

**NEW-WORLD SPELLER:  
SECOND BOOK FOR  
GRADES FOUR, FIVE,  
AND SIX, PP. 137-280**

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New-World Speller: Second Book for Grades Four, Five, and Six, pp. 137-280 by Julia Helen Wohlfarth & Lillian Emily Rogers

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# NEW-WORLD SPELLER

SECOND BOOK

For Grades Four, Five, and Six

BY

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## ON THE TEACHING OF SPELLING

THE teaching of spelling is concerned with both vocabulary and method. The words to be taught must be those which meet actual needs, and the method must be such that the spelling will be made automatic. **Introduction**

The vocabulary of this book is based upon the lists published by various scientific investigators in recent years, supplemented by lists from other reliable sources. An earnest effort has been made to include all words which belong to the writing vocabulary of the average person, and to exclude all words which are rarely used, or which are so comparatively simple that they no longer present any spelling difficulty when they come into use.

But a mere word list, no matter how well selected, is not a spelling textbook. It is the function of a textbook not only to provide suitable subject matter, but also to direct the pupil's activities upon this matter in such a way that he will master it with the greatest possible economy of time and effort. It is in this sense that the *New-World Speller* is a textbook, combining a thoroughly reliable vocabulary with methods of study which result in actual power to spell.

Learning to spell involves the formation of certain habits of mind. The most important is the habit of observing correctly the printed form of words. Next in importance, and often associated with this habit, is that of hearing words correctly. Nearly all mistakes in spelling result from the failure of children in these respects. The lessons in the *New-World Speller* have been planned to aid pupils in the formation of habits of observation. **Formation of spelling habits**

Effective work in spelling, as in all school subjects, depends on attention. Forced attention may accomplish something, but

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what is done with interest leaves the more lasting impression. The lessons, therefore, introduce great variety into the necessary drill in order to make it attractive to the children.

### **Directions for study**

Each year's work begins with a page of directions for study. These are addressed to the pupil, and form a vital part of the book. They should be *read* and *applied*. In addition to these general directions, nearly every lesson contains special suggestions for mastering individual words. The general and the special directions together are intended to stimulate and develop the self-activity of the pupils, and will gradually train them to attack a lesson without hesitation and learn it in the most economical way.

The power to grapple with a lesson independently, however, is not instantly acquired, no matter how clear the directions for study. The teacher must be relied upon to devote a part of the recitation period to directing the forces of her pupils, until habits of study have become established.

### **Methods of study**

Teach the children how to study and train them to use all the helps provided in the book. They must learn to select from each lesson the words which they are sure they can spell and to give all their time and attention to the others; they must learn to sift the easy from the more difficult words and to give each group its due amount of time and attention; they must learn how to get the meaning and use of unfamiliar words; they must learn to clinch knowledge by repetition.

The greatest possible variety in presentation and drill should be introduced. The lessons may sometimes be studied by looking at the words, then closing the eyes and trying to see the words with the mind's eye; sometimes by writing them on paper or on the blackboard; sometimes by spelling them aloud; sometimes by building them with cardboard letters; sometimes by playing simple games, which may or may not take the form



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of a contest. Attention should be directed to the difficult combinations of letters by underlining them, by writing them with crayon or pencil of a different color, by repeating them orally many times in succession, by comparing them with other words which have the same combinations. Any device that will fix the attention upon the letters which make the word difficult will be of the greatest assistance.

The method of learning new words by spelling them aloud should be carried on in school only when teacher and pupils are studying together. The results of a few minutes taken from the recitation period for the purpose of spelling aloud the hard words of the next day's lesson will repay the outlay of time a hundredfold. After habits of study have been established, spelling lessons may be assigned for home work, and the directions for study will then be invaluable.

A child does not know how to spell a word until he can do it automatically, both orally and in writing. To develop this power, review constantly. Each day the lessons of the preceding two or three days should be quickly but thoroughly reviewed; words of special difficulty should be followed up until they are thoroughly learned; and the many regular and special reviews should by no means be omitted. Here, again, variety is of the greatest importance. Each pupil may be required to keep a blank book in which he enters from day to day the words which he has misspelled. Frequent reviews of such words will correct individual errors. Another useful device is a blank book in dictionary form kept by the teacher. The words misspelled in class may be entered under their initial and reviewed by letter, the lists being copied on the blackboard for this purpose. After a little training, the pupils will be able to write the words in this dictionary of errors, and will take pride in keeping the lists as short as possible.

**Review  
and drill**

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### **Homonyms and vowel combina- tions**

The grouping of homonyms introduces a difficulty where none exists. It is a mere incident that *there* and *their* are pronounced alike. They are spelled differently and have entirely different meanings, and if each is repeatedly used in its proper relation to other words, the child remains unconscious of the similarity of pronunciation, and consequently no confusion arises. The same is true of all homonyms. In the higher grammar grades, when the words have been fixed, no harm can result from associating them in a drill exercise.

Though the spelling of many English words is absurd, as, for instance, *eight, trough, reign, bureau, once*, these are much less troublesome than common verb forms and words containing a sound expressed by several different vowels or combinations of vowels. *Feed, read, shield, machine, receive, here*, are illustrations. Nothing but frequent oral spelling and still more frequent writing of these words in sentences or phrases will fix them in the child's mind. If the word is important, clinch it; if it is not important, do not teach it at all.

### **Use of sentences and phrases**

The sentences and phrases are intended for dictation. The phrases afford an economical method of giving a large amount of drill on writing related words without taking time for complete sentences. Incidentally the children learn to discriminate between groups of words which express complete thoughts and those which do not. It is a good plan to read the sentence or phrase distinctly once, and then have the pupils repeat it before writing. Insist that they write without hesitation. This involves a thorough study of the lesson.

### **Syllabica- tion**

Learning to see the syllables of which a word is composed is one of the most important steps in learning to spell. Pupils must ultimately learn to see the syllables in undivided words. As an aid to this end, the words in this book are usually divided when they appear for the first time in the lower grades, while in

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the higher grades syllabication is gradually discontinued. The exercises requiring the pupils to find the short words of which longer ones are composed, those requiring them to combine short words into longer ones, and those requiring them to copy words and divide them into syllables, are all designed to cultivate the observing powers, and long use has demonstrated that such exercises are effective.

Have the pupils constantly pronounce distinctly before spelling by syllables. Since authorities differ, pronunciation may be accepted as a safe guide in a majority of cases.

Since the purpose of correcting spelling is to fix the right form in the child's mind, keep this end constantly in view. In oral spelling, have the child who made the error spell the word correctly at once. In correcting written exercises, cross out the wrong forms, and insist on their being rewritten correctly, so that finally only correctly spelled words shall be before the pupil. Many teachers make the mistake of so correcting papers that the wrongly spelled words are the more prominent. Train pupils to leave a blank space whenever doubtful of a word, and to write the word correctly after the papers have been returned to them, underlining it for thorough study.

The dictionary habit is an invaluable one; its importance cannot be overestimated. This book provides for progressive dictionary work throughout, following a general plan begun in the primary grades.

In the first grade the pupils are taught the letters of the alphabet in their order, and hunt words in alphabetically arranged lists. This work is continued throughout the second and third grades. In the fourth grade exercises are introduced to show that the initial letter alone does not determine the place of a word in an alphabetical list, and pupils are taught to arrange words in true alphabetical order and to insert words into lists