



# VOLUNTEER READER GUIDELINES

Thank you for volunteering to read with Read Aloud West Virginia. Sharing your love of books and reading can make the difference in a child's life. You are creating memories and motivating children to *want* to read for fun, helping them to build their skills and vocabulary along the way. Read Aloud readers strive to be the best readers they can be:

## 1. Select a book that is:

- **Age appropriate:** In both text difficulty and subject matter.
- **Well-paced:** Long, descriptive passages with a lot of adjectives don't work as well for class read alouds. Look for stories with dialogue, action, and verbs that move the story along.
- **Not religious or political:** Texts published to advance a particular religious or political cause are not appropriate for Read Aloud at school or in public settings. There is plenty of award-winning children's literature, as well as age-appropriate sports writing and other non-fiction to choose from. When in doubt, ask the teacher or a librarian.
- **Appealing to you:** You are "selling" this book to the class, and you can't sell what you don't like!

## 2. Practice

Actors don't go on stage without a rehearsal. You will bring the book and its characters to life for your audience, and you need practice to do that! Rehearse the book at least three times. This eliminates surprises and allows you to match your voice to the action. It also makes you comfortable enough with the story to look up from time to time and make eye contact with your listeners.

## 3. Arrive and leave on time

Schools run on tight schedules. You are a visitor. Be a good guest. Don't arrive late or overstay your welcome. If you must miss a session, notify your teacher in advance so they can plan accordingly. They should do the same for you.

## 4. Introduce yourself and set the stage

Especially during your first visit, it's important to let students know why you want to be there. Also introduce each book. You could explain why you chose it. Name the author and illustrator. Introduce details that will create curiosity about the book, share about the author or setting, and/or discuss the cover art and illustrator.

## 5. Make sure the classroom teacher remains in the room (virtual or physical) through your visit

It is important that you not be left alone with the students for their protection and yours, even during a virtual read aloud.

## 6. Read in a clear, engaging manner

Try not to read too quickly, too slowly, or in a monotone voice.

## 7. Don't test the students on the material

Remember, this is supposed to be *fun*. If you leave time for discussion at the end of your reading, keep the questions open ended. For example: *What did you think? What was your favorite part?* Pause to let children guess what will happen next.

## 8. Keep a log of what you read.

Pretty soon, you will have a repertoire of favorites.

(304) 345-5212 | [stateoffice@readaloudwv.org](mailto:stateoffice@readaloudwv.org)

For book recommendations, visit [readaloudwv.org/book-lists-and-reviews/](https://readaloudwv.org/book-lists-and-reviews/)



## **Mandatory Reporting Guidelines for Read Aloud WV Volunteers**

West Virginia law requires all volunteers of entities that provide organized activities for children, who have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected or abused, or observes a child being subjected to conditions that are likely to result in abuse or neglect, to report the circumstances to the West Virginia Department of Human Services (WVDHS) within 24 hours after suspecting the abuse or neglect.

Volunteers can report concerns to Centralized Intake of WVDHS at 1-800-352-6513.

In addition, volunteers should report the concerns to a principal at the school where they are reading, as well as to the Executive Director of Read Aloud West Virginia at 304-345-5212.

Moreover, if a volunteer believes that the child has suffered serious physical or sexual abuse or assault, they are required to immediately report that abuse or assault to the State Police and/or their local law enforcement agency.

It is not clear whether volunteer readers for Read Aloud West Virginia are persons mandated under West Virginia law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. However, out of an abundance of caution, we think it is important to advise all volunteers of the law and of the appropriate authorities where suspicions should be reported.

*-Updated 2/10/2025*

