Grades 4-8

ST. NICHOLAS NIGHT

A CCSS READER'S THEATER & CLOSE READING TOOLKIT

By: Erin Beers



Mrs. Beers
A LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

WHY READER'S THEATER?

Reader's Theater is one of my favorite tools to utilize in my 6th grade classroom. While I have listed the 4-7 grade common core standards that this package covers, Reader's Theater directly improves fluency and comprehension with any level. In addition, Reader's Theater allows students the opportunity to climb inside of a character and perform. While you can read through a passage just one time, students gain a greater understanding and build fluency when read multiple times.

DIRECTIONS:

- Copy the passage and extension activities for students.
- Give students 2-5 minutes to preview the passage and determine which character they might like to perform
- Based on class size, you may be able to have two different groups perform the same play.
- Display characters/parts in the classroom for students to see.
- I pull Popsicle sticks with student names to make character selection most fair. As I pull a student's name, they get to pick which part they would like
- I then write the student's name next to the character/part as a reminder.
- Once all parts have been selected, I give students another 2-5 minutes to scan through to locate their part.
- Finally, begin the passage. Read aloud as many times as you find suitable for your students.
- Answer Reader Response Questions, complete Context Clue Word Work, complete Journal Prompt, and Summary Organizer.

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Common Core Focused Reader's Theater
High Interest/Realistic Fiction Passage for
Middle Grade to Middle School Learners

CCS: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 RL 1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 RL 2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 RL 3. Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 RL 4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 W. 4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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St. Nicholas Night

Cast of Characters		
Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Mrs. Gallen- music teacher
Skylar- student	Trevor- student	Winston- student

Narrator #1: It was the Monday after Thanksgiving. Students were filing into school a bit tired from their Thanksgiving break. Some students had traveled to visit relatives, some stayed local and visited in town family and friends, and others were home helping prepare Thanksgiving meals at their own houses. Nonetheless, it was a much-needed break for everyone, teachers included, from school.

Narrator #2: On this Monday morning, Mrs. Gallen, the music teacher, had gotten word that the high school band students had a special Christmas performance they were invited to participate in at the downtown ice skating rink. It was exciting, but they would be missing the community St. Nicholas Night. She was ecstatic to be sharing this news and an exciting **prospect** with her first period band students.

Mrs. Gallen: (greeting her students at the door) Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen! I need you to swiftly take your seats. I have some information to share with you, and we need to get started on our work right away.

Winston: (jokingly) Don't you even want to hear about our Thanksgiving? You always want to be in the know about our weekends…

Mrs. Gallen: (hitting herself in the head with her hand) Winston, you know I do, but I have some really exciting news to share with this crew first.

Trevor: (**lightheartedly**) We see how it is, Mrs. Gallen! Go ahead with your newsflash!

Mrs. Gallen: (intensely) You know how every year our town has St. Nicholas Night?

Skylar: Of course! The Santa Claus **impostor** gets pulled around on a sleigh by horses and stops in each of the neighborhoods to pass out goodie bags to all of the smaller kids in our community…



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Mrs. Gallen: (interrupting) There is a bit more to it, but that is exactly what I am referring to…

Narrator #1: Mrs. Gallen then **proceeds** with the exciting news.

Mrs. Gallen: What you may or may not have paid attention to is the fact that our high school band follows behind St. Nicholas' sleigh in a trolley and plays holiday music to **enhance** the spirit of the night.

Winston: (**interjecting**) The band members are usually freezing their tails off because it is a really cold night.

Mrs. Gallen: (amused) That is true, but the exciting news I have for you is that this year because our high school students have a prior commitment performing downtown at the ice skating rink, this band class now gets to be the group performing in the trolley following behind St. Nicholas. What do you think?

Skylar: I think we have some holiday songs to practice…

Winston: I think I have some warmer clothes to buy!

Trevor: (**oblivious**) Mrs. Gallen, my family just moved to Milan this summer, so I have no clue what you are talking about! Can you share a little more about St. Nicholas Night?

Mrs. Gallen: Of course, Trevor. You fit so **seamlessly** into this group that I forget you haven't been here since kindergarten like many of the others. St. Nicholas Night is special event that our town celebrates, but it has been celebrated all across Europe for years. Many North American cities, like ours with large populations of people of German descent, also carry on the St. Nicholas tradition. St. Nicholas was a real Greek saint from the 4th century. He was well-regarded as one who was kind and helped those in need. It was said that he would give generous gifts and even place coins in the shoes of the needy.

Skylar: So why does a man that looks like Santa Claus parade around our town on St. Nicholas Night?

Mrs. Gallen: We have taken some of the ideas of St. Nicholas and turned them into our Christmas traditions, for sure. St. Nicholas was a thoughtful and generous man, who liked to do things for others during the night when they would not be observed. Through this occasion and with our Christmas traditions of Santa Claus, it is exciting to allow his good spirit to live on. So "St. Nicholas" comes to our town once a year to spread joy and do kind deeds for our children by giving them little bags of goodies. While we see a man that resembles Santa Claus doing this, it is the spirit of St. Nicholas that we are celebrating.



