolishness.

BAKER: Madam, my customers get exactly what they pay for – not more, and not less.

WOMAN: Then you may keep the cookies.

NARRATOR 2: She turned to go, but stopped at the door.

WOMAN: Van Amsterdam! However honest you may be, your heart is small and your fist is tight. Fall again, mount again, learn how to count again!

NARRATOR 2: Then she was gone.

NARRATOR 1: From that day, everything went wrong in Van Amsterdam's bakery.

NARRATOR 2: His bread rose too high or not at all.

NARRATOR 1: His pies were sour or too sweet.

NARRATOR 2: His cakes crumbled or were chewy.

NARRATOR 1: His cookies were burnt or doughy.

NARRATOR 2: His customers soon noticed the difference. Before long, most of them were going to other bakers.

BAKER: *(to himself)* That old woman has bewitched me. Is this how my honesty is rewarded?

NARRATOR 1: A year passed. The baker grew poorer and poorer. Since he sold little, he baked little, and his shelves were nearly bare. His last few customers slipped away.

NARRATOR 2: Finally, on the day before Saint Nicholas Day, not one customer came to Van Amsterdam's shop. At day's end, the baker sat alone, staring at his unsold Saint Nicholas cookies.

BAKER: I wish Saint Nicholas could help me now.

NARRATOR 2: Then he closed his shop and went sadly to bed.

NARRATOR 1: That night, the baker had a dream. He was a boy again, one in a crowd of happy children. And there in the midst of them was Saint Nicholas himself.

NARRATOR 2: The bishop's white horse stood beside him, its baskets filled with gifts. Nicholas pulled out one gift after another, and handed them to the children.

NARRATOR 1: But Van Amsterdam noticed something strange. No matter how many presents Nicholas passed out, there were always more to give.

NARRATOR 2: In fact, the more he took from the baskets, the more they seemed to hold.

NARRATOR 1: Then Nicholas handed a gift to Van Amsterdam. It was one of the baker's own Saint Nicholas cookies!

NARRATOR 2: Van Amsterdam looked up to thank him, but it was no longer Saint Nicholas standing there.

NARRATOR 1: Smiling down at him was the old woman with the long black shawl.

NARRATOR 2: Van Amsterdam awoke with a start. Moonlight shone through the half-closed shutters as he lay there, thinking.

BAKER: I always give my customers exactly what they pay for – not more, and not less. But why not give more?

NARRATOR 1: The next morning, Saint Nicholas Day, the baker rose early.

NARRATOR 2: He mixed his gingerbread dough and rolled it out.

NARRATOR 1: He molded the shapes and baked them.

NARRATOR 2: He iced them in red and white to look just like Saint Nicholas.

NARRATOR 1: And the cookies were as fine as any he had made.

NARRATOR 2: Van Amsterdam had just finished, when the door flew open. In walked the old woman with the long black shawl.

WOMAN: I have come for a dozen of your Saint Nicholas cookies.

NARRATOR 1: In great excitement, Van Amsterdam counted out twelve cookies –

NARRATOR 2: and one more.

BAKER: In this shop, from now on, a dozen is thirteen.

WOMAN: (*smiling*) You have learned to count well. You will surely be rewarded.

NARRATOR 1: She paid for the cookies and started out. But as the door swung shut, the baker's eyes seemed to play a trick on him.

NARRATOR 2: He thought he glimpsed the tail end of a long red cloak.

* * *

NARRATOR 1: As the old woman foretold, Van Amsterdam was rewarded. When people heard he counted thirteen as a dozen, he had more customers than ever.

NARRATOR 2: In fact, Van Amsterdam grew so wealthy that the other bakers in town began doing the same. From there, the practice spread to other towns, and at last through all the American colonies.

NARRATOR 1: And this, they say, is how thirteen became the “baker's dozen”, a custom common for over a century,

NARRATOR 2: and alive in some places to this day.

Three Sideways Stories from Wayside School

by Louis Sachar

Some say the teachers and students at Wayside School are strange and silly – and so will you!

READERS: 9

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
Mrs. Jewls	
Joe	
Bebe	
Calvin	
Louis	

NARRATOR 1: We're going to tell you about three of the children in Mrs. Jewls's class, on the thirtieth story of Wayside School.

NARRATOR 4: But before we get to them, there is something you ought to know. Wayside School was accidentally built sideways.

NARRATOR 2: It was supposed to be only one story high, with thirty classrooms all in a row. Instead, it is thirty stories high, with one classroom on each story.

NARRATOR 3: The builder said he was very sorry.

NARRATOR 1: Our first story is about Joe. One day, Mrs. Jewls kept him in from recess.

MRS. JEWLS: Joe, you are going to have to learn to count.

JOE: But, Mrs. Jewls, I already know how to count.
Let me go to recess!

MRS. JEWLS: First count to ten.

NARRATOR 4: Joe counted to ten.

JOE: Six, eight, twelve, one, five, two, seven, eleven,
three, ten.

MRS. JEWLS: No, Joe, that is wrong.

JOE: No, it isn't! I counted till I got to ten!

MRS. JEWLS: But you were wrong. I'll prove it to you.

NARRATOR 2: She put down five pencils.

MRS. JEWLS: How many pencils do we have here, Joe?

NARRATOR 3: Joe counted the pencils.

JOE: Four, six, one, nine, five. There are five pencils,
Mrs. Jewls.

MRS. JEWLS: That's wrong.

JOE: How many pencils are there?

MRS. JEWLS: Five.

JOE: That's what I said! May I go to recess now?

MRS. JEWLS: No. You got the right answer, but you counted
the wrong way. You were just lucky.

NARRATOR 1: She set down eight potatoes.

MRS. JEWLS: How many potatoes, Joe?

NARRATOR 4: Joe counted the potatoes.

JOE: Seven, five, three, one, two, four, six, eight.
There are eight potatoes, Mrs. Jewls.

MRS. JEWLS: No, there are eight.

JOE: But that's what I said! May I go to recess now?

MRS. JEWLS: No! You got the right answer, but you counted the wrong way again.

NARRATOR 2: She put down three books.

MRS. JEWLS: Count the books, Joe.

NARRATOR 3: Joe counted the books.

JOE: A thousand, a million, three. Three, Mrs. Jewls.

MRS. JEWLS: *(bewildered)* Correct.

JOE: May I go to recess now?

MRS. JEWLS: No.

JOE: May I have a potato?

MRS. JEWLS: No! Listen to me. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Now you say it.

JOE: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

MRS. JEWLS: Very good!

NARRATOR 1: She put down six erasers.

MRS. JEWLS: Now, count the erasers, Joe, just the way I showed you.

NARRATOR 4: Joe counted the erasers.

JOE: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. There are ten, Mrs. Jewls.

MRS. JEWLS: No!

JOE: Didn't I count right?

MRS. JEWLS: Yes, you counted right, but you got the wrong answer.

JOE: This doesn't make any sense! When I count the wrong way, I get the right answer, and when I count right, I get the wrong answer.

MRS. JEWLS: *(in great frustration)* Ooh!

NARRATOR 2: Mrs. Jewls hit her head against the wall five times.

MRS. JEWLS: *(turning away and butting her head)* Uh ... uh ...uh ... uh ... uh ... *(turns back to Joe)* How many times did I hit my head against the wall, Joe?

JOE: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. You hit your head against the wall ten times.

MRS. JEWLS: No!

JOE: Four, six, one, nine, five. You hit your head five times.

NARRATOR 3: Mrs. Jewls shook her head no and said,

MRS. JEWLS: *(shaking head)* Yes, that is right.

