



LANGUAGE ARTS

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **10th Grade | Unit 7**

LANGUAGE ARTS 1007

Oral Reading and Drama

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Oral Reading and Drama

Introduction

In this LIFE PAC® you will learn the value of reading aloud, the nature and role of oral reading, and the skills required for reading orally. You will learn how to use your voice properly, with correct phrasing, inflection, and eye contact. You will also learn how to select and prepare materials for presentation in speech contests and other public programs.

The second section of this LIFE PAC contains information to help you better understand drama. You will learn more about the development of drama in Greece and Rome. You will learn the characteristics of comedy and tragedy as well as become acquainted with some of the great writers of these two dramatic forms. You will study the elements of drama and learn more about dramatic irony and allegory. The second section will help familiarize you with some of the terminology used in discussing drama, preparing you for the actual reading of a play.

The third section of this LIFE PAC concerns interpretative reading of drama—the art of reading plays aloud. You will examine briefly the nature and the history of English drama, noting the characteristics distinguishing religious drama. You will read and evaluate *Everyman*, a classic Christian morality play.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC. When you have completed this LIFE PAC, you should be able to:

1. Summarize the importance of effective oral reading.
2. Define the function of oral reading.
3. Explain the effective use of the voice.
4. Describe the effective use of the body in oral reading.
5. Explain the preparation needed for reading orally.
6. List the rules for cutting material to be read orally.
7. Trace the early development of Greek and Roman drama.
8. Explain the history and the nature of tragedy.
9. Explain the history and the nature of comedy.
10. Explain certain elements necessary to drama.
11. Define and use certain literary terms pertaining to drama.
12. Explain the role of an oral interpreter of drama.
13. Trace the development of early English drama.
14. Describe three forms of Christian drama: the miracle, mystery, and morality plays.
15. Summarize the characteristics of the morality plays.
16. Describe *Everyman* as a morality play and as an allegory.

1. READING ORALLY

Training in oral reading is an asset. A student who has learned to read well to an audience has been freed from self-consciousness and fear when he appears before a group of listeners. He can read with competence and confidence a verse of Scripture in Sunday school, a poem in class, or a newspaper article to an elderly person with failing eyesight.

This LIFEPAK is designed to provide you with the composure, confidence, and skill necessary for effective oral reading.

In this section you will study the value, nature, and role of oral reading. You will learn more about the skills involved in reading orally. You will also learn to prepare your material carefully for reading orally.

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Summarize the importance of effective oral reading.
2. Define the function of oral reading.
3. Explain the effective use of the voice.
4. Describe the effective use of the body in oral reading.
5. Explain the preparation needed for reading orally.
6. List the rules for cutting material to be read orally.

Vocabulary

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

enunciation

inflection

intonation

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAK appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given in the glossary.

VALUE

Because the written word becomes most meaningful when it is spoken or read, its importance is most evident in this age of communication. Today, the spoken word is used everywhere: in mass communication, entertainment, education, government, and religion—guiding, enlightening, and enriching man's life. Reading orally is a valuable form of spoken communication. Reading to others has value as social action. When one reads to inform, to instruct, to entertain, or to inspire another, he is engaged in a social situation. The oral reader enters into a shared experience with his listener and, to some extent, with the author of the material being shared. Reading aloud also increases one's enjoyment of the content and heightens his appreciation for the sounds of the language of poetry and drama. As a social action, reading aloud can help the listener formulate answers to daily problems, it can capture his wandering attention, and above all it can give pleasure to those who cannot read for themselves.

In business. Oral communication emerged as a business with the development of mass communication. Countless jobs, unknown in the Twenties, are now available in the communications industries to qualified men and women. Because most broadcasters must read aloud from a manuscript, a teletype, TelePrompTer, or a cue card, the ability to read well has gained new significance. More is demanded of the oral reader for radio projection, however, because he has no opportunity to use body language or gestures to help him convey meaning. In visual productions much also depends upon the oral reader's appearance and his stage presence. In any case, the aspiring career seeker in either medium should remember the advice given by Lowell Thomas, the narrator for the old *Movietone News* newsreels. When asked once how to read a radio script effectively, he replied, "Make it sound as if it were not being read."



