

**Topic:** Drama

**Text Type:** Narrative Fiction

**Word Count:** 406

**Lexile® Measure:** 650L

**Skills:** Reading for Meaning  
Proper Phrasing  
Intonation  
Timed Reading

**Lesson 1**

**Time:** 10–15 minutes

**Skills:** Reading for Meaning

**Student Pages:** “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy)

**Lesson 2**

**Time:** 15–20 minutes

**Skills:** Proper Phrasing

**Student Pages:** “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy)

**Lesson 3**

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Skills:** Proper Phrasing with Commas

**Student Pages:** “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy)

**Lesson 4**

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Skills:** Intonation

**Student Pages:** “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy)

**Lesson 5**

**Time:** 15–20 minutes

**Skills:** Timed Reading

**Student Pages:** “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy)

**Teacher Pages:** “Behind the Scenes” (Teacher Copy), Fluency Chart

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**Note: Words in bold are said aloud by the teacher.**

## Reading for Meaning

Distribute “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy). **Follow along with me as I read this story. The title is “Behind the Scenes.”** Read the story aloud to students. Read the passage with expression, proper phrasing, and intonation. Model appropriate rate as you read. Read the dialogue or thoughts of Maria like how you think she might say them. After reading, ask the following questions to engage students in a discussion about the story:

- **What is the setting for this story?**
- **How do Maria’s feelings about Mrs. Roberts change by the end of the story?**
- **What words would you use to describe Maria? Mrs. Roberts? Why?**

Discuss any words students may not be familiar with.

Assign partners. Avoid pairing students of significantly different proficiencies. This results in less frustration. Also, the more proficient reader may serve as a model. Partners should be changed periodically.

It is important to model the expectations of partner reading. You may do this by role-playing with one student, or you may select two students to role-play the following:

- how to sit with your partner (Have partners sit close together so that the partner who is reading can use a low inside voice and still be heard.)
- how to read with your partner (Partner A reads. Partner B listens carefully and follows along. Partner A underlines lightly with a pencil any words he or she finds interesting or does not know. Partners may also assist with words if needed by using the following correction procedure:
  - If a student reads a word incorrectly, skips a word, or does not know a word, his or her partner points to the word and says, “What is this word?”
  - If the student reads the word correctly, the partner says, “Yes, that word is \_\_\_\_\_. Please reread the sentence.”
  - If the student does not know the word, the partner says, “That word is \_\_\_\_\_. Please reread the sentence.”
  - The student repeats the word and rereads the sentence.)
- how to dialogue with each other after the reading (Have students discuss what the passage is about and which words in the passage they found interesting or did not understand.)

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After these procedures have been modeled, have students practice. Discuss behaviors that are unacceptable as well.



## Independent Practice

Now, I want you to get with your partner and read “Behind the Scenes” together. Using a pencil, lightly underline any words you find interesting or do not know as you read. Partner A will read the first paragraph and stop. Then partner B will read the same paragraph. Discuss what you read and any words you found interesting or did not understand. Then follow the same procedure with the following paragraphs until you reach the end of the passage.

Walk around and observe students as they read together. If necessary, remind students of the expectations for partner reading.

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## Teach

Redistribute or have students take out “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy). **We will practice reading “Behind the Scenes” fluently.**

**Reading fluently** means reading the words correctly, at an appropriate rate, and with correct phrasing and intonation. Reading fluently is not about reading fast but about reading at an appropriate rate. Fluent reading should sound like talking. The way we read a text affects our comprehension.

Each lesson will focus on one or two aspects of fluency. **Today we will practice phrasing.**

**Phrasing** involves grouping certain words together when speaking. As we talk, we automatically chunk words into groups. This is also important when reading. There are some words that sound better chunked together, and when this is done, the ideas are easier to understand. Take a look at this sentence from the story.

Write the following sentence on the board: *Maria slipped through the back door and took her usual seat in the shadows.*

**Listen to me read this sentence. I will read it three different ways. Tell me which way sounds the most natural—like the way I would say it when talking.** Read the sentence three different ways by pausing briefly at each slash:

- **Maria / slipped / through / the / back door / and / took / her / usual / seat / in / the shadows.**
- **Maria / slipped through / the back / door and took her / usual seat in / the shadows.**
- **Maria slipped / through the back door / and took her usual seat / in the shadows.**

**Which one sounds like the way you would say it if you were talking?** Allow responses. The way I read it the last time sounds the most natural. Reading the sentence this way makes it easier to understand.

**Listen again as I reread the sentence. Then I want you to echo me by reading the sentence in a similar manner. Maria slipped / through the back door / and took her usual seat / in the shadows.**

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## Guided Practice

Let's practice correct phrasing together. We'll read the first paragraph using *echo reading*. I will read a sentence, and then I want you to repeat it in the same way that I've read it. Read the following paragraph one sentence at a time, modeling proper phrasing and expression. Pause *briefly* at the slashes within a sentence; pause *longer* at the slashes at the end of a sentence. Have students echo you by reading each sentence after you.

