

Camping Constitution

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TIPS FOR REHEARSING READER'S THEATER

BY AARON SHEPARD

- Make sure your script doesn't hide your face. If there is anyone in the audience you can't see, your script is too high.
- While you speak, try to look up often. Don't just look at your script. When you do look at the script, move just your eyes and keep your head up.
- Talk slowly. Speak each syllable clearly.
- Talk loudly! You have to be heard by every person in the room.
- Talk with feeling. Your voice has to tell the story.
- Stand or sit up straight. Keep your hands and feet still if they're doing nothing useful.
- If you're moving around, face the audience as much as you can. When rehearsing, always think about where the audience will be.
- Characters, remember to be your character even when you're not speaking.
- Narrators, make sure you give the characters enough time for their actions.

TIPS FOR PERFORMING READER'S THEATER

BY AARON SHEPARD

- If the audience laughs, stop speaking until they can hear you again.
- If someone talks in the audience, don't pay attention.
- If someone walks into the room, don't look at him or her.
- If you make a mistake, pretend it was right.
- If you drop something, try to leave it where it is until the audience is looking somewhere else.
- If a reader forgets to read his or her part, see if you can read the part instead, make something up, or just skip over it. Don't whisper to the reader!
- If a reader falls down during the performance, pretend it didn't happen.



CAMPING CONSTITUTION



Characters

Mrs. Freedom

George

Thomas Freedom

Narrator

Sam

Madison

Setting

This story takes place at the home of the Freedom family, where Thomas Freedom and his friends are planning a camping trip.



Madison



George



Sam



Thomas



Mrs. Freedom

Act 1

Mrs. Freedom: Let me know when you kids have a plan for our camping trip this weekend.

Thomas: Okay. Let me think—we need food, water, and a tent. What else do we need? Let's make a list.

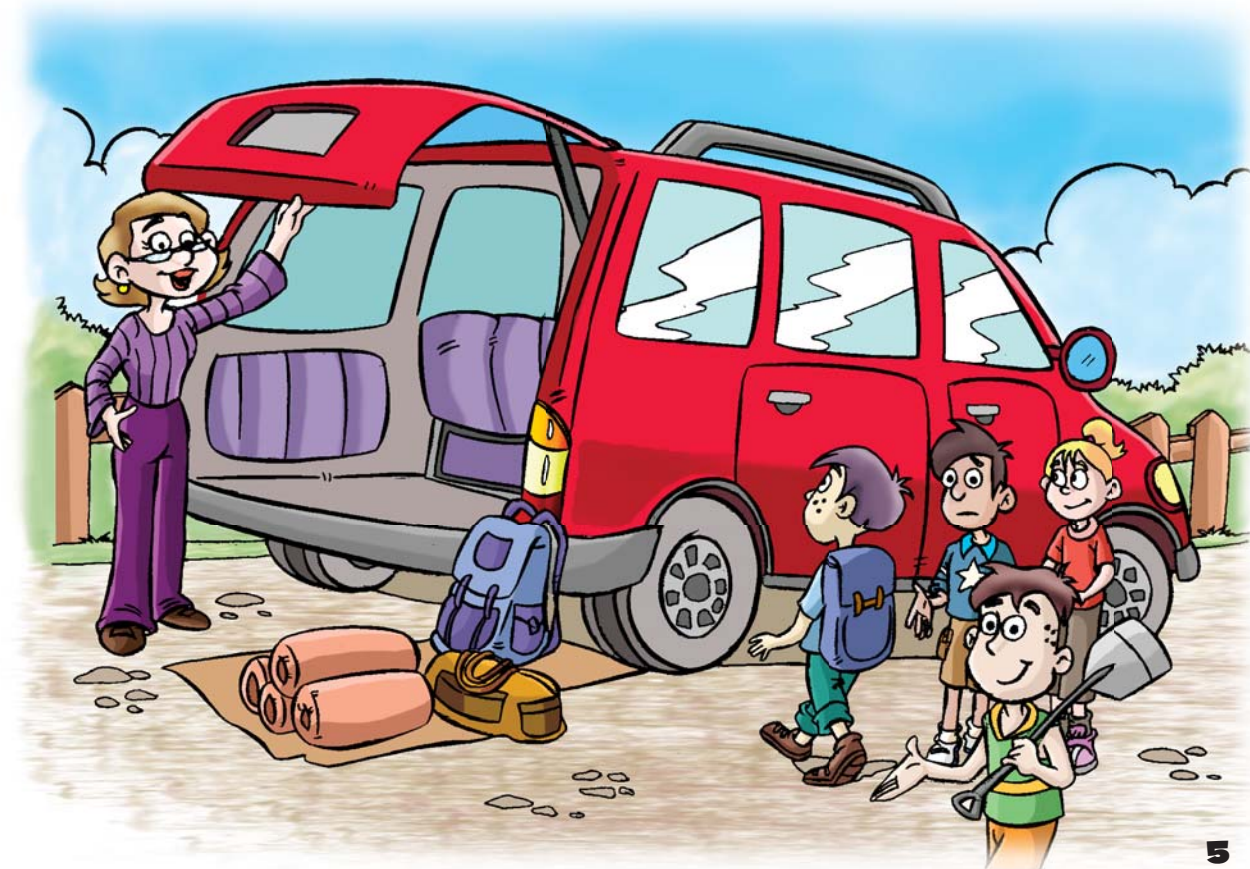
Sam: I can't wait to sleep outside under the stars.