NARRATOR 1: Just then, the bell rang.

JOE: Oh, darn.

NARRATOR 4: ... said Joe.

JOE: I missed recess!

* * *

NARRATOR 3: Our second story is about Bebe.

NARRATOR 1: Bebe was the fastest draw in Mrs. Jewls's class. She could draw a cat in less than forty-five seconds, a dog in less than thirty, and a flower in less than eight seconds!

NARRATOR 4: But of course, Bebe never drew just one dog, or one cat, or one flower.

NARRATOR 2: Art was from 12:30 to 1:30. Why, in that time, she could draw fifty cats, a hundred flowers, twenty dogs, and several eggs or watermelons!

NARRATOR 3: You see, it took her the same time to draw a watermelon as an egg.

NARRATOR 1: Calvin sat next to Bebe. He didn't think he was very good at art. It took him the whole period just to draw one airplane.

NARRATOR 4: So instead, he just helped Bebe. He was Bebe's assistant.

NARRATOR 2: As soon as Bebe would finish one masterpiece, Calvin would take it from her and set down a clean sheet of paper. Whenever her crayon ran low, Calvin was ready with a new crayon.

NARRATOR 3: That way, Bebe didn't have to waste any time. And in return, Bebe would draw five or six airplanes for Calvin.

NARRATOR 1: It was 12:30, time for art.

NARRATOR 4: Bebe was ready. On her desk was a sheet of yellow construction paper. In her hand was a green crayon.

NARRATOR 2: Calvin was ready. He held a stack of paper and a box of crayons.

CALVIN: Ready, Bebe?

BEBE: Ready, Calvin.

MRS. JEWLS: All right, class.

NARRATOR 3: ... said Mrs. Jewls.

MRS. JEWLS: Time for art.

NARRATOR 1: She had hardly finished her sentence when Bebe had drawn a picture of a leaf.

NARRATOR 4: Calvin took it from her and put down another piece of paper.

BEBE: Red!

NARRATOR 2: Calvin handed Bebe a red crayon.

BEBE: Blue!

NARRATOR 3: He gave her a blue crayon.

NARRATOR 1: They were quite a pair! Their teamwork was remarkable.

NARRATOR 4: Bebe drew pictures as fast as Calvin could pick up the old paper and set down the new.

NARRATOR 2: A fish.

NARRATOR 3: An apple.

NARRATOR 1: Three cherries –

NARRATOR 4: bing,

NARRATOR 2: bing,

NARRATOR 3: bing.

NARRATOR 1: At 1:30, Mrs. Jewls announced,

MRS. JEWLS: Okay, class, art is over.

NARRATOR 4: Bebe dropped her crayon and fell over on her desk.

NARRATOR 2: Calvin sighed and leaned back in his chair. He could hardly move.

NARRATOR 3: They had broken their old record. Bebe had drawn three hundred and seventy-eight pictures! They lay in a pile on Calvin's desk.

NARRATOR 1: Mrs. Jewls walked by.

MRS. JEWLS: Calvin, did you draw all these pictures?

CALVIN: No, Bebe drew them all.

MRS. JEWLS: Well then, what did you draw?

CALVIN: I didn't draw anything.

MRS. JEWLS: Why not? Don't you like art?

CALVIN: I love art. That's why I didn't draw anything.

MRS. JEWLS: I don't understand.

CALVIN: It would have taken me the whole period just to draw one picture. And Bebe would only have been able to draw a hundred pictures. But with the two of us working together, she was able to draw three hundred and seventy-eight pictures! That's a lot more art.

NARRATOR 4: Bebe and Calvin shook hands.

MRS. JEWLS: No, no! That isn't how you measure art. It isn't how many pictures you have, but how good the pictures are. Why, a person could spend their whole life drawing just one picture of a cat. In that time, I'm sure Bebe could draw a million cats.

BEBE: Two million.

MRS. JEWLS: But if that one picture is better than each of Bebe's two million, then that person has produced more art than Bebe.

NARRATOR 2: Bebe looked like she was going to cry. She picked up all the pictures from Calvin's desk and threw them in the garbage.

NARRATOR 3: Then she ran from the room, down all the stairs, and out onto the playground.

NARRATOR 1: Louis, the nice yard teacher, spotted her.

LOUIS: Where are you going, Bebe?
BEBE: I'm going home to draw a picture of a cat.
LOUIS: Will you bring it to school and show it to me
tomorrow?
BEBE: Tomorrow? By tomorrow I doubt I'll be finished
with even one whisker (*rushes off*).

* * *

NARRATOR 2: Our final story is about Calvin. One day, Mrs.
Jewls said,
MRS. JEWLS: Calvin, I want you to take this note to Miss
Zarves for me.
CALVIN: Miss Zarves?
MRS. JEWLS: Yes, Miss Zarves. You know where she is, don't
you?
CALVIN: Yes. She's on the nineteenth story.
MRS. JEWLS: That's right, Calvin. Take it to her.
NARRATOR 3: Calvin didn't move.
MRS. JEWLS: Well, what are you waiting for?
CALVIN: She's on the nineteenth story.
MRS. JEWLS: Yes, we have already established that fact.
CALVIN: The nineteenth story.
MRS. JEWLS: Yes, Calvin, the nineteenth story. Now take it to
her before I lose my patience!
CALVIN: But, Mrs. Jewls –
MRS. JEWLS: NOW, Calvin!
CALVIN: Yes, ma'am!

NARRATOR 1: Calvin walked out of the classroom and stood outside the door.

NARRATOR 4: He didn't know where to go.

NARRATOR 2: As you know, when the builder built Wayside School, he accidentally built it sideways. But he also forgot to build the nineteenth story.

NARRATOR 3: He built the eighteenth and the twentieth, but no nineteenth. He said he was very sorry.

NARRATOR 1: There was also no Miss Zarves.

NARRATOR 4: Miss Zarves taught the class on the nineteenth story. Since there was no nineteenth story, there was no Miss Zarves.

NARRATOR 2: And besides that, as if Calvin didn't have enough problems, there was no note.

NARRATOR 3: Mrs. Jewls had never given Calvin the note.

CALVIN: (*sarcastically*) Boy, this is just great! I'm supposed to take a note that I don't have, to a teacher who doesn't exist, and who teaches on a story that was never built!

NARRATOR 1: He didn't know what to do.

NARRATOR 4: He walked down to the eighteenth story,

NARRATOR 2: then back up to the twentieth,

NARRATOR 3: then back down to the eighteenth,

NARRATOR 1: and back up again to the twentieth.

NARRATOR 4: There was no nineteenth story.

NARRATOR 2: There had never been a nineteenth story.

NARRATOR 3: There would never *be* a nineteenth story.

NARRATOR 1: Calvin walked down to the administration office on the first story. He decided to put the note in Miss Zarves's mailbox.

NARRATOR 4: But there wasn't one of those, either. That didn't bother Calvin too much, though, since he didn't have a note.

NARRATOR 2: He looked out the window and saw Louis, the yard teacher, shooting baskets.

CALVIN: Louis will know what to do.

NARRATOR 3: Calvin went outside.

CALVIN: Hey, Louis!

LOUIS: Hi, Calvin. Do you want to play a game?

CALVIN: I don't have time. I have to deliver a note to Miss Zarves up on the nineteenth story.

LOUIS: Then what are you doing all the way down here?

CALVIN: There is no nineteenth story.

LOUIS: Then where is Miss Zarves?

CALVIN: There is no Miss Zarves.

LOUIS: What are you going to do with the note?

CALVIN: There is no note.

