

The Scrambled States of America

• Reader's Theater •

Grades
K-2, 3-5

by | Toni Buzzeo

Read the book aloud to children first, so that they can enjoy the illustrations and become familiar with the story.

Then, hand out a set of photocopied scripts to students. Since all of the states (as well as the Great Lakes) have speaking parts, you will want to assign more than one role to students unless you are working with more than one class. It will also be essential to have nametags that identify each reader's role. If you have plenty of time set aside, allow students to practice their parts individually or as a group until they are reading fluently. They will also learn even more geography if you have them physically arrange themselves as the states are actually positioned and then as they rearrange themselves when they swap places. However, if time is limited, have performers face the audience in a line and simply read their parts on the

first run-through. Once all readers are comfortable with their parts, have a second reading with an audience, if possible.

After Reading

Visit www.librarysparks.com for an interview between Toni Buzzeo and Laurie Keller about *The Scrambled States of America*. Also visit Laurie's Web site at www.lauriekeller.com.



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Roles

Sam	Idaho	Missouri	Pennsylvania
The Great Lakes	Illinois	Montana	Rhode Island
Alabama	Indiana	Nebraska	South Carolina
Alaska	Iowa	Nevada	South Dakota
Arizona	Kansas	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Arkansas	Kentucky	New Jersey	Texas
California	Louisiana	New Mexico	Utah
Colorado	Maine	New York	Vermont
Connecticut	Maryland	North Carolina	Virginia
Delaware	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Washington
Florida	Michigan	Ohio	West Virginia
Georgia	Minnesota	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
Hawaii	Mississippi	Oregon	Wyoming

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The Scrambled States of America

Sam: Hi there. I'm Sam. I'm assuming that you're in the mood to hear a story. Well, you're in luck, because I have a story for you. It's a little story about this fine country of ours. I'll bet you thought you'd heard 'em all, but not many people know this one.

Ohio: Let ME tell it!

Colorado: Oh, oh, let ME! Let ME!

Sam: No, no, you two—that part is my job. Now get back in your places. We're about to start the story. Aren't they cute? Let's give them a couple of seconds to get back into position. One thousand ONE. One thousand TWO. One thousand THREE. OK, here we go.

New Jersey: Excuse me. Hi, I'm New Jersey. I'm not new and I'm not wearing a jersey. Go figure!

Sam: Back in your place, New Jersey. Yes, well, it was just your basic, ordinary day in the good old U.S. of A. States all over the country were waking up, having their first cups of coffee, reading the morning paper, and enjoying the beautiful sunrise.

South Dakota: North Dakota, it's time to get up.

North Dakota: I'm up. I'm up.

Arkansas: Would you like a muffin, Tennessee?

Tennessee: Wow! Homemade!

Indiana: Ohio, have some coffee.

Michigan: La la la. I love to sing in the shower.

West Virginia: Mmm-mmm, this cereal is tasty.

New York: I'll pour the syrup on your pancakes, Pennsylvania. You say when!

Pennsylvania: Keep it comin'.

Massachusetts: Tennis, anyone?

Maine: Beautiful sunrise today.

Sam: Meanwhile, in Hawaii, the big island was talking to the smaller islands.

Hawaii: Wake up sleepy heads.

Sam: All the states were enjoying the beautiful sunrise, that is, except for Kansas. He was not feeling happy at all. How do I know this? Because he said so.

Kansas: I'm not feeling happy at all!

Sam: See? What did I tell you?

Nebraska: What's wrong, Kansas?

Kansas: *(Moan.)* I don't know. I just feel bored. All day long we just sit here in the middle of the country. We never GO anywhere. We never DO anything, and we NEVER meet any NEW states!

Nebraska: Hmmmmm ...

Kansas: Don't get me wrong, Nebraska. You're the best friend a state could have. But don't you ever want more? Don't you ever want to see what else is out there?

Nebraska: Yes! Yes, I do. And now that you mention it, I'm sick and tired of hearing North Dakota and South Dakota bicker all the time!

Kansas: *(Exclaim.)* I have a great idea! Let's have a party and invite all the other states! You know, one of those get-to-know-you deals. Everyone can bring a favorite dish. We could have music and dancing ...

Nebraska: *(Shriek.)* That's a great idea! I wish I'd thought of it myself.

Sam: So, with a little help from their neighbors, Missouri and Iowa, those wacky little Midwestern states planned the biggest party ever. They sent out invitations and blew up balloons. They even hired a band to play.

