

**THE BATTERSEA
SERIES OF STANDARD
READING BOOKS**

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The Battersea series of standard reading books by Evan Daniel

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EVAN DANIEL

**THE BATTERSEA
SERIES OF STANDARD
READING BOOKS**

THE BATTERSEA SERIES
OF
STANDARD READING BOOKS.

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TO THE TEACHER.



We learn to read mainly by the exercise of the visual memory. We have first to learn the shapes of letters, then to associate the letters with the sounds which they represent, singly and in combination, then to identify the written or printed word with the spoken word. To enable children to get through these successive stages the more easily, the teacher will find it advantageous to bear in mind the laws of memory, to have constant recourse to the association of ideas, and, to repeat again and again the impressions made upon the eye and the ear.

To a child beginning to learn its letters, the differences by which one letter is distinguished from another are not at once perceived. It is necessary, therefore, to resolve letters into their elements, and to train the eye to notice how these elements are combined. The first exercises in this book are intended to accomplish this result. See pp. 9, 10. Before the names and powers of the letters of the alphabet are taught, the children should learn to draw, no matter how rudely, the elements of which letters are composed and to combine them into letters. The children may perform these exercises either by drawing on their slates, as the teacher draws the "elements" on the black-board, or by making the letters on the ground with the aid of wooden, or cardboard, "elements." For the latter mode of performing these exercises all that is required are (1) four straight pieces of wood, or strips of cardboard, of equal length (the frame of an old slate answers admirably); (2) a wooden, or cardboard, disc, divided into four quadrants. The | and V groups of letters (see p. 9) may also be formed with the aid of peas and sticks as a Kinder-Garten exercise.

The next step is to identify the shapes of the letters, i. e. to remember the various combinations of the "elements" which form them. To effect this the teacher is recommended to teach the letters in the order of their simplicity, the capitals first, the small letters next. The capitals have been arranged in three groups, the first, or | group, composed of vertical and horizontal lines; the second, or V group, composed of oblique lines, or combinations of vertical, horizontal, and oblique lines; and the third, or O group, composed of curves, or combinations of right lines and curves. (See p. 10.) Each letter should be drawn upon the black-board (the simplest form of the letter, viz. that known as Egyptian type, being used), and the children should be required

1. To draw it in the air with their fore-fingers, as the teacher draws it on the black-board;
2. To form it, after the teacher, with the aid of the wooden, or cardboard, "elements";
3. To draw it on the black-board, or slate, after a copy set by the teacher;
4. To "match" it, by picking out from a number of letters on loose cards, or from a sheet of mixed letters, the letter corresponding to it.

Another valuable exercise on the forms of the letters may be performed by requiring the children to convert one letter into another, as shown on p. 18.

The active imagination of children makes them very quick in perceiving analogies, and as the associations supplied by these analogies are at once highly pleasurable and highly helpful to the memory, the teacher will do well to avail himself of the resemblances which the letters bear to familiar objects. The Mnemonic rhymes on p. 12 may be found useful for this purpose. Some of them may be pronounced ridiculous, but nothing is really ridiculous that is useful.

The forms of the letters having been learned, their names should next be taught, and the children should now be required to draw, or form, the letters without a copy, and to name the letters when pointed out on a sheet.

The small letters have been classified in much the same way as the capitals, and should be taught in the same way, except that the children should be required to form them in script hand.

Here it may be remarked that, all through the earlier steps of learning to read, the children should be required to write the typical words in each lesson. There is no method of learning to spell so satisfactory as systematized transcription. The mere effort of frequently copying a word fixes the picture of the word in the mind, and the copying of a series of words composed of similar sounds leads to a silent induction, which is as helpful to reading at sight as to spelling.

In the first part of the Primer the short sounds of the vowels are taught, and, in order to impress the typical words the more firmly on the memory, engravings of the objects which such words denote are placed by their side. This is a somewhat novel feature in an English Primer, but is common in German Primers. Its value rests upon the pleasurable associations which arise out of the connexion of the symbol with the thing symbolized and the assistance which those associations afford to the memory.

In teaching words into which the short vowels enter, the teacher is recommended to begin with the combination of the vowel with the final consonant. This should be printed and written on the black-board. Then initial consonants should be successively placed before it, particular attention being called to the power of these initial consonants in each case, the teacher somewhat exaggerating them, and showing to the class by the movement of the lips how they are formed.

In no case should the children be allowed to spell the words on the old "alphabetic" method. To repeat the names of the letters does not help a child either to arrive at the

sound of the word, or to spell the word. Anomalous words should be taught on the "look and say" system, and by transcription.

Combinations of letters that do not form actual words should be carefully avoided. Whatever advantage they offer, in helping to teach children to read at sight, may be equally well obtained by the analysis of words.

The Reading Exercises are made as interesting and consecutive as the circumstances of the case admit. The words at the head of them should be carefully taught, first as wholes, and then analytically. If, in reading, a child fails to make out a word, the teacher should fall back upon the class of words to which it belongs, and call attention once more to the characteristics which distinguish it.

Distinct articulation should be carefully cultivated by the teacher and required from the children.

No opportunity should be lost of increasing the vocabulary of the children. A child, who does not know the meaning of the *spoken* word, has a double difficulty to encounter in reading the *written* word. To this end simple object-lessons and the learning of poetry will be found valuable aids.

It is hardly necessary to observe that whatever cultivates the general intelligence of children will facilitate the acquisition of the power of reading well.

Analysis should be followed by synthesis, but the analysis should not be carried too far. The analysis of words is easier than the synthesis of letters, but many letters have powers in combination which they do not possess when they stand alone, and others represent sounds which the teacher will find it almost impossible to isolate, and the children to sound. The most enthusiastic advocates of the Phonic System admit that there is a very large class of words to which it is inapplicable. Even in those words to which it is applicable, it requires either a greatly extended alphabet, or a large employment of diacritical marks, which is practically the same thing.