

**THE MASTERY OF WORDS. BOOK
ONE: A COURSE IN
SPELLING ARRANGED FOR
GRADES ONE TO FIVE INCLUSIVE**

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The Mastery of Words. Book One: A Course in Spelling Arranged for Grades One to Five
Inclusive by Sarah Louise Arnold

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SARAH LOUISE ARNOLD

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THE MASTERY OF WORDS

BOOK ONE

A COURSE IN SPELLING ARRANGED FOR
GRADES *ONE TO FIVE* INCLUSIVE

A SERIES OF LESSONS BASED UPON THE ORDINARY
ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY, TO SECURE FOR THE
PUPIL PROMPT RECOGNITION OF WORDS,
ACCURATE SPELLING, AND THE
POWER TO HELP HIMSELF IN
THE STUDY OF WORDS

BY

SARAH LOUISE ARNOLD

DEAN OF SIMMONS COLLEGE, BOSTON
FORMERLY SUPERVISOR OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, MINNEAPOLIS
AND SUPERVISOR OF SCHOOLS, BOSTON

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EDUCATION DEPT.

PREFACE

THE Mastery of Words provides a course in Spelling for all grades. Book One is intended for the first five grades; Book Two is arranged for Grades Six, Seven, and Eight. Books One and Two are combined in a complete edition, to which this preface relates.

Children do not learn to spell through merely repeating in order the letters which make up words. Some children misspell because their pronunciation is slovenly. They do not hear the correct sound of the word. They must learn to hear truly. Others misspell because they do not clearly visualize the form of the word. They must be taught to give energetic attention to the printed form — to see clearly. But even then children fail to spell correctly if they are completely ignorant of the phonetic value of the letters which make up the word. There is no remedy for such failures except constant attention to the sounds of letters in words.

The Mastery of Words develops these powers. It provides for constant repetition of the ordinary phonograms which are regular in the majority of words. It secures clear enunciation, thus helping to overcome bad habits in speaking. It teaches the pupil to analyze words so that he is conscious of the real problem to be grappled with in spelling; and all the way along it provides exercises which prepare for the use of the dictionary.

Further, its lessons keep in mind that, after school days are over, spelling is used only in writing. The vocabulary of writing is limited; the vocabulary of speech is broad and varied. Drill in spelling should emphasize the words which are necessary for writing.

The vocabulary of the Mastery of Words is based upon the most recent and conclusive investigations of the Russell Sage Foundation, in charge of Dr. Leonard P. Ayres, by Professor Cook of the University of Colorado, by Professor O'Shea of the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Jones of the University of South Dakota, and others. These scholars have clearly shown that spelling books of the past have given undue attention to words which never appear in the student's vocabulary, still less in the essential vocabulary of writing. The thousand words in the Ayres list, proved to be the most commonly used in writing, are therefore taught and stressed in the Mastery of Words.

The author has emphasized the "type words," which are presented over and over again. The type words are purely phonetic — that is, they represent a common phonogram. Essential words which vary from the type are selected for special attention. Beginning with the third grade, black letter type is used to call attention to these words. By frequent review of these lists and of the type words, the pupil will master a very large group of words needed by everybody, yet which are frequently misspelled.

The deadly monotony of the old spelling book has been largely responsible for the lack of interest in spelling. The Mastery of Words has secured in a marked degree variety linked with repetition. The forms of the lessons are varied, and innumerable devices make spelling a live, interesting, and pleasurable study.

The appendix should be used by the older children and by the teacher, for reference. It provides lists, tables, and summaries, including the valuable Ayres list. Teachers should use the appendix freely. The author also urges frequent spelling and pronouncing matches, which provide drill in the form most enjoyed by school children.

After school days are over the pupil must be his own teacher. If he knows phonetics and can read the dictionary, he will be wholly independent. The Mastery of Words provides him with this double power.

PLAN OF THE COURSE

The First Grade must teach children to read. Children are introduced for the first time to the printed word. To distinguish one word from another, they must carefully observe word forms. The teacher selects words already known by sound. In reading, the children connect the sound and the form of the word. This act is also the first step in spelling. Learning to read is therefore a foundation for learning to spell.

