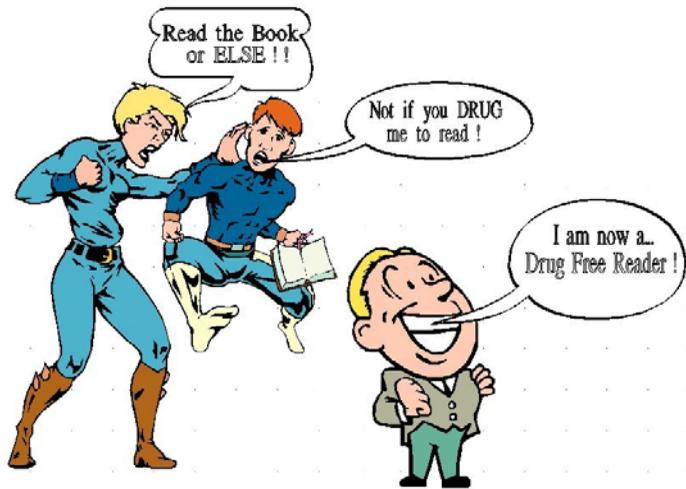


## DRUG FREE READING.COM

Website:

<http://www.drugfreereading.com>

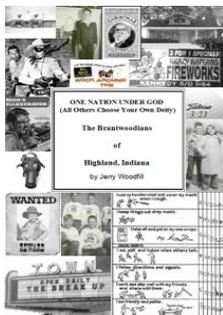
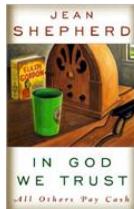
**"I had a drug problem.  
My teacher drug me to reading 'till I got addicted.  
Now I'm a drug free reader!"**



### Audio Dramatization: a Reading Comprehension Tool

Betty and Jerry Woodfill

American copyright law is partially responsible for this work. The author(s) sought engaging collegiate developmental candidates were the vignette Others Pay Cash) fashioned author Jean Shepherd. Having a Hohman (actually Wildcat, one of the co-authors (1944 - age 2 through 1960 - the birthplace of Rider 200 Shot Lightning Rifle." Shepherd's 1940s offered ideal oral versus read humor and entertaining powerful vocabulary an average twenty word-suitable was Shepherd's the Orpheum, an amusing show at the Orpheum Indiana. (actually it's



short stories suitable for reading courses. The initial writings (In God We Trust, All into A Christmas Story by kindred roots with Shepherd as Hammond) High School lived out his formative years, age 17) a mere five miles from Ralphie's fabled "Red Loader Range Model Air delightful anecdotes of the candidates for a study of comprehension. Their content were fraught with building prose lending to list per story. Especially account, Amateur Night at Theatre in Hohman, Hessville which is a suburb

of Hammond, Indiana) The operative concept was to memorize the account, perform it as a dramatic, standup Shep-like performance then immediately test class retention with twenty multiple choice questions. Subsequently, another class section would read the same narrative then answer the test questions without the benefit of either the oral presentation or readable text.

Because Jean Shepherd's stories have endearing charm for a broad age, social, racial, and educational audience, they seemed ideal for the project. However copyright law posed a dilemma. Their use in the classroom in either printed or acted form required copyright approval. Additionally, multiple copies for large classes need be purchased by both students and the project authors.

After reading virtually all of Shepherd's works dealing with his beloved denizens of Hohman, Indiana, the co-author Jerry Woodfill cloned Shepherd's writing, vocabulary, and anecdotes in A Christmas Story fashion. Entitled, similarly to Shep's In God We Trust, the One Nation Under God, Others Choose Your Own Deity has 35 vignettes. These, mostly non-fiction incidents of 5 to 15 pages, could be performed or read to the class. They, along with the comprehension test, could easily be completed in a single 55 minute class period.