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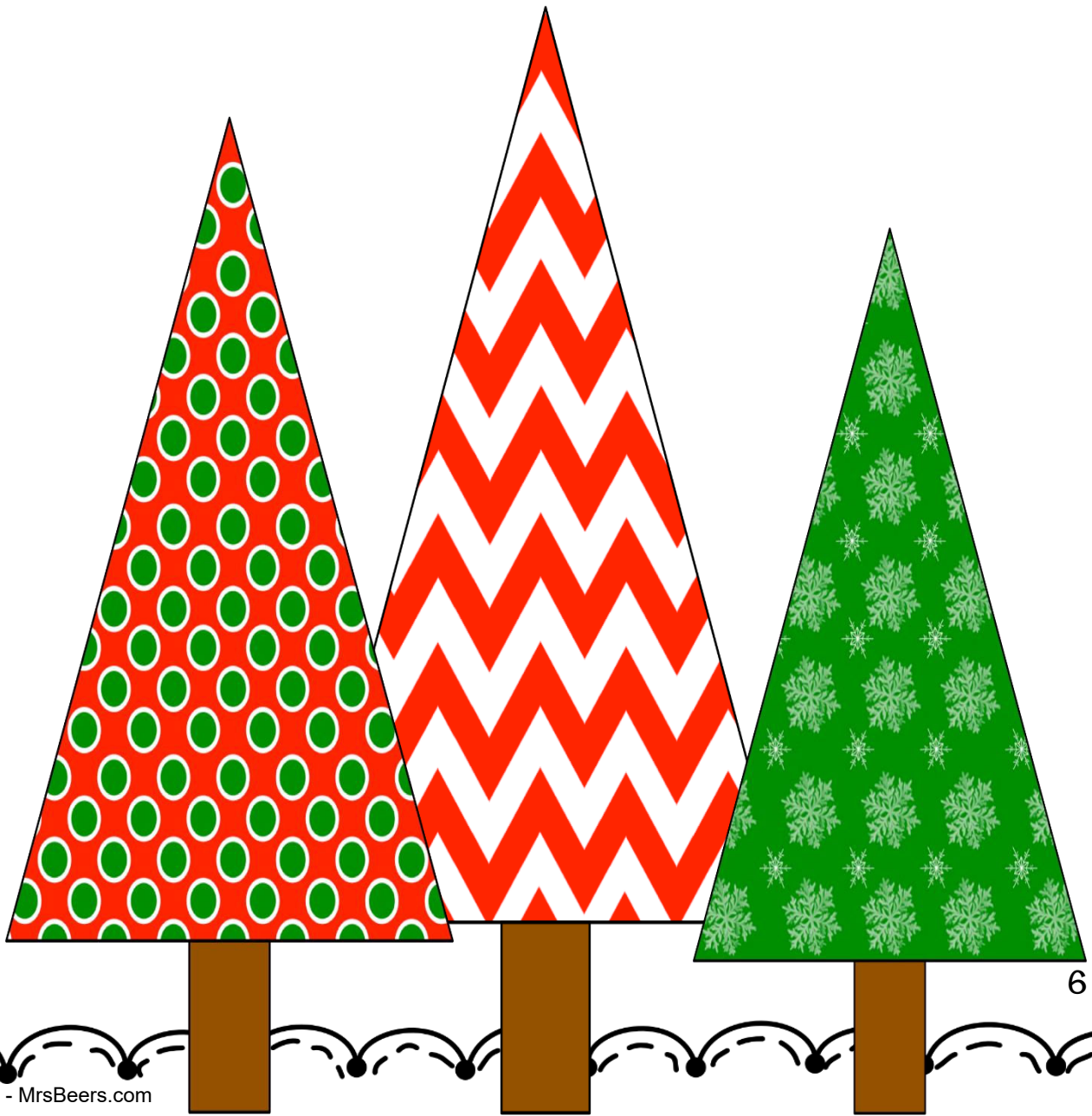
Winston: So what exactly will we be doing, Mrs. Gallen?

Mrs. Gallen: We will be practicing every day during our class time for the next ten school days to make sure we know all of our holiday music. On St. Nicholas Night, we will be meeting here at the school at 5:00 PM. I will bring snacks and more than enough hot cocoa to keep you all warm. From 5:50-8:30 PM we will be cruising around Milan on our trolley car following St. Nicholas and playing all of our favorite holiday music.

Trevor: I got it, Mrs. Gallen. Thanks for getting me caught up on the plan for the night and some history. I can't wait to tell my preschool-aged sister all about what is coming up. But I think we should get practicing. It sounds like an awful lot of people in our town are relying on us to keep the spirit of St. Nicholas alive.

