

Using Spotlight Theater Scripts

These scripts are adapted from scenes in the ten POSTCARDS FROM BUSTER episodes. They provide practice in key vocabulary, functional language, and key concepts. You can vary and modify the ways you use the scripts to suit the interests and language levels of your students. Try some of these ideas!

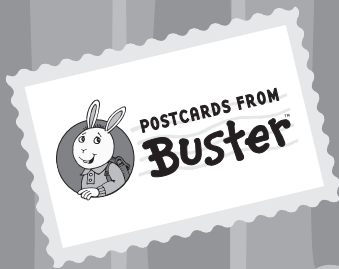
- After watching a POSTCARDS FROM BUSTER video, introduce the Spotlight Theater script by reading the Setting description at the top of the page. Ask the students what they remember about that scene in the video. What were the characters doing? What were they talking about?
- Display the Spotlight Theater script on an overhead projector. Divide the class in two groups. One group will read one character's lines. The other group will read the lines of the other character. This type of choral reading works well in classes of mixed proficiency levels. Beginning English speakers will be supported by the more advanced students in their group.
- Have students practice the scenes together in pairs or small groups. Pair beginning-level students with more advanced students and have them work together to present the scene. The only rule is that everyone in the group must participate in some way. For example, the beginning-level student can hold up a picture of the character and mime the character's actions each time his or her partner reads the character's lines. Or the two students can speak the lines in chorus.
- Use the Spotlight Theater scripts to focus on particular words, language structures, or writing conventions. If you have the script displayed on the overhead projector, you can circle or highlight words and talk about them.
- Have students draw part of the scene, and write part of the dialogue in speech bubbles above the characters.



“How about you?” questions

- Ask the questions to the entire class, and either let volunteers share their answers, or go around the room and have each student share his or her answer.
- If students have read the scripts in pairs, they can ask each other the questions. You might want to ask each student to report his or her partner's answer.
- Have students draw and/or write their answer to the question.
- Have students write original dialogues starring themselves and Buster. Buster can ask them the “How about you?” question, or they can ask the question of Buster. Students can then act out these dialogues with a partner.

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SPOTLIGHT THEATER

A Sense of Direction

Setting: *Buster meets Farah on top of the Sears Tower in Chicago, Illinois.*



Buster: Hi, my name is Buster.

Farah: Hello. My name is Farah.

Buster: It's nice to meet you. Could I ask you a question?

Farah: Sure!

Buster: What are you wearing on your head?

Farah: This is called a hijab. All the girls wear it at my school.

Buster: A hijab?

Farah: Say it again.

Buster: A hijab.

Farah: Yes, that's right.

Buster: Cool! What do you do at your school?

Farah: We go to class and we play basketball. And we also pray and read the Koran, our holy book.

Buster: Wow! Could I visit you at your school?

Farah: Sure! You can come tomorrow. I'll give you directions.



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What do you wear to school?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

Buster and Beatrice

Setting: *Buster talks with Cristina, Robert's younger sister, in the backyard of their house in San Antonio, Texas.*



Buster: Hi! What's your name?

Cristina: Cristina. I'm Robert's sister. This is our dog, Mikey.

Buster: Is he a puppy?

Cristina: No, he's an old man. He's 91 years old.

Buster: 91?! Is that people years or dog years?

Cristina: Dog years.

Buster: He looks pretty good for 91. Hey, listen to that music!
Is that Robert playing the accordion?

Cristina: Yes. He's practicing.

Buster: Robert is a great accordion player. Do you play an instrument, too?

Cristina: Yes. I play accordion.

Buster: Me too! I'm going to play with Robert at the festival.

Cristina: You are? That's great! I'll see you there.



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you play an instrument?
What instrument would you like to play?

MATH CHALLENGE!

1 dog year = 7 people years

How old is Cristina's dog in people years?

How old are you in dog years?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

Among the Hmong

Setting: *Buster meets Steve, a scientist at the insect and spider lab at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.*



Steve: Hi, Buster. I'm Steve. Welcome!

Buster: Is that a spider in your hand?

Steve: Yes, it is. This is a tarantula.

Buster: It sure is big and hairy! Aren't you scared?

Steve: No, this tarantula doesn't see me as a danger, so it's not going to bite me.

Buster: I thought tarantulas were dangerous.

Steve: Not usually. Actually, it is people who are dangerous to tarantulas.

Buster: What do you mean?