After considerable editing of the stories' text, the compellation became a self published 240 page book. In the interim, one of the co-authors became a full time instructor at a local community college teaching developmental reading/writing. Based on her course content, she, as co-author, tuned the content from 12 of the short stories for class application. The selections highlighted (1) inference, (2) critical analysis (3) empathy (4) comprehension (5) mood (6) tone (7) argument and (8) vocabulary. Prior to applying the concept in the classroom, the authors produced audio CDs of each story. This freed, the co-author, a government electrical engineer, from having to perform the oral versions in class. Instructors would benefit having the stories readily available via an inexpensive CD player for class use or simply downloading them from the [www.DrugFreeReading.com](http://www.DrugFreeReading.com) website. Likewise printable versions of each of the twelve stories along with vocabulary and comprehension tests are resident at the website. All twelve are in the public domain offered freely.

### Introductory Prologue for Instructor's Class Use

#### One Nation Under God: Others Choose Your Own Deity



The informational introduction which follows should be read or played prior to conducting the exercises:

Have you seen that classic yuletide Jean Shepherd movie A Christmas Story? It's an infectious experience. Most don't know that the plot is a compilation of author Jean Shepherd's short stories composed about his youth in Hammond, Indiana. Hammond was the actual name of Shep's fictional Hohman. I found the movie and stories so enjoyable that I authored an unpublished book - ONE NATION UNDER GOD as both a tribute to Jean Shepherd's story telling but also as a memoir of the Brantwoodians, my Indiana caste. We were the landed gentry, (80 foot wide lots) compared to Shep's Denizens of the Open Hearth, the steelworkers of Hessville. I deemed them the Hessvillites, as in Amalekites, Jebusites, inglorious tribal names.

Our Brantwoodian kingdom of a half square mile was graced by the boundary of Wicker Park, Highway 6 and 41 and the infamous CREEK. This, being only 5 miles, as the crow flies from Shepland, the Hammond suburb of Hessville, Indiana, seemed a worthy subject of satire. Like Jean Shepherd, I was a Hammond High School Wildcat, only a score of years later. But I hoped to capture Shep's irreverent, lofty style of writing and speaking. Like him, my sentences are oftentimes paragraphs long employing archaic and often self-coined adjectives and ever present mockery of the pompous. I tried to ply exaggeration, understatement, and self-deprecation as does he.

The authors would encourage asking class members to view the video, A CHRISTMAS STORY. The 1983 movie is readily available on DVD or VHS. Though most students have seen the movie, a fresh viewing is helpful to encourage interest in the workbook accounts and questions, especially since the author Jerry Woodfill's stories have similar tone and setting as the movie. Note: Care must be exercised not to show A Christmas Story in violation of copyright laws. However, there is limited permission when specified educational criteria are met which enable a classroom showing:

Under the "Educational Exemption" copyrighted entertainment movies may be shown in a school without copyright permission only if certain criteria are met. For specific requirements, please reference The Copyright Act of 1976, Public Law No. 94-553, 90 stat 2541: Title 17; Section 110(i), or consult your copyright attorney.

Finally, *One Nation Under God (Others Choose Your Own Deity)* treats author Jerry Woodfill's Brantwoodians forbearers in the same way Jean Shepherd characterizes his beloved denizens of the open hearth, the steelworkers of Hammond, Indiana. The study/project begins with the experience of the Nurse's Office. The date was November, 1952, the setting 8728 Woodward Ave., Highland, Indiana, Brantwood suburbia: (Having read the above, the instructor can launch the exercises and resources found below.)

### Operational, Instructional, and Content Solutions

When class numbers are large, the use of copyrighted materials is especially challenging. For the comprehension comparison study, the solution was the creation of a tri-fold booklet composed of both the stories and corresponding tests. (See the accompanying photos) By judiciously selecting font size, each of the 35 stories was fashioned into an 8.5" X 14" duplex tri-fold. Likewise was each of the corresponding question/vocabulary list worksheets duplex printed and tri-folded. Since the presentation of each story was either orally read aloud (or played via the CD player) or read silently, the number of printed copies need only equal the largest class size. Since all tests were multiple

choice, inexpensive notebook paper served as answer sheets.