Persons desiring to pursue reporting or acting careers in the communication media attend special schools where they learn the art of oral reading. They struggle through exacting training sessions so that they can go on the air with confidence. Some of them may work in advertising, but many of these students become well-known news commentators and interviewers. They are competent as oral readers.

At home. Reading aloud at home is just as important as reading aloud in public. A person's ability to read to his family can add joy and beauty to everyday living. The very act of laughing or weeping over a story with a loved one can enrich those moments. How precious, indeed, are the memories that often cluster around the reading of a child's bedtime story! Reading to children about the spiritual giants of the Old Testament or sharing with them one of the parables of our Lord has even greater importance. It will enlarge their understanding of the Bible and fill their minds with images of unforgettable heroes and with words and the lessons that Jesus taught. Moreover, such reading will also bring family members closer together. Reading well, with excitement and sensitivity, can implant in young minds the value of books as nothing else can.

**Complete the following activities.**

1.1 List five ways oral communication is used every day.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

1.2 Explain the social value of oral reading.

1.3 Explain the place of oral reading in business.

1.4 Explain the importance of oral reading in the home.

NATURE

The nature of oral reading is practical, cohesive, and interpretive. Oral reading is practical because it provides a broad background for children, imparting information, providing mental images, and underlining principles that parents wish to instill in them. It is cohesive because it cements relationships between parents and children and between sisters and brothers and because it provides a common collection of memories that can be recalled at will. Oral reading is said to be interpretative. The **intonation** and **inflection** in the voice of the reader brings the writer's intention to artistic realization.

Practical. By nature, reading aloud is practical whether a mother is reading one of the Chronicles of Narnia tales to her child or whether a minister is reading the seventeenth chapter of John to his congregation. The printed page is vital to man's way of life. Sharing a delightful use of words or an interesting fact with a family member or a friend can add to the pleasure of both reader and listener.

Oral reading improves pronunciation. An oral reader must pronounce the words that he might skip over if he were reading silently. In all walks of life people are required to read reports in committee meetings or before governing boards; in such situations correct pronunciation and **enunciation** are of utmost

importance. To save embarrassment, one should carefully check anything that will be read and look up the pronunciation of all unfamiliar words. A person's ability to read aloud in a thoughtful, clearly understandable manner will bring personal satisfaction.

Cohesive. When people share an oral reading, their minds are brought into unison. All of them are listening; all are responding mentally to the message being projected. The reader must comprehend the author's meaning so that he can clearly express the thoughts of the writer to the audience. This comprehension requires conscientious effort to extract the essential meaning. For a minister of the Word of God, this searching period is imperative. He "breaks the bread" as a mother robin does for her little ones. He is proving Scripture with Scripture, categorizing it into known doctrines, and distilling from it principles to live by. This presentation helps bind a group together in fellowship around the Word.

Interpretative. Interpretative reading creates an illusion. For this reason the masters of interpretation make whatever they are doing seem fresh, new, and easy even though the audience knows they may have spent hours, days, or months in rehearsing. The interpretative reader attempts to express the full intent of the author.



Answer true or false.

- 1.5 _____ Reading, by nature, is not a very practical pursuit
- 1.6 _____ Oral reading is cohesive because it causes everyone within hearing to be thinking of the same thing.
- 1.7 _____ Interpretative reading means expressing the author's meaning by voice intonation and inflection.
- 1.8 _____ Reading aloud never improves one's pronunciation of words.
- 1.9 _____ Oral reading at home is never practical.

ROLE

Since oral reading is a form of communication usually social in nature, it also has an individual function. An individual's experiences filter through the prism of his unique perceptions and find expression in words and actions.

Speaking, or reading aloud, is highly individualized. A person's voice is distinctly his own—as unique as his fingerprints. Because no two persons have exactly the same quality of voice or read with the same inflection or expression, oral reading reflects an individual's reading characteristics. Having once heard the poet Dylan Thomas read “The Hunchback in the Park,” how could one fail to recognize the owner of that strong, rich voice? Who could attribute that distinctive voice to any other speaker?