LOUIS: I understand.

CALVIN: That's good, because I sure don't.

LOUIS: It's very simple. You are not supposed to take no notes to no teachers. You already haven't done it!

NARRATOR 1: Calvin still didn't understand.

CALVIN: I'll just have to tell Mrs. Jewls that I couldn't deliver the note.

LOUIS: That's good. The truth is always best. Besides, I don't think I understand what I said, either!

NARRATOR 4: Calvin walked back up the thirty flights of stairs to Mrs. Jewls's class.

MRS. JEWLS: Thank you very much, Calvin.

CALVIN: But I –

MRS. JEWLS: That was a very important note, and I'm glad I was able to count on you.

CALVIN: Yes, but you see –

MRS. JEWLS: The note was very important. I told Miss Zarves not to meet me for lunch.

CALVIN: Don't worry.

NARRATOR 2: ... said Calvin.

CALVIN: She won't!

NARRATOR 1: So now you know about Wayside School. Some people say these stories are strange and silly.

NARRATOR 4: That is probably true.

NARRATOR 2: But when the children at Wayside School heard stories about us, they thought *we* were strange and silly.

NARRATOR 3: And that's for sure!

Pippi Goes to School

by Astrid Lindgren

Adapted for reader's theater from Pippi Longstocking, Viking, 1950.

READERS: 6

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
Pippi	
Tommy	
Annika ¹	
Teacher	

NARRATOR 1: In a little town in Sweden, there was a tumbledown house called Villa Villekulla². And in this house lived a girl with carrot-colored pigtails and shoes twice as long as her feet.

NARRATOR 2: This was no ordinary girl. She was the strongest girl in the world, and her name was Pippi Longstocking.

NARRATOR 1: Pippi lived there all by herself – except for a monkey named Mr. Nilsson and a horse on the porch. There was no one to tell her what to do, so Pippi did just what she liked.

NARRATOR 2: One of the things Pippi liked best was to play with her friends Tommy and Annika. And more than anything in the world, Tommy and Annika liked to play with Pippi. Of course, Tommy and Annika had to go to school.

¹ Annika is pronounced [ˈnɪkɑ].

² Villekulla is pronounced [ˈvɪlɪˈkøɫ].

ANNIKA: *(to Tommy)* If only Pippi would go too, how much fun we could have!

NARRATOR 1: They decided to try to persuade her. One afternoon in Pippi's kitchen, Tommy said,

TOMMY: You can't imagine what a nice teacher we have.

ANNIKA: If you only knew what fun it is in school! I'd die if I couldn't go to school.

NARRATOR 2: Pippi sat soaking her feet in a tub. She said nothing, but just wiggled her toes so the water splashed around everywhere.

TOMMY: You don't have to stay so long. Just until two o'clock.

ANNIKA: Yes, and besides, we get Christmas vacation and Easter vacation and summer vacation.

NARRATOR 1: Suddenly, Pippi poured all the water out on the kitchen floor.

PIPPY: It is absolutely unfair! I won't stand for it!

TOMMY: What's the matter?

PIPPY: In four months, it will be Christmas, and then you'll have Christmas vacation! But what'll I get? No Christmas vacation – not even the tiniest bit of one. Something will have to be done about that. Tomorrow morning, I'll begin school!

ANNIKA: Hurray!

TOMMY: We'll wait for you outside our gate at eight o'clock.

PIPPY: Oh, no, I can't begin as early as that! And besides, I'm going to ride to school.

NARRATOR 2: And ride she did!

NARRATOR 1: The next day, at exactly ten o'clock, Pippi lifted her horse off the porch. Then she galloped wildly through the town.

NARRATOR 2: When she reached the schoolyard, she jumped off the horse, tied him to a tree, and burst into the schoolroom.

PIPPY: Hi there! Did I get here in time?

NARRATOR 1: Tommy and Annika had told their teacher that Pippi was coming. She had decided to do all she could to make Pippi happy in school.

TEACHER: Welcome to school, Pippi. I hope you will enjoy yourself here and learn a great deal.

PIPPY: Yes, and I hope I'll get some Christmas vacation. That is the reason I've come. It's only fair, you know.

TEACHER: If you would first tell me your whole name, I'll register you in school.

PIPPY: My name is Pippilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Mackrelmint Efraim's Daughter Longstocking, daughter of Captain Efraim Longstocking, formerly the Terror of the Sea, now a cannibal king. Pippi is really only a nickname, because Papa thought Pippilotta was too long to say.

TEACHER: Well, then, we shall call you Pippi, too. But now suppose we test you a little and see what you know. Pippi, can you tell me what seven and five are?

PIPPY: (*shocked*) Well, if you don't know that yourself, I'm certainly not going to tell you!

OTHER CHILDREN: (*gasp*)

NARRATOR 2: All the children stared at Pippi in horror.

TEACHER: (*gently*) Pippi, we don't answer that way in school.

PIPPY: (*sincerely*) I beg your pardon. I didn't know that. I won't do it again.

TEACHER: No, let us hope not. And now I will tell you that seven and five are twelve.

PIPPY: See that! You knew it yourself! So why are you asking?

NARRATOR 1: The teacher decided to act as if nothing had happened.

TEACHER: Well, now, Pippi, how much do you think eight and four are?

PIPPY: Oh, about sixty-seven.

TEACHER: Of course not! Eight and four are twelve!

PIPPY: Well now, really, that is carrying things too far! You just said that seven and five are twelve. There should be some rhyme and reason to things, even in school!

NARRATOR 2: The teacher decided there was no point trying to teach Pippi any more arithmetic.

TEACHER: Tommy, if Lisa has seven apples and Axel has nine apples, how many apples do they have together?

PIPPY: Yes, you tell her, Tommy, and tell me too, if Lisa gets a stomach-ache and Axel gets more of a stomach-ache, whose fault is it, and where did they get those apples in the first place?

NARRATOR 1: The teacher decided to give up on arithmetic altogether.

TEACHER: *(getting frustrated)* Pippi, maybe you would prefer to learn reading. Here is a picture of a wild goat called an ibex. And the letter you see in front of the ibex is called “I.”

PIPPY: That I’ll never believe. I think it looks exactly like a straight line with a little fly speck over it. But what I’d really like to know is, what does the ibex have to do with the fly speck?

NARRATOR 2: The teacher took out another card.

TEACHER: *(trying to stay calm)* And here is a picture of a snake, with the letter “s.”

PIPPY: Speaking of snakes, I’ll never ever forget the time I had a fight with a huge snake in India. *(acting out her story)* You can’t imagine what a dreadful snake it was – fourteen yards long and mad as a hornet – and every day he ate up five Indians and then two little children for dessert, and one time he came and wanted me for dessert, and he wound himself around me – uhhh! – but I’ve been around a bit, I said, and hit him in the head, bang!, and then he hissed, and then I hit him again, and bingo! he was dead, and indeed, so that is the letter “s” – most remarkable!

NARRATOR 1: The teacher’s patience had come to an end.

TEACHER: Children, go outside so I can talk to Pippi alone.

OTHER CHILDREN: *(go out)*

NARRATOR 2: When Pippi and the teacher were by themselves, Pippi came over to her.

PIPPY: You know what? It was lots of fun to come to school to find out what it’s like. But I don’t think I want to come anymore – Christmas

vacation or no Christmas vacation. There are altogether too many apples and ibexes and snakes and things like that. It makes me dizzy in the head. I hope you won't be upset, Teacher.

TEACHER: I certainly am upset, Pippi, but I'm upset that you won't behave properly! Any child who acts as badly as you do wouldn't be allowed to come to school no matter how much she wanted to!

