

# Expressive Engagements

## Reference Sheet and Examples

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**Dramatizing**

Dramatizing the story spontaneously in verbal or nonverbal ways

**Talking Back**

Talking back to the story or characters, providing advice to the characters, or expressing an opinion about the actions of the characters

**Critiquing/Controlling**

Suggesting alternatives in plot, character, or setting

**Inserting**

Inserting oneself or one's friends or family into the story

**Taking Over**

Taking over the text and manipulating it for one's own purposes

Based on Sipe, L.R. (2002). Talking back and taking over: Young children's expressive engagement during storybook read-alouds. *The Reading Teacher*, 55 (5), 476–483.

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# Expressive Engagements

## Reference Sheet and Examples (continued)

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You can incorporate the five expressive and performative engagements into any read-aloud. For example:

### **Dramatizing**

- Have students practice their body motions and create a dramatic play of the story for their classmates. As an alternative, create a center that encourages students to act out stories as they are reading.
- Have students create a “story capsule” with artifacts to retell or dramatize a story. Students may include props that are suitable to the story including teacher- or student-made masks and objects from the story that may aid in the retelling.
- Have students dramatize their own version of a story and prepare a script.

### **Talking back**

- Gather students into small groups and have each one read the text (or read the pictures) and insert their own comments.
- Using sticky notes, have students write or draw their comments about the book and place them on the corresponding pages.

### **Critiquing/controlling**

- Have students write a letter to the author, detailing how they would act if they were one of the characters.
- Write a diary entry in a journal, pretending to be one of the characters in the story.

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# Expressive Engagements

## Reference Sheet and Examples (continued)

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- Have students create Character Trading Cards ([http://readwritethink.org/materials/trading\\_cards](http://readwritethink.org/materials/trading_cards)) for the characters in the stories you have read. Students can use these to contrast the characters; they can also exchange them and use them as writing prompts to write their own versions of the story.
- Read other versions of the same story, discussing the changes that were made and whether they agree or disagree with the changes. The interactive Venn diagram (<http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/venn/index.html>) can be used by students to chart the differences between the two stories and organize their thoughts before writing their critique.

### Inserting

- Invite students to rewrite or draw the story with an additional character – themselves!
- Have students work in pairs to draw or write about their partner as a character in the story. Afterwards, have students share their stories with one another.

### Taking over

- Have students search through the story for personal connections or ways that they took over the text. Compile the list and create a class book, illustrating each entry.
- Find places in the text where the words could be replaced. For example, instead of the “my what big eyes you have” students might write “your eyes are huge.” Have students reread the story using their new words.
- Create a list or a notebook of story connections relating to the students’ personal lives.