Social. For students of oral reading, a knowledge of the best works of great writers, past and present, is helpful. The themes of life, love, and death are frequent subjects among great writers of prose and poetry. These expressions of human truths find an echo in every human heart. To read well from such literary masters as Shakespeare, Milton, Emerson, Dickens, T.S. Eliot, or Robert Frost, the student must gain sensitivity and depth. By cultivating “the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds,” to quote the poet Shelley, the student can acquire that sensitivity and depth of understanding; he can also draw from them, as from a reservoir of ideas, attitudes, sentiments, and values to energize, sharpen, and deepen his awareness and appreciation of life. Those who would read well before an audience, must possess depth and understanding. Oral readers must also possess the ability to express that depth and understanding with sensitivity. Hiram Corson in *The Voice and Spiritual Education*, written in 1896, said, “Some of the best readers I have ever known have been of the former class (having inner capital of emotional power) who honestly voiced what they had



sympathetically assimilated, and did not strain after effect.” Without that emotional power, he says, the reader is likely “to run into all kinds of extravagances which disgust people of culture and taste. The voice instead of being the organ of the soul is a betrayer of soullessness.”

Individual. What you read will affect what you think. Good literature will increase your vocabulary, and that in itself will modify your thought patterns. The more you read aloud, the greater your fluency will become. You can develop as a leader, for oral reading makes one stand out from the rank and file. To be able to read aloud before a group for an extended period with poise and self-command, without rushing through the reading or becoming self-conscious or affected, takes a great deal of practice. To be capable of reading moving passages without breaking down requires a composure that indicates emotional maturity. When a person can read aloud and know that everyone in his audience is listening to every tone, every pause of voice and every emphasis, he will experience a sense of confidence that will carry over to his next experience and will build with each successive one.



Complete each statement.

- 1.10** Reading aloud has a a. _____ and an b. _____ function.
- 1.11** Since oral reading usually has listeners, it can be classed as a _____ act.
- 1.12** Prose and poetry writers of the past and present express ideas about such subjects as
a. _____, b. _____, and c. _____.
- 1.13** A reader must gain a. _____ and b. _____ of understanding
to be able to read well such writers as Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Frost.
- 1.14** Hiram Corson implied that, to be a good reader, one must have a. _____
capital of b. _____ power.
- 1.15** Reading good literature will a. _____ your vocabulary and will
b. _____ your thought patterns.
- 1.16** A successful experience in reading aloud before an audience will give you a sense of
_____.

SKILLS

Reading well before a group requires two skills: the effective use of the voice and the effective use of the body. Emerson said, "And it is so plain to me that eloquence, like swimming, is an art which all men might learn, though so few do." The two skills cannot be separated; they depend on each other.

Effective use of the voice. Every speaker or oral reader must learn how to use his voice effectively. One's voice is affected by his attitude toward himself, toward his material, and toward his audience. Nothing unmasks the inner person so quickly as the voice. A person should learn to make the most of his voice. No *ideal* voice exists. The vocal sound produced depends on the length and thickness of a person's vocal cords. These sounds are amplified by the *resonators*: the throat, the nose, and mouth. The *articulators*, the lips, teeth, tongue, hard and soft palates, divide the stream of sound into syllables and into words. The sounds that result from a person's vocal

apparatus have a distinguishing quality that is unique. No one can change the quality of his voice, but he can practice to improve it.

The quality of one's voice is affected by both volume and rate. Proper breath control determines volume.

The reader should keep in mind the advice of the Apostle Paul. "Let your moderation be known to all men." This principle may be applied to volume control: A speaker should not shout at his audience, but he should speak so that he can be heard. A weak voice or a strong voice is not inherited; it is developed. Volume may not be a problem with an audience of two or three; it can be a problem in a roomful of people. A public speaker should test the room in which he will speak. A student may ask a friend to sit in the back of the auditorium or room before his speech to check on volume.

