

**THE NORMAL COURSE
IN SPELLING FOR PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

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The Normal Course in Spelling for Public and Private Schools by Larkin Dunton & C. Goodwin Clark

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NORMAL COURSE IN SPELLING

FOR

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

BY

LARKIN DUNTON, LL.D.,
HEAD MASTER OF THE BOSTON NORMAL SCHOOL,

AND

C. GOODWIN CLARK, A.M.,
MASTER OF THE GASTON SCHOOL, BOSTON.



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PREFACE.

THE outcry against spelling-books, raised a few years ago, resulted from two causes: the poor quality of the books themselves, and the poor use to which they were put. But the banishing of all spelling-books from the schoolroom, as a remedy for the evil, was an illogical process; and the result, in many places, has been one or two generations of poor spellers.

In this case, however, as in many others, extreme measures have been followed by reaction. The extremists and those acting under their influence are recovering their senses, and the spelling-book is being restored.

The authors of the following work belong to that class of teachers who believe that a spelling-book, if of the right kind and used in the right way, is a useful text-book. Grammars, rhetorics, geographies, histories, and even systematic works on composition, are useful, — and so are spelling-books. But it does not follow that they should all be combined in one. It is possible to drive a nail with a chisel; but nails can be driven better and quicker with a hammer. So a text-book is better for a special use by being specially adapted to that use.

These facts will account for the absence from this work of many puzzling exercises in the construction of sentences,

and in fitting words to parts of ready-made sentences, as well as for the lack of lessons and examinations in geography, grammar, and history, with which some of the modern spelling-books abound. It is believed to be better at times to concentrate the attention of the student upon spelling; and, accordingly, that all matter tending to distract his attention from the special work of learning to spell should be excluded from the spelling-book.

It has, therefore, been the aim of the authors to make a spelling-book for teaching pupils to spell. It is believed that the proper study of the lessons in this book will, in the shortest time, develop in the student the ability to spell the words which he will afterwards need to write. The lessons, for the most part, contain only words in common use; no words have been introduced simply because they were odd or hard to spell.

At the same time the matter for the lessons has been so selected, classified, and arranged as to afford the pupil all the incidental advantages of definition and use in sentences consistent with the main purpose of the work.

The words are classified according to similarity and dissimilarity of form and meaning; thus calling into use the principles of the association of ideas in learning both orthography and definition.

Rules for spelling, as well as the subject of prefixes and suffixes, have received due attention.

The work is commended confidently to the consideration of those teachers who believe in the judicious use of the spelling-book.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

LEARNING to spell consists largely in forming correct habits,— habits of thinking, in order, of the names or forms of the letters composing words, and habits of moving the pen so as to make these letters when their names or forms are thought of. Ultimately the habit is formed of moving the pen aright, so as to make all the letters in the right order, when entire words only, and not the separate letters, are in the mind.

In oral spelling the pupil recalls and speaks the names of the letters; this may or may not be accompanied by the recall of the visible forms of the letters. In written spelling the guide to the process of making the letters is, primarily, the conception of the forms of the letters; this may or may not be accompanied by the ideas of the names of the letters.

In learning to spell orally the pupil must hear the pronunciation of the word, see all the letters in order, and think of the names of the letters. If, during the process, stress is laid on the visible form, the pupil will, when he comes to spell, recall the names of the letters through the image of the word; if, on the contrary, stress is laid on the names of the letters, he will recall the names through their association with one another and with the word as a whole.

In learning to spell by writing the pupil must add to the hearing and seeing, necessary in learning to spell orally, the process of making the letters. Whether the processes of forming the letters are to be recalled, during the writing of words, through the conception of the forms of the letters, or through

the conception of the names of the letters, depends upon whether stress has been laid upon form or upon sound during the process of learning.

Some pupils are helped more in spelling by the association of sound; others more by the association of form; all, no doubt, are helped more or less by both. Hence both kinds of spelling should be practised in school.

The following order in the treatment of a spelling lesson will, as a rule, be found profitable:—

1. Pronunciation of the words by the pupil, the teacher assisting.
2. Study of the words by the pupil.
3. Oral spelling of the words, the teacher pronouncing.
4. Copying the words by the pupil.
5. Writing the words from dictation.

In oral spelling it is best for young pupils to pronounce each syllable by itself, and then the last syllable spelled, together with the preceding syllables, before naming the letters of the next syllable. Older pupils may simply pause between the syllables; but this method should not be allowed till the naming of the letters of a syllable is instantly followed by the idea of the pronunciation of the syllable.

In many of the lessons words are defined by one or two words standing in parallel columns; these lessons should be spelled across the page. In that way the pupil is learning definitions as well as orthography.

As learning to spell is the forming of good habits, never allow a pupil to try to spell a word till he knows how. Teach him to distinguish between knowing and guessing; and then insist upon knowledge.

THE
NORMAL COURSE IN SPELLING.



PART I.
EASY LESSONS.