Madison: This is going to be fun. I can't wait to go swimming!

George: I want to cook hot dogs over a campfire.

Sam: I want to look for buried treasure!

Thomas: Hot dogs! We need to add that to our list.



George: I'm going to bring some games. I have a sleeping bag, too. Madison, what are you going to bring?

Madison: I'm bringing my swimsuit, goggles, and my brother's inflatable raft. I can't wait to go swimming!

Thomas: Swimming? Are we camping near a lake? I thought we would camp by a river so that we could catch fish for dinner.

Mrs. Freedom: Are you kids still arguing about where to camp this weekend? You sound like our Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution back in 1787. They had something in mind—a land of liberty. But they had to work hard on the details, discuss, debate, and vote in order to come to a decision.

Madison: Are you talking about the Constitution of the United States of America?

Mrs. Freedom: Yes, exactly.

Sam: The Constitution is a set of rules. Right?

Mrs. Freedom: Sure, it's that—and so much more.

Sam: It's the Supreme Law of our land.

Thomas: Wow, Sam. How do you know so much about the Constitution?

Sam: Don't you remember when we learned about it in school?

George: Oh, yes—that's right! Constitution Day is in September, I think.

Sam: Right! September 17 is not only my birthday, but it's also the birthday of our government.

Mrs. Freedom: The Constitution is a set of rules that describes how our government is organized. Also, it defines and limits the powers of the government.





Madison: We definitely need a set of rules to help us make decisions and get things done. Then we won't keep having the same arguments.

Narrator: These kids have good ideas. But first, they need to get organized. In 1787, delegates from 12 of the 13 original colonies gathered to revise the Articles of Confederation. The men needed to cooperate and compromise. Thomas and his friends are finding out how to do the same things so that they can have a successful camping adventure.

Act 2

Mrs. Freedom: You still need to figure out what to bring. Then, we need to pack up the car.

Sam: Can we go swimming and fishing?

George: We can camp at a lake or we can camp at a river. But we can't do both.

Thomas: I was hoping to camp near a ranch. I wanted to go horseback riding.

Madison: This is hard! Everybody has different ideas about what they want. If we waste too much time talking about things, we won't have time to go swimming!

Narrator: The delegates discussed and debated all summer long—in the heat, with the doors closed. Sometimes tempers flared, but the men kept compromising and working hard. This camping trip is like that. Each person wants something. So they will need to get organized and make some compromises. Or, this trip will never happen.

Poem: Compromising

Act 3

- George:** We have a lot to do!
- Sam:** We can't even agree on where to camp. How are we going to decide what to pack?
- George:** Let's stop arguing and take a vote.
- Madison:** What we need are some rules so we don't have this problem all weekend.
- Thomas:** Maybe we should create a Camping Constitution.
- George:** We could each be in charge of something. I can be in charge of the tent and sleeping bags.
- Sam:** That's a good idea, George. I can be in charge of the campfire.
- Madison:** I can be in charge of the water. We need water for drinking, washing stuff, and cooking.
- Thomas:** I can be in charge of the food. But we all need to help with the list. Let's see. We need hot dogs—and what else?

Thomas: We can't bring along all of our favorite foods. But we can at least compromise.

Narrator: The campers are starting to get their trip organized. Everyone is taking on some of the work. That's just what the delegates had to do at the Constitutional Convention.

Act 4

Mrs. Freedom: Sounds like you each have work to do. Who's in charge? You need to have someone who will make sure that the tent person has what he needs. And you need someone to make sure that you bring enough water for everyone.



Thomas: I think George should be our leader. He is good at thinking of everything that we need.

Sam: I agree. I vote for George to be our president.