Oral reading suffers if the rate, or speed of utterance, is too fast or choppy. Haste in

speaking causes words to run together, especially in an auditorium or a gymnasium where the acoustics are poor. A hurried presentation is caused by stage fright or by lack of preparation. The purpose of reading to an audience is to share ideas; but if the words follow each other so rapidly that no one can understand what is being said, the speaker is wasting the time of the audience as well as his own.

In preparing a reading, follow this rule: Read the material as you would speak it to a friend, fitting the rate of speed to the requirements of the context. Pronounce the words carefully, paying special attention to the end consonants *-ing* for example. Separate your words; do not run them together. Finally, strive for a clear, smooth, interesting presentation.

Pitch and resonance. Voice quality is also affected by pitch and resonance. Pitch refers to the tone of one's voice. It is determined by the repetition of the vibrations of the vocal cords. Pitch ranges from high to low. The most comfortable tone usually occurs somewhere midway between those two points. To find this *optimum pitch*, repeat "ah" several times pausing after each sound as your voice moves up and down your range from the top to its lowest point. In this way you can find the tone of voice that is most desirable for you.

The controlled relaxation of one's vocal resonators produces a pleasant, full sound. Under stress the muscles of the throat will tighten. A tight throat will produce a thin sound. If the speaker's mouth is dry because he is tense, his resonators will be reduced in size and efficiency; and the quality of his voice will suffer. One must be sufficiently relaxed to use the resonators properly in amplifying the voice. Some exercises that will improve resonance include these five: (1) tightening the jaws and then relaxing them for an equal length of time; (2) standing in a comfortable, erect position and dropping one's lower jaw as far as it will

go and then yawning; (3) sighing several times quickly; (4) loosening the mouth and gritting the teeth; and (5) tightening the neck muscles while hunching the shoulders and putting more tension on the mouth and throat, holding and relaxing this position once or twice.

In any case, to attain clarity of utterance is vital for the oral reader. Nothing in his manner should call attention to his production of the speech sounds. Problems in enunciation, pronunciation, and articulation can all be improved with concentration and practice. The use of recordings, self-evaluation, and the criticism of "practice" listeners can be valuable aids in removing whatever faults or unattractive mannerisms a speaker might have. Any such problem should be corrected before a public appearance if possible.

Some problems of vocal quality are caused by physical difficulties. A person whose voice is gravelly, hoarse, strident, nasal, or breathy should have a physical checkup to determine the cause. A *gravelly* or *hoarse* throat is usually the result of overstrain, a throat infection that has been neglected, or perhaps a cold or sore throat. Medical attention and rest may relieve the condition. *Stridency* is the habitually shrill quality found in voices of some persons who whine or nag. Shakespeare had something to say about strident speech in his comedy *The Taming of the Shrew*. A *sotto voce* (sot' oa voa' chee), or stage whisper, uses a breathiness that identifies the utterance as a whisper. A *nasal sound* is caused by allowing too much air to escape through one's nose. Because stress is the source of many speech problems, relaxation is the key to their removal. Experiment with your voice to see how many different imitations you can produce without straining. Some artists and entertainers have perfected this simulation to an art and have made international reputations by impersonating famous people.

indifference, uncertainty, or fear. The posture of the reader or speaker as he stands before an audience will reveal his general attitude and affect audience response. An erect but relaxed body will signal confidence and assurance. A slouch or shuffle as the speaker makes his way to the stage projects a lack of energy or an indifference that triggers a like response from the audience. Thus, body language projects excitement or boredom, intensity or indecision, vigor or tiredness, confidence or fear. The vibrations sent out from one on the platform are matched in kind by those from the audience. Commanding or controlling the mental attitude is therefore of great importance as one stands before an audience to read aloud or to speak.