On this account many teachers postpone the definite lessons in spelling until the middle of the first school year, or even later. Spelling is not really postponed or omitted, but emphasis is centered upon recognizing the form of words, pronouncing, and copying the words.

But the form of the word is mastered by repeating it in writing or by naming the letters. Unless the letters are learned, the child knows words only as wholes, and cannot recognize new words by the help of familiar ones. The alphabet must be taught.

The Mastery of Words therefore introduces the alphabet at the beginning of the definite work in spelling. It is presented with the help of pictured objects. Every letter is related to a type word, whose initial sound is the sound of the letter (exception, *x*). By frequent and repeated drill in naming the pictures and pronouncing these names in two parts (initial sound and the remainder of the word), the letter is associated with the sound which it chiefly or always represents.

(The type-words *apple* and *zebra*, used to teach the initial sounds, *a* and *z*, need not be spelled until the pupil is further advanced. They are enclosed in parenthesis to indicate this delay.)

During the first grade, the pupil must name the letters in order, must find them when named out of order, and must sound as well as name the letter. He then realizes that words are made up of letters, all of which have some relation to the sound of the word. This is the foundation of all spelling.

The words then selected for spelling present common phonograms in which every letter is sounded, and thus review the initial sounds. No day should pass without the repetition of the alphabet in order, and the quick naming of letters as found in different words.

Many short words (verbs, prepositions, and pronouns chiefly) must also be taught, in order that sentences may be used. *Is, has, he, to, in*, etc., must be shown in sentences, for they have no meaning except in relation to other words. These sentences should, when possible, include some word from the day's reading.

The teacher may adjust the length of the lesson to the ability of her class, for classes in first grade differ much in their rate of progress. The lists of words may be extended at will. It is always a good plan to add a word learned in reading which is in some way related to the spelling lesson of the day. One sentence at a time is enough for the first grade unless the class is very active and able. Typical sentences are inserted to be copied by the children. Two new words suffice for a lesson, if the familiar words are reviewed daily.

For the Second Grade the work of the first grade should be reviewed. Now the silent letter is introduced (final *e*). This brings in the long vowel phonogram and the fact that some letters stand for more than one sound — a difficult fact in English spelling.

New phonograms combining vowels are taught, as in *book, lay, boy, oil*, etc., and consonant sounds in combination, as *wh, th*, etc. The vowels are emphasized over and over in attractive ways, as on page 18, where the short phonograms are sung to the tune of *Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol*. Occasional sentences for copying and for dictation suggest types; such sentences should be related to the reading lesson. Phonetic words are presented in groups. Final *ing* and *er* are added, and the third sound of the vowel which accompanies *r*.

As in the first grade, daily reviews should keep in mind the sounds of all the letters, including the two or three sounds of the

vowels. The alphabet should frequently be recited or sung in order. Children should name rhymes for every phonogram and extend the lists of phonetic words.

Grade Three reviews the vowels in their common combinations, presents *y* and *ies*, emphasizes the long vowel and the silent letter, carefully studies the consonants presenting two sounds (a stumbling block in spelling), analyzes words containing *x* and *cks*, *z*, and sounding like *z*, compares *ee* and *ea*, introduces essential sight words, presents more words of two syllables, reviews all the familiar types, adds *d* and *ed*, and drills upon difficult combinations, as *ould* and *ought*. Word building increases thoughtful attention; more silent letters are studied; a careful chart reviews the three chief vowel sounds. Words from the Ayres list are used. The entire primary work lays the basis for accurate and independent spelling.

For Grade Four and following, a page of exercises is presented for each week. Four advance lessons of different kinds are given on each page. The drill exercise which appears at the bottom of the page beneath a wavy line reviews the essential combinations of letters and the various vowel sounds.

The author advises a review of the entire page on the fifth day of the week, and that every ninth week should be given to review.

The words in certain lessons are arranged horizontally instead of in vertical lists. This varies the form of the lesson and approaches more nearly the common arrangement of words.

The author deplors the presentation of all words in syllables, in a spelling book. Words should be studied as they appear in ordinary reading. Attention to syllables, as phonetic power increases and word analysis continues, is secured in this book by presenting occasional groups of words separated into syllables and also by giving specific lessons from time to time as progress in word building requires.

Such lessons can be extended by dividing into syllables words from the reading book and by reference to the dictionary. The