

NARRATOR 1: That old bird wasted all his time
Searchin' high and low for a

(SAME CLAPPING AS BEFORE).

ALL: VA - LEN - TINE!

NARRATOR 3: Finally, the wise old owl perched upon the world's very bottom,
shook his wide wiggle wiggle wings, and ruffled his neck feathers.

NARRATOR 2: Then the wise old owl spun his round owl eyes in both directions
and said:

(#4 STANDS TO READ THE FOLLOWING LINES):

4/OWL: Whooooooooo and whew! I've flown around this round wide world
and still haven't found the perfect valentine. Maybe I'm going about
this thing in the wrong way! Maybe I should explore the world on
foot instead!

(#4 SITS AND LOOKS VERY SATISFIED WITH HIMSELF. #1
LOOKS AT #4 IN DISBELIEF! #1 WALKS OUT FROM BEHIND
MUSIC STAND CARRYING SCRIPT AND ADDRESSES #4).

NARRATOR 1: On foot? Are you nuts?

(#4 JUMPS TO FEET).

READER 4: Hey, I didn't write this script! I'm just reading the owl's part and that's what it says -- on foot. He's supposed to walk!

NARRATOR 1: O.K., O.K., but hustle it up, will ya? A walk around the world could take forever.

(#1 RETURNS TO BEHIND MUSIC STAND, PLACING SCRIPT ON STAND AGAIN).

READER 4: Let's compromise. He'll run!

NARRATOR 1: Oh brother! If you ask me, this Oliver character is one card short of a deck!

4/OWL: Whooooooooo?

(ALL READERS GLARE AT #4, THEN #2 SLOWLY LOOKS AT AUDIENCE, SIGHS, AND CONTINUES).

NARRATOR 2: Oliver stretched his tiny tickle tickle toes and began to run.

NARRATOR 3: He ran across fields and forests, through streams and rivers, on flats and desserts, over hills and mountains,

NARRATOR 1: and finally came to rest in a deep green valley.

NARRATOR 2: But he did not find the perfect valentine.

(#2 BEGINS CLAPPING TO A STEADY 4/4 BEAT. AUDIENCE AND OTHER READERS JOIN IN. WHEN READY, #2 READS AND FOLLOWS ALREADY ESTABLISHED PATTERN).

NARRATOR 2: Now clap your hands and join this rhyme.

(CLAP, CLAP, CLAP, CLAP).

NARRATOR 1: Oliver ran along this line.

(CLAP, CLAP, CLAP, CLAP).

(AS READING CONTINUES, #4 DRAWS LINE "F" AS SHOWN AT THE BACK OF THIS TEACHER SCRIPT).

NARRATOR 3: That old bird wasted all his time
Searchin' high and low for a

(CLAPPING, AS BEFORE).

ALL: VA - LEN - TINE!

NARRATOR 1: And when he didn't find the perfect valentine, Oliver stretched his tiny tickle tickle toes and ran all the way back home.

(#4 DRAWS LINE "G", THEN STANDS UP, WALKS AROUND DISPLAY PAD, AND ADMIRES THE WORK. #4 THINKS FOR A MOMENT, THEN SEES THE LIGHT!).

READER 4: Well, would you look at that! I get the picture! I see the light! I'm a genius - that's what I am!

NARRATORS 1,2,3: Who?

READER 4: Me! I've figured out this perfect valentine business. You people aren't giving old Oliver enough credit.

NARRATOR 3: What are you talking about?

READER 4: Oliver does find the perfect valentine. Watch!

(#4 SITS BACK DOWN AND DRAWS LINES "H" AND "I" AS SHOWN AT THE BACK OF THIS TEACHER SCRIPT).

NARRATORS 1,2,3: (READERS LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND AD LIB LINES LIKE: HE'S/SHE'S RIGHT! I DON'T BELIEVE IT! HOW DID THAT HAPPEN? NOW THAT'S A SURPRISE! ETC. THEN #4 PUTS DOWN MARKER PEN AND BEGINS TO CLAP IN A STEADY 4/4 BEAT AS OTHER READERS HAVE DONE BEFORE. AUDIENCE AND READERS JOIN IN).