Breathing is most important in the production of speech and in the communication of expression. It is one of the body's primary tasks. Without sufficient breath a reader cannot put full expression into the words he is sharing with his audience. Read this familiar passage from I Corinthians 13, breathing only where the slash marks occur:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal/ And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge/ and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing/

The preceding breathing pattern is that of the average new reader. Now read the following selection taking a shallow breath at the single slash marks and a deeper breath at the double ones. This rate of breathing relieves the pressure build-up and improves the expression:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity/ I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling

cymbal// And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge/ and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains/ and have not charity, I am nothing//

Sometimes frequent breathing can produce a choppiness of the delivery. To prevent this effect, make each breath a quiet, gentle inhalation of air, not a sharp, sudden intake. As you read you will feel the beauty of the passage and will have time to express the meaning the Apostle Paul intended.

Punctuation marks need not govern breathing. The sense of the passage is of far more importance. Take whatever number of breaths you need to give full significance to the material you are interpreting. If the pronunciation of a word is difficult, taking a quiet breath before pronouncing it can be helpful. Breathing is modified by the reader's attitude toward a selection. Proper breathing will increase the emotional response the audience makes.

Breathing and gestures can enhance or detract from oral reading. Gestures, the movement of your hands, as well as your body motions must be natural. They must be responses to the ideas being read. A reader who is deeply moved by his selection, will use gestures depicting the sorrow, anger, joy, or elation evoked by that selection. Some readings will suggest more natural gestures than others. James Weldon Johnson's poem, "The Creation," for example, will prompt more body language response than will Emily Dickinson's "There Is No Frigate like a Book." Try to become aware of the way you respond to emotions, then incorporate the appropriate gestures naturally into your presentation. Any motion that is merely mechanical, however, should be avoided. Gestures should not call attention to themselves, but they should enhance meaning.

PREPARATION

Anything that is worth doing is worth doing well. One cannot expect to be able to read aloud in public without some preparation. When a student has been assigned to read a selection in class, he should not wait until the day before to begin his preparation. He should begin at once; otherwise, he will be disappointed in himself; and his audience will reveal the signs of boredom.

The pages of bookprint were not designed with oral reading in mind. The margins of a book are not wide enough to permit making notations to assist the reader. The print is too small and usually single-spaced making it difficult for the reader to find his place after he has looked at the audience. Therefore, one should first type the selection he is preparing for oral reading. Type the selection on heavy, quality paper that will not rustle or slide when it is moved. Do not end the page in the middle of a sentence. Use double spacing or even triple spacing. Allow two or two and a half inch margins on both sides for notations. Design signals that will remind you of the phrasing you have decided is

best and of the emphasis you want to give key ideas. Note the following standard markings:

/ indicates a hesitation or a chance to breathe.

// indicates a longer pause, a shift in idea, or the insertion of a new word.

___ underlining a word signifies emphasis or shading of a word.

In addition to these markings, you may signify emotional projections you feel the selection requires—words such as *quietly*, *excitedly*, *ominously*, *apprehensively*, or any others the selection requires. The comments or instructions to yourself are to help you use the pauses to the best advantage. They will bring to mind the changes in mood you intended to use. You will be able to interpret meaning as you go along, even in a first reading. The *meaning* of the material to be projected to your audience is your major concern.

If you have difficulty reading aloud publicly from a copy on which you have written instructions, make notations only on a photocopy for rehearsal. Use a clean, unmarked copy for your performance.



Complete the following activity.

- 1.33** Read the following selection orally. Note the changes in mood specified in the margins. Ask a friend to listen to your reading and evaluate it.

Do not think that these notations are the only possible interpretation of this selection. Every reader will react differently to the same work, and therefore will interpret it differently.

