

THE SILENT READERS

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The Silent Readers by William D. Lewis & Albert Lindsay Rowland

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE
SILENT READERS

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ILLUSTRATED BY

FREDERICK RICHARDSON

TEACHERS' MANUAL
FOR
FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH READERS

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY
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EDUCATION DEPT.

TO THE TEACHER

TEACHING SILENT READING

What is Silent Reading? Children will tell you that it is "reading silently" or "reading to yourself" or "just reading"; and many teachers with much of the same idea in mind will give books to a class of children and say, "Read this story", or "Read pages 179 to 200", and hope that the pupils will read quietly and not interfere with their work with another class! Under these circumstances, watch the individual pupils as they read. Some smile or cry over the appealing parts and tell you with enthusiasm, "It is a good story"; others read along over the words, but their faces show no signs of appreciation; a few seem to be pronouncing words silently, or mechanically plodding along word by word; frequently a poor reader becomes discouraged and closes the book.

In these contrasting habits is the key to what silent reading really is. The children who show appreciation, enthusiasm and love for reading have discovered somewhere how to read silently. They know how to get the thought from the printed page; the words mean pictures, actions, sounds—real things to them. They have the ability to grasp the printed phrases and their meanings. They know how to "read between the lines," when to skim the repetitions and non-essentials, and when to move slowly taking in every shade of meaning. Surely this is the kind of reading that gives pleasure and knowledge and information. It is real silent reading.

Training in Silent Reading. Children can be taught to get the thought from the printed page; in fact this skill must be developed; it does not just "come" from many tiresome oral reading lessons or from "just reading out of a book". Silent reading requires specific training.

Specific Training: Different Types of Material. Children generally read stories easily, but do not show the same ability

(iii)

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when they read geography, history, or arithmetic. The difficulty is probably one of understanding and following directions. Therefore special kinds of training must be needed to develop different types of comprehension. Evidently different reading methods and more special training are needed for studying certain subjects than for others.

Different Reading Purposes. Perhaps the most important principle of teaching silent reading is to get the child to realize the purpose for which he is reading. When he has determined the purpose of his reading he naturally assumes an appropriate attitude toward the reading material. In reading poetry, an older person reads to enjoy the swing of the rhythm; in reading the newspaper he aims to seize upon a few ideas or statements and to skim the columns, taking what he desires as he goes. When reading an essay, or a sermon, he reads slowly, carefully, pondering over the words and phrases as the thoughts present themselves. So the child must determine whether he is reading for pleasure, for information or for instruction. And having determined his purpose he must pursue the method of reading best suited to accomplish the end.

When Should Training in Silent Reading Commence? In the first grade. From the beginning, reading must satisfy the desire to get meaning and interesting experiences from the printed pages; the words must have thought back of them. Reading in the first grade must never be the mere pronouncing of words. When such words as "run" or "hop" are written on the board as commands, the pupil must grasp the meaning before he can execute the command. In other words, the power of thought getting must be developed throughout the primary grades; in the intermediate grades this training may be focused on broader experiences and the interpretation of thoughts from textbooks, while in the upper grades skill is developed in analyzing, organizing and comparing relative values of ideas in various reading materials.

How to Use the Manual. The Manual should be used as a course of study in silent reading for grades four, five, and six. It

aims to give to the teacher studying the problem a vision of what silent reading involves, and it tries to stimulate a spirit of enthusiasm for the development of this reading skill.

It is more than a manual for "The Silent Readers" because it extends the work beyond these textbooks into every phase of classroom teaching, making the pupils not only self-reliant but also eager to broaden their reading experience.

It suggests and emphasizes teaching methods and gives definite material and procedures to illustrate these methods. The teacher should grasp the spirit of the manual, follow it as a course of study, and use the material in well-selected books to develop step by step the abilities or results that may be looked for in her special grade.

Then, and this is of paramount importance, she should aim to see that the methods pointed out here carry over to all reading, including that done outside the classroom.

CONTENTS

TO THE TEACHER.....	iii
METHOD AND MATERIAL.....	1
SUMMARIES OF FOURTH, FIFTH, SIXTH READERS.....	3
SUGGESTIONS AS TO METHOD.....	10
READING FOR APPRECIATION OR ENTERTAINMENT.....	15
LEARNING TO GRASP THE PLOT OF A STORY.....	27
DRAMATIZATION.....	37
READING POETRY FOR APPRECIATION OR ENTERTAINMENT.....	43
ACTING FOR MOVIES.....	48
READING FOR INSTRUCTION.....	50
READING FOR INFORMATION.....	60
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL.....	65
INDEX TO CONTENTS OF THE READERS.....	68

THE SILENT READERS

LEWIS AND ROWLAND

METHOD AND MATERIAL

I. Method. An efficient program for the teaching of silent reading should include:

1. Carefully selected material.
2. Regular and well-developed lessons, and drill exercises.
3. Standard tests for measuring results.

Standard tests, like those mentioned on page x of the preface of each volume of the Silent Readers, should be given at least at the beginning and the close of the term, and the results compared. Quick drill exercises, or speed tests, should be given throughout the term. Classes should be divided into groups according to results of such tests; the high group, the middle group, the low group, and the instruction should be based on group needs. In the middle and low groups, especially, the instruction should be largely individualized.

Types of poor readers and remedies:

<i>Types</i>	<i>Remedies</i>
1. Lazy, purposeless readers.	Point out purpose by means of set questions or problems, etc.
2. Conscientious, plodding word by word readers.	Train to skim, to get <i>main</i> facts, to avoid details.
3. Timid, nervous, uncertain readers.	By the use of easier reading material seek to build up confidence.
4. Slow readers handicapped by lip movements.	Bad habit can only be corrected by individual help.

There is one difficulty common to most poor readers: they have no *standards* for judging the effectiveness of their reading,