PIPPI: (*astonished, almost starting to cry*) Have I behaved badly? Goodness, I didn't know that. You understand, Teacher, don't you, that when you have a mother who's an angel in Heaven and a father who's a cannibal king, you don't know just how to behave in school, with all the apples and ibexes.

TEACHER: (*calming down*) I understand, Pippi. I'm not annoyed anymore. Maybe you can come back to school when you're a little older.

PIPPI: (*happily*) I think you are awfully nice, Teacher. And here is something for you.

NARRATOR 1: Pippi took from her pocket a lovely gold watch.

TEACHER: Pippi, I can't possibly accept such a valuable gift!

PIPPI: But you have to take it! Otherwise, I'll come back tomorrow, and you wouldn't like that, would you?

NARRATOR 2: Then Pippi rushed out to the schoolyard and jumped on her horse. All the children waved goodby.

PIPPI: (*waving and riding off*) So long, kids. I won't be back for awhile. But always remember how many apples Axel had – or you'll be sorry!

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

by Eric Carle

Enjoy this famous tale and draw some pictures of what the caterpillar consumed!

READERS: 8 or more

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
GROUP A	
GROUP B	
GROUP C	
GROUP D	

NARRATOR 1: In the light of the moon a little egg lay on a leaf.

NARRATOR 2: One Sunday morning the warm sun came up and ... pop! ... out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar.

NARRATOR 3: He started to look for some food.

GROUP A: On Monday he ate through one apple.

NARRATOR 1: But he was still hungry.

GROUP B: On Tuesday he ate through two pears.

NARRATOR 2: But he was still hungry.

GROUP C: On Wednesday he ate through three plums.

NARRATOR 3: But he was still hungry.

GROUP D: On Thursday he ate through four strawberries.

NARRATOR 1: But he was still hungry.

GROUP A: On Friday he ate through five oranges.

NARRATOR 2: But he was still hungry.

GROUP B: On Saturday he ate through one piece of chocolate cake,

GROUP C: one ice cream cone,

GROUP D: one pickle,

GROUP A: one slice of Swiss cheese,

GROUP B: one slice of salami,

GROUP C: one lollipop,

GROUP D: one piece of cherry pie,

GROUP A: one sausage,

GROUP B: one cupcake,

GROUP C: and one slice of watermelon.

NARRATOR 3: That night he had a stomachache!

NARRATOR 1: The next day was Sunday again.

GROUP D: The caterpillar ate through one nice green leaf, and after that he felt much better.

NARRATOR 2: Now he wasn't hungry any more – and he wasn't a little caterpillar any more.

NARRATOR 3: He was a big, fat caterpillar.

NARRATOR 1: He built a small house, called a cocoon, around himself.

NARRATOR 2: He stayed inside for more than two weeks.

NARRATOR 3: Then he nibbled a hole in the cocoon, pushed his way out, and...

EVERYONE: HE WAS A BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLY!

The Ant and The Grasshopper

Aesop's Fable

See how this famous fable sounds in English.

READERS: 5

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
Ant	
Grasshopper	

NARRATOR 1: On a beautiful summer day a grasshopper sat and sang a sweet song.

NARRATOR 2: The grasshopper saw an ant working hard carrying grain to his house.

GRASSHOPPER: Look at that silly ant. All day long he works hard and never enjoys the sunshine.

NARRATOR 3: The grasshopper laughed at the ant and then he continued his song. He basked in the warm sun all summer long without a care in the world.

NARRATOR 1: As summer turned to autumn the grasshopper continued to sing his song and enjoy the sunshine. The ant, on the other hand, continued to gather food and store it in his house.

NARRATOR 2: When winter came the cold winds blew hard and the snow covered the meadow with a thick blanket of white.

NARRATOR 3: The grasshopper tried to find food, but of course he found nothing.

NARRATOR 1: It didn't take long for the grasshopper to knock upon the ant's door and beg...

GRASSHOPPER: Please help me! I have nothing to eat! I shall starve without your help.

ANT: My dear Mr. Grasshopper, all summer long I worked hard carrying food to my home while you played in the sunshine. I will not share my food with someone who is so lazy.

GRASSHOPPER: I was busy singing my song. I was making beautiful music. What should I do now?

NARRATOR 2: The ant thought for a moment and then said...

ANT: I suggest you dance.

NARRATOR 3: And the moral of this fable is...

ANT: You must do the work before you take the time to play.

ALL: The end.

Jessica

by Kevin Henkes

Did you have an imaginary friend when you were a child?

This is a story of Ruthie, and her imaginary friend Jessica. They do everything together and are the very best of friends. Ruthie's parents keep telling her that Jessica isn't real, but she knows that Jessica is.

READERS: 9

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
NARRATOR 5	
Dad	
Mom	
Ruthie	
Jessica	

NARRATOR 1: JESSICA.

NARRATOR 2: Ruthie Simms didn't have a dog. She didn't have a cat, or a brother, or a sister. But Jessica was the next best thing.

NARRATOR 3: Jessica went wherever Ruthie went. To the moon, to the playground, to Ruthie's grandma's for the weekend.

MOM AND DAD: "THERE IS NO JESSICA,"

NARRATOR 4: said Ruthie's parents. But there was. She ate with Ruthie, looked at books with Ruthie, and took turns stacking blocks with Ruthie, building towers.

NARRATOR 5: If Ruthie was mad, so was Jessica. If Ruthie was sad, Jessica was too. And if Ruthie was glad, Jessica felt exactly the same.

NARRATOR 1: When Ruthie accidentally spilled some juice, she said,

RUTHIE: “Jessica did it, and she’s sorry.”

NARRATOR 2: When Ruthie’s parents called a babysitter because they wanted to go to a movie one night, Ruthie said,

RUTHIE: “Jessica has a stomachache and wants you to stay home.”

NARRATOR 3: And when Ruthie turned five, it was Jessica’s fifth birthday too.

MOM AND DAD: “THERE IS NO JESSICA,”

NARRATOR 4: said Ruthie’s parents. But there was. She went to bed with Ruthie, she got up with Ruthie, and she stayed with Ruthie all the while in between.

NARRATOR 5: On the night before the first day of kindergarten, Ruthie’s mother said,

MOM: “I think Jessica should stay home tomorrow.”

NARRATOR 1: Ruthie’s father said,

DAD: “You’ll meet a lot of nice children. You can make new friends.”

NARRATOR 2: But Jessica went anyway.

NARRATOR 3: Jessica wanted to go home so badly that Ruthie had to hold her hands and whisper to her. When the teacher announced everyone’s name, Ruthie and Jessica weren’t listening.

NARRATOR 4: Jessica crawled through a tunnel with Ruthie, she took a nap with Ruthie, and she shared Ruthie's paintbrush during art.

NARRATOR 5: When all the children lined up two-by-two to march to the canteen, Jessica was right next to Ruthie. A girl came up to Ruthie and stood by her side.

JESSICA: "Can I be your partner?"

NARRATOR 1: she asked. Ruthie didn't know what to say.

JESSICA: "My name is Jessica,"

NARRATOR 2: said the girl.

RUTHIE: "It is?"

NARRATOR 3: said Ruthie.

NARRATOR 4: The girl nodded.

RUTHIE: "Mine's Ruthie,"

NARRATOR 5: said Ruthie, smiling. And they walked down the hallway hand-in-hand.

NARRATOR 1: Ruthie Simms didn't have a dog. She didn't have a cat, or a brother, or a sister. But Jessica was even better.

