

**CLASSIC FOR
CHILDREN: A
FIRST READER**

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Classic for Children: A First Reader by J. H. Stickney

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J. H. STICKNEY

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CLASSICS FOR CHILDREN.

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STICKNEY.



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◀ANNOUNCEMENT.▶

ACCORDING to the promise of the Primer which precedes this little volume, children are here introduced to real reading. We have sought to provide stories and verses which shall have the same interest for them as the magazine of *belles lettres* has for grown people, and yet be entirely suited to their small powers.

The guiding principle has been the cultivation of a taste for reading; and nothing, we think, is included which will not promote right feeling, and lead to the appreciation of what is excellent.

A considerable number of the selections are standard, or classic, in the accepted sense. The remainder are in the simple narrative style, which makes easy reading. After an almost exhaustive research, the best short stories were found close at hand in recent juvenile magazines. By special arrangement, we are able to use both stories and illustrations, in a large number of cases, from "Our Little Ones," the literary successor of the "Nursery."

To correspond with the advancement, made and making, in teaching reading, this book is of somewhat higher grade than most First Readers. It is, however, much less difficult than appears, by reason of the naturalness of the language and the winsomeness of the stories. It may be found expedient, for a little time, where these advanced methods have not borne their fruit, to use the book as a Second Reader—at least for supplementary reading. It will, however, easily follow the Primer of its own series.

We appreciate that the way to learn to read is by reading, and have given material for a much larger amount of practice than is common in books of this grade. Yet we do not forget that more is required in a reader than a collection of readings, however well adapted these may be. Provision is made for the daily study of words and idioms, the development of language, and the ready use of script.

It is customary to place at the head of a lesson the new words that occur in it. We have thought it wise to present all words, whether new or not, which could possibly be found difficult of recognition. This gives to any single lesson the appearance of carrying a larger number of new words than other readers. The truth is often quite the reverse.

A few songs, interspersed here and there, to add to the interest, have been kindly furnished by Mr. L. W. Mason, Director of Music, and author of Music Readers.

Other items of possible value to teachers are given under Notes and Suggestions.

J. S. CUSHING & Co., PRINTERS, BOSTON.

◁ NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS. ▷

THE aim of a Primer is a clear and striking presentation of words. It is the office of a First Reader to lead a child to begin to make his small stock of words the capital for an active business and the means of acquiring the untold wealth that lies in books. The requirement of a book at this stage is that it shall be difficult enough to keep the reader constantly improving, and easy enough to hold his interest. A lesson to be made a school study should be different from a reading entertainment.

A. Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of the *Preparatory Word Study*. It should be a next to invariable rule that no lesson shall be read until its Word Study has been followed out. Standing at the head of the reading, it should say to the child: "Here are all the hard places you will find. Master these, and you can read a delightful story with perfect ease." The word work will then be undertaken with direct reference to a manifest reward. The following points summarize the principles of Word Study:—

1. In cases where the letters have their usual sound, pupils should be taught to find out the word. If directed to call such a word *something*, most pupils will call it rightly, and where they do not, the need for the study of sounds and syllable combinations is shown.

2. In cases of an opposite character, it is better to tell the word outright, teaching it as a whole, by the form-process or sight-method.

3. In the many cases where, though not strictly regular in construction, the word can be marked to indicate its sound, it should be made plain by the diacritical mark or the sounding of its vowel elements. And if the word is one of a class, its congeners should be taught after the manner of the Primer.

B. The breaking up of long words into syllables helps in giving confidence to children when they meet them. The vowel thus becomes the key to a syllable, and the succession of syllables expresses an idea, as the succession of words in a sentence expresses a thought. The common prefixes and suffixes should be recognized as wholes, — *con-*, *-ly*, *-ment*, *-able*, *in-*, *-on*, *-less*, *-ful*, and others, should become as easy to grasp as a single letter. In blackboard lessons, the teacher secures this by covering the remaining portion of a word. The following words illustrate a kind of lesson of great interest to children:—

IM-	CAL-	CON-
IM-ME-	CAL-I-	CON-SID-
IM-ME-DI-	CAL-I-FOR-	CON-SID-ER-
IM-ME-DI-ATE-	CAL-I-FOR-NI-	CON-SID-ER-A-
IM-ME-DI-ATE-LY	CAL-I-FOR-NI-A	CON-SID-ER-A-BLE

The reverse process of writing a long word and then cutting from it parts recognized as syllables until only one syllable is left, is of equal value and interest. *Circumstances*, *misunderstanding*, *responsibility* are examples. It is of

little consequence whether the words are fully understood. It is better that they should be familiar to the ear.

