

Run Turkey, Run!

Inspired by a Thanksgiving Finger Play Poem. Revised,
Expanded and Formatted for Readers Theater
By Lois Walker

To find the proper rhythm for this reading, first read-aloud and clap through the sections as you go. Each underlined word or word part falls directly on a beat. As you read, clap on each underlined word, keeping the rhythm steady. Be careful not to read too fast! This is a rehearsal technique and readers will not clap throughout the reading during performance.

CAST: This reading is divided between sets of 5 readers (the five turkeys) and has been formatted for 10 individual readers. You may use a minimum of five readers, or assign other sets of 5 to each verse for a total of 25 readers, depending on how many readers you wish to involve. Simply cross out and change the reader numbers below. All readers join in on the ALL CHORUS between verses and have movement directions during each chorus, so none are left with nothing to do once they have read their solo lines.

POSITIONING: All readers stand in a line facing the audience. (If you use 25 readers, you may have to place them in two rows, then ask the back row readers to change places with the front readers when the time comes for their solo reading parts).

THE READING BEGINS: Verse 1 readers step forward, read their lines, and act out the words as they are spoken. Ask readers to use small movements, facial expressions, gestures, etc. to interpret the words spoken.

Example for Verse 1: Look down and wiggle toes, smile for "feeling fine", look to the sky and look to the ground, twist, prance, etc.

When the chorus is read by ALL, each of the five readers turns back to audience as his/her number is read: "Five, four, three, two, one." On the last "RUN" of the chorus, all five readers turn back to face the audience and point directly at audience, indicating the direction they want the turkeys to RUN!

If using more than 5 readers, Verse 1 readers step back into position, Verse 2 readers step forward, and the reading continues.

THE BUILDING MOVEMENT: No matter how many sets of readers you are using, these same movement directions apply to all sets of 5 readers throughout the reading. After a verse has been read, the readers of that verse continue to move each time "Five, four, three, two, one" is read aloud throughout the piece. This happens all down the line, (Verse 1 readers, Verse 2 readers, Verse 3 readers, etc.) and all turn back to face the audience on the last RUN! of the chorus.

Verse 5 readers are the last to join in the turning and pointing movements and, if you are using 25 readers, only do them once. Verse 1 readers, however, will participate 5 times. At the very end of the piece, all verse readers point to the audience on the word RUN!

COSTUMES: No costumes are necessary, but bits and pieces of turkey attire might be fun and visually interesting.

VERSE 1

- READER 1: Five fat turkeys stand in a line.
 They wiggle their toes and are feeling fine.
- READER 2: They look to the sky,
- READER 3: They look to the ground.
- READER 4: Then they twist and turn and prance around.
- READER 5: But they won't be prancing on Thanksgiving Day,

READER 5: 'Cause when it comes, they'll run away!

ALL: Run turkey, run.
Thanksgiving is fun.
It's fun for most,
But not for the roast!

*(All Verse Readers turn backs to audience, one by one,
as numbers are read below)*

Five, four, three, two, one....

So, run turkey,
Run turkey,
RUN!

(Readers turn back to face audience and point on the word RUN!)

VERSE 2

READER 6: Five fancy turkeys stand in a row.
They ruffle and fluff their wings just so.

READER 7: They look to the left.

READER 8: Then look to the right.

READER 9: When they shake their feathers, they're quite a sight!

READER 10: But they won't show off on Thanksgiving Day,
'Cause when it comes, they'll run away!

ALL: Run turkey, run.
Thanksgiving is fun.
It's fun for most,
But not for the roast!

*(All Verse Readers turn backs to audience, one by one,
as numbers are read below)*

Five, four, three, two, one...

So, run turkey,
Run turkey,
RUN!

(Readers turn back to face audience and point on the word RUN!)

VERSE 3

READER 1: Five proud turkeys stand on a path.
They like themselves, and it makes them laugh!

READER 2: They look at themselves,

READER 3: They look at each other.

READER 4: Each one thinks she's (he's) better than her (his) brother.

READER 5: They will still be proud on Thanksgiving Day,
'Cause when it comes, they'll run away!

ALL: Run turkey, run.
Thanksgiving is fun.
It's fun for most,
But not for the roast!

*(All Verse Readers turn backs to audience, one by one,
as numbers are read below)*

Five, four, three, two, one....

So, run turkey,
Run turkey,
RUN!

(Readers turn back to face audience and point on the word RUN!)

VERSE 4