



Readers Theatre

**Sample**

**Cumulative &  
Verse Tales**

# Summary of Authority to use Digital Materials



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# Readers' theatre

Cumulative & Verse Tales Contents



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Sample



# Readers' theatre

Cumulative & Verse Tales Introduction (a)



## About Readers' Theatre

Readers' theatre is a way to involve students in reading aloud as dialogue – the spoken word. Students 'perform' by reading scripts adapted from the WINGS Traditional Tales series.

Readers' theatre is a strategy that promotes reading fluency through the rehearsals that lead to the performance. Its goal is to enhance students' reading confidence by having them practise reading for a purpose. Reluctant readers experience a real reason to read aloud.

Specific benefits that arise from the process of rehearsal and performance in readers' theatre include:

- Reading fluency through the repeated use of the language in dialogue
- Reading expression through the context of the language use in front of an audience
- Understanding of character in literature through role-playing
- Incentive to read for a real audience

## About Cumulative Tales

The word 'cumulative', etymologically, has 'friends and relations' in the form of *accumulate* and *cumulus*, all of which mean 'heap, gather'. To young children, there is something irresistible about cumulative tales and their dynamic growth as the text uncoils through repetition of characters and their actions. This snowballing of words and rhythm allows children to predict and recall words as they join in the telling.

The fact that so many cumulative tales have survived the test of time through various cultures gives some insight into the role of the traditional village storyteller. After-all, there were children to be entertained as well as adults, and storytellers through the ages have employed this literary technique.

## Benefits of cumulative tales in literature and language study

The international nature of the cumulative tale and its intoxicating style of repetition makes it very useful for:

**Literary comparison** about plot, structure and style

**Early writing** through:

- innovating on a pattern
- character and plot development

**Performance of text** to an audience

## Comparative cultural studies

Cumulative tales across very different cultures are so similar that they hint at being the product of retelling of some prototype deep in history. Some examples are:

- *The Gingerbread Man, Old MacDonald Had a Farm* and *The House that Jack Built* (England)
- *The Thick Fat Pancake* (Norway)
- *The Little Bread, The Giant Turnip* and *The Little Wooden Hut* (Russia)
- *Poor Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly* (Canada)



# Readers' theatre

Cumulative & Verse Tales Introduction (b)



## About verse

Some refer to reading or writing a good book as 'ploughing through the pages'. This metaphor is more accurate than they might imagine with regard to *verse*. This word goes way back to Indo-European *\*wert-* 'to turn', a metaphor for a plough being turned by a farmer to begin another row (*furrow*) in the soil; hence, later, the poet 'ploughing' through the lines of a poem.

The rhythm and rhyme in good verse make the words easier to recall, especially for children when they play skipping or clapping games to the rhythm of such text. Hence its popularity in children's books and songs through the ages.

## Benefits of verse in literature and language study

The use of particular stylistic devices in verse presents a number of opportunities in early learning.

## Rhyme

The similarity of final sounds in rhyming words is a useful means of teaching phonics.

## Rhythm

The regular rhythm in verse makes it possible to draw attention to syllables in words.

## Repetition

The common occurrence of repetition in lines of verse is a natural means of children practising the pronunciation of words and phrases.

## Fluency

Verse is often set to music. While a child might reread a favourite prose text several times, verse and lyrics in songs will be willingly chanted and sung many times. The repetition and rhythm induces such a familiarity with the words that it enhances fluency and expression in young learners.



# Readers' theatre

The Gingerbread Man

Play Script 1



## Choose your cast

Old Woman \_\_\_\_\_ Boy \_\_\_\_\_ Dog \_\_\_\_\_

Old Man \_\_\_\_\_ Girl \_\_\_\_\_ Fox \_\_\_\_\_

Gingerbread man \_\_\_\_\_ Cat \_\_\_\_\_

## The Play

### Old Woman:

I baked a gingerbread man.

### Old Man:

Yum! Let's eat him now.

### Gingerbread man:

No! I will run away.

### Old Woman:

Run after him!

### Old Man:

Run fast.

### Gingerbread man:

Run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man.

### Boy:

I will catch you.

### Girl:

I will catch you, gingerbread man.

### Gingerbread man:

Run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man.

### Cat:

Miaow! I will catch you.

### Dog:

Woof! I will catch you, gingerbread man.

### Gingerbread man:

Run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man. Uh-oh! There is a river.

### Fox:

I can take you across the river.

### All together:

Now we will catch you, gingerbread man.

### Gingerbread man: (To fox)

Quick, help me!

### Fox:

Get onto my nose.

### Gingerbread man:

Ha-ha! Run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man.

### Fox:

But I can! Snap! Yum!

Complexity ★★★★★



# Readers' theatre

Fox Mask



 print your mask on thin cardboard

 colour your mask

 cut it out

 practise your lines with your group



# Readers' theatre

Dog Mask



 print your mask on thin cardboard

 colour your mask

 cut it out

 practise your lines with your group



# Readers' theatre

Cat/Cougar Mask



 print your mask on thin cardboard

 colour your mask

 cut it out

 practise your lines with your group



# Readers' theatre

Gingerbread Man Finger-Puppet



 print your puppet on thin cardboard

 colour your puppet

 cut it out

 practise your lines with your group