The Gingerbread Boy

a fairytale

This is the classic tale of an old couple, with no children of their own, who bake a gingerbread boy to keep them company. Does it remind you of something?

READERS: 9

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
Gingerbread Boy	
Old Woman	
Old Man	
Cow	
Horse	
Fox	

NARRATOR 1: Once upon a time there was a little old woman and a little old man and they lived in a little old house.

NARRATOR 2: They didn't have any children. Nope, not even one!

NARRATOR 3: One day the little old woman decided to make a boy out of gingerbread.

OLD WOMAN: I'm going to make a little gingerbread boy. I'm rolling out the dough, and putting him on a pan to bake. Into the oven you go!

OLD MAN: I love gingerbread. Yum! Yum!

OLD WOMAN: Oh, the Little Gingerbread Boy is done.

NARRATOR 1: Out jumped the Little Gingerbread Boy.

NARRATOR 2: Out of the door and down the street he ran.

NARRATOR 3: The Little Old Woman and the Little Old Man ran after him.

GINGERBREAD BOY: Run, run as fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!

NARRATOR 1: The little Gingerbread Boy ran on and on until he saw a cow.

COW: Stop little Gingerbread Boy! I want to eat you!

GINGERBREAD BOY: I've run away from a little old woman and a little old man and I can run away from you, too, I can! Run, run, as fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!

NARRATOR 2: And the cow couldn't catch him.

NARRATOR 3: The little Gingerbread Boy ran on and on until he saw a horse.

HORSE: You look good enough to eat.

GINGERBREAD BOY: I've run away from a little old woman, a little old man, and a cow, and I can run away from you, too, I can! Run, run, as fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!

NARRATOR 1: And the horse couldn't catch him.

NARRATOR 2: The Little Gingerbread Boy ran on and on until he saw a fox.

NARRATOR 3: By this time, the Little Gingerbread Boy was sure that nobody could catch him.

GINGERBREAD BOY: I've run away from a little old woman, a little old man, and a cow, and a horse, and I can run away from you, too, I can! Run, run, as fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!

FOX: Why, I would not catch you if I could. I would not catch you if I could. I would not even think of it.

NARRATOR 1: The Gingerbread boy looked around and he suddenly saw a river.

GINGERBREAD BOY: Oh not a river!

NARRATOR 2: The Gingerbread boy was certainly puzzled.

FOX: Jump on my tail and I will take you across.

NARRATOR 3 said the Fox.

NARRATOR 1: The Gingerbread boy jumped on the fox's tail.

NARRATOR 2: The fox swam into the river.

FOX: Little Gingerbread boy, you better get on my back or you'll get wet.

NARRATOR 3: The fox swam deeper and deeper.

FOX: My back is tired. Little Gingerbread boy, you better get on my nose.

NARRATOR 1: As soon as the fox reached the shore, the fox threw back his head and gobbled the Gingerbread boy up!

EVERYBODY: And that was the end of the gingerbread boy!

Caps for Sale

by Esphyr Slobodkina

READERS: 10

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
Peddler	
Monkeys (5)	

NARRATOR 1: *Caps for Sale. A tale of a Peddler, some Monkeys and their Monkey Business.*

NARRATOR 2: Once there was a peddler who sold caps. But he was not like an ordinary peddler carrying his wares on his back. He carried them on top of his head.

NARRATOR 3: First he had on his own checked cap, then a bunch of gray caps, then a bunch of brown caps, then a bunch of blue caps, and on the very top a bunch of red caps.

NARRATOR 4: He walked up and down the streets, holding himself very straight so as not to upset his caps. As he went along he called,

PEDDLER: “Caps! Caps for sale! Fifty cents a cap!”

NARRATOR 1: One morning he couldn’t sell any caps. He walked up the street and he walked down the street calling,

PEDDLER: “Caps! Caps for sale. Fifty cents a cap.”

NARRATOR 2: But nobody wanted any caps that morning. Nobody wanted even a red cap.

NARRATOR 3: He began to feel very hungry, but he had no money for lunch.

PEDDLER: “I think I’ll go for a walk in the country,”

NARRATOR 4: said he. And he walked out of town – slowly, slowly, so as not to upset his caps.

NARRATOR 1: He walked for a long time until he came to a great big tree.

PEDDLER: “That’s a nice place for a rest.”

NARRATOR 2: And he sat down very slowly, under the tree and leaned back little by little against the tree-trunk so as not to disturb the caps on his head.

NARRATOR 3: Then he put his hand up to feel if they were straight – first he checked his own checked cap, then the gray caps, then the brown caps, then the blue caps, then the red caps on the very top.

NARRATOR 4: They were all there. So he went to sleep. He slept for a long time.

NARRATOR 1: When he woke he was refreshed and rested.

NARRATOR 2: But before standing up he felt with his hand to make sure his caps were in the right place. All he felt was his own checked cap!

NARRATOR 3: He looked to the right of him. No caps. He looked to the left of him. No caps. He looked to the back of him. No caps. He looked behind the tree. No caps.

NARRATOR 4: Then he looked up into the tree and what do you think he saw? On every branch sat a monkey. On every monkey was a gray, or a brown, or a blue, or a red cap!

NARRATOR 1: The peddler looked at the monkeys. The monkeys looked at the peddler. He didn't know what to do. Finally he spoke to them.

PEDDLER: "You monkeys, you! You give me back my caps."

NARRATOR 2: he said, shaking a finger at them. But the monkeys only shook their fingers back and him and said,

MONKEYS: Tsz, tsz, tsz.

NARRATOR 3: This made the peddler angry, so he shook both hands at them and said,

PEDDLER: "You monkeys, you! You give me back my caps."

NARRATOR 4: But the monkeys only shook both their hands back at him and said,

MONKEYS: Tsz, tsz, tsz.

NARRATOR 1: Now he felt quite angry. He stamped his foot, and he said,

PEDDLER: "You monkeys, you! You better give me back my caps!"

NARRATOR 2: But the monkeys only stamped their feet back at him and said,

MONKEYS: Tsz, tsz, tsz.

NARRATOR 3: By this time the peddler was really very, very angry. He stamped both his feet and shouted,

PEDDLER: "You monkeys, you! You must give me back my caps!"

NARRATOR 4: But the monkeys only stamped both their feet back at him and said,

MONKEYS: Tsz, tsz, tsz.

NARRATOR 1: At last he became so angry that he pulled off his own cap, threw it on the ground, and began to walk away.

NARRATOR 2: But then, each monkey pulled off his cap...and all the gray caps, and all the brown caps, and all the blue caps, and all the red caps came flying down out of the tree.

NARRATOR 3: So the peddler picked up his caps and put them back on his head – first his own checked cap, then the gray caps, then the brown caps, then the blue caps, then the red caps on the very top.

NARRATOR 4: And slowly, slowly, he walked back to town calling,

PEDDLER: “Caps ! Caps for sale! Fifty cents a cap!”

ALL: The end.

Poppleton

by Cynthia Rylant

This play has been broken into the three chapters of the book. You may choose to do just one chapter or assign the chapters to different groups and perform as a whole.

NEIGHBORS

READERS: 6

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
POPPLETON	
CHERRY SUE	

NARRATOR 1: *Poppleton*, Chapter 1: *Neighbors*, by Cynthia Rylant.

NARRATOR 2: Poppleton used to be a city pig. He did city things. He took taxis. He jogged in the park. He went to museums.

NARRATOR 3: Then one day Poppleton got tired of city life. He moved to a small house in a small town.

NARRATOR 4: Poppleton's small house was charming. It had a little sunroom where Poppleton took naps.