TEACHER CHECK

_____ initials

_____ date

Psalm 19

The Holy Bible

King James Version

Informative

with awe

as if this
were new
information

Joyously

intently

thoughtfully

brightly

admonishingly

reverently

prayerfully

The heavens declare/ the glory of God;/
and the firmament sheweth/ his handiwork.//
Day unto day/ uttereth speech,/ and
night unto night sheweth knowledge.//
There is no speech nor language/
where their voice is not heard.//
Their line is gone out/ through all the
earth,/ and their words/ to the end of the
world.//
In them/ hath he set/ a tabernacle for the
sun,//
Which is as a bridegroom/ coming out
of his chamber,/ and rejoiceth/ as a
strong man/ to run a race.//
His going forth/ is from the end / of
heaven,// and his circuit/ unto the ends
of it// and there is nothing/ hid/ from
the heat thereof.//
The law of the Lord/ is perfect,//
converting the soul:// the testimony/ of
the Lord/ is sure,/ making wise/ the
simple.//
The statutes/ of the Lord/ are right,/
rejoicing the heart:// the commandment/
of the Lord/ is pure,/ enlightening the eyes //
The fear of the Lord/ is clean,/ enduring
for ever:// the judgments/ of the Lord/
are true/ and righteous altogether//
More to be desired/ are they/ than gold,/
yea,/ than much fine gold:// sweeter
also/ than honey/ and the honeycomb.//
Moreover/ by them/ is thy servant
warned:// and in keeping of them/ there
is great reward.//
Who/ can understand his errors?//
cleanse thou me/ from secret faults.//
Keep back/ thy servant also/ from
presumptuous sins:// let them not// have
dominion over me:// then/ shall I be
upright,/and I shall be innocent/ from
great transgression//
Let the words/ of my mouth,/ and the
meditation/ of my heart,/ be acceptable/
in thy sight,/ O Lord,// my strength,/ and
my redeemer.//

Memorizing. “Giving a reading” usually implies that a selection should be memorized for a public presentation. Certain memory techniques have proved to be very helpful. One such technique is the use of an electronic recording with a phone or computer. Record the selection for two purposes: to learn the selection by reading and listening to it simultaneously and to analyze any problems you may hear in your reading.

If you have included rate-pronunciation-inflection faults in your recording, make the corrections. Be careful to enunciate clearly and emphasize meanings effectively. After you have learned the reading, you can polish it: practice in the room where you will give it, if possible, and have a friend or your instructor listen to you and give you constructive criticism. Working on the selection silently can assist the memorization; but you must also find a place where you can speak aloud and practice voice projection, vocal interpretation, and eye contact. An introduction to a reading should be prepared. Every good introduction should

have two objectives: presentation of the necessary background information and setting the mood for the reading so that the audience will be ready to respond. The reading should not be summarized, nor should a biography of the author be presented. The introduction should simply prepare the audience for the material to be read.

Contesting. In many states speaking and reading contests are conducted for students of both public and private schools. The Constitutional Essay Contest, for example, requires the student to write his essay, to submit it, and to memorize it for reading in a contest. Tri-state contests are not uncommon. The Forensic League requires membership of the school before its students can participate in its regional contests or in the all-state final contest held each year. In your area many private Christian schools may have formed an association for the promotion of training in this art. Speaking contests encourage young speakers to continue speaking publicly and reading orally.

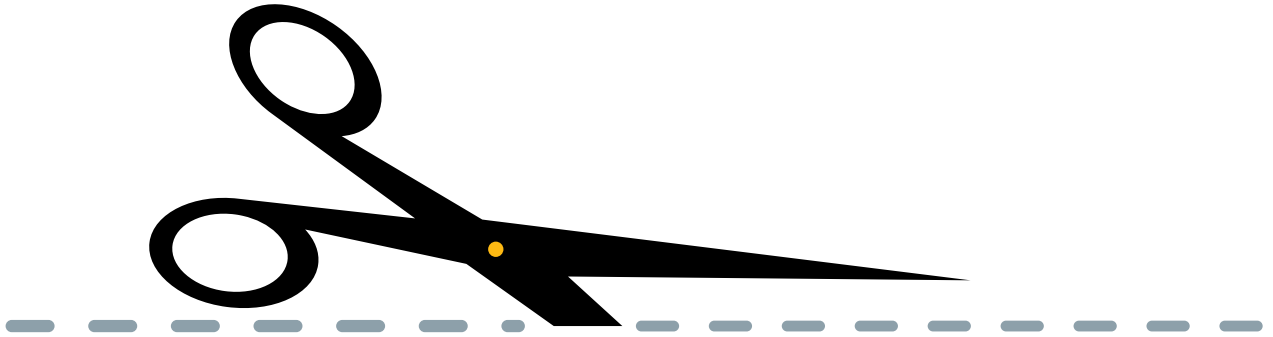


Answer true or false.

