**Cuts and Changes**

Feel free to make cuts and changes in the story that will make your script livelier, simpler to understand, or easier to perform. But be sure to read through and check whether everything in the story still makes sense.

Some authorities on reader’s theater object to even the most minor changes in the author’s work. But the author was not writing for performance. If you refrain from making appropriate changes, the author’s work may not appear in its best light.

Here are some things you may want to “cut":

* Tag lines. These are the lines that tell us “he said” or “she said.” In performance, these seldom do more than break up the flow of the story and trip up the readers. But leave in the ones that give extra information the audience must hear. Also leave in ones that an author has used to build rhythm.
* Long descriptions. Many stories include long sections of narration that slow the action. These can often be shortened or even removed.
* Minor characters or scenes. Cutting these can simplify the stage action and/or adjust for a small number of readers. Often, important dialog or information can be shifted to another character or scene.

Here are other areas where you might make changes:

* Character splitting or combining. As mentioned earlier, you can combine two or more similar characters into one, or split one into two or more.
* Additional speeches. Some story characters may have no lines, or may be onstage for a long time before they speak. In these cases, you may want to invent brief speeches for them. Also, if the narration tells *about* what a character said, you might convert this into a speech of the character.
* Stage directions. You can often make the script smoother by converting parts of the narration to stage directions for the characters.
* Difficult or obscure language. Though readers should be encouraged to read “up” from their level, some scripts will be much easier to follow—for both readers and audience—if you now and then substitute a simpler word, or split a sentence in two. With foreign stories, you may want to “translate” unfamiliar terms.
* Sexist or demeaning language. Often this can be changed unobtrusively. If not, the story may not be appropriate for young people.
* Aids to reading. You can underline or italicize words that should be stressed, add commas to delineate phrasing, or insert stage directions to indicate the feeling behind speeches.