

Reading Aloud

*****The Prime Rule of Reading Aloud*****

Read it yourself first! You'll read it much better, and will know that the material is just right for your group.

Before you read the book to a group of younger children...

- Take some time with the group to predict what will happen.
- Introduce vocabulary that may be new
- Show the title, the author, and the illustrator
- Review good listening behavior
- Wait for the attention of the group before you begin.

While you're reading...

- As much as possible, stay with the text so that the author's words are intact. Stop for questions or explanations only if you sense the group needs help.
- Vary your pace. Reading especially slowly can be very intriguing.
- Change your volume. Reading quietly often forces unruly groups to quiet down.
- Have the children repeat a line. This encourages them to listen closely. It's especially fun when you model the phrase in an idiosyncratic way.
- Have the children make a vocal response to a particular word. This also encourages active listening, and helps children develop expression.
- When you're reading rhyming text, pause before the final word. Again, you're leading the children toward making predictions, toward becoming active listeners.
- A pause can be a wonderful thing—note if there's a place where the action suspends, or where a character has a choice of ways to respond to a situation.
- Often the verbs in a story are especially important—pay extra attention to those.
- Although not everyone needs to be wildly expressive, it is indeed important that you read with expression.
- If you're reading to children who are learning to read, run your hand under the text as you read, to help them see the left to right movement.

Reading Aloud to Older Children or Young Adults:

Many of the same things apply...

- Read slowly. Remember that you have the benefit of seeing the words, but your audience only hears you, and they need to process the words as they hear them. A pause from time to time can be helpful.
- Pay extra attention to verbs
- Vary your pace, and vary your pitch.
- Consider pronouncing people's names in a distinctive way. Be perky when naming a character who's cheerful, or say the name slowly and sadly for a lugubrious person.
- Don't give out at the end of a sentence—again, remember that your audience can't see the words; they only hear YOU.
- Dialogue can be difficult in reading a novel aloud; if you must read a book heavy with dialogue, be sure that it's clear who is speaking. Many books with a lot of dialogue use indentation to show who's speaking, which is impossible for the listeners to follow.
- Remember that older children love picture books. More and more picture books have fairly mature subject matter that is suitable for upper elementary and middle school.
- Also remember the nonfiction! There are many wonderful narratives of people, history, and adventure that really happened.

Be Sure You Know About:

The Read-Aloud Handbook

By Jim Trelease

ISBN 0141001615

Written for laypeople, but helpful for teachers, to explore the value of reading aloud, to suggest ways of doing so effectively, and to help every child become a reader.

Reading Magic

By Mem Fox

ISBN 0156010763

Written in her trademark opinionated and enthusiastic style, Fox inspires parents and other adults to make reading magic.

Read It Aloud!

By Monty Haas

ISBN 0967740002

An excellent overall guide to reading aloud effectively.

(Note—Read Aloud Nebraska has sponsored all three of the above author/leaders at conferences in Nebraska!)

Helpful resources on the Internet:

Read Aloud Nebraska: A committee of the Nebraska State Reading Association, their site has an idea each day about reading that comes from local schools as well as links to other sites.
www.readaloudnebraska.org

Read Aloud Books Too Good To Miss: The Association for Indiana Media Educators develop five read-aloud lists each year for Indiana schools. The lists are for primary school, intermediate school, middle school, high school, and ageless.
www.ilfonline.org/Units/Associations/aime/Programs/ReadAlouds/Readaloud.htm

Jan Brett's homepage: Jan has to be one of the most generous children's authors. Her website has a little bit of everything. Among of our favorites are the masks that can be printed out so children can retell a favorite story like THE MITTEN or THE HAT.
www.janbrett.com

Eric Carle's homepage: This has information on the author and a section where teachers share ideas on how to use his books in the classroom.
www.eric-carle.com

Mem Fox's homepage: Mem is a champion of reading aloud to children, the sooner the better. Her site offers insights into her books as well as her 10 commandments for reading aloud and more.

www.memfox.com

And to go directly to her Ten Commandments for Reading Aloud:

<http://www.memfox.com/ten-read-aloud-commandments.html>

Jim Trelease's website: An excellent companion to his book, The Read Aloud Handbook. Trelease showcases information from a variety of sources to underscore his opinions about leading children to reading and learning.

www.trelease-on-reading.com

Mem Fox's

Ten Read Aloud Commandments

1. Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes every single day reading aloud.
2. Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they learn to read!
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.
5. Read the stories that the kids love over and over and over again, and always read in the same 'tune' for each book.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games.
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are short!
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as finding the letters that start the child's name and yours, remembering that it's never work, it's always a fabulous game.
9. Never ever teach reading, or get tense around books.
10. Read aloud every day because you just love being with your child, not because it's the right thing to do.

This page printed with approval by Mem Fox for Read Aloud Nebraska

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