- 1.34 _____ Oral reading takes little advance preparation.
- 1.35 _____ Most books have wide enough margins to hold notes.
- 1.36 _____ The first step in preparing an oral reading is to type it.
- 1.37 _____ Write comments in the margins for other people to use.
- 1.38 _____ Use heavy, quality paper for typing your reading.
- 1.39 _____ The most important thing for an oral reader to concentrate on is his speed.
- 1.40 _____ One should never memorize in preparation for giving an oral reading.
- 1.41 _____ Introducing a reading includes giving background information and setting a mood for the audience.
- 1.42 _____ It is always wise to summarize a reading before giving it.
- 1.43 _____ Performing in a speaking contest can contribute growth in a young speaker.

Cutting. Often the piece you wish to use for a reading is too long. Usually it can be reduced without loss of interest or meaning. The rules for cutting effectively are these:

1. Find a selection that suits you, your audience, and the occasion.
2. If you choose a piece that is too long for the allotted time, be sure the segment can stand alone (not needing the material that precedes or follows it). Any gaps can be taken care of in the introduction.
3. Cut minor characters if they do not advance the plot or affect the outcome of your reading.
4. Cut in large segments whenever possible.
5. Paraphrase if necessary to fill in meaning that you have eliminated.
6. Cut directions to direct quotations such as “he said” and “he spoke meaningfully.” Just use those directions in your interpretation.
7. Be careful to retain the author’s objectives and, by all means, his style. Be careful of distortions that can occur in cutting.



Readings for cutting are taken usually from three prose categories: descriptive prose, expository prose, and narrative prose. Prose refers to any literature that is not poetry or drama. Descriptive prose relies primarily on imagery, which stimulates the senses—smells, touch, taste, hearing, and sight.

Cutting descriptive prose is not easy. One can cut down but not out. After deciding which descriptive elements are best retained to give the audience the most vivid and accurate picture, remove the less significant details.

Expository prose includes essays, reports, journals, analysis, news stories, and magazine articles. The purpose of expository prose is to explain, to interpret, or to define. In cutting

selections from this kind of prose, one should first read the entire piece carefully to be sure he has grasped the main thoughts, the author’s intention, and the most significant details. Irrelevant material should be cut. Although narrative prose is primarily written to entertain, the author may have dealt also with a social problem that needs correction. Be sure that you handle those parts sensitively when you cut narrative prose.

Cutting poetry should seldom be tried, for poetry has been written in a highly compressed form. The poet condenses his thought by means of word choice, word order, and even word omission. When a poet uses repetition, he does it for a reason that usually can be determined by a careful reader.



Read the following poem by Wordsworth.

**Written in March
While Resting on the Bridge at the Foot
of Brother's Water**

The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake cloth glitter.

The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now cloth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The plowboy is whooping—anon—anon:
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains,
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

- William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Can you find a word in this poem that is not necessary? This poem is one that cannot be cut, nor would one desire to cut it. It is a unit. The total is more than the sum of its parts.

Cutting plays is not so difficult. They may be shortened in several ways. One of the first ways is to eliminate minor characters who do not play significant parts. Any repetition of thought can be cut out. Select a scene which has the

minimum of exits and entrances; telescope one scene into another for cohesion; cut out any dialogue that does not advance the plot. Omit all stage direction, and eliminate scenes that depend on lighting and sound effects.

The following lines from Shakespeare's Hamlet (Act 1; sc iv) illustrate the proper method for cutting short scenes in plays to be used for oral readings.

Hor

Look, my lord, it comes!

~~*Enter Ghost.*~~

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
 Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd, 40
 Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
 Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
 Thou comest in such a questionable shape
 That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
 King, father, royal Dane; O, answer me!
 Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
 Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
 Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
 Wherein we saw thee quietly interr'd,
 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws, 50
 To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
 Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous; and we fools of nature
 So horridly to shake our disposition
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
 Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[Ghost beckens Hamlet.]

