

Adapting text

The higher-level stories in *Macmillan English Explorers* are written in the style of novels that children read in their own language. These stories are aimed at confident readers whose English is at a fairly high level. This means that children have the skills required to adapt them into drama texts.

- 1 First take the part of the Reader that you wish to dramatize, and photocopy it. Divide the class into groups and make sure that each group has coloured felt pens or highlighters.
- 2 Ask children to identify each speaker, and colour that speaker's words in a different colour.
- 3 Drama activities often involve narrators. These are not characters as such, but the voice which tells the story. Ask children to find the narrative text in a scene. For example: 'Aladdin was the son of Hassan the tailor.' These words will become the narrator's part, so children should highlight them in a different colour.
- 4 Ask children to underline text which explains how, where or when people move. For example: 'Aladdin kicked the ball to his friend.' These are the stage directions.
- 5 Ask children to cross out phrases which are not needed in a play script, such as 'said the old man' and 'Aladdin replied'. Children shouldn't put these words into the script. However, they should pay attention to how words are spoken. For example, phrases like 'cried the old man' indicate how the actors should say the words.

This page from *Aladdin* (*Explorers*, Level 5) has been annotated to turn it into a drama script.

yellow highlighted text = the narrator's words

blue highlighted text = Aladdin's words

orange highlighted text = Aladdin's uncle
(the old man)

purple highlighted = Friend's words

underlined text = stage directions

crossed-out text = unnecessary words

When the text from a Reader is dramatized, you may need to add actions for the characters to do which are not described specifically in the text. For example, at the top of this page, when the narrator introduces Aladdin and his mother, actions could include:

- Aladdin and his mother warming their hands by a fire.
- Aladdin rubbing his tummy.
- Aladdin going to sleep.

CHAPTER 1

The wizard

Aladdin was the son of Hassan the tailor. Hassan died when Aladdin was twelve and so the boy lived with his mother. They lived in a little house in the middle of the town. They were very poor. Sometimes Aladdin went to bed without any dinner.

Some years after his father's death, Aladdin was playing football in the street with his friends.

'Kick it to me, Aladdin!' ~~said his friend.~~

Aladdin kicked the ball to his friend ... but an old man with a long grey beard caught it! The old man carried the ball to Aladdin.

'Good morning!' ~~said the old man.~~ 'You are a fine young man. What is your name?'

'My name is Aladdin,' he answered.

The old man stroked his beard. 'And what is your father's name?' ~~he asked.~~

'My father's name was Hassan. He was a tailor in this town,' ~~replied Aladdin.~~ 'But he died when I was twelve. I live with my mother.'

'I knew it!' ~~cried the old man.~~ He clapped his hands and laughed. 'Hassan the tailor was my brother! You look just like him, with your black hair and your long legs. I am your uncle, Aladdin! Here, take these two gold coins! They are a present for your mother. Will you take me to visit her?'

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Once children have highlighted the text, you can use these pages as your script.

Alternatively, if you wish to add more stage directions and make the text easier to read, you can type it out. However, this needs to be done by the teacher outside class, and will take longer to prepare.

In the script below, the start of the Aladdin story has been rewritten by the teacher and divided into scenes. Extra stage directions have been added, indicated by the letters *SD*.

Aladdin

Scene 1

SD Aladdin and Mum sitting by the fire, rubbing hands.

Narrator Aladdin was the son of Hassan the Tailor. They lived in a little house in the middle of the town.

SD Aladdin rubs tummy and goes to sleep.

Narrator They were poor. Sometimes Aladdin went to bed without any dinner.

Scene 2

SD Aladdin and friends playing football.

Narrator Some years after his father's death, Aladdin was playing football in the street.

SD Aladdin kicks the ball. Friend misses it. Uncle (old man) catches ball and brings to Aladdin.

Uncle Good morning. You are a fine young man. What is your name?

Aladdin My name is Aladdin.

Most of the stories in *Macmillan Children's Readers* are written in the form of speech bubbles and narrative text. By allocating the role of 'narrator' for the narrative text, these Readers can be performed without adaptation. However, you may wish to photocopy them, and then add sound effects and stage directions.