

**ENGLISH WORDS AS SPOKEN
AND WRITTEN: DESIGNED TO
TEACH THE POWERS OF LETTERS
AND THE CONSTRUCTION AND
USE OF SYLLABLES AND WORDS**

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English Words as Spoken and Written: Designed to Teach the Powers of Letters and the Construction and Use of Syllables and Words by James A. Bowen

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ENGLISH WORDS

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SYLLABLES AND WORDS

BY

JAMES A. BOWEN

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A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages; may not be able to speak any but his own; may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly. — RUBIN.



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PREFACE

WRITTEN words are characters designed to cause the reader to conceive certain sound combinations which, whether heard or imagined, express ideas. Every word in our language has its sign-character. The art of constructing or construing these characters is called spelling.

Word characters are composite, their sign-structure being strictly analogous to the sound-structure of the words they signify.

Each elementary sound in our speech is represented by one or more sigas called phonograms. A phonogram may consist of one, two, three, or four letters. Thus, the sound of long *a* is signified by the phonograms, *a*, *ai*, *ay*, *au*, *ea*, *ei*, *ey*, *eigh*. In word-structure, the phonogram is always an indivisible unit, and should be so treated. It is never silent.

Spelling should be by phonogram, not by letter. By such spelling the words *cat* and *caught* have each three phonograms, *c-a-t* and *c-augh-t*.

This spelling accords with the true phonetic nature of the language; it avoids the confusion and perplexity which result from considering letters as the only phonograms, though many of them are frequently without function.

The phonograms in our language are not very numerous, and are soon learned, as characters, by proper observation in words wherein they occur. Familiarity with them greatly benefits both spelling and reading.

No spelling-book contains a tenth part of the words which an ordinarily educated person can spell, for in read-

ing we unconsciously observe the structure of each word we peruse, and innumerable repetitions of these observations impress upon us the certain phonograms that go in certain words, and thus our ability to spell is increased.

The province of the spelling-book and the teacher is to familiarize pupils with the various ways in which *syllables* are made, and to teach them to see phonograms and syllables as they read.

If spelling is properly taught, it naturally leads one to see all words both as units and in detail, and he who habitually sees words in detail is sure to be a good speller.

No one can "see syllables" correctly until he understands the functions of the letters. In recognition of this fact, this book discusses the vowels and the consonants, in their order, one by one, together with the digraphs into which they enter, fully exemplifying the uses of each. The digraph, that stumbling-block in spelling, ceases to be formidable, when its office is understood.

This book is based on the theory of phonogram spelling. Attention is called to its introductory part which sets forth its plan.

TO THE TEACHER

It is necessary that pupils *write* the words in the spelling exercise, as the picturing or visualization of words is very important. Writing a word tends to fasten its image in the mind, while the muscular effort involved brings the word to perception through an added sense, that of touch or muscular perception. It is suggested that the visualization of words is stronger when they are written *separate from context*, as in columns, or within rectangles.

While spelling has little or nothing to do with sense, it is yet desirable that pupils should know the meaning of each word they spell. Require that each word shall be used, orally, in one or more sentences.

The digraph is a very common phonetic substitute for a letter. In oral spelling, the letters of the syllable should be named in their order, but those of each phonogram should be *grouped in the naming*, so as to show that they are recognized as members of a phonetic element, and, together, equal to a letter. The pupil should not say *b-a-i-t*, but should say *b-ai-t*, thus indicating the three phonetic elements of the word. The *ai*, together, should have about the same stress and time of utterance, as each of the other letters. (§ 4.) Briefly, oral spelling is the calling, in their order, of the phonograms of a word, rather than the letters.

By the practice of writing selections from his reader or history, separating each word into its phonograms, the pupil will learn to appreciate the spirit of word-structure,

and acquire the habit of perceiving phonograms in words as he reads. This habit, more than all else, makes a person a good speller.

For example: —

Girt round with rugged mountains
The fair Lake Constance lies;
In her blue heart reflected
Shine back the starry skies;
And, watching each white cloudlet
Float silently and slow,
You think a piece of Heaven
Lies on our earth below!

The following described exercise is very effective: —

Let each pupil hold his reader and follow one member of the class while that member names the words of a selection in their order, stating with each the number of phonograms it contains. For instance: Girt — 4, round — 4, with — 3, rugged — 6, etc. When a mistake is made, let the reading pass to the next pupil.

It is imperatively necessary that pupils be trained to habits of correct articulation. Proficiency comes from practice, and the best practice is found in oral spelling. To know a word we must learn it by the sense of hearing, the sense of sight, and the sense of muscular perception. Oral spelling acquaints the pupil with a word through the ear and the vocal organs, as written spelling does through the eye and the fingers.

The syllable is the unit element of words, as the phonogram is of syllables. From a thousand given syllables, many thousands of words may be made; hence, a knowledge of syllables is a knowledge of the structure of words. Familiarity with syllables gives power over words. In oral spelling the pupil should *spell by syllables*, pronouncing each one as he spells it, in the old-fashioned way.

INTRODUCTION

WORDS, SYLLABLES, LETTERS

NOTE.—These sections (1-31) are for reference rather than for study.

§ 1

Human beings communicate their thoughts by means of vocal sounds. The process is called **speaking**. A sound or combination of sounds which expresses an idea is called a **word**.

§ 2

Some words are uttered by one effort or impulse of the voice, while others require several. A sound or union of sounds made by one impulse, as part of a word, is called a **syllable**.

§ 3

The educated portion of mankind also communicates thought by means of written or printed signs. The best system of sign-communication is that in which the signs stand for words. There are more than two hundred thousand words in the English language, each of which is represented in print or writing by a sign-character.

§ 4

There are forty-four elementary sounds used in making syllables in the English language. These are represented by means of written or printed characters called **letters**, of

which there are twenty-six. Different letters may represent the same sound. Different sounds may be represented by the same letter. Some sounds are represented by two or more letters in combination. That which represents an elementary sound, whether it be one letter or a combination of letters, is a **phonogram**.

§ 5

In making the sign of a syllable, we put together the phonograms which represent its sounds, in the same order in which the sounds are joined to make the syllable itself.

In making the sign of a word, we join the syllable signs in the order in which the syllables are joined in the word itself. Thus, the character or sign which represents a word is made up of sign parts, just as the word itself is made up of sound parts.

The making of word characters from sound and syllable characters is called **spelling**. Naming orally the letters and syllables of a word in their order is also called **spelling**.

§ 6

Analyzing a word is dividing it into syllables, and its syllables into **sounds**. Analyzing a word character, which is called a word, is dividing it into syllable characters, and these into their sound characters.

§ 7

In the throat are ligaments called vocal cords, which may be made to vibrate by the breath, producing sound or tone. This tone may be modified greatly by changes in the tension of the vocal cords and in the shape of the throat, mouth, and nasal cavity, made at will by the speaker. By these means, various sounds are produced.

The free sounds made by the vocal cords and modified by the changing shape of the vocal cavity, are **vowel sounds**.