

**FIRST LESSONS IN
THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE**

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First Lessons in the English Language by Thos. W. Harvey

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THOS. W. HARVEY

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LANGUAGE**

HARVEY'S LANGUAGE COURSE.

FIRST LESSONS

IN THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY

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LANGUAGE, AND OF THE GRADUATE-SCHOOL READERS.

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PREFACE.

An attempt has been made, in this little manual, to arrange a series of progressive lessons in the use of language, which shall lead the pupil to express thought accurately and concisely, and to avoid, as well as to criticise, the most common inaccuracies of expression. The book in its present form is simply an extension and application of the principles sketched out in the "Oral Lessons" of the author's Elementary Grammar.

As will be seen, grammatical terms have been used sparingly—those only being introduced with the application of which every pupil ought to be made familiar in the third or fourth year of school life.

Sentence-making and composition writing are, it is believed, presented in a natural and attractive manner. Words are given for the pupil to use in sentences. At first, all the words to be used are given; then, a part of them. After the pupil has acquired some facility in the construction of sentences, he is taught to use groups of words, or phrases and clauses, as single words.

As a closing exercise in sentence-making, the subject and the predicate of a sentence are given, the pupils being required to suggest modifiers, and to arrange into sentences such words and groups as he may select. Experience has demonstrated that this is a natural method of instruction, and that pupils taught in this manner soon learn to express their thoughts with accuracy and facility.

Composition writing is begun with picture lessons. The pupil is taught to tell what he sees in a picture, and to answer questions about the objects represented in it. The description and the answers following it make a composition. He is next taught to study a picture, to exercise his inventive powers in writing short stories suggested by it; then, to imagine that what he sees through a window or a door is a picture as easy to be described as a painting or an engraving. Afterward, all real or imaginary picture frames being removed, he is required to describe actions as they actually occur. These lessons have been used in many schools with the most satisfactory results.

The description of single objects belongs to an advanced course of instruction, and its treatment will receive attention in the second book of this series. With due deference to the opinions of those who differ from him, the author must enter his protest against requiring young pupils to perform tasks which are severe tests of the ability and ingenuity of those belonging to the higher departments of our schools.

The intelligent teacher need not be told that some of the lessons in sentence-making may be used in the instruction of pupils as soon as they are able to read in a primer or first reader. The same may be said of some of the picture lessons. In fact, the sooner this work is begun, the better for the pupil. He can not too soon be taught to express his thoughts in written language. Thorough work must be insisted on, however; and no exercise or class of exercises should be omitted, neither should any exercise be abandoned until the pupil has mastered all its requirements. In the use of this book the teacher as well as the pupil should "make haste slowly."

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
The Alphabet	7
Words	7
The Noun	8
Kinds of Nouns	9
Names of Objects known by the Senses	11
Number	13
Sentence-Making	14—26
Abbreviations	27
Quotation Marks	31
Picture Lessons	32—36
The Verb	36
Incorrect Language	38
The Adjective	39
Incorrect Language	41
Subject and Predicate	42
The Participle	45
The Adverb	46
Incorrect Language	49
The Pronoun	50
Incorrect Language	51

Possessives	52
Appositives	55
The Preposition	56
The Conjunction	58
Incorrect Language	60
Picture Lessons	61—69
Observation and Description	70
Writing from Memory	71
Changing Verse into Prose	73
Letter Writing	76

FIRST LESSONS
IN THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

1. The Alphabet.

The teacher writes on the blackboard—m, c, n, l, s, g, a, h, q, e, k, r, d, x, v, i, y, w, j, u, o, t, f, p, z, b.

Teacher. What are these characters called?

Pupils. They are called *Letters*.

T. How many letters have I written?

P. You have written twenty-six letters.

T. Have you seen them written in this order before?

P. We have not.

T. In what order have you seen them written or printed?

A pupil. In this order: 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.

T. Can you tell me what the arrangement is called when the letters are written in this order?

P. It is called the *Alphabet*.

2. Words.

Teacher. Can any one tell me what a letter represents?

A pupil. A letter represents a sound.

T. That is right. We articulate one of these sounds, or combine two or more of them, and have a *Syllable*. We