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Lesson One: Who is the Storyteller?

As Charles Dickens' novella became wildly popular, he toured throughout Britain and abroad for years performing readings often being met by paparazzi and fans like a modern-day rock star. Dickens would change his vocal expression and tone for the various characters, but probably told the story in the point of view of himself as the narrator. In Mark Cabus' version, he chooses to tell the story from the point of view of a character, not as Charles Dickens the author. Mark embodies 18 different characters during his one-hour performance of A Christmas Carol, and his narrator is a character whose identity is revealed at the end of the play. This activity will be fun for your students as they will get to experience a little of what it is like to perform as a storyteller, all while improving reading fluency.

Objectives:

- The students will consider ways to tell a story physically, vocally, and emotionally.
- The student will design a dramatic reading of the scene to perform.

Materials needed: Copy of script page (found on the next page in this guidebook); Copies of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens - It is recommended that students read at least Stave One before this doing this activity so they are familiar with Dickens' writing style.

Instructional Procedures:

- 1) Discuss with students that Mark Cabus' A Christmas Carol is a one-man show during which he will perform as 18 different characters, including the narrator or voice of the story. The script he uses is adapted directly from the novella, A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.
- 2) Ask your students how they think Mark will perform so many different characters without confusing the audience. How would they do it if they were to perform the text alone? am eget
- une porta 3) Give students a copy of the script excerpt on the following page. por magna. Ask your students to read his/her page silently three times. s et netus et They should look up words they don't know, or ask you Nune ac magna. what the words mean in context to their portion of suctor ac accumsan id cttis felis. Pellentesque the story.

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- 4) Ask students to read their excerpts aloud three times, while remaining seated at their desks. Students will practice at the same time, so the noise level with go up. This practice will help them gain confidence and help them get used to hearing their own voices aloud.
- 5) Now, ask students to consider themselves the storytellers/actors and to become the character of the narrator. Who will their narrator character be? Will they be themselves? Will they choose to tell the story from the point of view of one of the characters in the story? Will they be someone else entirely?
- 6) Ask them to choose body positions, tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, etc. for their narrator character. They will present their story to the class as a dramatic reading.
- 7) Allow time for students to practice performing their readings. Students should stand up, use appropriate voice changes, actions, and gestures for their excerpts.
- 8) Finally, students should take turns performing for the class. Allow a little time for applause (and encourage good audience etiquette).
- 9) After all have finished, discuss as a class how it felt for them to act as the narrator and perform dramatic readings. What influenced their decisions for who their narrator character was? Could the students easily differentiate between their classmates' characterizations?

Assessment: Look for student comprehension and proper pronunciation of the text while performing, and respectful behavior when listening.

After the performance: Ask students to recall their performances of the script. Discuss the similarities and differences between their personal choices and Mark's performance. Who was the narrator in Mark's version?

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