

SPEED RACER

He's a natural behind the wheel — but can Speed win when others won't race by the rules? Based on the new action movie inspired by the Japanese cartoon series.



>>> Fluency Workout

This year, we gave you several tips for reading aloud smoothly.

Remember to:

- Mark your parts
- Practice your Word Workout words
- Read slowly
- Pause at commas and periods
- Read ? and ! with expression

What else can you do to read this play more smoothly? List two things you learned this year:

1. _____
2. _____

Enjoy the play!

>>> Characters

Sign up for the character you're going to read. *Starred characters are major roles.

*Narrator 1 (N1)

*Narrator 2 (N2)

*Speed Racer, a young race-car driver

*Pops Racer, Speed's dad, a builder of race cars

Mom Racer, Speed's mom

Spritle Racer, Speed's younger brother

Trixie, Speed's girlfriend

*Arnold Royalton Esquire, a powerful race-car-company owner

Taejo Togokahn, a race-car driver

*Racer X, a mysterious, masked race-car driver

Cruncher, a hired thug

Inspector Detector, an officer of the law

Announcer 1 (A1)

Announcer 2 (A2)



Scene 1

N1: Welcome to a fantasy world where cars race superfast and do amazing tricks.

N2: At Thunderhead Raceway, vehicles zoom around the track. Speed Racer is in the lead.

A1: He may be young, but no one can outrun this kid!

A2: He doesn't race for the big race-car companies...yet.

A1: A win tonight could qualify him for the Grand Prix.

A2: Let's hope he doesn't make the same mistakes as his older brother, Rex Racer...

N1: Speed drives his white car wildly fast. Yet, he's calm and

totally in control.

A1: Holy moly, he's going for the record that Rex set eight years ago!

N2: The crowd roars in appreciation. Among the fans are Speed's mom, dad, younger brother, Spritle, and girlfriend Trixie, a helicopter pilot.

N1: Memories of Rex rush through Speed's mind. He remembers his brother teaching him to race...going on trial for cheating...dying in a crash.

N2: Speed feels as if his brother Rex is with him as he zooms toward the finish line. At the last second, he decides to take his

foot off the gas pedal.

A2: And... the record still stands. What a race! This kid is going to be good!

N1: Meanwhile, a mysterious man watches the race on TV.

Racer X: He's going to be the best, if they don't destroy him first.

Scene 2

N2: The next morning, Speed comes into the kitchen.

Mom: Good morning, Champ. Breakfast is ready.

N1: As Speed dives into his pancakes, the doorbell rings. A well-dressed man hands Pops a

box of expensive cigars.

Royalton: I admire your work, Mr. Racer. The cars you build for Racer Motors are stunning.

Pops: Uh, thanks, but who are you?

Royalton: I am Arnold Royalton Esquire, president and chairman of Royalton Industries. I'm here to meet Speed. (*Just then, Speed joins them.*) Young man, you are a racing genius.

Spritle: Speed's not interested in driving for you or any other big sponsor!

Royalton: Of course not! I wouldn't dream of separating Speed from Racer Motors. I just want to **propose** a partnership between your amazing racing family and mine. Please visit my factory tomorrow.

N2: Speed and his family agree.

Scene 3

N1: The next morning, the Racer family tours Royalton's impressive race-car factory and training center.

N2: Meanwhile, an unmarked truck cruises down an empty highway. Inside, a thug beats up a young Japanese man.

Cruncher: I thought we had a deal, Taejo. You're supposed to lose races, not win them. Maybe this will help you remember the next time you race.

N1: Cruncher pulls Taejo's hand toward a tank of flesh-eating fish. Suddenly, something hits the truck.

N2: A black car driven by the masked Racer X forces the truck to pull over.

Cruncher: Aargh! Him again!

N1: Cruncher kicks Taejo out of the truck as it **swerves** away.

Scene 4

N2: Moments later, Taejo climbs into Racer X's car.

Taejo: Thank you. You saved my life.

Racer X: You thought you could take on the big sponsors. You can't. Not without help.

Taejo: I don't know what you're talking about.

Racer X: You won the Cortex race. You weren't supposed to. You did it to save Togokahn Motors.

Taejo: The company has belonged to my family for five generations.

Racer X: And now Royalton, Cruncher's boss, wants it. He

wants you to lose races, so the price of your company falls. Then he can buy it cheap. The only way you'll ever stop these people is to bring them to **justice**.

Taejo: Justice? That's an empty dream.

N1: Racer X pulls over.

Racer X: Get out!

Taejo: I'll see you at the Fuji race.