With most computer printers capable of using 8.5" x 14" paper, duplexing is achieved by simply selecting the word processor's printer's odd page option and page number for one side of the sheet then turning the printed sheet over and selecting the even option with the subsequent even page number. For the cost of two sheets of legal sized paper, a single student has both the text and test for a class session. (*The stories and corresponding tests are available as an on-line digital .pdf file formatted for legal size paper.*)

With copyright and cost challenges dealt with, the author(s)' interaction with the developmental student population began. A number of questions remained, (1) Were the stories compelling enough to hold the hearers or readers' attention? (2) Was the content, based on the author's world view, appropriate [ Indeed, even Shepherd's writings and oral programs can challenge content censors. ] Because of the age of those enrolled in developmental college reading classes ( post high school to adults) this was somewhat mitigated. However, reviewers were asked to comment and edits were made accordingly. This was the process which resulted in the following summary:

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Results Summary: The Approach**

The subjects of the study numbered approximately 60 students of a reading developmental education program of a local community college. A broad range of ages, occupation and educational status comprised the test population.

At the onset, the study approach was conducted as described above with:

(1) subsequent classes and class sessions tested on the orally performed then read versions of the short stories. The oral vs. read scenarios were interchanged between classes to normalize the data.

(2) While the initial stories were performed via an inexpensive audio CD player, plans were for later live oral presentations/recitations by the stories' author. Another goal was to compare a live versus an oral presentation, i.e., performing the story versus listening to the same on an audio CD.

(3) Additionally, effort was undertaken to examine results based on the content of the stories, i.e., the entertainment effect. Colleagues and friends were consulted, asked to read the subject stories and grade their "interest value" respectively. This assessment was to be correlated with oral and read class presentation results.

Comments: At the onset, no grades were given the students in the interest of engendering cooperation. Later plans were for a daily grade to be entered based on the multiple choice comprehension and vocabulary tests.

### **Predictions versus Results**

The authors went beyond the developmental college population, asking friends and other groups to participate in the study. Among the stories used were: *The Spalding 7 and the Titleist 3:23, The Across the Tracks Girl, The Dirty, Disgusting, and Diseased, He'll Blow His Fingers Off, The Nurse's Office, and The Battle of the Alimentary Canal.* Initially, it was thought that the most entertaining of the 35 samples were deemed too long (25+ minutes) for groups to hear or read at a single sitting, in or out of class. However, based on the entertainment content, this was not the case. Additionally, it was discovered that

the prospect of the comprehension test greatly encouraged both listening and reading.

Initially, it was predicted that the audio versions would reap the best retention. However, in some cases, this was not so. A former elementary school reading teacher of minority students (one of the original Brantwoodians) listened to the complete set of audios then read the published version. Her assessment was that the published version was altogether more engaging. Additionally, a friend of the authors, an excellent grammarian, scored poorly on the comprehension test after hearing one of the audio tracks. Puzzled, the authors sought an explanation. "I'm a sight not an audio learner explained their friend." Obviously, this was an issue that would significantly skew results, a factor needing attention as the study progressed.

### **Future Plans**

The co-authors chose to install the stories and audio files on-line at the website [www.spaceacts.com/dfr\\_web\\_site/dfrhome.htm](http://www.spaceacts.com/dfr_web_site/dfrhome.htm) as well as install the content on a DVD replicating the website. The publishing approach cloned that innovated by Jerry Woodfill for NASA space education public domain resources. This would benefit the Developmental Education user community in keeping with the two fold objective for the study: (1) to provide public domain non-copyrighted resources for developmental education use and (2) to make available inexpensive reproducible class materials.

