

For Grown-Ups

The Read-Aloud Cheat Sheet

Voice, pacing and pause tips to make any book come alive.

Before You Begin

- **Preview the book.** Skim once so surprises land the way the author intended.
- **Set the stage.** Cozy up, silence phones and take one deep breath together.
- **Invite the cover.** Ask: “What do you notice? What do you wonder?”

Use Your Voice Like an Instrument

Tool	How to use it
Pitch	Higher for tiny characters, lower for big ones. Contrast helps kids track dialogue.
Pace	Slow for tender or scary moments. Quick and clipped for action.
Volume	Whisper the secrets. Boom the surprises. Return to normal for narration.
Accent	Give each character one signature quirk (a lisp, a giggle, a growl) and keep it consistent.

The Power of the Pause

- **Pause before a page turn** to build suspense.
- **Pause after a big word** so meaning can sink in.
- **Pause after a question** — count silently to five before rescuing the silence.

Keep Little Listeners Engaged

- **Point and track** with your finger under repeated words.
- **Sound effects:** knock the floor, whoosh with your breath, clap the thunder.
- **Movement breaks:** “Can you show me sleepy?” “Now show me brave!”
- **Predict together:** “What do you think happens next?”

Golden rule: Reading aloud is a conversation, not a performance. If a child interrupts with a question, that’s the story working.

After the Last Page

- 1 Ask one wondering question (“Why do you think she felt that way?”).

- 2 Connect to their world (“Have you ever felt like that?”).
- 3 Invite a re-read of a favorite page — repetition builds fluency and confidence.