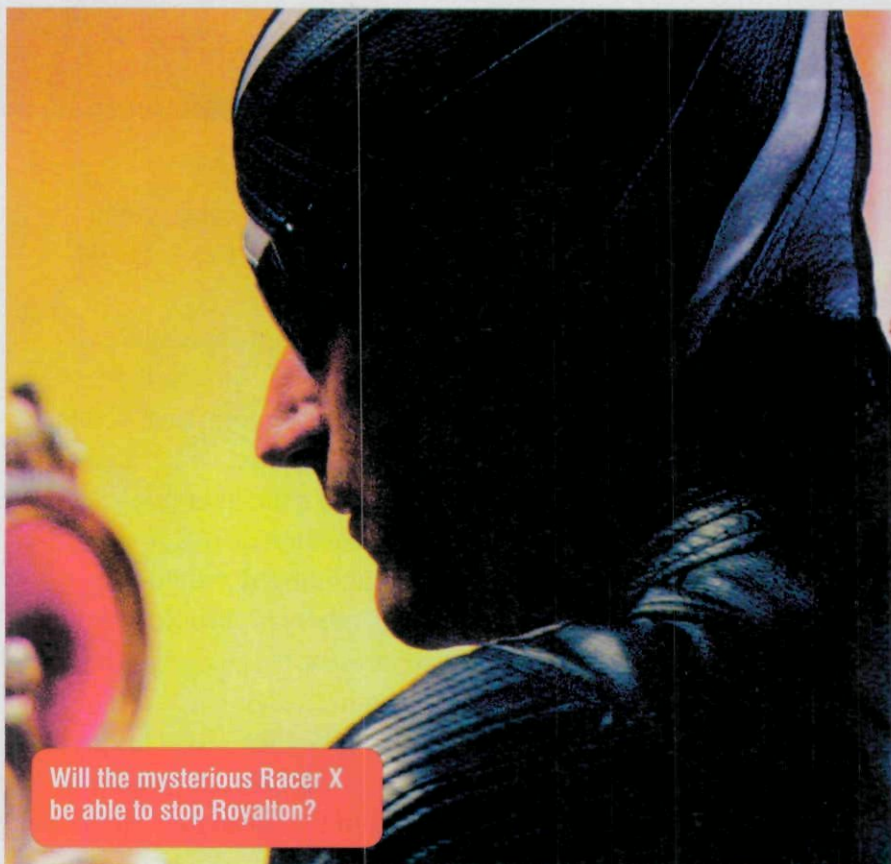
Racer X: When you lose, if you can still dial a phone, call this number.

N2: Taejo reads the name on the card: Chief Inspector Detector.

Scene 5

N1: Later, Royalton makes a call from his office.

Royalton: I'm depending on you to take care of this,





Speed and his family say no to Royalton's offer. For them, car racing isn't about money and power. It's about building amazing, fast cars and racing them with skill.

Cruncher. I want Togokahn Motors now. And cheap!

N2: Royalton sees Speed through his glass door and slams the phone down.

Royalton (sweetly): Speed, come in! Take a seat! Are you ready to say yes?

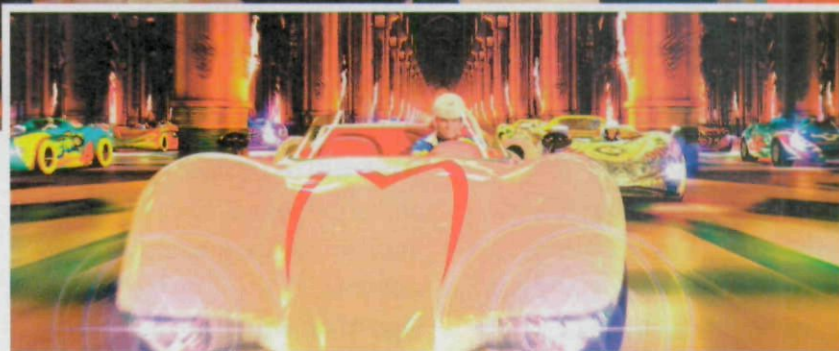
Speed: Racing means everything to my family, Mr. Royalton.

N1: Royalton nods and smiles.

Speed: After my brother died, my dad didn't work on a car for a year. Then one night, we watched an old recording together—the 1943 Grand Prix. We realized racing is in our blood.

Royalton: Ah, yes. I remember that race. Burns and Stickleton, duking it out.

Speed: I appreciate your offer,



sir, but this deal's not for me.

N2: Royalton's smile freezes into a **sneer**.