**Maria slipped / through the back door / and took her usual seat / in the shadows.  
/ The cast of the play / had gathered on stage / and were discussing today's scene. /  
Maria strained her ears to listen. / She loved the story of Annie, / the orphan who was  
lucky enough / to get adopted by a millionaire. / She loved the music, / and she loved  
the costumes. / She loved the idea / of being on stage.**

Fluent readers chunk words together as they read. This helps to make the author's ideas easier to understand.

## Independent Practice

Review the expectations for partner reading with the students. **Now, with your partner, practice using proper phrasing as you read the passage.** Have each student read the passage as before, one paragraph at a time. Walk around and listen in as students are reading. Comment on proper phrasing. If necessary, model how to use proper phrasing again.

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## Teach

**Reading fluently is important to our comprehension of a passage.**

Redistribute or have students take out “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy). **In the previous lesson, we practiced phrasing. We are going to continue practicing phrasing by looking at commas.**

**Commas help us with phrasing. They tell us when to pause briefly while reading. Commas separate lists of items, characteristics, or events. Paying attention to commas helps us with chunking words as we read. Look at this sentence.** Write the following sentence on the board and circle the commas: *Mrs. Roberts, the woman in charge, always tried to talk to Maria.*

**Now listen as I read.** First, read the sentence without pausing, and then read it again with expression, pausing briefly at the commas. Lead the students in a discussion about the different ways you read the sentence. **Why does the second way sound better?** Allow responses. **Now, read the sentence with me.**

## Guided Practice

**Now, let’s practice together. We will read the second paragraph together. You will read along with me. Try to make your voice match with mine. Remember to briefly pause at commas.** Read aloud the paragraph below with expression and proper phrasing. Pause briefly at the commas.

**She also hated going to the after-school program, / which was where she was supposed to be. / Mrs. Roberts, / the woman in charge, / always tried to talk to Maria. / She asked her what she was reading. / She asked her whether she liked school. / She asked her whether she had a pet. / Last week, / she had overheard Maria humming “Tomorrow,” / one of the songs from the play. / Maria hadn’t even realized / that she had been humming / —until Mrs. Roberts appeared next to her / and started to sing along!**

## Independent Practice

Review the expectations for partner reading with students. **Now, with your partner, practice reading the passage. Remember to use proper phrasing. Also, remember to pause briefly at commas. Commas will help you chunk words together.**

Have each pair of students read the passage together, one paragraph at a time. Walk around and listen in as students are reading. Comment on proper phrasing. If necessary, model phrasing again.

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## Teach

Redistribute or have students take out “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy). **Let’s continue to practice reading fluently. This time we will focus on intonation.**

**Intonation** involves stressing or emphasizing some words more than others. We do this naturally when we are talking. This is important when reading as well. It helps to add interest or drama to certain parts of the writing, and it helps to carry the author’s message. Write this sentence on the board: *The cafeteria was swarming with students.*

**Listen for the word I emphasize in this sentence.** Read the sentence, emphasizing the underlined word: **The cafeteria was swarming with students. Emphasizing the word swarming helps to show how crowded the cafeteria is and how busy the students are.**

**We can also emphasize other words in this sentence. The emphasized word will help listeners know which message the author is trying to convey.**

Have students practice reading the sentence aloud, putting emphasis on a different word each time. Underline the word you want students to emphasize, and then erase the line and place it under a different word for students to emphasize.

- The cafeteria was swarming with students.
- The cafeteria was swarming with students.
- The cafeteria was swarming with students.

**Emphasizing certain words helps to convey the author’s intent and create more drama and interest while reading.**

## Guided Practice

**Now, let’s practice reading the fourth paragraph together. Notice that the word *be* at the end is italicized. The italics tell you that you need to emphasize the word.** Read each sentence with proper phrasing while emphasizing the underlined words shown below. Be sure not to overdo the emphasis—read it naturally. After each sentence, have students repeat the sentence in the same way in which you read it.

**Suddenly, the side door of the auditorium opened, and, to Maria’s horror, in walked Mrs. Roberts. She climbed the steps to the stage and spoke briefly to Ms. Garcia, the drama teacher. Ms. Garcia nodded and smiled. Ms. Garcia was young, beautiful, and talented. She had once been in a movie. Maria longed to know her—or, better yet, *be* her.**



## Independent Practice

**Now it's time to practice with your partner.** Have students read the passage with their partner. Partners should take turns reading one paragraph at a time. After both have read the paragraph, have students discuss what the paragraph is all about.

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## Timed Reading

Redistribute or have students take out “Behind the Scenes” (Student Copy). **While you are reading with your partner today, I will listen to each of you read. I will call you over one at a time and have you read for 60 seconds. Then we will set fluency goals together. Remember what is expected during partner reading. I want each partner to read the passage twice. You may begin.**

While students are reading, call one student over at a time and listen to him or her read the passage for 60 seconds. Encourage students to do their best reading.

For each student, use a copy of “Behind the Scenes” (Teacher Copy) to mark words that the student has trouble reading. If the student does not know a word, point to the word and say “This word is \_\_\_\_.” Have him or her read the word and continue reading the passage.

