


Santillana Spotlight on English Reader’s Theater Level K

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Santillana Spotlight on English Reader’s Theater Level K			
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School-based literacy is a complex process; and, learning to read in a foreign language is a major challenge for many young English learners—especially at the level of comprehension. *Santillana Spotlight on English Reader’s Theater Level K* offers children a unique experience of “reading to learn.” The textbook leverages Reader’s Theater to create enthusiasm, excitement, and motivation for the kindergarten classroom.

Spotlight Reader’s Theater is filled with bright, colorful pictures and illustrations, and large bold font for easy reading. The text is filled with new vocabulary and stories with scripts, songs, and writing activities spread among a total of three units. The units are comprised of seven lessons each centered on popular U.S. tales such as *The Three Little Pigs* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Across the lessons of each unit, children are engaged in understanding the unit objectives, arranging story details in graphic organizers, engaging in sing-alongs, connecting story content to academic subjects, and creating fun arts and crafts. Following the three units is a final project that emphasizes graphic organizers once again to assist children in finding comparisons across each story. The end

of the text provides a four-page picture glossary to help children associate vocabulary words with images.

The activities in *Spotlight Reader's Theater* ask children to read, write, speak, sing, and memorize. Teachers can guide students in their reading by asking questions that help children make predictions and inferences, recall the characters, formulate conclusions, and question the author's purpose. For example, following each story, children are asked to draw connections from the content using graphic organizers. In Unit 2, Lesson 3, boxes labeled First, Next, and Last require that children re-sequence the major events of *The Three Little Pigs*. Children are also asked to connect story content to subject areas such as math, social studies, and science. Content-area knowledge is reinforced as children practice counting, identify family structures, and recognize and name different shapes. Another repeated feature of the text is song. Each unit contains a music section that pertains to the story at hand. For example, after *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, children sing "Nice Family of Bears." The song reminds learners of the story's content and reinforces key vocabulary words. Singing helps attach associations to story content and vocabulary while simultaneously reinforcing learning and sound awareness. Moreover, the songs reinforce the rhythm of English, vocabulary, and comprehension. The teacher's edition of the text comes with an audio CD that includes each song. An additional CD entitled *Blackline Masters* contains sheet music of the songs and stage directions for each story script.

The activities in *Spotlight Reader's Theater* not only teach academic skills, but also life skills. Kindergarteners learn values such as patience—children must wait their turn to speak in the play, and become more aware of others and teamwork—each child works together to create an entire production. The stories of each unit exemplify sharing, friendship, and listening to others' feelings. For example, in *Neeta Goes to Kindergarten*, the narrator talks about making new friends on her first day of school. Teachers can use the text to model how to care for and respond to friends when they are upset or angry, and how to play together appropriately.

As a classroom teacher, I especially appreciate and enjoy the sing-alongs. I have taught in preschool and kindergarten classrooms and if there is one thing children enjoy, it is singing songs. Music fosters creativity among children and serves as an energy outlet. Children can sing loudly then softly, or quickly then slowly and vice versa. Teachers can change around, replace, or add new words, and supplement the music with clapping, dancing, and jumping.

Spotlight Reader's Theater posits that the main goal of reading is comprehension. Children will spend time rereading the text as they refer back to the scripts to recall information, make predictions and inferences, and draw conclusions. Also, children will have rehearsed the script multiple times before showcasing the final performance. The text is convenient

for teachers because it provides ideas for displaying student work. Arts and crafts activities can be arranged around the classroom to support comprehension and reinforce key vocabulary learned. In Unit 2, Lesson 6, children are asked to create masks of a character from *The Three Little Pigs*. These masks can be used not only during the final performance, but during playtime and storytime, as well.

The text would be most useful in the early learning language classroom. It is designed for native Spanish speakers, but is suitable for all first language groups. *Spotlight Reader's Theater* will bring a fun and exciting atmosphere in the classroom and allow children to bring what they read to life. Children will become more enthusiastic about reading as they are taken from the floor to the front of the room. Reading will no longer be simply words on a page, but an adventure. They will sing songs, design art, and work on a theatrical team. Overall, *Spotlight Reader's Theater* makes reading a fascinating experience for young children.

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