

There are so many ways to bring literature to life in your home, classroom, or library. “Reader’s Theater” is one fun way to encourage and develop fluency, comprehension and confidence in reading. *Mrs. McTats and her Houseful of Cats* is one of my favorite books. It is an alphabet story, it is a counting book, too. Mrs. McTats opens her door every day to welcome a new “sweet dear” into her home. But for me, the most important thing about Mrs. McTats is that she opens her heart. It is a story about including everyone, whether they are alike or different there is always room for one more. This story also lends itself to the Reader’s Theater format beautifully. Of course, the script below can be modified in any way that is appropriate for your readers. Perhaps you will perform the story with a class of reading buddies. Perhaps you can entice other teachers to join in. However you use the script, think of this as a celebration of literature. Invite parents, grandparents and friends. Whether you choose to have elaborate sets and costumes or the most basic telling of the story is up to you. Most of all, make it your own and have fun!

SET THE STAGE!

Give yourself some room for this one. You’ll want to fit twenty-six characters displaying the alphabet in a row by the end of the story.

COSTUMES!

You can make this as simple or as complex as you'd like.

PROPS!

- A sign which reads, "SCRATCH ON THE DOOR" to prompt audience participation when this refrain is repeated throughout the story.
- What will Mrs. McTats feed her cats? Create a market of your own built from cardboard boxes, paper towel rolls, etc.! You'll need some chicken, beef, stew, liver, tuna, trout and any other delicacies you choose.
- Math, Math, Math: Want to keep count along the way? Have one or two students keep a VISUAL count as more and more cats visit Mrs. McTats.
- The alphabet! You can purchase or paint your own oversized letters. As each cat enters the story, have a student come forward holding the corresponding alphabet letter. Be creative! Lakeshore Learning has a wonderfully BIG set of cardboard letters. Have each child decorate a letter. By the end of the story, you will have a glorious life-sized alphabet stretched across the room or stage.
- Alliteration Activity : Draw, name, invent, and color your own cat. Yodel likes to "yodel!" What does your cat like to do?
- Paper mache: Fill you room with cats!

THE CHARACTERS!

Mrs. McTats

Narrator One

Narrator Two

Narrator Three

The Counter (in charge of all numbers)

The Scratcher (shakes the sign to insure audience participation)

The Alphabet Letters, A to Z (the cats!)

MRS. MCTATS AND HER HOUSEFUL OF CATS

By Alyssa Satin Capucilli, Illustrated by Joan Rankin

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Narrator 1: In a small, cozy cottage lived Mrs. McTats.

Narrator 2: She lived all alone except for

The Counter: one cat.

Narrator 3: Every morning she left as the clock struck

The Counter: eight –

Mrs.McTats: “To market, to market! I musn’t be late!”

Narrator 1: She browsed through the market and chose a plump fish.

Mrs.McTat: “For Abner and me. What a sumptuous dish!”

Narrator 2: But when she got home,

Scratcher: There came a scratch on the door,

Narrator 3: And in walked

The Counter: two cats.

Narrator 1: Was there room for
The Counter: two more?
Mrs. McTats: “Come in, my sweet dears,”
Narrator 2: said Mrs. McTats.
Mrs. McTats: “I’m sure I’ve got room for just
The Counter: two more cats.
Mrs. McTats: I’ll call you Basil, and Curly you’ll be. I only had
The Counter: one cat,
Mrs. McTats: but now I have
The Counter: three!”
Narrator 3: The very next morning, Mrs. McTats woke early.
Narrator 1: She stopped to pet Abner and Basil and Curly.
Mrs. McTats: “To market, to market! I musn’t be late. This
chicken, I think, will surely taste great.”
Narrator 2: But when she got home,
Scratcher: There came a scratch on the door,
Narrator 3: And in walked
The Counter: three cats.
Narrator 1: Was there room for
The Counter: three more?
Mrs. McTats: “Come in, my sweet dears,”
Narrator 2: said Mrs. McTats.
Mrs. McTats: “I think I’ve got room for just...

The Counter: three more cats.

Mrs.McTats: Now give me a moment. What shall your names be? You're Dolly, you're Ernest and Fuzzy makes

The Counter: three!

Narrator 3: The very next morning off went Mrs. McTats

Mrs. McTats: "What can I buy for my

The Counter: six hungry cats?"

Mrs.McTats: "I've got it!"

Narrator:1 she said.

Mrs. McTats: "I'll make a nice stew."

Narrator 2: So she carried home beef and liver to brew.

Narrator 3: But back at home...

Scratcher: there came a scratch on the door,

Narrator 1: And in walked

The Counter: four cats. Was there room for four more?

Mrs.McTats: "Come in, my sweet dears,"

Narrator 2: said Mrs. McTats.

Mrs.McTats: "I know there's a place for just

The Counter: four more cats. Ten's....

Mrs.McTats: a fine number –

The Counter: Ten cats

Mrs.McTats: and me –

I'll call you Goldie and Herman you'll be."

Narrator 3: Izzy and Jezebel pranced ‘cross the floor.
And then right behind them....

The Counter:Followed five more!

Mrs.McTats: Koko, and Linus, Millie, Noreen,
And you shall be Oscar. There that makes

The Counter: fifteen.”

Narrator 1: The very next day off went Mrs. McTats.

Mrs. McTats: “What can I possibly feed

The Counter: fifteen cats?”

Narrator 2: She chose a fine tuna.

Narrator 3: She chose a fresh trout.

Narrator 1: But when she got home, her cats were all out!

Narrator 2: She counted her cats from

The Counter: one to fifteen,

Narrator 3: But somehow

The Counter: six more cats...

Narrator 1: had just joined the scene!

Mrs.McTats: “Come, come, my sweet dears,”

Narrator 2: said Mrs. McTats.

Mrs.McTats: “I’m sure I have plenty for

The Counter: twenty-one cats.

Mrs. McTats: Pip, Quip, and Rosebud, Sally, and Toesie,
Ursula, dear, do make yourself cozy.”

Scratcher: But then came another scratch on the door.

Narrator 3: Could it be more cats?

The Counter: How many more?

Narrator 1: In came Violet,

Narrator 2: In came Winnie.

Narrator 3: And, just behind, a kitten she named Xinnie..

Narrator 1: In came Yodel – last of the bunch.

The Counter: Twenty-five cats.....

All: ready for lunch!

Narrator 2: But something was missing.

Narrator 3: What could it be?

Narrator 1: Just what it was, Mrs. McTats could not see.
As she stood there puzzling,

Scratcher: There was a scratch on the door.

Narrator 2: And Mrs. McTats wondered,

Narrator 3: Could there really be more?

Narrator 1: Could she squeeze in more cats?

The Counter: More than twenty-five?

Narrators 1, 2, 3: Who was the one who was next to arrive?

Mrs.McTats: “Come in my sweet dear,”

Narrator 1: said Mrs. McTats

Mrs.McTats: I live in this cottage with...

The Counter: twenty-five cats.

Mrs.McTats: But if you don't mind, you're welcome to stay.
You're welcome to eat. You're welcome to play.”

Narrator 2: Now in that small cottage lives Mrs. McTats,
Narrator 3: All happy and cozy with her
The Counter: twenty-five cats... And one little puppy....
Narrator 1: who's known as Zoom,
All: In a small, cozy cottage with plenty of room.
Narrator 2: And just when the clock strikes each morning
The Counter: at eight,
Narrator 3: Mrs. McTats hurries off.
Mrs. McTats: “I musn't be late. To market, to market!
What treats will there be? For....
The Counter: twenty-six sweet dears
All: From A to Z!”