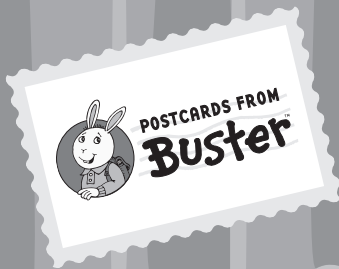
Steve: These spiders live in the forest. We cut down trees for wood. When we cut down too many trees, the tarantulas have no place to live.

Buster: Gee, I wouldn't like it if someone came and wrecked my house in Elwood City. Maybe spiders aren't so bad after all.



HOW ABOUT YOU?

How do you feel about spiders?
Are you scared of them? Do you like them? Why?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

Rock and Roll

Setting: *Buster is climbing El Dorado Canyon in Boulder, Colorado.*



Buster: Oh, no! I can't move!

Lindsay: Just think about where you're going to go next.

Buster: I can't go up and I can't go down. Send a helicopter!

Lindsay: Take a deep breath and relax. And take your time.

Buster: Okay. All right, maybe I could move my hand here.
And hey—this is a good place for my foot...

Isabel: You're doing a great job. Keep moving.

Buster: Hey, I'm climbing! I'm climbing!

Isabel: Keep going. You're so close!

Buster: I'm climbing like a spider. Straight up the wall to the
top of the mountain! Hey guys—I'm at the top!

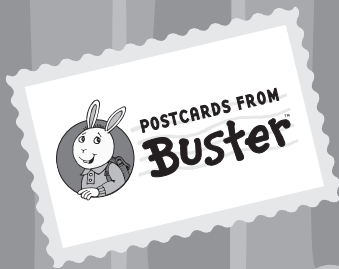
Lindsay: Yay! Great! We knew you could do it. Isn't it beautiful
up here, Buster?

Buster: Yeah, it's great up here. This is amazing. What a day!



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What do you like to do outdoors?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

Hoops and Drums

Setting: *A classroom at Stephen's school on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.*



Buster: Hello, Mr. Starr Weed.

Starr Weed: Hello.

Buster: You have a cool name. Where did it come from?

Starr Weed: It was a name given to me so I could live a long time and become an elder.

Buster: Do you mind if I ask you how old you are?

Starr Weed: I'm 86 years old now and I'll continue on up to 100, I hope!

Buster: 100 years old! I guess your name really works! So, what does an elder actually do?

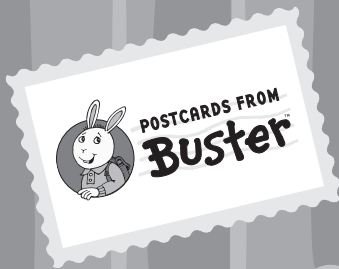
Starr Weed: I teach the kids about their language and their culture, so they can pass our traditions on to the next generation.

Buster: Wow, that sounds like a really important job. Maybe when I'm 86 years old, I'll teach my grandkids to play the accordion, and we'll watch "Bionic Bunny" together!



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What are some of your favorite family traditions?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

A City View

Setting: Aryeh's apartment in New York City.

Aryeh: Come on, Buster. Let me give you a tour of the apartment. This is the living room.

Buster: Wow, check out the view! We're so high up! Hey, what's this for?

Aryeh: Oh! You're looking at the havdalah candle over there, aren't you?

Buster: Yeah. What is it?

Aryeh: We use it for a blessing at the end of Shabbos.

Buster: What's Shabbos?

Aryeh: Every week, on the seventh day, we have a rest day. Because when God created the world, he rested on the seventh day.

Buster: Wow, how do you know that?

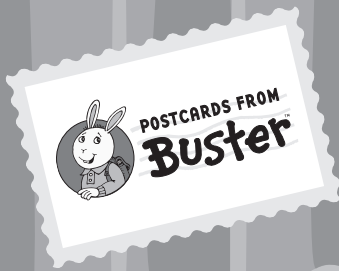
Aryeh: It says it in the Torah—which is the Bible. We don't do work on Shabbos. Not even homework. And we can't touch anything electronic.

Buster: Well, I'm pretty sure I could take a rest from my homework for a day. But it would be tough not being able to open the refrigerator.



HOW ABOUT YOU?

Aryeh and Maddie love living in New York City.
Which do you like best, the city or the country? Why?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

Home Sweet Homes

Setting: *Buster and Athena shop for desserts in a snack shop in Miami, Florida.*



Buster: Thanks for lunch, Athena. I loved all that Cuban food. By the way, do Cubans make desserts?

Athena: Sure.

Buster: Then it's my duty to try them. As research for my mom's article, of course.

Athena: This is *arroz con leche*.

