

**LESSONS ON THE USE OF THE
SCHOOL LIBRARY FOR RURAL
SCHOOLS, STATE GRADED
SCHOOLS, VILLAGE AND CITY
GRADES**

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Lessons on the Use of the School Library for Rural Schools, State Graded Schools, Village and City Grades by O. S. Rice

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Wisconsin, Dept. of Education

54

Lessons

on the use of the

School Library

for

Rural Schools, State Graded Schools, Village
and City Grades

Also for use in **High Schools** in the
giving of such library instruction out-
lined as has not been given in the grades

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MADISON, WISCONSIN

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SCHOOL DISTRICT. IT IS TO BE ACCESSIONED
AND AS CAREFULLY ACCOUNTED FOR AS
A BOOK ADDED TO THE SCHOOL
LIBRARY BY PURCHASE.

INTRODUCTION

There are over one and one-half million books in Wisconsin school libraries, with large additions in the aggregate each year. These books have been a power for good in the schools of the state. And yet the returns possible from the investment in school libraries are greatly in excess of those yet realized. It is so short a time since there were practically no school libraries that teaching practices, so far as the school library is concerned, are still to a large extent dominated by methods and courses of study which originated when the textbook reigned supreme.

To help make the school library as effective an agency as possible in the work of the schools and in the lives of those who attend them these lessons have been prepared. Specifically, they are intended for the guidance of teachers in giving to their pupils definite lessons on the use of the school library.

The Wisconsin law now provides that candidates for county or city teachers' certificates, and hence also for state certificates by examination, shall write on the cataloging and use of school libraries. Applicants for third grade certificates were included in this law beginning January 1, 1915. In the Wisconsin township library list of 1910-'11 instructions are given on the cataloging and care of elementary school libraries and the high school library list of 1909 contains similar instructions for high school libraries. The present publication, as an incident to its main purpose, will help teachers prepare for examinations on the use of school libraries.

Acknowledgments. Most of the manuscript of this publication was read by Miss Bertha Bergold, Assistant Librarian, whose suggestions have been of material help in its preparation. The lessons on the daily newspaper were thoroughly revised as a result of the suggestions made by W. G. Bleyer, Associate Professor of Journalism and Chairman of the Course in Journalism, University of Wisconsin. Certain other parts were likewise submitted to specialists and advantage taken of their criticisms. Inspectors Amy

Bronsky, Annie Reynolds, and W. E. Larson, of the Department each read a large part of the manuscript and made helpful suggestions. Sincere thanks are due all those who have thus aided in the preparation of these lessons on the use of the school library; also to Miss Mary A. Smith, Librarian of the Madison Public Library, for permission to include an outline of the lessons on the public library which she each year gives to the pupils of the eighth grade of the Madison schools.

High schools. Much of what is included in the reference lessons outlined is suitable also for use in high schools. In fact, most of it will be found of value to those students who have not received this training in the grades. See page 22 for further suggestions.

Teachers' training classes. Since the lessons are intended for use in elementary schools, it follows that they will be of service in teachers' training classes in county training schools, high schools, and normal schools. Preparing teachers to train the rising generation in the use of books, probably the greatest single source of human progress, should receive attention at least equal to that given the traditional school branches.

School and public libraries. The lessons aim to give training in the use of whatever reference material the school library may contain, however meager that may be. Most people do not have access to the resources of a good-sized public library, and it is for them all the more essential to receive training in the use of simple reference sources, and in the choice of books for general reading. Those who later move into communities where there are good library facilities will be all the more likely to make use thereof, if they have received this training in school, while the young people who are fortunate enough to live in a community which supports a good public library, should receive the training which will help make sure that they will take advantage of their opportunities. It is hoped that these lessons will prove of substantial assistance in bringing about an effective cooperation between the school and the public library.

Organization of the library essential. In order to give any considerable part of the lessons outlined, it will be necessary to have the library properly classified and cataloged, the books correctly arranged on the shelves, etc. To help the teacher bring this about, there is given on page 8 an outline of what is necessary for the purpose.

Influence of lessons on choice and use of books. It is not at all supposed that these lessons cover the whole field of work in preparing children wisely and effectively to use printed matter. However, it is believed that, by studying and using the library books at hand in the ways herein in-

icated, the pupil will receive a training which will have an effective influence upon his choice and use of books throughout life. The outlines given relate to reference work and to general reading. The larger part of the publication is devoted to reference work, but the suggestions with regard to general reading are of equal or even superior importance and should be given careful attention by the teacher.

Textbooks. The reference work is intended to be done with the school library books and not with the class textbooks. The use of textbooks should be considered of and by itself as part of the work of the class in which the text is used.