### **Printable/Downloadable Resources for Class Use**

The .pdf printable story files were (*and are*) formatted for 8.5 X 14 inch legal size paper. By selecting the desired narrative and corresponding questions, the stories can be used in a classroom setting via printed copies for each student. Included are answer sheets so that the legal sized copies can be reused for each class with only the answer sheets expendable. By simply selecting the page desired, placing legal size paper in the printer, an instructor can print the number of copies corresponding to the largest class. By flipping the copies over, selecting the page number of the opposite side of the desired hand-out along with selecting the same number of copies as before, the opposite side of the story, question or answer sheet is printed.

All the .pdf and audio files are accessed from the project DVD or the on-line html-web-based page links to the audio performances as well as the .pdf printable narratives, exercises, and answer sheets. Additionally, the entire content is available at the web-site as a .pdf printable instructor's workbook. Likewise are the audio readings accessible at the website as either .mp3 or .wav files.

### **About the Co-authors: Betty and Jerry Woodfill**

Betty and Jerry Woodfill have been married for 43 years. They have two married sons, Jared, an attorney, and Matt, a pastor. While Betty is from Nacogdoches, Texas, Jerry is a native of Indiana. Attending Rice University on a basketball scholarship, Jerry met Betty, an elementary school teacher, after graduating as an electrical engineer and joining NASA.

Betty Woodfill entered the field of developmental education as an

adjunct instructor at San Jacinto College (Central) in Pasadena, Texas. After serving 14 years in an adjunct capacity, she was selected as a full time faculty member of the San Jacinto Language Skills department in 2006. In that capacity, Betty participated in a number of national and state convention gleaned ideas about improving student comprehension, retention and writing skills.

Simultaneously, Jerry continued his work at NASA which began in the mid 1960s as the Apollo Program warning system engineer. However, in recent years, he devoted a portion of his time to educational outreach and resource development for the space agency. By conducting this study comparing oral comprehension/retention to read comprehension/retention, the couple was able to combine Betty's reading/writing experience with Jerry's speaking, writing and educational outreach interests.

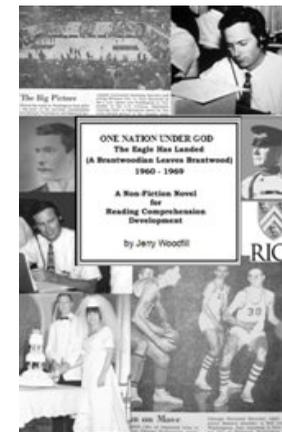
### **Table of Contents**

Below is the story list chosen for the Retention/Comprehension Study.

- 1. The Nurse's Office: Comprehension Questions: 25:56
- 2. The Across the Tracks Girl: Comprehension Questions: 17:51
- 3. The Dirty, Disgusting and Diseased: Comprehension Questions: 27:57
- 4. What Dad Never Taught Me: Comprehension Questions: 30:28
- 5. He'll Blow His Finger Off: Comprehension Questions: 9:51
- 6. The Ledger: Comprehension Questions : 20:33
- 7. The Spalding 7 and Titleist 3:23: Comprehension Questions: 16:58
- 8. The Brantwoodian Villain: Comprehension Questions: 12:55
- 9. The Rock 'n Roll Hall of Shame: Comprehension Questions: 11:15
- 10. The Town Theator: Comprehension Questions: 17:50
- 11. Battle of the Alimentary Canal: Comprehension Questions: 10:58
- 12. The Report Card: Comprehension Questions:25:17

### *Introduction of a Novel to Developmental Readers:*

After employing the above comprehension/vocabulary resources, developmental reading instructors may want to encourage student novel reading. The novel featured to the below left is offered as a resource for this purpose. It is in the public domain and can be accessed at the *Drug Free Reading* website, ([www.drugfreereading.com](http://www.drugfreereading.com)), as a public domain printable or electronic accessible non-fiction book.



For comments and questions, contact the authors at:

[drugfreereading@drugfreereading.com](mailto:drugfreereading@drugfreereading.com)