As students read, listen for proper phrasing and intonation. Provide positive feedback on their efforts when they are done.

When the student begins reading, start a timer or use a clock with a second hand. At the end of 60 seconds, tell the student to stop reading. Subtract the number of words that gave the student trouble from the total number of words the student read. This results in the student’s Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM).

(Total Number of Words Read) – (Number of Problematic Words) = (Number of Words Correct Per Minute)

Example: (101 Words Read) – (3 Problematic Words) = 98 WCPM

Give each student a Fluency Chart. Assist the student in charting his or her WCPM with a bar graph. The student should keep the graph to record readings of various other passages over time. Readings of the same passage may be recorded as well. Each time a passage is read, have the student write its title in the Title section of the chart and shade in the correct amount for WCPM on the graph. It will be motivating for the student to see his or her growth over time.

Each student will need to set his or her own fluency goal. Take the student’s initial WCPM and help him or her set a reasonable goal. A reasonable goal would be adding one or two words to his or her WCPM each week. The goal can be a monthly goal or a six- to nine-week goal.

Have students take the passage home and continue to practice. They can read the passage to a family member while practicing rate, phrasing, and intonation. They can also have a family member time them as they practice reading for 60 seconds.

## Behind the Scenes

Maria slipped through the back door and took her usual seat in the shadows. The cast of the play had gathered on stage and were discussing today's scene. Maria strained her ears to listen. She loved the story of Annie, the orphan who was lucky enough to get adopted by a millionaire. She loved the music, and she loved the costumes. She loved the idea of being on stage.

She also hated going to the after-school program, which was where she was supposed to be. Mrs. Roberts, the woman in charge, always tried to talk to Maria. She asked her what she was reading. She asked her whether she liked school. She asked her whether she had a pet. Last week, she had overheard Maria humming "Tomorrow," one of the songs from the play. Maria hadn't even realized that she had been humming—until Mrs. Roberts appeared next to her and started to sing along!

The cafeteria was swarming with students. Couldn't Mrs. Roberts find another kid to pester?

Suddenly, the side door of the auditorium opened, and, to Maria's horror, in walked Mrs. Roberts. She climbed the steps to the stage and spoke briefly to Ms. Garcia, the drama teacher. Ms. Garcia nodded and smiled. Ms. Garcia was young, beautiful, and talented. She had once been in a movie. Maria longed to know her—or, better yet, *be* her.

Mrs. Roberts left the auditorium, and Maria breathed a sigh of relief. She had been worried that Mrs. Roberts had discovered her hiding place and come to take her back to the cafeteria. She slid down in her seat, glad to be invisible.

"Maria, we need your help!" These shocking words came from the stage—from the mouth of Ms. Garcia. Maria was too surprised to speak, but she did sit up straight. Ms. Garcia looked straight at Maria and repeated herself. "Maria, please come to the stage. Our Annie is out sick, and we need a replacement. You can use the script to follow along. And you don't *have* to sing—unless you want to." Ms. Garcia smiled her warm and wonderful smile.

The next thing Maria knew, she was on the stage. Her shyness had evaporated. She was standing in the spotlight, reciting lines she already knew by heart. And when they got to the songs, she would know those, too.

*Thank you, Mrs. Roberts, Maria thought. Thank you for knowing me so well.*

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## Behind the Scenes

|   |                                       |
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| Maria slipped through the back door and took her usual seat in the shadows. The cast of the play had gathered on stage and were discussing today’s scene. Maria strained her ears to listen. She loved the story of Annie, the orphan who was lucky enough to get adopted by a millionaire. She loved the music, and she loved the costumes. She loved the idea of being on stage.  | 18<br>35<br>53<br>69                  |
| She also hated going to the after-school program, which was where she was supposed to be. Mrs. Roberts, the woman in charge, always tried to talk to Maria. She asked her what she was reading. She asked her whether she liked school. She asked her whether she had a pet. Last week, she had overheard Maria humming “Tomorrow,” one of the songs from the play. Maria hadn’t even realized that she had been humming—until Mrs. Roberts appeared next to her and started to sing along! | 85<br>103<br>121<br>137<br>154<br>155 |
| The cafeteria was swarming with students. Couldn’t Mrs. Roberts find another kid to pester? Suddenly, the side door of the auditorium opened, and, to Maria’s horror, in walked Mrs. Roberts. She climbed the steps to the stage and spoke briefly to Ms. Garcia, the drama teacher. Ms. Garcia nodded and smiled. Ms. Garcia was young, beautiful, and talented. She had once been in a movie. Maria longed to know her—or, better yet, <i>be</i> her.                                     | 169<br>184<br>202<br>219<br>230       |
| Mrs. Roberts left the auditorium, and Maria breathed a sigh of relief. She had been worried that Mrs. Roberts had discovered her hiding place and come to take her back to the cafeteria. She slid down in her seat, glad to be invisible.  | 246<br>264<br>273                     |
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| <i>Thank you, Mrs. Roberts, Maria thought. Thank you for knowing me so well.</i>  | 406                                   |

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