NARRATOR 1: It had lots and lots of shelves where Poppleton kept things. It had a little garden where Poppleton planted corn.

NARRATOR 2: And it had Cherry Sue. Cherry Sue was Poppleton's new neighbor. Cherry Sue was very friendly. In the mornings she called out,

CHERRY SUE: “Yoo-hoo! Poppleton! Would you like some oatmeal?”

NARRATOR 3: So Poppleton had oatmeal with Cherry Sue. In the afternoons she called out,

CHERRY SUE: “Yoo-hoo! Poppleton! Would you like a toasted cheese?”

NARRATOR 4: So Poppleton had toasted cheese with Cherry Sue. At night she called out,

CHERRY SUE: “Yoo-hoo! Poppleton! Would you like spaghetti?”

NARRATOR 1: So Poppleton had spaghetti with Cherry sue. This went on day after day. At first it was fun. But not for long.

NARRATOR 2: Some mornings Poppleton did not want oatmeal. He wanted to sleep.

NARRATOR 3: Some afternoons Poppleton did not want toasted cheese. He wanted TV.

NARRATOR 4: Some nights Poppleton did not want spaghetti. He wanted to practice playing his harmonica.

NARRATOR 1: But Cherry Sue kept calling,

CHERRY SUE: “Yoo-hoo! Poppleton!”

NARRATOR 2: One day when he was watering his lawn, Poppleton couldn’t take it anymore. When Cherry Sue stuck her head out the window and yelled,

CHERRY SUE: “Yoo-hoo!”

NARRATOR 2: Poppleton soaked her with the hose.

CHERRY SUE: “Poppleton!”

NARRATOR 3: cried Cherry Sue, dripping.

NARRATOR 4: Poppleton felt awful. He ran and got a towel for Cherry Sue.

POPPLETON: “I’m sorry, Cherry Sue. I just got so sick of toasted cheese and spaghetti and oatmeal. Sometimes I just like to be alone.”

CHERRY SUE: “You too? I kept inviting you over because I didn’t know how to *stop* inviting you over. I thought it might hurt your feelings.”

NARRATOR 1: Then Poppleton soaked *himself* with the hose. They laughed and laughed. Poppleton and Cherry Sue were best friends from then on.

Library

READERS: 7

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
POPPLETON	
CHERRY SUE	
LIBRARIAN	

NARRATOR 1: *Poppleton*, Chapter 2: *Library*, by Cynthia Rylant.

NARRATOR 2: Poppleton went to the library every Monday. Monday was *always* Poppleton’s library day.

NARRATOR 3: If Cherry Sue invited him to tea on Monday...

CHERRY SUE: “Poppleton would you care to join me for tea on Monday?”

NARRATOR 3: Poppleton would say,

POPPLETON: “Sorry. Library day.”

NARRATOR 4: If there was a wonderful parade in town on Monday, Poppleton would say,

POPPLETON: “Too bad. Library day.”

NARRATOR 1: Poppleton took library day very seriously.

NARRATOR 2: At the library Poppleton always got a table all to himself. He spread out each of his things on the table: his eyeglasses, his tissues, his lip balm, his pocket watch, his book marker and his duffel. Then he began to read.

NARRATOR 3: Poppleton liked adventure stories. He buried his head in an adventure book every Monday, and left it there all day long.

NARRATOR 4: Sometimes he needed a tissue for a sad part.

NARRATOR 1: Sometimes he needed lip balm for a dry part.

NARRATOR 2: Sometimes he needed his pocket watch for a slow part. But he loved his adventure.

NARRATOR 3: At the end of the day, Poppleton finished the story. He thanked the librarian.

POPPLETON: “Thank you.”

LIBRARIAN: “See you next Monday, Poppleton.”

NARRATOR 4: He packed up his things in his duffel. Then he slowly walked home, all dreamy from so much adventure. Monday was Poppleton’s favorite day of all.

The Pill

READERS: 6

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
POPPLETON	
FILLMORE	

NARRATOR 1: *Poppleton*, Chapter 3: *The Pill*, by Cynthia Rylant.

NARRATOR 2: Poppleton's friend Fillmore was sick in bed. Poppleton brought Fillmore some chicken soup.

FILLMORE: "I feel terrible, Poppleton."

NARRATOR 3: said Fillmore. Poppleton replied,

POPPLETON: "Have a bowl of soup."

FILLMORE: "First I have to take my pill."

POPPLETON: "Where is it?"

FILLMORE: "Over there on the table."

NARRATOR 4: Poppleton brought Fillmore his pill.

FILLMORE: "I can't take it like that. You have to hide it."

POPPLETON: "Hide it?"

FILLMORE: "You have to hide it in my food."

POPPLETON: "I'll put it in the soup."

FILLMORE: "No, it has to be something sweet."

POPPLETON: "Sweet?"

FILLMORE: "Sweet and soft."

POPPLETON: "Sweet and soft?"

FILLMORE: “Sweet and soft with raspberry filling.”

POPPLETON: “Sweet and soft with raspberry filling?”

FILLMORE: “And chocolate on top.”

POPPLETON: “Chocolate on...Fillmore, are you talking about Cherry Sue’s Heavenly Cake?”

NARRATOR 1: Fillmore smiled.

NARRATOR 2: Poppleton went away. Soon he came back with Cherry Sue’s Heavenly Cake.

POPPLETON: “Now I can hide your pill.”

FILLMORE: “Don’t tell me which piece of cake it’s in.”

NARRATOR 3: Poppleton sliced the cake into ten pieces. He hid Fillmore’s pill in one of them. Fillmore had the first piece.

FILLMORE: “Yum! Did I take my pill?”

NARRATOR 4: Poppleton shook his head. Fillmore had another piece.

FILLMORE: “Yum! Did I take it?”

NARRATOR 1: Poppleton shook his head. Fillmore ate piece after piece after piece.

FILLMORE: “Did I take it?”

NARRATOR 2: Poppleton kept shaking his head. Finally there was one piece of cake left.

POPPLETON: “Thank goodness.”

NARRATOR 3: Fillmore looked at the piece of cake.

FILLMORE: “I can’t eat that one. It has the pill.

POPPLETON: “WELL, WHAT CAN YOU EAT?”

NARRATOR 4: shouted Poppleton.

FILLMORE: “Something lemony. With coconut.”

POPPLETON: “I feel sick. Move over.”

NARRATOR 1: Poppleton and Fillmore were sick in bed for three days. They took *lots* of pills. It took twenty-seven cakes to get them down.

All: The end.

Which Shoes do You Choose?

by Aaron Shepard

With so many kinds of shoes at the store, how can Katie ever choose?

READERS: 12

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
CLERK 1	
CLERK 2	
CLERK 3	
CLERK 4	
CLERK 5	
CLERK 6	
CLERK 7	
CLERK 8	
CLERK 9	
KATIE	

NARRATOR 1: Katie was tired of wearing the same old shoes.

NARRATOR 2: She went to the store to buy new ones.

NARRATOR 1: The clerks asked her,

ALL CLERKS: “Which shoes do you choose?”

NARRATOR 2: Katie said,

KATIE: “I want shoes that are braggy, not baggy.”

ALL CLERKS: (*thinking about it*) Hmmm. Let me see.

CLERK 1: We have small shoes,

CLERK 2: and tall shoes,

CLERK 3: and walk-on-the-wall shoes.

