The Emperor’s New Clothes
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Once there was an emperor who loved clothes.

He spent all his money on them.

He cared nothing about his kingdom.

Only clothes mattered to him.
1 One day, two men came to town.

2 “We make the finest clothes in the world,” they said.

3 “Our clothes are very special,” they added. “They are invisible to anyone who is a fool.”
The emperor heard about the men’s claim.

He wanted some new clothes for the big parade.

“If I wear the clothes,” he thought, “I will know who is a fool.”

So the emperor gave the men lots of gold coins.

“Make me the finest clothes,” he ordered.
But the men were not what they claimed.

They looked like they were cutting cloth.

They looked like they were sewing cloth.

But there was no cloth.

There was no thread.

They were just pretending to make clothes.
"I wonder if my new clothes are ready,” thought the emperor one day.

He sent a clerk to find out.

The clerk found the two men working hard.

“Oh, no,” the clerk said to himself.

“I can’t see the new clothes!”

“Nobody must know that I am a fool,” he thought.

So he told the emperor how grand the clothes were.
The next day, the emperor sent another clerk.

“Find out when the clothes will be done,” he said.

This clerk could not see the clothes either.

“Oh no,” thought the clerk. “I must not let anyone know I am a fool.”

So he told the emperor how smart the clothes looked.
At last the emperor’s clothes were ready.

“See the beautiful colors,” one man said.

“We used the finest cloth,” said the other.

“Feel how light it is,” they said. “It is as light as a spider’s web.”

“You will feel like you are wearing nothing at all!” they said with a grin.
3 The two men pretended to help the emperor put on the new clothes.

4 “How well you look, your majesty!” they said.

1 The men held up a mirror for the emperor to see.
“What is this?” thought the emperor. “I see nothing at all.”

“Am I a fool?” he wondered.

He looked around the room.

Everyone was saying how wonderful he looked.

“Thank you for your fine work,” said the emperor finally.
It was time for the parade.
The street was lined with people.
The emperor held his head high and began walking.
“Look at the emperor’s new clothes,” everyone said.
“His new clothes are so...interesting!” someone said.
“He looks so...amazing,” said another.
No one wanted to say that they saw nothing.

No one, that is, except a small child.

“But he has nothing on!” shouted the child.

Soon people began to whisper, “He has nothing on!”

Voices everywhere were saying, “The emperor has no clothes on!”
2. The emperor was too proud to stop.
3. He kept walking in his invisible clothes.
4. But the emperor knew that he was the real fool.
A Note to the Teacher

Primary Concepts Readers’ Theater scripts are a powerful way to help children develop fluent reading skills as they become acquainted with children’s literature classics. Readers’ Theater scripts provide the following benefits:

■ Develop skill in pacing, articulation, phrasing, and expression in oral reading.
■ Encourage children to monitor their own reading for fluency.
■ Build cooperative skills in a small group.
■ Acquaint young readers with time-honored favorites from children’s literature.

Readers’ theater is the performance of literature that is read aloud expressively rather than acted. Because the goal is to perform the selections in front of a group, readers’ theater gives children an incentive for reading familiar text over and over, thus improving their fluency.

Using the Scripts
Students work in groups of four. They either choose or are assigned a part (1, 2, 3, or 4) to practice.

Practice Makes Perfect
Each child should be given his or her own script book. The group reads and rereads the text, perfecting their fluency, pacing, phrasing, expression, and the flow from one reader to the next. The group can listen to the audio model of the script, or you may wish to model the reading yourself.

Students typically listen critically to their own readings and try to improve with each reading. Members of the group should be encouraged to listen attentively and give each other feedback. Remind students how to give positive feedback by first telling what is working and then describing what might be improved and how.
As the groups become proficient in their readings, encourage them to experiment with special ways to read the text:

- Use expressive voices.
- Say some words or phrases loudly and others softly.
- Slow down or speed up text.
- Shorten or lengthen pauses.

**Performance Time**

After the children have practiced to near perfection, have them read selections in front of an audience, for example, their classmates, another classroom, or their parents. Consider inviting parents for a Readers’ Theater Tea. Students will enjoy making the invitations. The formal tea will make all their hard work pay off with the applause of pleased parents.

No costumes or props are required for these performances. The main focus is on the celebration of reading.

**Other Resources**

*Readers’ Theater* script books and audio are available in several genres. For these and other resources for teachers, please consult a Primary Concepts catalog or visit our website at [www.primaryconcepts.com](http://www.primaryconcepts.com).