Royalton: You poor, **naive** fool. Don't you know that racing is all about money and power? Ben Burns knew he was going to win in 1943. The sponsors chose the winner before the race, as we do every year.

Speed: What? No!

Royalton: Oh, yes. You won't last long in this game without me. Now, sign that contract!

Speed (walking out): If that's your idea of racing, you can keep it.

Scene 6

N1: A few days later, Speed competes in the Fuji race.

N2: On the third lap, Speed pulls ahead of Taejo. Suddenly, a gray car purposely slams against him, sending all three cars spinning. Speed barely escapes with his life.

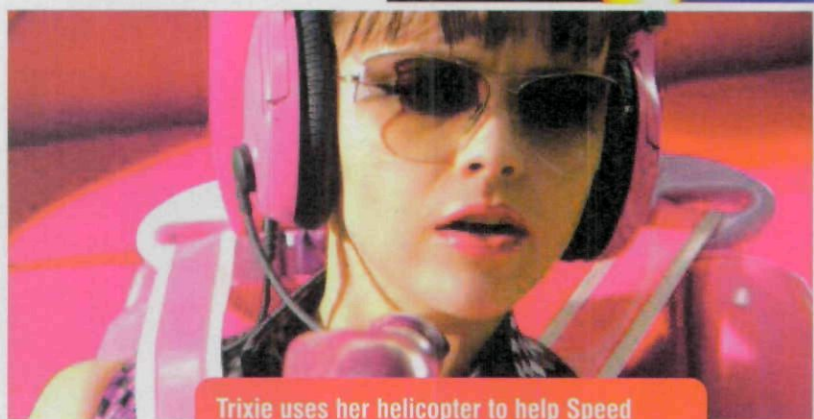
N1: The next day, Spritle reads from *The Racing News*.

Spritle (reading): Did Speed Racer use an illegal move during the Fuji race? The Racer family is giving the sport a dirty name!

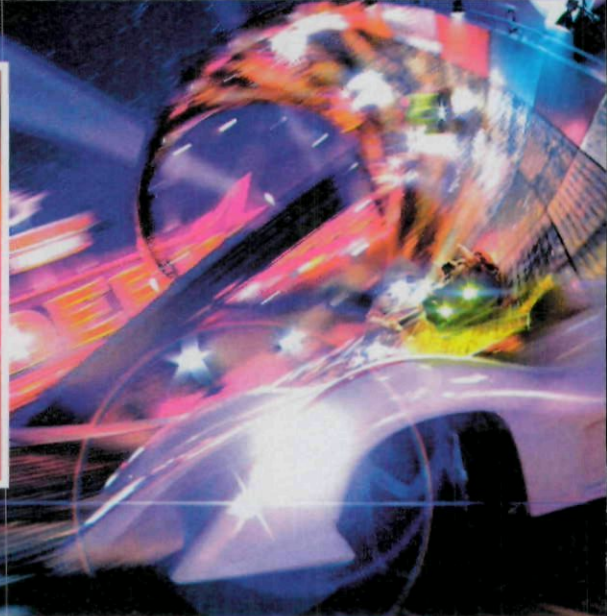
Speed (angry): Royalton said this would happen if I didn't

WORD WORKOUT

pro•pose: offer, suggest | **swerves:** turns suddenly | **jus•tice:** fairness, judgment in court
sneer: a hateful look | **na•ive:** too trusting



Trixie uses her helicopter to help Speed avoid danger during the Casa Cristo Classic.



drive for him. He owns the other drivers, and the media.

Pops: They tried the same thing with Rex. The truth will come out.

Speed: Don't be naive, Pops.

N2: Speed goes to his room. He tears the Ben Burns poster from his wall. His mom knocks on the door and opens it.

Mom: Are you OK?

Speed (sadly): Maybe racing is just a business.

Mom: What you do behind the wheel of a race car has nothing to do with business. It's your **passion**. We'll figure this out—together.

Scene 7

N1: The doorbell rings. It's Racer X and Inspector Detector.

Inspector: May we talk to Speed? It's important.

N2: Everyone gathers in the living room.

Inspector: We've been after Royalton for years for fixing races, but we don't have the evidence we need to **convict** him in a court of law.

N1: Speed studies Racer X carefully. He's troubled by how much the masked man looks like Rex. He continues to listen.

Inspector: Racer X works closely with us. He's our greatest weapon against these **villains**.

Spritle: Why does he always wear that mask?

Inspector: If you knew his identity, you might become targets for his enemies.

N2: Spritle gulps.