CLERK 4: We have red shoes,
CLERK 5: and head shoes,
CLERK 6: and down-the-hill-sled shoes.
CLERK 7: We have blue shoes,
CLERK 8: and BOO shoes,
CLERK 9: and paddle-canoe shoes.
ALL CLERKS: Which shoes do you choose?
KATIE: I want shoes that are slicky, not sticky.
ALL CLERKS: Hmmm. Let me see.
CLERK 1: We have jog shoes,
CLERK 2: and log shoes,
CLERK 3: and hop-like-a-frog shoes.
CLERK 4: We have tied shoes,
CLERK 5: and wide shoes,
CLERK 6: and carnival-ride shoes.
CLERK 7: We have trail shoes,
CLERK 8: and snail shoes,
CLERK 9: and wind-in-your-sail shoes.
ALL CLERKS: Which shoes do you choose?
KATIE: I want shoes that are spiffy, not iffy.
ALL CLERKS: Hmmm. Let me see.
CLERK 1: We have black shoes,
CLERK 2: and snack shoes,
CLERK 3: and ride-on-a-track shoes.
CLERK 4: We have wet shoes,

CLERK 5: and pet shoes,
CLERK 6: and super-speed-jet shoes.
CLERK 7: We have moon shoes,
CLERK 8: and goon shoes,
CLERK 9: and hot-air-balloon shoes.
ALL CLERKS: Which shoes do you choose?
KATIE: I choose all these shoes.
ALL CLERKS: *(gasp)*
NARRATOR 1: She bought the shoes and took them home.
NARRATOR 2: And now the store has
ALL CLERKS: *(to audience)* NO MORE SHOES TO CHOOSE!

Get out of Bed

by Diane Z. Shore

ROLES: 2 or more

MOM	
CHILD	

MOM (*yelling*): Get out of bed you silly fool!
Get up right now, it's time for school.
If you don't dress without a fuss,
I'll throw you naked on the bus!

CHILD: Oh, Mom, don't make me go today.
I'm feeling worse than yesterday.
You don't know what I'm going through.
I've got a strange, rare case of flu.
My body aches, my throat is sore.
I'm sure I'm knocking on death's door.
You can't send me to school – achoo! – (*sneeze*)
'Cause everyone could get it, too.
Besides the kids despise me there.
They always tease, and always stare
And all the teachers know my name.
When something's wrong, it's me they blame

MOM (*yelling*): You faked a headache yesterday.
Don't pull that stuff on me today.
Stop acting like a silly fool –
The principal cannot skip school!

I Like Myself!

by Karen Beaumont

READERS: 8 or any number

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
NARRATOR 5	
NARRATOR 6	
NARRATOR 7	
NARRATOR 8	

- NARRATOR 1: I like myself.
- NARRATOR 2: I'm glad I'm me.
- NARRATOR 3: There's no one else I'd rather be.
- NARRATOR 4: I like my fingers,
- NARRATOR 5: my ears,
- NARRATOR 6: my nose.
- NARRATOR 7: I like my fingers
- NARRATOR 8: and my toes.
- NARRATOR 1: I like me wild.
- NARRATOR 2: I like me tame.
- NARRATOR 3: I like me different
- NARRATOR 4: and the same.
- NARRATOR 5: I like me fast.
- NARRATOR 6: I like me slow.
- NARRATOR 7: I like me everywhere I go.

NARRATOR 8: I like me on the inside, too,
NARRATOR 1: for all I think and say and do.
NARRATOR 2: Inside, outside, upside down,
NARRATOR 3: from head to toe and all around,
NARRATOR 4: I like it all!
NARRATOR 5: It is all me!
NARRATOR 6: And me is all I want to be.
NARRATOR 7: And I don't care in any way
NARRATOR 8: what someone else may think or say.
NARRATOR 1: I may be called a silly nut
NARRATOR 2: or crazy cuckoo bird –
NARRATOR 3: so what?
NARRATOR 4: I'm having too much fun, you see,
NARRATOR 5: for anything to bother me!
NARRATOR 6: Even when I look a mess,
NARRATOR 7: I still don't like me any less,
NARRATOR 8: 'cause nothing in this world, you know,
NARRATOR 1: can change what's deep inside, and so...
NARRATOR 2: No matter if they stop and stare,
NARRATOR 3: no person
NARRATOR 4: ever
NARRATOR 5: anywhere
NARRATOR 6: can make me feel that what they see
NARRATOR 7: is all there really is to me.
NARRATOR 8: I'd still like me with fleas or warts,

NARRATOR 1: or with a silly snout that snorts,
NARRATOR 2: or knobby knees or hippo hips,
NARRATOR 3: or purple polka-dotted lips,
NARRATOR 4: or stinky toes
NARRATOR 5: or horns protruding from my nose,
NARRATOR 6: or-yikes!-
NARRATOR 7: I still would be the same, you see...
ALL: I like myself because I'm ME!

The Keys to my Kingdom

*adapted from an Old Rhyme
scripted by Lisa Blau*

READERS: 6

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	
NARRATOR 5	
NARRATOR 6	

NARRATOR 1: These are the keys to my kingdom.

NARRATOR 2: In that kingdom there is a city;

NARRATOR 6: In that city there is a town;

NARRATOR 4: In that town there is a street;

NARRATOR 5: In that street there is a lane;

NARRATOR 3: In that lane there is a yard;

NARRATOR 1: In that yard there is a house;

NARRATOR 2: In that house there is a room;

NARRATOR 5: In that room there is a bed;

NARRATOR 6: On that bed there is a basket;

NARRATOR 2: In that basket there are some flowers;

NARRATOR 3: Flowers in the basket –

NARRATOR 1: Basket on the bed; bed in the room; room in the house;

NARRATOR 5: House in the yard; yard in the lane; lane in the street;

NARRATOR 4: Street in the town; town in the city; city in the kingdom;

NARRATOR 1: And here are the keys to my kingdom;

ALL: Of my kingdom these are the keys.

The King's Breakfast

*by A.A. Milne
scripted by Richard Swallow*

READERS: 4

QUEEN	
DAIRYMAID	
ALDERNEY--COW	
KING	
NARRATOR	

NARRATOR: The King asked
 The Queen, and
 The Queen asked
 The Dairymaid:

KING: Could we have some butter for
 The Royal slice of bread?

NARRATOR: The Queen asked the Dairymaid,
 The Dairymaid said,

DAIRYMAID: Certainly,
 I'll go and ask the cow
 Now
 Before she goes to bed.

NARRATOR: The Dairymaid
 She curtsied,
 And went and told the Alderney,
 "Don't forget the butter for
 The Royal slice of bread."

NARRATOR: The Alderney said sleepily,

ALDERNEY: You'd better tell
his Majesty
That many people nowadays
like marmalade
Instead.

NARRATOR: The Dairymaid
said, "Fancy!"

NARRATOR: and went to
Her Majesty.
She curtsied to the Queen, and
turned a little red.

DAIRYMAID: Excuse me,
Your Majesty,
For taking of
The Liberty,
But marmalade is tasty, if
It's very thickly
spread.

NARRATOR: The Queen said,

QUEEN: Oh!

NARRATOR: And went to His Majesty,
"Talking of the butter for
The Royal slice of bread,
Many people
Think that
Marmalade
Is nicer.
Would you like to try a little
Marmalade
Instead?"

NARRATOR: The King said,

KING: Bother!

NARRATOR: And then he said,

KING: Oh, deary me!

NARRATOR: The King sobbed,

KING: Oh, deary me!

NARRATOR: and went back to bed.

KING: Nobody,

NARRATOR: He whimpered,

KING: Could call me
 A fussy man.
 I only want
 A little bit
 Of butter for
 My bread!