READER 4: Now clap your hands and join this rhyme.

(CLAP, CLAP, CLAP, CLAP).

The story's ended just in time.

(CLAP, CLAP, CLAP, CLAP).

That wise old bird is feelin' fine,
For there's his perfect

(CLAP ON ALL THREE SYLLABLES).

ALL: VA - LEN - TINE!

(READERS 1,2,3 WALK FROM BEHIND MUSIC STANDS TO JOIN
#4. ALL BOW).

THE END

OWL'S PERFECT VALENTINE

SPRINGBOARDS TO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

"Everyone needs to talk - to hear and to play with language, to exercise the mind and emotions and tongue together. Out of this spirited speech can come meaningful, flavourful language, worth the time and effort of writing and rewriting, phrasing, rehearsing, and reading aloud."

Source: Wolsch, R.A. and Wolsch, L.A.C. From speaking to writing to reading: Relating the arts of communication. New York, Columbia University Teachers College. Used to introduce SECTION 6: Sharing Stories, Poems and Songs. Enhancing and Evaluating Oral Communication in the Primary Grades. Student Assessment Branch, Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, Canada, January, 1988.

Owl's Perfect Valentine

Source: An original story by Lois Walker.

Notes: In this TAKE PART Read-Aloud Story Script, Lois Walker has created another delightful holiday story. Noteworthy is the use of a repetitive internal poem in rhyme which allows children to participate by clapping hands rhythmically in time to a steady 4/4 beat. Also of interest is the strong visual image of Oliver the Owl, unforgettable with his "wide, wiggle, wiggle wings," his "tiny, tickle, tickle toes," and his "round eyes spinning."

RETELLING: After a classroom reading of "Owl's Perfect Valentine," ask students to return to their desks and retell the story in written form. They may do this as individuals, or in cooperative groups. Encourage writers to experiment and create their own unique versions of the tale. (This particular version uses poetry, rhythm, and rhyme, but it is only one version). The actual story can be told in many different ways. For example, a writer might,

- (a) retell the story from the old owl's point of view as he searches the world for a perfect valentine.
- (b) retell the story with drawings.
- (c) retell the story in a simple form for younger children. Turn this retelling into a picture book by illustrating the text. Design and produce the front and back covers.
- (d) retell the story as though it were being printed in the "Valentine Review," a local newspaper.

- (e) create original valentine designs and/or write an accompanying feature story for another local newspaper. Include recipes for lovers, information on the origins of St. Valentine's Day, lyrics from love songs, etc.
- (f) write limericks or other poems which relate to the story:

There once was an Oliver owl
Who over the wide world did prowl
He flew double time,
Through rhythm and rhyme,
Substituting a smile for a scowl.

When all written retellings are ready, ask authors, poets, and newspaper writers to illustrate, publish, and display their works.

STORYTELLING: Ask volunteer storytellers of various reading levels to prepare "Owl's Perfect Valentine" for oral presentation. Remind students to capture the essence of the tale, rather than memorizing lines from the story script version. The story should be told in each teller's own words. Encourage practice sessions with a listening partner, a tape recorder, or independently. Later, ask tellers to tell their stories to the class or to smaller groups from within the class. After tellers gain confidence through repeated practice and tellings, send them off to a lower grade to share the stories again.

DRAMATIZING: Try some collaborative retelling by asking a group of students to dramatize "Owl's Perfect Valentine" in its own way. (Any mixture of ages and reading levels can be involved in the dramatization). Participants may assign roles and re-enact the tale by either acting the parts themselves, or portraying part or all of the characters through puppets, cardboard cut-outs, stuffed animals, or toys. Costume pieces, props, or masks might be used. Remind students that, unlike the reading script version, gesture, action, and theatrical staging will be needed to make the dramatization come alive!

