

Figure RL 5.11

Recommended Books for Crafting Reader's Theatre Scripts	
<b>First and Second Grades</b>	<b>Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grades</b>
<i>"Fire! Fire!" Said Mrs. McGuire</i> (Bill Martin Jr.)	<i>The Day the Earth Was Silent</i> (Michael McGuffee)
<i>Duck Soup</i> (Jackie Urbanovic)	<i>The Great Kapok Tree</i> (Lynne Cherry)
<i>Mouse Was Mad</i> (Linda Urban)	<i>Fleas</i> (Jeanne Steig)
<i>It's Mine!</i> (Leo Lionni)	<i>The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!</i> (Jon Scieszka)
<i>The Flying Dragon Room</i> (Audrey Wood)	<i>The Seven Chinese Brothers</i> (Margaret Mahy)
<i>Geraldine's Big Snow</i> (Holly Keller)	<i>I Wish I Were a Butterfly</i> (James Howe)
<i>Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type</i> (Doreen Cronin)	
<i>The Three Billy Goats Gruff</i> (any version)	
<i>The Three Little Pigs</i> (any version)	
<i>Goldilocks</i> (any version)	

The class then meets in three groups (whose membership is based on who has depicted parts from the beginning, middle, and end) to determine an order for each piece within that group. The class then stands in a circle around the room and reads the combined pieces in sequence. Adjustments in sequence may be made before reading the piece again, and students may add helpful terms such as *first* and *next* to help clarify the order of events. Lead the class to discuss whether the plot has been captured. The pieces are bound together into a class book and kept in the classroom library.

### Poetry Appreciation Readings

Poetry in the classroom should be an experience that involves reading for the joy of reading and writing for the joy of writing. When the time is right—when children have an interest in the sounds, meanings, and formats—then more formal instruction on style reasonably can begin.

1. Prepare students for poetry appreciation by telling them you would like them to revisit an already-read text to bask in the delightfulness of the poet's craft. In relation to Reading Anchor 5, you might ask that they consider questions related to the connections between format and meaning (See Figure RL 5.12.)
2. As students revisit the text, they use a sticky note to mark one part that stands out for them in relation to the questions. They may use the sticky note to record their reasons for selecting the part.
3. Students talk with a partner about the part they marked, telling why they think that part adds value to the piece.

### Questions for Considering Poetry

Poetry is a unique genre in that its visual layout contributes to its meanings and sounds. Poets use spaces and line breaks to speed us up, slow us down, change our intonation, create a rhythm, keep us on a thought, or shift our focus (Kohl 1999). As you discuss poetry formats with students, show them how you read through the selection once or twice to get an overall picture of what it looks like and how it is organized. An initial examination helps readers get their bearings within the poem and become familiar with its language and structure (Kohl 1999). On a second or third reading, students can explore the following:

- What looks like writing you have seen before? What breaks this pattern?
- Why do you think the poet chose this format?
- How are spaces and line breaks used?
- Read the poem without line breaks. How is it different?
- How are verses or stanzas used?

### Poetry Center

To encourage wide reading, establish a *poetry center* that includes children's poetry anthologies, photocopied poems, child-written poems, paper, pencils, and materials for illustrating. Also make available a selection of very short poems for children who wish to experiment with performing. Arrange for students to keep a special notebook for copies of their favorite poems. They can print poems from the Web and tape them into their notebooks and/or copy their own. Personal poetry anthologies make excellent individualized reading, and kids tend to return to them again and again.

### Storyboard Center

Create a center for students to sequence familiar text using storyboards. A *storyboard* is made up of cut-apart pages of a picture book. Students place the storyboard pictures in order. You can select key pages rather than placing all pieces at the center. You may wish to laminate the pieces on colored construction paper and to place pictures from the beginning on green, middle on yellow, and end on red (Tompkins 2001). Before placing the materials in the center, model the process with a small group.

### Comparative Reviews

To prepare a *comparative review*, students review a text by comparing it with a second piece. If you teach in the early grades, all students may review the same two texts that you have read aloud, or students may choose two to review from a small set of familiar texts that you display. If you teach older students, students may read and review their own texts.

Not only can students review two pieces of text written within the same genre, they can also review across genres. When asking students to review across genres, you may wish to keep the topics similar, to help emphasize that different genres suit different purposes. Figure RL 5.13 provides a suggested set of literature for review across genres.