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
 As if it some impartment did desire
 To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
 It waves you to a more removed ground:
 But do not go with it:

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham: It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor: Do not, my lord.

Ham: Why, what should be the fear?

I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
 And for my soul, what can it do to that,
 Being a thing immortal as itself?

It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
 Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff

That beetles o'er his base into the sea;
 And there assume some other horrible form,
 Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
 And draw you into madness? think of it:

The very place puts toys of desperation;
 Without more motive, into every brain
 That looks so many fathoms to the sea:
 And hears it roar beneath.

Ham: It waves me still.

Go on; I'll follow thee.

**Answer true or false.**

- 1.44 _____ Good poetry is easy to cut for a reading.
- 1.45 _____ It is acceptable to cut minor characters out of a play or story if they do not advance the plot.
- 1.46 _____ Always keep the directions to direct quotations as “he said,” or “he spoke hurriedly.”
- 1.47 _____ Expository prose is easier to cut than descriptive prose.
- 1.48 _____ Any repetition in poetry can be cut.
- 1.49 _____ In cutting a play you can telescope one scene into another.

Complete this activity.

- 1.50 Choose a selection to cut for a reading. Prepare it and present it to a small group or a classmate.



Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test. The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.

SELF TEST 1

Match these items. (each answer, 2 points).

- | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------------------|----|--|
| 1.01 | _____ | descriptive prose | a. | memorization |
| 1.02 | _____ | narrative prose | b. | sticking together |
| 1.03 | _____ | cutting | c. | physical motions |
| 1.04 | _____ | expository prose | d. | graphic discourse that describes |
| 1.05 | _____ | gestures | e. | careful shortening of a reading |
| 1.06 | _____ | cohesion | f. | beneath the conscious level,
subconscious |
| 1.07 | _____ | enunciation | g. | language that uses the senses |
| 1.08 | _____ | eye-contact | h. | prose that tells a story |
| 1.09 | _____ | voice-print | i. | prose that explains or persuades |
| 1.10 | _____ | paraphrase | j. | clear articulation |
| | | | k. | looking up at audience regularly |
| | | | l. | summarizing passage in your own
words |
| | | | m. | poise, self-command |
| | | | n. | like fingerprint, unique to its owner |

Answer true or false (each answer, 1 point).

- 1.011 _____ Oral reading is not so important today as it was 100 years ago.
- 1.012 _____ Lowell Thomas said, "Make it sound as if it were not being read."
- 1.013 _____ One's ability to read aloud will have little effect on his business or profession.
- 1.014 _____ Reading aloud does not necessarily require one to understand what he is reading.
- 1.015 _____ Those who read aloud best make it look easy.
- 1.016 _____ One's voice is affected by his attitude toward himself.
- 1.017 _____ The resonators are the mouth, nose, and lips.
- 1.018 _____ The articulators are the tongue, teeth, palates, and lips.
- 1.019 _____ One inherits a strong or weak voice.

1.020 _____ Speaking rapidly in a large gymnasium causes your words to run together; making them hard to distinguish.

Complete these statements (each answer, 3 points).

1.021 When you read something too fast, you rob the material of its a. _____ , and the listener of b. _____ .

1.022 Optimum pitch is _____ .

1.023 You can relax your sound-producing mechanism before a performance by
a. _____ , b. _____
and c. _____ .

1.024 A person whose voice is hoarse, habitually strident, or nasal in quality should first
_____ .

1.025 Body movement that expresses inner feeling is called _____
_____ .

1.026 Hurried reading, words run together, and lack of expression are often caused by
_____ .

Answer these questions (each answer, 5 points).

1.027 What is the value of learning how to read to an audience?

1.028 What steps would a person go through to prepare for reading aloud to a group?

1.029 How can one discover problems of volume and rate in public reading?

1.030 What are the steps in choosing and cutting a reading?

	SCORE _____	TEACHER _____	initials	date
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