

THE PRINCIPLES OF ORAL ENGLISH

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The Principles of Oral English by Erastus Palmer & L. Walter Sammis

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BY

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PREFACE

TEACHERS of oral English are, as a rule, pleased or displeased with the rendition of a sentence, a declamation, an oration or a reading according as it pleases or displeases their taste; and this only because taste has been, thus far, the only measure available for the guidance of the teacher or the instruction of a pupil. Taste alone and in itself, however, can no more afford a foundation for a standard of oral English than it can for music. The need in grammar school, high school and college is for an exposition of the subject that shall fix a standard which one who is familiar with the subject of grammar cannot fail to understand and apply. The laws of grammar are established, and its rules, if applied to sentences, cannot fail to develop in speaker or reader the ability to express intelligently the thoughts which they contain.

If a student thoroughly understands the thought content of a sentence and the emotion which accompanies it, he will express it in exactly the manner which the rules set forth in this book indicate; and if he masters these rules and their application, he can give an accurate and just reason for his method of expression.

To furnish, then, a standard of measurement in the use of oral English, is the prime object of this book; and since grammatical analysis is the only sure means of determining what the thought in a sentence is, the laws uttered have been applied to the various forms of the English sentence.

Many teachers insist that all that is necessary to good delivery is to master the thought in a sentence; but they do not provide a method of reaching that thought. Other teachers contend that a familiarity with arbitrary rules is all that is necessary. Neither side is wholly right, although each advocates an essential truth. In this book the authors have not only combined the principles of both methods, but have, in addition, adduced rules which show the student how to reach the thought, and also the conventional method of expressing it.

It is not sufficient, however, in treating a subject such as this, to deal with the thought only, because the thought is usually colored by some emotion, and almost never stands alone. Emotion affects the quality of the voice, and the force, the rate and the pitch with which the thought is uttered. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the nature of the emotion in order to appreciate the effect it will have upon the vocal utterance of the thought. The authors have, accordingly, noted the principal kinds of emotion, analyzed their effects and pointed out their influences upon delivery.

Sentences have been grouped under proper heads,

according to grammatical structure, and analyzed, and the laws which govern their delivery have been deduced as the result of the analysis. For this two hundred and nineteen quotations have been used, taken from the works of one hundred and twenty-four standard authors.

The subject of delivery is treated first as a science. Afterward, in the chapter on Practice, an opportunity is given for its development as an art. To furnish additional material for the practice of reading and speaking as an art, a number of declamations have been appended. Most of these declamations have been adapted from chapters which have never been used for the purpose of speaking. It will be noticed that the declamations are descriptive rather than forensic. The authors have desired that this work should be used to develop an ability to treat vocally the ordinary affairs of life, and not necessarily for the development of the power of oratory. In many instances the delivery of forensic declamations has developed in a student a style which is florid and not at all appropriate for public speaking or ordinary conversation. Descriptive pieces, on the contrary, have no such effect, but rather develop an easy and pleasing style of conversation. Declamations have, therefore, been culled from works of a descriptive character instead of from forensic utterances.

AUTHORS QUOTED

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ADDISON	1	CROLY	1
ALDRICH	2	CURTIS	2
ALISON	1	DALY	1
BANCROFT	1	DANTON	1
BENJAMIN	1	DAVIS, JEFFERSON	1
BIBLE	9	DAVIS, W. S.	1
BLACKMORE	3	DEFEW	1
BOSWELL	1	DIBDEN	1
BURNS	1	DICKENS	9
BUTLER	1	DILL	1
BROWNING	2	DOYLE	1
BRYANT	2	DOUGLAS	1
BRYCE	1	ELIOT	2
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CHOATE	3	GOLDSMITH	1
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