

Reader's Theater Exercise 24: **The Night Before Christmas**

This exercise will help you maintain productive classroom activity as students look forward to Winter Break. This activity is a Reader's Theater version of the classic poem, "The Night Before Christmas," designed for Grades 2 - 6.

With three cheerful elves as the narrators, along with the characters of St. Nick and Mr. and Mrs. Darling, the story allows students to each play an active role instead of simply reciting the poem as an outsider. The script holds the fluency-building strength of Reader's Theater and is even multi-leveled, like most of our stories, so students of different abilities can each read at their own levels while enjoying the story together.

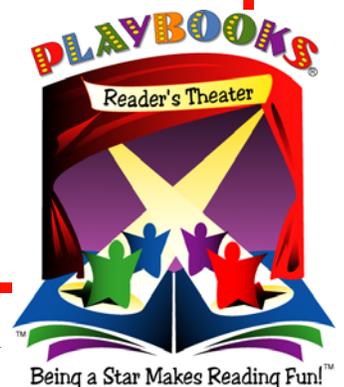
Teacher Instructions:

Review the following script and Recommended Reader Assignment Guide. Assign the character roles based on matching the students' ability levels to the difficulty of the roles, using the form provided. Also, try to keep student personalities and dynamics in mind when grouping students together as you assign the roles.

Have your students read the script aloud in their groups at least three to four times for the most fluency building, according to the guidelines of Repeated Guided Oral Reading. You could have them read it all during one day, or once on three or four separate days over a week's time.

Add fun to this reading activity by having students bring in costumes for their parts. A nightcap for Mr. Darling and a Santa hat for St. Nick would work well. You could even lead into your holiday party with this activity!

Happy Holidays from Playbooks® Reader's Theater!



Recommended Reader Role Assignment

FOR TEACHER'S USE ONLY - NOT FOR STUDENT USE



The Night Before Christmas

A Playbook® Adapted Classic



Reader No.	Story Character (level of reading difficulty)	Group 1 Reader	Group 2 Reader	Group 3 Reader	Group 4 Reader	Group 5 Reader
1	Mr. Darling <i>Low</i>					
2	Mrs. Darling <i>Low</i>					
3	Tinsel the Elf <i>Medium</i>					
4	Snowflake the Elf <i>Medium</i>					
5	Holly the Elf <i>High</i>					
6	St. Nick <i>High</i>					

The Night Before Christmas

A Playbook® Adapted Classic

Originally by Clement Clarke Moore or Henry Livingston

Provided with our
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Reader's Theater Exercise 24



Character Summary

Before beginning this story, it is helpful for each reader to read his/her character summary aloud.



Tinsel the Elf

I'm Tinsel, and I am one of St. Nick's helpers. I think this is the best time of the year because I get to help him make Christmas special for everyone!

Holly the Elf

I'm Holly, and I am also a Christmas elf. I love telling the Christmas story! It makes me feel all warm and fuzzy inside.

Snowflake the Elf

I'm Snowflake, and I love this time of year! Not only do I get to share the story of St. Nick with you, but I love playing in the snow!



Mr. Darling

I am Mr. Darling. Christmas is the best time of the year because I am so happy to be with my family.



Mrs. Darling

I am Mrs. Darling, and I just love Christmas. What I like most is seeing our children's happy faces on Christmas morning!



St. Nick

I'm jolly old St. Nick, but I have also been called Santa Claus and Kris Kringle. I travel around the globe each Christmas Eve spreading Christmas cheer to all the children of the world!

Tinsel	Snowflake	Holly
St. Nick	Mr. Darling	Mrs. Darling

What is Cue Text? *Cue text tells readers HOW to read their lines. Cue text is shown in both italics and parentheses and appears before a line of dialogue. Cue text is not read aloud.*

Example: *(yelling)* **Look out!**

Tinsel the Elf 'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the House.

Holly the Elf Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse!

All Readers *(very quietly)* **Shhhh!!!**

Snowflake the Elf The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,

All Elves **In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there!**

St. Nick **HO! HO! HO!**

Mr. Darling The children were sleeping all warm in their beds,

All Elves **While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads!**

Mr. Darling And mamma in her robe, and I in my cap,

Mrs. Darling Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,

Tinsel the Elf When out on the lawn there began such a clatter!

All Readers *(stomping your feet)* **Stomp! Stomp! Stomp!**

Mrs. Darling I jumped from the bed to see what was the matter.

Mr. Darling Away to the window I flew like a flash.

Holly the Elf She tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

All Readers *(making wind noise)* **Swish! Swish! Swish!**

Snowflake the Elf The moon on the top of the brand new white snow

All Elves **Gave the sparkle of daytime to objects below.**

Tinsel the Elf When, what to their wondering eyes should appear,

Holly the Elf But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer!

Mrs. Darling With a little old driver, so happy and quick,

Tinsel	Snowflake	Holly
St. Nick	Mr. Darling	Mrs. Darling

Snowflake the Elf They knew in a moment it must be St. Nick!
St. Nick (*very jolly*) **Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas!**
All Elves: (*excited*) **Hooray for St. Nick!!!**

Holly the Elf More rapid than eagles, his reindeer, they came.
Snowflake the Elf He waved, and he shouted, and called them by name;
St. Nick Now, Dasher! Now, Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! On Cupid! On, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!

Mrs. Darling Just like a train that speeds by you so fast,
Mr. Darling Or even a rocket that zooms up in a blast.

Holly the Elf So up to the house-top the reindeer they flew,
All Elves With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too!

Mr. Darling And then, in a second, I heard on the roof
Mrs. Darling The stomping and kicking of each little hoof.
All Readers (*stomping your feet*) Stomp! Stomp! Stomp!

Mr. Darling As I pulled in my hand, and was turning around,
Holly the Elf Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
All Readers: (*loudly*) BOOM!

St. Nick **Ho! Ho! Ho!**

Tinsel The Elf He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
Holly the Elf And his clothes were all covered with ashes and soot;
Snowflake the Elf A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
Tinsel the Elf And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
Holly the Elf His eyes—how they twinkled, his dimples—how merry!
Mrs. Darling His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
Snowflake the Elf His cute little mouth was curved up like a bow,

Tinsel	Snowflake	Holly
St. Nick	Mr. Darling	Mrs. Darling

Mr. Darling And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.
 Tinsel the Elf The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
 Holly the Elf And the smoke circled around his head like a wreath.
 Mrs. Darling He had a wide face and a little round belly,
 Tinsel the Elf That shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly!
All Elves *(patting your stomach) Pat! Pat! Pat!*
 St. Nick Ho! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas!
 Snowflake the Elf He was chubby and plump, quite a jolly old elf,
 Mrs. Darling And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.
 St. Nick With a smile on my face, that stretched from ear to ear,
 I soon let them know they had nothing to fear.
 Mr. Darling He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
 Mrs. Darling And filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk.
 Tinsel the Elf And laying his finger aside of his nose,
 Snowflake the Elf And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
 Holly the Elf He sprang to his sleigh—to his team gave a whistle,
All Elves **And away they all flew like the fluff of a thistle.**
The Darlings **But we heard him call out, as he drove out of sight,**
 St. Nick *Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!*

THE END