Buster: That looks really good. Is it your favorite?

Athena: Yeah, I love *arroz con leche*. This other one is *dulce de leche*. And this last one is called *tres leches*.

Buster: What does *leche* mean?

Athena: *Leche* is the Spanish word for milk.

Buster: So all these desserts are made with milk?

Athena: Yes, that's right.

Buster: Which dessert are you going to have?

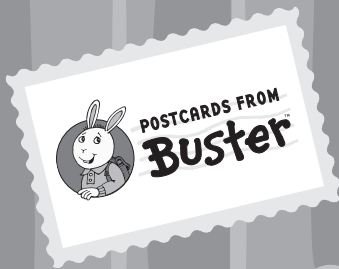
Athena: I'll have the *arroz con leche*.

Buster: I wonder which one I'd like best. I guess I'm just going to have to try them all!



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What's your favorite dessert?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

Riding the Wave

Setting: Joe, Forrest and Coral's dad, is talking to Buster in the family's backyard in Cocoa Beach, Florida.



Buster: Have you always lived in Florida?

Joe: I've lived in Florida almost all my life. I was born in Cocoa Beach, and I still love it here.

Buster: What do you love about it?

Joe: I love being so close to the beach.

Buster: It's cool that you and the kids surf together. How did Forrest and Coral get to be so good?

Joe: Well, they've had a lot of practice. Anyone can do it with the right instruction and some practice.

Buster: Cool! So, do you have any surfing tips for me?

Joe: When you feel the wave coming, push yourself up, and put your weight on your front foot.

Buster: Okay, I think I can remember that...

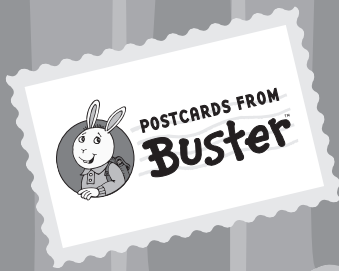
Joe: Oh, Buster, you're going to love surfing. I'm sure you'll do fine.

Buster: I hope so. It sure looks like a lot of fun!



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What are some other fun things you can do at the beach?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER

Buster's Lucky Year

Setting: *Buster meets Hayley and Kary in a food shop in San Francisco's Chinatown.*



Buster: Wow! You guys must really love oranges.

Hayley: Actually, these are tangerines. They bring good luck.

Buster: You eat tangerines for good luck?

Kary: For the Chinese New Year.

Buster: But New Year's was almost a month ago. Aren't you a little late?

Kary: This is the Chinese New Year. It's from the traditional Chinese calendar.

Buster: Cool! So what day is it on?

Hayley: We celebrate for 15 days.

Buster: Whoa! 15 days? That's a whole lot of tangerines.

Kary: Yes. There are many other lucky things, too, like bamboo.

Buster: Why bamboo?

Kary: It brings good luck and long life because bamboo is very strong.

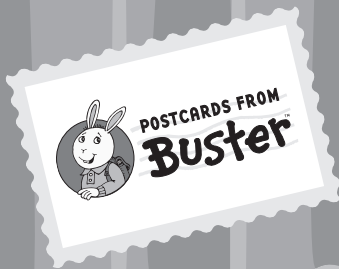
Buster: Well, I could sure use some good luck. Maybe I'll get some tangerines and bamboo for Chinese New Year. Can I come shopping with you?

Hayley: Sure—follow us!



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What is your favorite celebration?
How do you celebrate?



SPOTLIGHT THEATER



Coming Together

Setting: *Buster is hammering a Los Viajeros poster onto a telephone pole in Seattle, Washington, when he meets DeShe, who is hammering a poster onto the other side of the pole.*

Buster: Hey, this pole has an echo! Oh! Who are you?

DeShe: I'm DeShe Brooks. I'm putting up a poster for the show at Cannon House.

Buster: That's what I'm doing! Which group are you with?

DeShe: I'm with a gospel choir. We're called the Total Experience Gospel Choir.

Buster: What kind of songs do you sing?

DeShe: Gospel songs.

Buster (laughing): I kinda figured that. But what *is* gospel?

DeShe: Well, it's kind of like church, except you sing. You don't even have to be a Christian for the songs to inspire you.

Buster: That sounds great.

DeShe: We have choir practice tomorrow. Would you like to come?

Buster: Sure, I'd love to!

DeShe: Great. Meet me at the basketball court.

Buster: Got it. See you there tomorrow!



HOW ABOUT YOU?

What are some of your favorite songs?
Name a song you've learned from someone in your family.