

MAKING BOOKS COME ALIVE

TIPS FOR DRAMATIC READING

Would you like to read aloud so that everyone wants to hear more?

Here are some simple guidelines for helping you make books come alive. You can listen to the recording < <http://tinyurl.com/9voetdy> > that goes with these pages to hear the examples.

1. The elements of dramatic reading are
 - a. How *fast* you read (fast, slow)
 - b. How *loud* you read (soft, loud)
 - c. The *pitch* of your voice (high, low)
 - d. The *tone* of your voice (mellow, harsh)
 - e. The *accent* you use (different ways of pronouncing things)
2. Use *punctuation* properly
 - a. A period (.) makes us bring the pitch down and pause for a moment
“It was a dark and stormy night. The wind whipped the branches into furious motion.”
 - b. A question mark (?) makes us bring the pitch upward.
“Was it a dark and stormy night? Yes, it was.”
 - c. A comma (,) signals a brief pause but no shift in tone
“It was a dark and stormy night, and the wind whipped the branches into furious motion.”
 - d. A semicolon (;) signals a shorter pause and only a slight downward shift
“It was a dark and stormy night; the wind whipped the branches into furious motion.”
 - e. A colon (:) makes us emphasize the first part of a sentence, then pause before we go on to an explanation of what we just read
“It was a dark and stormy night: the wind whipped the branches into furious motion.”
 - f. Quotation marks (“ ”) make us change the tone of our voice to show that someone else is speaking
It was a dark and stormy night. Bob said, “The wind is whipping the branches into furious motion.”

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- g. Exclamation marks (!) mean that a sentence or phrase is important, so you can say it louder and more slowly.
“The twins looked at each other in horror. The cavern had no exit!”
 - b. *Italics* mean that a word is special and can be emphasized by tone or speed
“It was a dark and stormy *night*, but the day dawned calm and pleasant.”
 - i. A dash (–) and parentheses [(and)] interrupt the flow of reading to give additional information
It was a dark and stormy night (not unusual for that time of year).
It was a dark and stormy night – not unusual for that time of year.
3. Don't pause at the end of a line of text: read ahead of what you are saying so that you don't let the end of the line interfere with your reading
 4. If something is important, say it louder and more slowly
“Shaheem examined the control panel carefully. It wasn't just inactive: it was locked.”
 5. If something is exciting, unexpected or surprising, say it faster and with a higher pitch
“The twins suddenly realized the horrible truth: the cavern had no exit!”
 6. Invent a special way of speaking for each character in a story
 - a. Some can speak more slowly or quicker
 - b. Others can speak with a higher pitch or a lower
 - c. If you can change your accent, characters from different groups can sound different



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< http://www.mekabay.com/methodology/dramatic_reading.pdf > or

< <http://tinyurl.com/9rzoct2> >

The narrated lecture is available online as a self-playing PowerPoint file

< http://www.mekabay.com/methodology/making_books_come_alive.ppsx > or

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