FROM PAGE TO STAGE- READER'S THEATER
Grades 2–3

Objectives:

1. Students will portray a character from a story using their body (i.e., pantomime) and voice (i.e., projection, tone, diction, rate, pitch).
2. Students will use body and voice to communicate character traits and emotions in a guided drama experience.
3. Students will collaborate with actors to bring their short scene or monologue to life.
4. Students will evaluate and critique ideas and concepts interactively through listening and speaking.

Materials:

- *The Velveteen Rabbit* board book by Margery Williams (read aloud here)
- Printed readers' theater script (6-7 copies per scene; attached; student parts highlighted in advance)
- Simple props: top hat (narrator), two bunny ears (Velveteen & Wild Rabbit), scarf (Lulu), reading glasses (Gran), nurse hat (Nana), wand (fairy), doll toy, horse stuffed animal
- Open classroom space or carpet area for movement

Directions:

- Tell students: "When you come to the Gaillard Center, you will see *Velveteen*, a performance based on the book *The Velveteen Rabbit*."
- Explain: "When a book is adapted for the stage, the story is turned into a script that actors perform using voice, movement, and imagination."
- Share that reader's theater is a way to perform a story by reading aloud with expression – no memorization needed.

Activity directions:

- **Introduce the story**
    - Share with students, "A toy rabbit becomes special through love, imagination, and time. Along the way, the rabbit meets other toys and learns about the world and what makes him special or 'real.'"
    - Read *The Velveteen Rabbit* board book by Margery Williams Bianco (read aloud here).
- Describe the differences between tone, pitch, and pace.

    - Tone - emotion behind what you're saying
    - Pitch - high or low sound
    - Pace - fast or slow
- Experiment changing tone, pitch, and pace for the same words. For example: "A rabbit! I love it!", "Welcome to the land of the sweets,", "I love ballet." Try saying these slow and sad; now try saying it happy and fast.
- Describe how movement/gestures impact acting.
    - Play "I just got off the bus."
    - For example: "I just got off the bus, and I am at a zoo" (students strike pose that corresponds with that situation).
- **Assign roles**
    - Divide students into four groups of five students
    - Assign one character per student
- **Rehearse scripts (10-15 minutes)**
    - Groups practice reading their scripts aloud
    - Model expressive reading
    - **Explain that italicized actions are for acting, not reading
    - Encourage clear voices and simple movement
- **Perform**
    - Groups perform one scene at a time
    - Audience gives 1–2 positive comments after each scene

Conclusion

- Share with students, "Today you helped transform a story from a book into a performance. When you attend *Velveteen* at the Gaillard Center, think about":
    - How the actors use voice and movement
    - How the story changes from page to stage

SC College & Career Ready Standards:

- **T.P IL.3.1** - I can portray a character within the context of a story using my body (i.e. pantomime) and voice (i.e. projection, tone, diction, rate, pitch).
- **T.P NL.3** - I can use body and voice to communicate character traits and emotions in a guided drama experience.
- **T.CR IH.1.3** - I can collaborate with actors to bring my short scene or monologue to life.
- **ELA.C.9** - Evaluate and critique ideas and concepts interactively through listening and speaking.

- **ELA.AOR.1** - Evaluate and critique key literary elements that enhance and deepen meaning within and across texts.

Scene 1: A Special Gift

Characters: Narrator, Lulu, Gran, Velveteen Rabbit, Nana

Narrator:
Lulu had just moved into her grandmother's house. Everything felt new.

Gran:
I have something special for you. I hope it helps you feel at home. *(hands imaginary toy)*

Lulu:
A rabbit! I love it!

Velveteen Rabbit:
(quietly) I hope she plays with me.

Lulu:
I will take care of you forever.

Velveteen Rabbit:
Maybe I can become her favorite.

Nana:
Time for bed! It's time to get some rest now. Toys stay in the nursery.

Scene 2: The Nursery Talk

Characters: Narrator, Velveteen Rabbit, Skin Horse, Toy Soldier, Doll

Narrator:
The toys talked when no one was around.

Toy Soldier:
(salutes) I never bend or change my shape. I am always neat and proper!

Doll:
(twirls around) I am very fancy and beautiful. I am loved by everyone who sees me.

Narrator:
They shared stories and ideas together.

Velveteen Rabbit:
(*thinking)* What does it mean to be real? Is it something I can become?

Skin Horse:
Real isn't how you are made. It happens over time when you are loved.

Scene 3: Playtime Adventures

Characters: Narrator, Lulu, Velveteen, Wild Rabbit, Nana

Narrator:
Lulu played with Velveteen every day. They shared many adventures together.

Lulu:
You're my favorite toy! I take you everywhere I go.

Velveteen:
I feel special when we are together. *(hops up and down)* I love our adventures!

Wild Rabbit:
(*waves hand to join)* Come run with us outside! We are fast and free in the grass.

Nana:
(cups hand around mouth) Time to come inside! Playtime is over for today.

Scene 4: Becoming Real

Characters: Narrator, Velveteen Rabbit, Fairy, Lulu, Skin Horse

Narrator:
Velveteen had been loved for a long time. Something wonderful was about to happen.

Velveteen:
I feel different now. Something inside me has changed.

Skin Horse:
Love has changed you. That is how toys become real.

Fairy:
You are ready to become real. *(gesture transformation)* Your journey has brought you here.

Lulu:
I will always remember you. *(smiles at Velveteen)* You will always be special to me.

(All characters together):
The End!