Iowa: Hmmmmm. Connecticut, K-U-N-N ... no wait ... C-U-N-N ... oops, that's not right ... K-O-N-E ... hmmmph. Hey, how do you spell Connecticut?

Nebraska: Yyyuck! These stamps taste terrible.

Kansas: Hello? This is Kansas calling. What type of music do you play? ... Uh Huh ... Oh, yes, I LOVE accordions!

Sam: At last, the big day came, and little by little the states arrived at the party. Nebraska and Kansas were on the welcoming committee, Iowa was in charge of coats, and Missouri and Illinois passed out name tags for each state to wear.

Illinois: Massachusetts, I just saw your nametag!

Iowa: That's a nice coat you're checking.

New Hampshire: Wow! Those Southwestern states can really dance!

Sam: Within minutes after their arrival, the states began making friends with each other. They spent hours talking, laughing, dancing, and singing.

Maryland: Have you tried the Alabama peanut bars?

Utah: I love beets!

Delaware: Pile my plate high and deep.

Missouri: Hey look. Nevada and Mississippi seem to be falling in love!

Sam: It was long into the evening when Idaho and Virginia got up on stage.

Idaho: Excuse me. Sorry to interrupt, but Virginia and I were just talking and we thought it might be fun if she and I switched places—you know—so we could see a new part of the country.

Virginia: Yes. Then we thought maybe all of you might want to try it, too. What do you think?

Sam: A wave of excitement swept through the room.

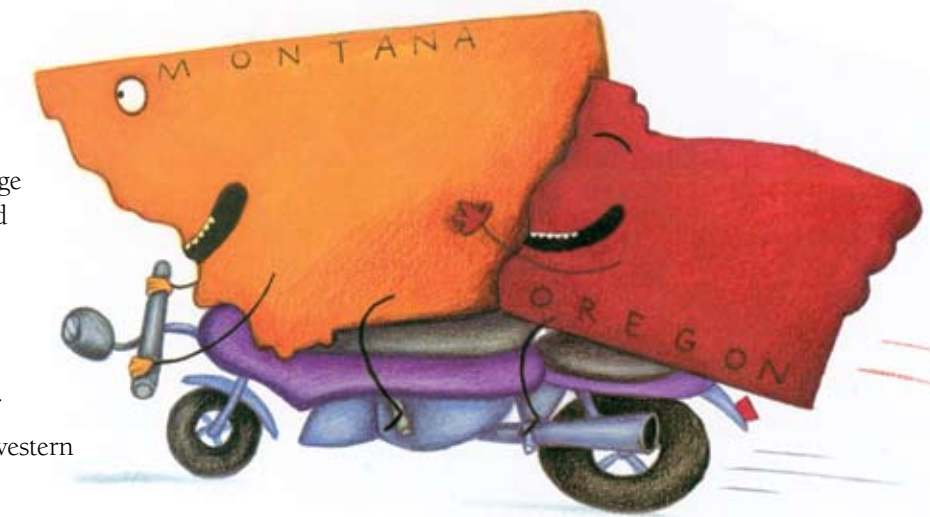
Oklahoma: Woohooo!

West Virginia: We should have done this YEARS ago!

Sam: They could hardly wait. Immediately, the states made their plans to switch places. They said their good-byes and went directly home to pack.

Florida: Just go south!

Minnesota: Just go north!



New Mexico: Ouch! Packing a cactus is—ouch! I'll take you out as soon as we, ouch, get there. OK? Ouch.

Nevada: I'll go get my things and meet you there.

Mississippi: I can't wait!

Sam: Maryland packed the Washington Monument and the White House in a suitcase.

Maryland: It's a pleasure to give you a ride, Washington, D.C. Are you O.K. in there Mr. President?

Sam: It took the better part of the next morning for the states to move to their new spots, but finally they were settled in. All of the states were much happier now that they were by their new neighbors and in a new part of the country. Oh yes, this was a much better arrangement!

Wyoming: Now that I'm up here in Alaska's place, I can catch up on my reading.

Kansas: Aloha, world, from down here in Hawaii's spot!

Florida: Am I too heavy?

Utah: Not at all.

The Great Lakes: Um ... Where did Michigan go? What's going on?

New York: Hey, Statue of Liberty, you look good here in Illinois.

Kentucky: Hawaii, your islands are so cute!

Oklahoma: What's your favorite kind of ice cream, Iowa?

Iowa: Corn flavored, of course.