Speed: So, what do you want with me?

Inspector: Taejo has a file with enough information to put Royalton and Cruncher behind bars for years. But he won't give us the file unless we help him save his family's company.

Speed: How?

Inspector: There is a race coming up that Taejo believes he can win.

Spritle: You mean the Casa Cristo!

Inspector: Taejo **insists** on having Speed and X on his team, or the deal's off.

Pops: I lost one son to that death trap. I won't lose another!

Scene 8

N1: Despite Pops' warnings, Speed enters the race. He and Trixie fly to Casa Cristo in her pink helicopter.

A1: Welcome to the 82nd Casa Cristo Classic! This race **spans** 5,000 kilometers of the most winding and **treacherous** roads ever raced.

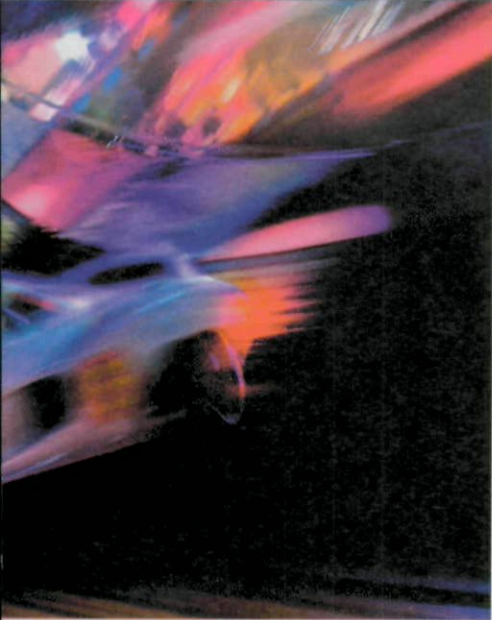
A2: The winning team earns an invitation to the Grand Prix!

N2: The starting gun fires. The race cars explode forward. Speed, Racer X, and Taejo make their way up a steep cliff.

N1: Trixie's helicopter flies overhead, following the action. She radios the team.

Trixie: Watch out for the Yen-Che team. I think they're up to something.

N2: A Yen-Che driver pulls in front of Speed. He hits a secret button, and a front tire explodes. His car swerves, sending Speed, then Taejo dangerously close to the cliff's edge.



N1: Just then, Racer X slams into Yen-Che's rear bumper. He uses jacks to lift and flip Yen-Che's car out of the way.

A1: Looks like Taejo's team means business!

Scene 9

N2: After two days of dangerous driving, Speed's team wins the race. They return home.

N1: Racer X finds Speed working on his car.

Racer: I have bad news. Taejo tricked us. He won't hand over the file on Royalton. He just used our win to drive up the value of Togokahn Motors.

Speed: You mean, he sold out to Royalton?

N2: Racer X nods. Speed fights his frustration.

Speed: Tell me the truth, you're Rex, aren't you?

N1: Racer X pulls off his mask.

Speed: You—you're not Rex. Your face is different.

Racer: I'm sorry, Speed. Your brother would be proud of you.

Speed: For what?

Racer X: For trying to make a difference.

Speed: What good did it do? Racing hasn't changed, and it never will!

Racer X: Perhaps you're right. Racing may never change. But what really matters is that we don't let racing change us.

Speed: If you know so much, why don't you tell me why I should keep driving?

Racer X: Sorry. That's for you

to figure out. I just hope when you do, I'm there to see it.

N2: Racer X leaves. Speed tells Pops the bad news.

Speed: It's all a racket, Pops. Even the Grand Prix—the sponsors decide who wins.

Pops: With your skill and passion, maybe this year will be different.

N1: He hands Speed an envelope. It is Speed's invitation to the Grand Prix. Speed doesn't know what to do. Then, he thinks about what Racer X said. Speed smiles.



Speed is uncertain about his future as a race-car driver. Will he make the right choice?

Think About It

What do you think happens next in the story? Is Speed's racing career over, or will he race in the Grand Prix? If Speed does enter the race, will Royalton's drivers be able to take him out with their cars' dirty tricks? Or, will Speed expose Royalton's cheating ways and win the Grand Prix? What surprises might Racer X have up his sleeve?

Write your own ending to this story and e-mail it to us at actionmag@scholastic.com. To find out what happens to Speed, see the movie, due in theaters on May 9.

WORD WORKOUT

pas•sion: great love | **con•vict:** prove guilty | **vil•lains:** mean criminals

in•sists: demands firmly | **spans:** reaches across | **treach•er•ous:** very dangerous

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