Amari's Shining Moment

By The Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School
Illustrated by John Floyd Jr.
How you read with children makes a difference, for a lifetime.

A book can transform a child’s life forever. By reading this book at least three times, you help children build language and vocabulary, engage in meaningful conversation, nurture critical thinking, and create powerful, determined learners and problem solvers.

How to transform storytime into the ultimate learning experience for each and every child.

**1st READ**

**FOCUS ON EVENTS**

The first time you read, use think-alouds to teach vocabulary, key events, and the story problem. Use voices, expressions, tone, and pace to help bring the story to life.

Tips for reading:

- Point to words
- Act out words
- Tell child-friendly definitions
- Use think-alouds
- Ask open-ended questions

The first time you read, use think-alouds to teach vocabulary and characters’ thoughts and feelings related to key events. Remember to use expressions in your voice to bring the story to life.

**2nd READ**

**FOCUS ON EMOTIONS**

The second time you read, use think-alouds to teach vocabulary and characters’ thoughts and feelings related to key events. Remember to use expressions in your voice to bring the story to life.

- Use think-alouds to help children understand important parts of the story.
- Ask open-ended questions

Ask your child, “How do you think he feels?” or “What do you think she feels?”

- Tie the book to other parts of the day
- Plan centers and small group activities connected to the story that encourage children to use vocabulary from the book.

**3rd READ**

**CHILD TELLS THE STORY**

The third time you read, encourage children to tell you about the key events and key characters in the story. Ask them important questions and highlights about key events and characters in the story.

- Ask your child, “How do you think he feels?” or “What do you think she feels?”
- Tie the book to other parts of the day
- Plan centers and small group activities connected to the story that encourage children to use vocabulary from the book.

**Rollins Center for Language & Literacy**

This book is intended to be read to children ages 3-6. Please feel free to help your older children attempt to read the story to you. Enjoy!
Look, Amari has a new friend. I bet they enjoy spending time together. I wonder what kind of adventures they will have.

I remember that Andres felt very nervous about performing in front of a crowd. I wonder how Amari encouraged him to be brave. Let's read and find out.

Amari was confident that Andres would overcome his fear. I wonder how she was so sure.

Before you Read this Book, Say…

1st Read: Look, Amari has a new friend. I bet they enjoy spending time together. I wonder what kind of adventures they will have.

2nd Read: I remember that Andres felt very nervous about performing in front of a crowd. I wonder how Amari encouraged him to be brave. Let's read and find out.

3rd Read: Amari was confident that Andres would overcome his fear. I wonder how she was so sure.
“Amari, where are you off to?” asked Mama.
“I’m going next door to Andres’ house to figure out what we’re doing today. You know we do something together every Saturday!” Amari said as she rushed out the door.

Andres’ grandmother, Abuela, opened the door. “Amari, you are up and about early!” she exclaimed.
Andres ran to greet Amari. “What do you want to do today?” asked Amari. “Are we going to the library like we usually do?”

“Well, Abuela wants to take us somewhere special,” replied Andres.

Abuela smiled, “I will call your mom and invite your family.”

“Where are we going? Where are we going?” Amari asked excitedly.

“You’ll just have to wait and see. We’ll leave in an hour, so go home and get prepared for our adventure,” encouraged Abuela.
Amari raced through her front door, excited to share the news with Mama and Will.

“Mama! Will! Abuela is taking us somewhere special!” gasped Amari.

“We already know,” chuckled Mama.

“Go grab your backpack, and I will throw your sunscreen and hat in.”
Amari and Andres were anxious to know where they were going. When Abuela pulled the van into a parking space, Andres and Amari recognized where they were.

Abuela backed out of the garage, and Amari and Andres ran hurriedly to the van.

"Piedmont Park!" Andres shouted.

"There are so many people! What's going on here?" asked Amari.

"It's an event called the Dogwood Festival that takes place every spring," explained Abuela.
Amari and Andres’ eyes grew wide as they looked at the different sights in amazement. They saw booths full of art, food trucks with yummy smells wafting out of them, musicians playing a variety of instruments, and dogs running after frisbees in a special tournament.
“There are just so many things to see!” Amari said to Andres. Amari pulled on Will’s arm as he read the festival program and map.

“Amari, there’s a kid’s village,” Will explained.

“What happens there?” asked Amari.

“Well, there is a special performance of the play The Shoemaker and the Elves that starts in ten minutes! Let’s check it out.”
They found seats in the crowded grass in front of the outdoor stage. “Mama, what’s a play?” asked Amari.

“A play is when people act out a story for others to enjoy,” she answered. Andres glanced around. There were so many people filling the park. “It sure takes a lot of courage to perform in front of this many people. I would be so nervous on that stage,” he thought.
After the play, Amari was full of questions.