**Kindergarten:** Let students know that they will be considering two texts that you have read aloud to them and choosing one favorite. (Choose two different genres.) Write the genre and title of each choice on a piece of chart paper and display the texts underneath. Ask students to choose one favorite, write the title and genre at the top of the page, and then draw something they liked about the favorite piece. After the students have completed their reviews, hold a whole-class session, using a graph to determine which text was the overall favorite.

**First Grade:** Let students know that they will be considering two texts that are written in different genres but about similar topics (choose literature, informational text, or poetry). Write the genre and title of each choice on chart paper and display the texts underneath. Students choose the text they like the best and write the title and then indicate one thing they like about the piece through drawing and writing a sentence. After the students have completed their reviews, hold a whole-class session to graph the two choices and determine which text was the overall favorite.

Figure RL 5.13

Comparing Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry		
Fiction	Nonfiction	Poetry (Available Online)
<i>The Sun Is My Favorite Star</i> (Frank Asch)	<i>The Sun</i> (Melvin and Gilda Berger)	"A Pizza the Size of the Sun" (Jack Prelutsky)
<i>The Butterfly</i> (Anna Milbourne)	<i>Monarch Butterfly</i> (Gail Gibbons)	"Fake Tattoo" (Nikki Grimes)
<i>The Apple Pie Tree</i> (Zoe Hall)	<i>Apples</i> (Gail Gibbons)	"The Cow in Apple Time" (Robert Frost)
<i>It's Pumpkin Time!</i> (Zoe Hall)	<i>The Pumpkin Book</i> (Gail Gibbons)	"Spaghetti Seeds" (Jack Prelutsky)
<i>The Snowy Day</i> (Ezra Jack Keats)	<i>When Winter Comes</i> (Robert Maass)	"Snow Day!" (Kenn Nesbitt)
<i>A Color of His Own</i> (Leo Lionni)	<i>Chameleon, Chameleon</i> (Joy Cowley)	"I Have a Pet Chameleon" (Kenn Nesbitt)
<i>Diary of a Worm</i> (Doreen Cronin)	<i>Wiggling Worms at Work</i> (Wendy Pfeffer)	"The Worm" (Ralph Bergengren)
<i>Dolphin's First Day</i> (Kathleen Zoehfeld)	<i>Dolphins</i> (Sylvia James)	"Sea Creatures" (Meish Goldish)
<i>Cats, Cats, Cats</i> (Leslea Newman)	<i>Cats</i> (Anna Milbourne)	"I've Got a Three-Thousand-Pound Cat" (Jack Prelutsky)
<i>The Great Kapok Tree</i> (Lynne Cherry)	<i>Rain Forest Babies</i> (Kathy Darling)	"If You Catch a Firefly" (Lilian Moore)

**Second Grade:** Let students know that they will be considering two stories and deciding which ending they like the best. Display both texts. Students choose one favorite and prepare an evaluation by drawing the ending, describing what makes it good, and explaining why they prefer it over the other ending. After the students have completed their reviews, hold a whole-class session to graph the two choices and determine which ending was the overall favorite.

**Third Grade:** Let students know that they will be comparing two texts written in the same genre. Write the genre and title of each on chart paper, and display the texts underneath. Ask students to choose a favorite and to prepare a written rationale by referring to each text as they comment on an assigned set of elements. For example:

- Which opening pages/line did you prefer? Why?
- Which ending did you prefer? Why?
- Which language was more aesthetically pleasing to you when read aloud? Why?
- Which would you want to read again? Why?

**Fourth Grade:** Let students know that they will be considering three texts: one story, one informational text, and one poem. Write the genre and title of each choice on chart paper and display the texts underneath. Students choose their favorite and prepare a rationale for their choice by commenting on an assigned set of elements. For example:

- Which format do you generally prefer? Why? Use examples from the three texts to explain your preference.
- Which content do you generally prefer? Why? Use examples from the three texts to explain your preference.

**Fifth Grade:** Let students know that they will be comparing two texts written in the same genre. Students choose a favorite and prepare a written rationale by commenting on an assigned set of elements. For example:

- Which opening did you prefer? Use examples from the texts to show why.
- Which ending did you prefer? Use examples from the texts to show why.
- Which sounds more pleasing to you when read aloud? Use examples from the texts to show why.
- Which would you want to read again? Use examples from the texts to show why.