Washington: That party was fun but I miss the water!

Nebraska: I love the water!

Sam: But after a couple of days had passed and all the excitement had died down, the states began to realize that they weren't as happy as they thought. Florida, who had switched spots with Minnesota, was FREEZING in the frosty northern climate. And Minnesota, who forgot to buy sunscreen, got an awful sunburn.

Vermont: A big hug will make your sunburn feel better!

Minnesota: Yyyouuuuch!

Texas: Hutchooo! I've got a Lone Star size cold.

Maine and Kentucky: Thanks for the cold germs, pal!

Sam: Alabama, New York, and Indiana—all of whom took California's place—were bothered by an annoying rumbling sound that kept them up all night.

Wisconsin: Want some cheese?

California: Eeeeeoo! Get it away! I'm lactose intolerant!



Sam: Arizona, who had traded places with South Carolina, was upset because the ocean waves kept ruining her hairdo.

Tennessee: Why did I switch with Washington?

Colorado: Hey, Idaho. Scratch my back, will ya, Potato Head?

Sam: Nevada and Mississippi fell in love so nothing bothered them.

Nevada: Do you want to become Mrs.issippi?

Mississippi: I do.

Sam: Alaska, who had been wanting a little more interaction with the other states, was irritated by Oklahoma's handle jabbing into his left side and Michigan's thumb tickling his right.

Michigan: Kitchy kitchy koo!

Oklahoma: (Sing.) Where the wind comes sweepin' down the plain ...

Arkansas: Ouch, watch it, Cactus!

Sam: And worst of all, Kansas, who had switched places with Hawaii because he was sick of being stuck in the middle of the country, was now stuck in the middle of NOWHERE, singing, playing his guitar, and feeling lonesome and seasick.

Kansas: (Sing.) In the middle of nowhere feelin' lonesome and seasick, my guitar is soggy and I feel so blue ...

Sam: And Hawaii was longing for some peace and quiet like in the good old days.

Hawaii: Please, just five minutes of quiet!

Sam: Well, there was no question in any state's mind about what to do. Everyone wanted to go home! So, even faster than they made the first trip, they packed up their things and hit the road.

Illinois: Yes, my name is Illinois and I need one airline ticket to ... um ... well, Illinois ... mmmhmmm ... no, the "S" is silent.

Ohio: Whew, this bus is bumpy! Do you have any threes in your hand?

West Virginia: Go fish!

Florida: Want a ride?

Louisiana: Sure. I know you're headed in my direction.

Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire: Hey, Connecticut! Want a ride in our car?

Connecticut: Sure! Did you see my sign "East or Bust"?

California: (Sing.) California here I come ...

New York: Taxi! Yoo Hoo!

Nevada: I'll never love another.

Mississippi: You're the only state for me.

Sam: As the sun set across the country, all of the states—from A to W—were back in their very own homes. The states were so happy to see their old friends again. They spent the entire evening sharing their new experiences with each other—the good and the bad.

Alaska: I can stretch out again!

Hawaii: No more hoedowns! Alooooha!!

Idaho: Hey, Oregon and Washington, I brought you some corn from Iowa—it's a little soggy.

Oregon and Washington: Glad to have you back, neighbor.

Montana: I saw the Statue of Liberty!

Arizona: Saltwater does nothing for the hair!

Colorado: I had a snowball fight with Alaska!

North Dakota: Let's not argue any more.

South Dakota: It's a deal!

Nebraska: I almost got eaten by a shark!

Minnesota: Sunburns hurt!

Iowa: Have you lost weight?

Missouri: A little, through the middle.

New York: Michigan, want this crazy shirt?

Michigan: What's it say?

New York: My friend traded places with California and all I got was this stupid T-shirt!



Michigan: This is a classic!

Indiana: The ground was SHAKING.

Tennessee: Kentucky, my man! Thanks for the Hawaiian pineapple!

Alabama: The earth moved!

Georgia: Take the cash, Florida. I won it for you in Las Vegas!

North Carolina: Nevada and Mississippi fell in love!

South Carolina: That's sweet! Too bad they live so far apart.

West Virginia: I missed ya.

Virginia: I missed you, too.

Pennsylvania: I saw Mexico!

Rhode Island: It's good to be home.

Maine: Ayuh, I brought you some peaches from Georgia.

New Hampshire and Vermont: Thanks, neighbor.

Sam: That night, all the states in the country went to bed feeling happy about the new friends they had made but, most of all, feeling very thankful to be home.