“Mama, have you ever been in a play? How did they make those costumes?”
“How could they talk loud enough for everyone to hear?”
“How could they remember what to say?”

Mama laughed, “Hold on, Amari. I can only answer one question at a time.”

As her dad tucked her into bed that night, Amari lay thinking about how brave the actors had been.

“Amari, Mama told me you saw The Shoemakers and the Elves today.
We have a copy of that book, so I thought we could read it,” Dad said.
He pulled a colorful book off the very top shelf of Amari’s bookcase.

Use think-alouds:
I saw that Amari was remembering all the things about the play that she saw. She then asked me if she could hear that part of her day.
The next morning, Amari skipped next door to show Andres the book her dad had found.

“Look, it’s The Shoemaker and the Elves! Just like we saw at Piedmont Park!”

Andres flipped through the pages, admiring the illustrations and recognizing familiar scenes. Amari had an idea. “What if we put on a play?” exclaimed Amari. “We could use the book to help us remember what happened!”

“I could never perform in front of people. I would be so nervous, Amari,” Andres admitted.

As Amari kept explaining the idea, it did sound fun. Andres agreed to help put on the play.
Amari ran home to tell her family about the idea. “Will, can you help us construct a stage like the one we saw at the Dogwood Festival?”

“Sure, meet me in the backyard,” he said.

Will arrived in the backyard with an armful of old wood, a hammer, and nails.

“Look! I found these strings of lights in the garage! We could hang them up above our stage!” said Amari.

“I was thinking we could use this box to make our backdrop!” added Andres.

“Once we make the stage then you can paint it!” Amari’s Dad added.
Andres bit his lip and sighed as he hung the lights on the stage. “Are you okay, Andres?” asked Amari.

Andres shrugged his shoulders and continued to string lights on the stage.

All week, Amari and Andres continued to prepare for the big day. On Friday afternoon, they finished the stage and picked out old shoes and tools to be the props. Mama helped them design costumes. Everything was ready!
Andres' lip trembled. “I am excited, but I am scared to be in front of a crowd,” Andres explained. Abuela came around the table and gave Andres a big hug.

“It’s okay, Andres. Even the best performers get a little nervous before a big performance. It’s called stage fright. I would always get nervous before I sang in front of people.”

Amari looked up at Abuela. “You sang in front of people?” she asked.

“Absolutely! I love to sing, and I was part of many singing groups!” Abuela explained. “I always say that what makes you feel more confident is practice, practice, practice! So, let’s practice!”

That night, Amari had dinner at Abuela and Andres' house. Amari noticed Andres was unusually quiet. “Aren’t you excited about tomorrow, Andres?”
Andres arranged a pretend audience on the living room floor.

Amari giggled. “That’s not a real crowd, Andres.”

“Well, we will have to use our imaginations.”

Amari and Andres practiced *The Shoemaker and the Elves* over and over again for Abuela and their imaginary audience.

The next morning, they set up chairs and blankets just before the large crowd gathered. Will stood behind the curtain with Amari and Andres and helped them into their costumes. Andres peeked from behind the curtain and shuddered.

“Remember that we’ve had plenty of practice, and you know what to do, Andres,” Amari encouraged.
Will hugged Andres and said, “Do you want to know what I do when I get nervous?”

Andres nodded his head.

“I do star jumps to remind me that I am a star, and I can do anything I put my mind to.” As he jumped into the air, he shouted “I am a star!” At the same time, he reached his arms out wide above his head and kicked out his legs.

Andres and Amari laughed. Will looked so silly.

“Now you try,” encouraged Will.

Andres began to jump into the air over and over again, shouting “I’m a star! I’m a star! I’m a star!”

All the laughing made him feel better.

“Ready?” asked Amari.
“Ready!” said Andres. They took a deep breath as Will pulled back their curtain. The play began! At last, they were performing like the actors in Piedmont Park!

When the play was complete, the crowd went wild. Andres and Amari beamed. They had performed courageously even though it was scary being in front of a big crowd. Maybe one day they would even perform at the Dogwood Festival.

Use think-alouds:
I bet that Amari and Andres feel proud of themselves for completing their production. I know that Andres is especially proud of himself for being able to overcome his fear of performing in front of people. And Amari should feel proud because she helped her friend overcome his fear.
The next Saturday morning, Andres and Amari returned to the library. When they left, their arms were so full of books they could barely carry them. When they got home, they spread the books out on Abuela’s living room floor.

Amari looked at her friend. “What book should we act out next?”

Do more with the book

• Read other books about being brave and having courage with your child. You can find many of these at your local library. Here are some examples: Owl Babies by Martin Waddell, Alexander and the Wind Up Mouse by Leo Lionni, Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman, and The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn.

• Encourage your child to talk about a time when he or she felt nervous or afraid. Discuss ways to overcome fears. Now have them share these ways to overcome fears with a sibling or friend.