Mrs. Gallen: Everyone, thanks for being willing to take on this challenge. You make me proud to be your music teacher. Let's play…



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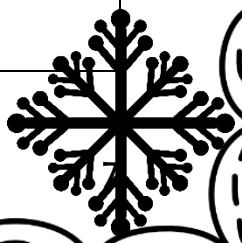
Name: _____

St. Nicholas Night
Word Work

Directions: Find the word in the text. Write the sentence that the word is in in the "Word in Sentence" box. Using context clues, write the meaning of the word in the "Meaning using context clues" box.

Word	Word in Sentence	Meaning using Context Clues
prospect		
lightheartedly		
impostor		
proceeds		
enhance		
interjecting		
oblivious		
seamlessly		



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Name: _____

St. Nicholas Night
Reader Response Questions

Directions: After completing the Reader's Theater, answer the following questions in complete sentences citing specific details from the text.

1. What is St. Nicholas Night? How does the town of Milan celebrate? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What role will Skylar, Winston, and Trevor have on St. Nicholas Night? Why is this a big night for Mrs. Gallen? Cite evidence from the text to support your response.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Share two facts about St. Nicholas described in the text.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.

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St. Nicholas Night Journal Prompt

Directions: In the space provided below, respond to the journal topic. Your writing needs to be in complete sentences, with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Topic #1: In Milan, St. Nicholas Night is a special tradition. Share about a tradition you celebrate in your town or community. When does this event take place? Why is this tradition meaningful to you and your family? Share your experience on the lines below.



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Summary Strategy Organizer

Directions: Summarize this text using the Summary Strategy Organizer below.

SUMMARY	
	Somebody
	wanted
	but
	so
	Then
	Summary

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Answer Key

Word	Meaning using Context Clues
prospect	outlook
lightheartedly	cheerily
impostor	fake
proceeds	continues on
enhance	improve
interjecting	interrupting
oblivious	unaware
seamlessly	flawlessly

Reader Response Questions:

1. We have taken some of the ideas of St. Nicholas and turned them into our Christmas traditions, for sure. St. Nicholas was a thoughtful and generous man, who liked to do things for others during the night when they would not be observed. Through this occasion and with our Christmas traditions of Santa Claus, it is exciting to allow his good spirit to live on. So "St. Nicholas" comes to our town once a year to spread joy and do kind deeds for our children by giving them little bags of goodies. While we see a man that resembles Santa Claus doing this, it is the spirit of St. Nicholas that we are celebrating.

2. Mrs. Gallen has asked her band students to perform in the St. Nick Night festivities because the high school students have a prior commitment performing downtown at the ice skating rink, this band class now gets to be the group performing in the trolley following behind St. Nicholas.

3. Student answers may include: St. Nicholas was a real Greek saint from the 4th century. He was well-regarded as one who was kind and helped those in need. It was said that he would give generous gifts and even place coins in the shoes of the needy.

Journal Response:

Student responses should incorporate information about a tradition celebrated and specific details about the occasion. Students will also explain the importance of celebrating this specific tradition with their own family. I evaluate students using a 4-point scale.

Summary:

Mrs. Gallen wanted to share some exciting news about St. Nicholas Night with her students, but they were preoccupied with complaining about it. So, finally she was able to share the news that the high school band would not be able to participate by playing in the St. Nick Night festivities. Then her students were a bit more enthusiastic about St. Nick Night because they would be able to perform.

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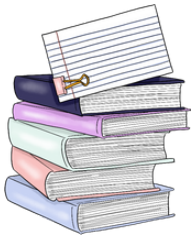

THANK YOU!



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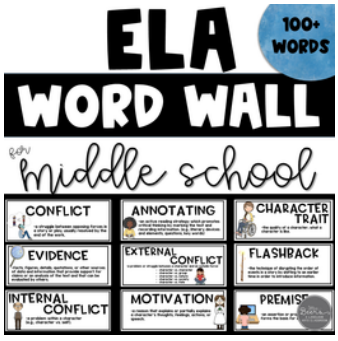

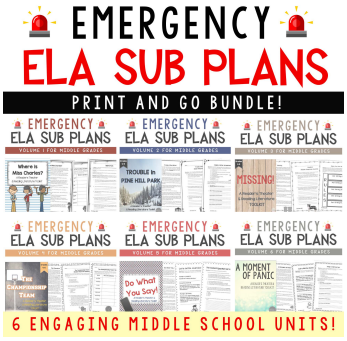

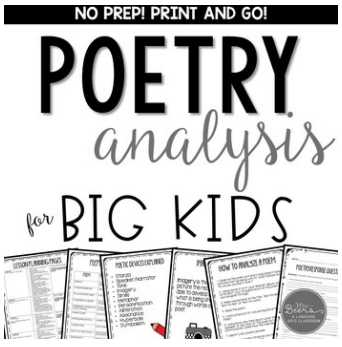

LET'S CONNECT

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