

CHARACTER VOICES

A fun way to add charisma to your basic reading routine is to do character voices. Read a story to your youngster while giving each character a distinctive voice. A villain could have a deep, spooky voice; a shy character might have a quiet, hesitant speech pattern; or a lion may give a boisterous “Roarrrrrrr” after each sentence to make a point. In essence, you are trying to match the voice to the character’s personality.

In addition to the good time you’re guaranteed to have together, there are other educational benefits. First, by reading the character voices differently, your learner’s comprehension will be strengthened because it will be easier for her to remember who said what. Secondly, she will begin to recognize the patterns of conversation. In other words, she’ll learn to anticipate that a quotation is either preceded or followed by wording like, “she said.” Becoming familiar with these conversational patterns will help her when she begins to read independently and write creatively. Lastly, your child will become a better oral reader with the modeling of this technique. She will learn how to use her voice to read (and speak) in an interesting and compelling manner. After your child has heard you read this way a few times, she will want to do some of the character voices too. Encourage her, and read the story together. Plan a performance for your family after a Sunday dinner!

Extension Activities:

- Have groups of three or four children read a story orally in their best character voices. After some practice, they can perform for their classmates.
- Write generic statements on sentence strips such as “I can’t do my homework today.” Challenge your learner or learners to read the statements with angry, sad, worried, excited, and scared character voices.
- Perform a reading of a chapter or storybook assigning various characters to different people. Encourage other family members or classmates to watch as an audience.