Grades for which suitable. The grades for which the different lessons are suitable have been indicated. By grades 6-8, for instance, is meant that the lesson may be given in any one of these grades, depending upon circumstances. Usually it is best to give a reference lesson in the lowest grade mentioned, unless there are good reasons to the contrary. The earlier a reference lesson is given the more practical application it will have before the pupil leaves school. In some cases, part of the work outlined should be given in the lowest grade named and other parts in higher grades. This applies especially to a series of lessons on the same topic, such as the lessons on the use of the dictionary. So far as feasible this gradation of work has been indicated. However, only the teacher doing the actual work with a certain class, under given conditions, is in a position to decide some of the questions of gradation.

Classes in which to give the lessons. The classes in which the different lessons should be given are indicated. This is intended to help the teacher in apportioning the work among the various classes, so that the reference work, as a rule, will be given in that class which deals with the subject most nearly related to the work to be done, and also so as not to overburden any one class with reference lessons. Here again the indications are suggestive only, and practical necessity may make it advisable for the teacher to give the work in some other class than the one suggested. An index by classes in the back part of this publication will enable the teacher quickly to see what reference work is suggested in connection with the various classes of the school. In this connection read the next paragraph.

Lessons to be adapted to pupils and equipment. All the lessons outlined cannot be used in some schools, owing to lack of material with which to work; but all those lessons for which there is material at hand should be utilized. Effort should be made to add to the library the books and equipment needed for the instruction outlined. The instruction should be varied from that outlined so as to meet the special needs of the pupils.

Graded course. It is not the intention that the lessons are to be given in the order in which they are arranged in this publication. Such an arrangement, as will be seen by inspection of the lessons included, would be impracticable. A course of lessons by grades, with subdivisions by classes, is outlined beginning on page 16. This is followed by an outline by classes, with subdivisions by grades. With these outlines as guides, the lessons can be given in orderly sequence and without duplication or confusion.

Index. The index will make readily accessible any included material pertaining to the lessons on the use of the school library.

Note taking. The habit of taking notes when doing reference work should be encouraged. These notes the pupils should, as a rule, have the privilege of referring to when reciting, just as in practical life we are at liberty to refer to notes made in the course of reading up on any particular subject.

Practical application. When any unit of reference work has been done, as, for example, that on the atlas, the teacher should plan to have the pupils use that source of reference material thereafter whenever its use is advisable in the work being done.

Self-help and instruction. It is well for the pupils themselves to make a preliminary examination of any reference book which is to be studied. This will help develop the habit of critically examining books which may fall into their hands. However, the teacher must be careful not to overdo in this direction. He must not be afraid to do some genuine teaching in the use of the school library just as in arithmetic, geography, and other traditional school subjects. We should remember that most children creep before they walk. Devote as many recitations to any topic as may be necessary. Do not slight anything attempted; rather than that omit some of the topics. The aim should be to teach each topic attempted so well that thenceforth the pupil will make practical use of the instruction received.

Emphasize the reference feature. Many of the questions in the exercises given under the various topics require answers which the pupil may have learned from a reference book or may have gotten from hearsay. It should be borne in mind that the exercises are intended to give practice in the use of reference books and the source of information should in each case be reported by the pupil. The merit of the work of any pupil depends upon the judgment shown in selecting and using the reference material available.

Combine reference work and study. The exercises in reference may be assigned as lessons in the subject as well as lessons in reference, thus, as it were, killing two birds with one stone.

Reviews. Practical application of what has been taught whenever occasion for its use occurs is the best kind of review. However, a review in a later grade of what was learned in an earlier grade gives occasion to teach some things which the pupils were not far enough advanced to learn when they first were introduced to that particular feature of reference work. Inability and disinclination to make practical application of the instruction and misunderstandings of various kinds can also be attended to by means of reviews. Besides, there may be pupils in class, coming from other schools, who have not been given some of the instruction outlined. It is therefore advisable to review the lessons from time to time as conditions may require and opportunity offer. Reviews are especially desirable in the higher grades suggested when the lesson has been given in a lower suggested grade.

Library hour. As an incentive to general reading, it would be well, occasionally to devote the last hour of the Friday afternoon session to a library program. At this time pupils, who by conversation with the teacher, have demonstrated that they can make an interesting report on a book or on some character or other feature of a book or article read, should be given an opportunity to talk to the school. Biographical sketches of noted authors, recitations, and other related exercises will supply ample additional material for such programs.

Young People's Reading Circle. The Wisconsin Teachers' Association has provided for the organization of a Wisconsin Young People's Reading Circle. The bulletins issued by the State Reading Circle Board will be distributed to all teachers and will help to bring about good general reading on the part of the girls and boys in our schools and others of school age.

Credit should be given for this library work. The children should be made to realize the great truth that one of the most important results of a good education is to know where to find information in printed material, to have a taste for good reading and some ability in choosing such reading from the vast quantity of printed matter which confronts us on every hand.

The teacher must know the books. Both for the sake of the reference work and the general reading the teacher must know the books which he expects the pupils to use. It is advisable for the teacher carefully to go over each reference lesson before he assigns it to the class and to look up, to such an extent as may be necessary, the references in the material with which the pupils will work. He will then know better what modifications to make in the assignment and will be more interested and hence create more interest in the reference work.