NARRATOR: The Queen said,

QUEEN: There, there!

NARRATOR: And went to
 The Dairymaid.
 The Dairymaid
 said,

DAIRYMAID: There, there.

NARRATOR: And went to the shed.
 The cow said,

ALDERNEY: There, there!
 I didn't really
 Mean it;
 Here's milk for his porringer
 And butter for his bread.

NARRATOR: The Queen took the butter
 And brought it to
 His Majesty.
 The King said,
 “Butter, eh?”

NARRATOR: And bounced out of bed.

KING: Nobody,

NARRATOR: he said,
 As he kissed her
 Tenderly,

KING: Nobody,

NARRATOR: he said,
 As he slid down
 The banisters,

KING: Nobody,
 My darling,
 Could call me
 A fussy man...
 But
 I do like a little bit of butter for my bread.

New Year's Resolutions

by Francis B. Watts Sue

READERS: 7

Joe	
George	
Mabel	
Ruth	
Jim	
Jean	
Mother	

SUE: Hello, friends! It's New Year's Day.
So listen, now, to what I say.
To free my teeth from cavities,
My resolution, if you please,
Is no more candy will I eat.
For tooth decay is caused by sweets.

JOE: A dandy resolution, Sue.
I've made a resolution, too.
To my little sister, Jean,
I vow that I won't be so mean.
She's a little pest, I find.
But to her I will be kind.

GEORGE: I really wasn't going to tell.
But I, George, made a vow as well.
As you all know, when I'm "up tight,"
I'm very quick to start a fight.
From now on, George will grin instead.
So just remember what I said.

MABEL: Well, I declare, it's very strange.
All of us are trying to change.
Now I'm the king who's apt to shirk

My household chores – that sort of work.
So no more “goofing off” for me.
A different girl I’m going to be.

SUE: Resolutions are fun to make,
But very easy vows to break.

Joe: I’ll truly try to do my best,
Though my sister Jean’s a pest.

GEORGE: You can bet your bottom dollar
That this year I won’t fight and holler!

SUE: On candy I will never nibble!

MABEL: About my chores I will not quibble!

ALL (*raise right hands*):
Here and now this oath we take
Our resolutions we won’t break!

RUTH: Hi there, buddies, want some candy?
The peanut taffy’s really dandy.

GEORGE: Thank you, Ruth, we surely do.
It’s very generous of you.

SUE: None for me. No thank you, Ruth.
I don’t eat candy. That’s the truth.

RUTH: I wish that I could stay and play.
But my folks and I are going away.

JOE: You kept your vow! Hey, good for you!

SUE: ‘Twas not an easy thing to do.

JIM: Georgie-Porgie puddin’ pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry,
Yah, yah, yah. Yi, yi, yi.
Kissed the girls and made them cry.

GEORGE: Go home, Jim, and tease your pup.
You won’t get my dander up.

I've better things to do than punch.
And you do, too, I have a hunch.

JIM: George is different, I take note.
I always used to get his goat.
Now teasing him's no fun at all.
Well, so long kids.
Don't drop the ball.

MABEL: That Jim's a bully type, all right.
But, George, we're proud you didn't fight.

GEORGE: I'm glad I kept my vow, I s'pose.
But how I longed to punch his nose!

JEAN: May I play football? May I, Joe?
You know how I love it so!
At playing football I'm not good.
But, gee, I wish you'd say I could!

JOE: I think we'll let you join us, sis.
When your turn comes, try not to miss.
But if you do, we want no crying.
Just keep on practicing and trying.

JEAN: Oh, thank you, Joe! I bet a cracker
I'll soon play like a Green Bay Packer!

SUE: You've been kind, Joe.
You vowed you would.

JOE: I really wasn't sure I could!

MOTHER: Mabel!!

GEORGE: That's you mother calling, Mabel.

MABEL: I know. It's time to set the table.
I'd like to put it off awhile.
But I'll go do it with a smile!
Postponing work is no solution,
When you've made a resolution.

SUE: Have you noticed, noticed how
 Each of us has kept his vow?

JOE: But that's one day,
 Somehow, I fear,
 We just can't keep it up all year.

GEORGE: We'll take it one step at a time,
 Like a hill we're going to climb.

SUE: We've kept one day. Tomorrow's another.
 We can succeed. We'll help each other.
 We'll learn to be so strong.
 We'll keep our vows the whole year long!

MABEL: We can succeed, I'm sure we can.
 Let's take our solemn oath again.
 I have to hurry, understand.
 So please raise quickly your right hand.

SUE, GEORGE, MABEL, JOE (*raise right hands and speak solemnly*):
 Here and now, this oath we take.
 Our resolutions we won't break!

One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish

by Dr. Seuss

READERS: 4

NARRATOR 1	
NARRATOR 2	
NARRATOR 3	
NARRATOR 4	

NARRATOR 1: *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*

NARRATOR 2: By Dr. Seuss.

NARRATOR 3: From there

NARRATOR 4: to here,

NARRATOR 1: From here

NARRATOR 2: to there

ALL: Funny things are everywhere

NARRATOR 1: One fish

NARRATOR 2: Two fish

NARRATOR 3: Red fish

NARRATOR 4: Blue fish.

NARRATOR 1: Black fish blue fish

NARRATOR 2: Old fish new fish.

NARRATOR 3: This one has a little star.

NARRATOR 4: This one has a little car.

ALL: Say! What a lot of fish there are.

NARRATOR 1: Yes. Some are red.

NARRATOR 2: And some are blue.

NARRATOR 3: Some are old.
NARRATOR 4: And some are new.
NARRATOR 2: Some are sad.
NARRATOR 4: And some are glad.
NARRATOR 3: And some are very, very bad.
NARRATOR 1: Why are they sad and glad and bad?
NARRATOR 2: I do not know.
NARRATOR 3 & 4: Go ask your dad.
NARRATOR 2: Some are thin.
NARRATOR 4: And some are fat.
NARRATOR 3: The fat one has a yellow hat.
NARRATOR 4: From there
NARRATOR 3: to here,
NARRATOR 1: From here
NARRATOR 2: to there
ALL: Funny things are everywhere.

Three Cheers for Teachers!

by Carol Montgomery

For teachers everywhere.....

READERS: 2-4 or any number

A	
B	
C	
D	

All To our teachers...

A: For your years of college...

B: Studying forever...

C: Being tested too much...

D: Writing beyond belief...

All: We say, thanks!

A: For your hours of frustration...

B: Trying to discipline...

C: Wanting to motivate...

D: Longing to make a difference...

All: We say, thanks!

A: For your unwavering dedication...

B: Believing in your calling...

C: Believing in your students...

D: Believing in their dreams...

All: We say, thanks!

A: For your incredible creativity...

B: Trying new things...

C: Making class special...

D: Creating forever memories...

All: We say, thanks!

A: For your excellent character...

B: Loving your students...

C: Encouraging everyone...

D: Expecting excellence...

All: We say, thanks!

A: And, for who you REALLY are...

B: Someone who cares...

C: A humble hero...

D: A role model to many...

All: We say, thanks!

A: Thank you for studying – long hours.

B: Thank you for sacrificing – time, money, energy.

C: Thank you for persevering – when it's so hard.

D: Thank you for committing – to education.

A: Thank you for stretching – toward the future.

B: Thank you for believing – the BEST.

C: Thank you for smiling – from the heart.

D: Thank you for caring enough to teach.
Three cheers for teachers!

All: Hip, hip, hooray!
Hip, hip, hooray!
Hip, hip, hooray!

All: We honor YOU!

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