

**ENGLISH PROBLEMS IN
THE SOLVING,
FOR THE JUNIOR AND
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS**

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English problems in the solving, for the junior and senior high schools by Sarah E. Simons

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SARAH E. SIMONS

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ENGLISH PROBLEMS IN THE SOLVING

For the Junior and Senior High Schools

BY

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HIGH SCHOOLS



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TO THE
AMERICAN

PREFACE

This book grew out of a course of lectures on the teaching of English, delivered in the Summer Schools of Johns Hopkins University for the years 1918 and 1919. In response to the request from some of my students that our discussions of the problems confronting the English teacher should take on a more or less permanent form these lectures are now being published.

Certain additional chapters are included because of the peculiar significance they hold for all teachers of English. It gives me great pleasure to state that they are the work of two of my Washington colleagues, Miss Emily F. Sleman and Miss Anne McColm, both teachers in the Central High School. I wish to express to them here not only my great indebtedness for allowing their contributions to appear in this volume, but also my sincere appreciation of their very material aid in the organization of this book.

My thanks are due to Mr. James Fleming Hoscic, Mr. Samuel Thurber, and Mr. H. G. Paul for the privilege of quoting freely from their respective periodicals: *The English Journal*; *The English Leaflet*; and the *Bulletin* of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English.

SARAH E. SIMONS

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CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARIES

The Junior High School. Definition and Aims. Minimum Essentials for Junior High-School English. The Separation of Composition and Literature. The Problem of the Start. The Problem of the Assignment. The Problem of Correlation.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The Junior High School is now an accepted fact in the organization of school systems all over the country. It has come into existence as a result of scientific study of the best means of adjusting the school to the physical and psychological development of the child.

For the most part, this new scheme of organization has stressed economy of time, better mastery of subject-matter through departmental teaching, early election, and subject promotion. In nearly every case in which the subject-matter of the junior high school has been discussed, little or nothing has been said under any of these heads regarding the teaching of English in the junior high school. Naturally enough, perhaps, in its beginnings the new school would be concerned with the two entirely new things which the system brought with it—the study of languages in the seventh and eighth grades and the introduction of vocational subjects. The fact that the teaching of English is continuous from the first grade through the senior high school has, perhaps, made it seem unnecessary to make any changes in method. But this new arrangement does mean and should mean a re-examination of

method and of choice of subject-matter in the teaching of English in the junior high school.

Mr. Charles S. Pendleton says: "I believe that it (the junior high school) has come to stay, and I believe still further that it requires us to consider, not merely a new kind of teaching of English but two new kinds."¹ Certainly, if the difference in the physical, mental, and psychological equipment of the child is so divergent in the pre-adolescent age from that of the adolescent as to necessitate a reorganization of the whole school system, some very definite account of those differences must be taken in planning and teaching the course in English. Those of us who have taught in the four-year high-school course have always noticed the essential difference in the attitude and interests of the first-year pupils as compared with those of the upper years. We have felt, too, the difficulty in bridging over the gap between the grade-school preparation in English and the first year of high-school English. With the junior high school in operation we have the opportunity and the duty of planning more definitely to adapt the work in English to the particular needs of these three very important years in the junior high school.

Before formulating a definite course for these three years let us see in general what our aim should be, and what advantages this new scheme of organization will bring to the teaching of English. To take up the second point first, it ought to mean the possibility of setting a standard of achievement at the end of the junior high-school course which will make the entrance preparation for the senior high school much more

1. From "The New Teacher of English" in the *English Journal*, Nov. 1917.