Madison: Hear! Hear!

George: Okay. I'll be president for this camping trip. Then we'll elect a new president. That way we'll all have a chance to lead the group.

Narrator: At the Constitutional Convention, George Washington was chosen to be the leader. All the delegates thought that he was the perfect man for the job.



Act 5

Mrs. Freedom: Sounds like you're getting organized. We should pack the car tonight.

Madison: Okay, everybody. I am not the camp cook. We all will need to take turns.

Sam: And I could use help with the fire. I already have the supplies, so all we need to do is collect firewood.

George: I have an extra sleeping bag. Does anyone need it?

Thomas: I need a sleeping bag. Thanks!

Madison: I've figured out how much water to bring. But each of us will need to carry our own water bottle.

George: I'll make a list of everything we need. But I need each of you to report to me before we pack the car.

Madison: Is anyone bringing a compass?

Thomas: Who is bringing the flashlights?

Sam: We should each bring our own soap. Right?

Thomas: Or maybe it would be better to get soap and toothpaste to share.

Narrator: I think it's finally coming together. It may seem like it has taken a long time for these kids to get organized. But it took about 100 days for the delegates to write the Constitution of the United States.

 **Song: Listen**

Act 6

Mrs. Freedom: You should make a list of some of these decisions. Then, you should vote. That way, you can be in agreement.

George: Okay. That's a good idea. We can vote on where we'll go.

Thomas: Who will do what chores.

Sam: How late we will stay up.

Madison: And whether or not we'll bring our own toothpaste and soap.

Narrator: Voting was necessary to ratify the Constitution. Ratify means to agree. The states held special conventions to vote for or against the Constitution. Nine states were in favor, and so the Constitution was ratified.

Act 7

Thomas: I can't believe how much planning it takes to get ready for a camping trip!



Mrs. Freedom: Well, we could have just grabbed a few things and then headed for the mountains. But we would only have a bunch of people with one idea in common—camping. It’s a great idea. But you still need to figure out how to make it happen.

Thomas: Without a plan, we might have made it to the campsite. But I probably would have left the tent and sleeping bag at home.

Sam: I would have probably forgotten all the stuff we need to make a fire.

Madison: And everyone would be using my soap, toothpaste, and maybe even my toothbrush!

Thomas: And we’d just be swimming or fishing. We would never even get around to looking for buried treasure.

Mrs. Freedom: Okay, kids—isn’t it about time we went to the store?

Thomas: Sorry, Mom. We just got so caught up in writing our new constitution.

Sam: It’s awesome, Mrs. Freedom! We even included our very own preamble, “We the people of this camping trip . . .”

Mrs. Freedom: Well, it sounds like you have come to some good decisions. Tomorrow, you’ll have a lot of fun!

Thomas: With our new constitution, I know our camp will run smoothly. And I won’t be stuck doing all the work myself.

George: We’ll also have time to do all the things we want to do. Now let’s get the food, pack the car, and get some sleep. We want to leave first thing in the morning. Then we can swim, fish, and search for buried treasure!





COMPROMISING

Tell me what you hope for.
I'll tell you my hopes, too.
We'll work it out together
And decide just what to do.

I'll give in on some things.
You'll give a little, too.
We'll work it out together
And decide just what to do.

It can't go only my way.
It can't go just yours, too.
We'll work it out together
And decide just what to do.

We'll take some of your thoughts
And some of my thoughts, too.
We'll work it out together
And decide just what to do.

Then we'll both be happy.
We'll both be peaceful, too,
'Cause we worked it out together
And we know just what to do.



LISTEN



Sometimes it's good to have some rules
To help us make our choices.
Discuss, debate, and vote
So we can hear each other's voices.

Listen, listen, and keep it up
You sisters and you brothers.
Listen, listen keep it up
Let's take care of each other.

Sometimes it's good to have some rules
To help us make our choices.
Discuss, debate, and vote
So we can hear each other's voices.

Listen, listen, and keep it up
You sisters and you brothers.
Listen, listen keep it up
Let's take care of each other.

GLOSSARY

Articles of Confederation—articles which combined the 13 original colonies into a loose confederation

constitution—document that outlines the laws that govern a country

Constitutional Convention—meeting of the delegates from the colonies to decide how to deal with Great Britain

Constitution Day—A federal holiday that recognizes the ratification of the United States Constitution. It is observed on September 17, the day the U.S. Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution in 1787.

debate—to discuss or examine a question

delegates—people who are sent to a meeting to speak for a group of people

liberty—freedom

representative—standing or acting for another, especially through delegated authority