• Visit your local park and discuss similarities between the local park scenery and the scenery discussed in the story.

• Encourage your child to talk about a time when they felt like they experienced a “shining moment.”

• Practice doing star jumps with your child throughout the day.

• Research plays for children in your area, and take a family trip to view the performance.

• Choose a book from home, school, or your local library to act out.

• Write and decorate invitations to friends and family to view your play. Or, invite special stuffed animals, dolls, or figurines to watch the performance!

• Create scenery and costumes for your play from materials around your house.

• Decorate paper plates to make masks for your performance. Help your child use a hole puncher or scissors to cut a hole on each side and tie together to hold the mask onto his or her head. These masks are a perfect costume for animal characters.

• Transform a cardboard box into a castle, cave, or skyscraper to use in your play by painting, coloring, or gluing different materials onto the outside. Cardboard box creations make great scenery for plays!

Put on a play like Amari and Andres

Summary: The Shoemaker and the Elves

The Shoemaker and the Elves is a story about a shoemaker who couldn’t make enough money to take care of his family, no matter how hard he worked. One day he had only enough leather to make one more pair of shoes. Before going to bed that night, he left the leather out with plans to make one more pair of shoes the next day. When he woke up, he saw a beautiful pair of shoes already made. Someone came into the shop and was so impressed with the well-made shoes that he paid more than expected. Now, the shoemaker had enough money to make two more pairs of shoes. Every morning new shoes were waiting for him. Customers continued to come in and pay more than expected for the shoes. Because he was able to sell these shoes for good money, he gave away some shoes and money to help other people in their town. One night, the shoemaker and his wife decided to stay up to see who could be making these shoes. At midnight, they saw two elves in tattered clothes. They watched as the elves worked to make the shoes. As soon as the sun came up, the elves ran away. The next day, the shoemaker and his wife talked about how grateful they were, made them new clothes, and left them on the workbench. The elves were excited about the new clothes but never returned again.
Mayor’s Summer Reading Club 2015

Alliance Theatre
www.alliancetheatre.org

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
www.aecf.org

Atlanta Braves
www.atlantabraves.com

Atlanta Dream
www.atlantasports.com

Atlanta Families Awards
www.atlantafamilies.org

Atlanta Police Department
www.atlantapd.org

Atlanta Public Schools
www.atlanta.spsd.us

Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
www.assd.org

Atlanta Speech School
www.atlantaspeechschool.org

Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System
www.afpls.org

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta
www.bgcm.org

Carl E. Sanders Family YMCA at Buckhead
www.ymcaatlanta.org

The Children’s Museum of Atlanta
www.childrensmuseumatlanta.org

City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office
www.atlanta.gov

City of Atlanta Parks and Recreation:
Centers of Hope
www.atlantaga.gov

Clarkston Early Learning Network
www.cflection.org

DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs
www.dekalbcountyga.gov/parks

Emmanu House
www.emmanuouseatlanta.org

Endurance Project Management

Fernbank Museum of Natural History
www.fernbankmuseum.org

Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy
www.ferstfoundation.org

Friends of Adair Park
www.adairpark.com

Friends of Reverend James Orange Park at
Oakland City

GEARAS: Georgia Early Education Alliance
for Ready Students
www.gearas.org

Georgia STAND-UP
www.georgiatastandup.org

Georgia State University, Department of
Middle and Secondary Education
www.mse.education.gsu.edu

High Museum of Art
www.high.org

Horizons Atlanta
www.horizonsatlanta.org

Jumpstart for Young Children
www.jys.org

The Junior League of Atlanta
www.atlanta.org

Lillian Cooper Shepard Park
Mesa Capital Partners
www.mesacap.com

Pope Turner Make Great Learners, Inc.
www.pageturnersgreatlearners.org

Park Pride
www.parkpride.org

PNC BANK
www.pnc.com

re:imagine_ATL
www.reimagineATL.com

Reach Out and Read Georgia
www.readingandreading.org/georgia

Sheltering Arms
www.shelteringarmsforkids.com

United Way of Greater Atlanta
www.unitywayatlanta.org

U.S. Attorney’s Office (NDGA)
www.justice.gov/usao/gan/community

The Wren’s Nest
www.wrensnest.org

More Information

www.atlantaspeechschool.org

www.geears.org
Amari is back with a new adventure! After seeing a play at Atlanta's Dogwood Festival, Amari and her friend and neighbor, Andres, are inspired to put on their own play. What challenges will these friends have to overcome as they get ready for their big performance?

Amari shares her strength and encourages her friend to overcome his stage fright as they work together to bring books to life on the stage. Amari's Shining Moment also includes ideas for adults to use while reading. These ideas will build children's language and vocabulary skills and prepare them to be on a path to “read to learn” by 3rd grade.