

# Teacher Narrated Story Drama

*Engaging Students through Drama with a Creative Read Aloud*

## Target Grades

Elementary

## Description

This guideline and video sample demonstrate how teachers can creatively read a text aloud in class, guiding students to physically play along with the action of the story's characters to enhance text understanding.

## Objectives

- **Teachers** will be able to enhance students' literacy skills by creatively engaging them in a text.
- **Students** will demonstrate greater interest in and understanding of a story and its meaning.

## Purpose: Drama parallels reading

Researchers have discovered that the mental requirements for understanding drama are similar to those for reading. The meaning of a reading is generally grasped in a transaction between the reader and the text. In process drama, which involves children in imaginary, spontaneous play, meaning is made from the engaging transactions between teacher and students.  
McNamee, G.D., McLane, J.B., Cooper, P.M., & Kerwin, S.M. (1985). Cognition and affect in early literacy development. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 20, 229-244.

## Learning Connections

### COMMON CORE Anchor Standards

- LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- LITERACY.CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

**HCPS III FINE ARTS Standard 3: Drama and Theatre:** Understand & apply the skills of acting, design, and technical theatre & understand the role of drama in various cultures throughout history

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS Anchor Standards

- #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- #6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- #10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

### Nā Hopena A'o Framework Connection

- The story demonstrates how **responsibility** and **aloha** contribute to feelings of **belonging** and **total-well-being** in a family and community.
- The teacher expressively reading the story and engaging students in dramatizing the events establishes a sense of personal **excellence** during learning experiences.

## An Introduction to Techniques for Creative Telling

Watch this **Teacher Narrated Story Drama** example video. The text is on page 3 marked with suggested ways to apply the Techniques for Creative Telling to the Marshall Islands story, 'Reef Eyes.'

[Click here for other digital story examples.](#)



### Techniques for Creative Telling

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pause</b></p> <p>Stop telling at key action moments, allowing students time to fully explore the moment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Volume</b></p> <p>Change volume to encourage students to vary the size of their action. With a loud volume, actions tend to be bigger. Using a soft volume encourages students to create small, quiet actions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Emphasis</b></p> <p>Give special weight and purpose to significant emotions, reactions or actions, encouraging students to make bold, strong creative choices</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Repetition</b></p> <p>Repeat words to capture the duration or intensity of a moment and help students experience the feeling or reaction of characters. ('She ran a long distance' becomes 'She ran ran ran ran a long, long, long distance.' 'He worked hard to lift the heavy rock' becomes 'He worked hard to lift lift lift lift the heavy heavy rock.')</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pace</b></p> <p>Speed up or slow down the telling of the story to match the action of the moment. Varying the pace also varies student engagement in the story. Speed increases excitement. Slowing down enhances suspense and mystery.</p>	

### Engaging Students through Drama in a Creative Read Loud

<b>PREPARE</b>	Select a text. Mark in the text where you might apply each of the Telling Techniques.
<b>PROMPT</b>	Tell students, "As I share a story, you will act it out." Have students find their own personal space. "Show with your body how each character moves and acts as I read the story."
<b>NARRATE</b>	Make generous use of the techniques, guiding student movement and involvement.
<b>SIDE-COACH</b>	Respond to how students are performing, encouraging more detailed and expressive choices that expand on the characters' actions and emotions. Note strong choices made by students as they enact the story.
<b>REFLECT</b>	<p><b>Story meaning</b></p> <p>What word or words best describe each of the characters?</p> <p>What did the main character(s) learn through her/his experience?</p> <p><b>Drama experience</b></p> <p>What choices did you make that helped the story as we acted it?</p> <p>How else could you show the character's actions and feelings?</p>
<b>REVISE</b>	If desired, play out the story a second time. Ask students to suggest dialogue that the characters might speak.

**'Reef Eyes' adapted from a Marshall Islands folk tale**

TELLING TECHNIQUES	Emphasis	Repeat	Pause	Volume	Pace
<b>STORY TEXT</b>					
<p>On the tiny island of Namdrik, two young girls played tricks on everyone and everything. The two girls loved to sit in coconut trees and drop big brown coconuts on everyone walking by. They would laugh and laugh. At night, the two girls liked tip-toeing into the dark to grab the leg of a sleeping pig. They would pull until it squealed loud enough to wake everyone on the island. The two girls always laughed and laughed.</p>					
<p>Mama and Papa scolded their two naughty girls. "Stop playing tricks on everyone and everything," the parents told them. "Someday, you're going to get in trouble that you can't get out of." Did the girls listen to their parents? Of course not! Instead they decided to play their biggest trick ever. This is what happened.</p>					
<p>The chief of the island paddled in from the ocean one morning with a big load of fish. He piled all the fish in front of his house. Tired out, the chief decided to take a short nap. When he woke up, the chief felt like cooking up those delicious fish. But stepping out of his house, he got an unwelcomed surprise. "What happened to my fish?" the chief shouted.</p>					
<p>A burst of giggles rustled the trees above him. Looking up through the leaves he saw the two young girls. "It was you two!" "We never saw your fish," said the first. "We're just collecting coconuts for Mama and Papa," answered the second. "I know you two. You stole my fish," he yelled. "I want them back right now." "Right now?" the two girls asked and smiled. "Right this very moment," the chief growled.</p>					
<p>"Okay." The two girls shook the tree. Fish rained down. The chief ran into his house to keep from getting slapped by all those fish. But he had caught a huge bunch of fish. The roof of his house caved in, burying him. The two girls slid down the tree and skipped off, laughing.</p>					
<p>The chief wasn't laughing. He struggled out of the pile of fish and house. The chief took a deep breath, and then let out a furious roar. The roar echoed across the tiny island. The two girls nearly leapt out of their skins. They begged their parents to help them. "Please, please, please hide us!" Did their parents help? No way. The roaring grew closer. The girls took off running. The chief roared on and ran right after them.</p>					
<p>The girls sprinted to the very end of the island. The two frantically looked for a place to hide. Not a bit of land was left, just a horizon full of ocean. The girls felt trapped. The chief's roaring grew louder every second. The two girls looked at each other, fear filling their eyes. What could they do? And then they saw it. At the edge of the reef sat a huge clam with its mouth wide open, basking in the sun. The two girls leapt into the clam. They slammed it shut. Just four wide eyes peaked out as the girls waited nervously for the furious chief.</p>					
<p>The chief roared right to the end of the island. Breathing heavily, he hunted for those two little tricksters. He found nothing. And as hard as he listened, he didn't hear even a single giggle. "Just wait until I find you two," the chief said and marched off.</p>					
<p>The two girls laughed. "What a great trick we played on the ..." They pushed to open the clam. It stuck. The girls pounded, kicked and shoved at the giant shell, but it refused to open even a crack. The two girls quit laughing. The two girls never got out. In the Marshall Islands that kind of clam is called a <i>mejanwod</i>, which means 'reef eyes.'</p>					