C. The right use of the voice is of great help in intelligent reading. It hardly matters how long a pupil halts before a questioned word, if he keeps the thread of the sentence in mind; or how slowly he may read, if there is no break in the continuity of voice modulation. Read, "This — has — been — a — fine — day," without the least drawing of the words, but with natural expression, and it will appear that both reader and listeners may be taught to hold their attention and interest where time must be taken to find out a word.

D. SILENT READING. — We recommend even at this early stage the beginning of systematic silent reading. A part of the time given now to slate work would be much more profitably spent in the reading of some book either previously read aloud, or so simple as to be in the main intelligible. Questioning afterward upon what has been read gives opportunity for the best possible language training. The call for short stories suitable for such reading will soon be fully met.

E. THE USE OF POETRY. — With respect to poetry teachers fall into two distinctly marked classes, the one almost utterly eschewing it, and the other making it their chief resource for the cultivation of expression.

It is a fact that children are fond of poetry, and that the love of poetry is the love of literature, — one of the noblest recreations the mind can have. It would seem, therefore, to be every teacher's duty to inspire in children's minds a growing taste for standard poetry. The droning *sing-song* will readily yield to musical rhythm if a sufficient number of pleasant rhymes and verses are repeated, and the reading will follow the style of the recitation.

F. Another item on which teachers differ relates to the time to give to a single lesson. It is now quite generally thought better to use a new lesson each day. Ninety per cent of the words are common to nearly all the lessons, and children read with better expression what is fresh to them. The practice of examining children on new reading has done away with a system of drill which was stultifying in the highest degree.

G. METHOD IN LEARNING TO WRITE. — This is the period in the school course for teaching a child to write. His penmanship is *improved* in the years that follow; but after the completion of this reader he should have command of script both to read and write.

Three kinds of lessons are needful: —

1. The training indicated in the series called "Vio's Lessons," where the teacher gives her time and effort to the training of her class in principles.

2. The constant copying of sentences, beginning when the child has nothing to show but a line of broken curves which no one could read, and ending in the faithful reproduction of the original. This is begun, in some schools, with little or no reference to the knowledge of the words written. Progress appears to be slight at first, but when once the pupil learns to follow the direction of lines it is very rapid.

3. The writing of short sentences without a copy. This can come only where the forms of the letters are well known. By a little care in selecting, however, it is possible to make a limited number of letters go a great way.

THE ALPHABET.

TWELVE STUDIES.

- I. Repeat the letters of the alphabet in their order. Write them, using first small letters, and then capitals. Count them.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

o p q r s t u v w x y z
 O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

- II. Name the VOWELS in order. Name the CONSONANTS. Tell how many of each.
- III. Choose a vowel, place a consonant before it, call it a *syllable*, and pronounce it. Write the syllable, and put the MACRON (—) over the vowel.
 Do the same with each vowel. Sing the Phonic song, *Ba be bi bo bu*. Page 26, Primer.
- IV. Choose a consonant, a vowel to follow it, then another consonant to follow the vowel. Write the three like a syllable or word. Note that the vowel has become a short sound instead of a long. Pronounce the syllable, and put the BREVE (˘) over the vowel. Use all the vowels thus. Write a list of words, following this type. Example: *bā, băt; sē, sēt*, etc.

- V. Place after such syllables or words as were made in the last lesson the final *e*, and consider the effect upon the vowel.
 Example: *tüb, tūbe; cāp, cāpe; rip, ripe; not, note; hat, hate.*
- VI. Sound *a*, and write some words using the letter as marked.
 Example: *all, call, fall; aw-ful, paw; caught, taught.*
- VII. Do the same with *ä, â, and â*. Mark the vowels in *ah, fast, calf, care, dare, bear.*
 Sound: *car, care; bar, bare; far, fare.*
- VIII. Write *e* and *i* with the WAVE (~), and sound the letters. Make play-words, by choosing a consonant to precede. Give a list of real words ending in *r*. Use the vowel *u* with the CIRCUMFLEX (^).
- IX. Mark the vowels in *come, do, full, put, etc.*
- X. Use *th, sh, sc, st, bl, pr, qu, sm, dr, dw, etc.*, in making words.
- XI. Pronounce: *-est, -eth, -ard, -ant, -ent, -ble, -ing, -ful, -ness, -tion, -er.* Make words.
- XII. Study: *y* (long and short); *g, s,* and *c* (hard and soft); *ng* and *nk*.

NOTE. — These lessons are not put into such *language* as children would require. They are intended for occasional use, one at a time, in Blackboard work, as a means of helping children in the ready acquisition of words, and so of promoting fluency in reading. It has seemed that this arrangement would serve the teacher better than the customary method of scattering lessons through the entire book.

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