

**A FRENCH READER: WITH
PHONETIC
TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR FIRST
YEAR STUDENTS, PP. 1-265**

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A French Reader: With Phonetic Transcriptions for First Year Students, pp. 1-265 by Hugh A. Smith & Jeanne H. Greenleaf

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HUGH A. SMITH & JEANNE H. GREENLEAF

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*With Phonetic Transcriptions
For First Year Students*

BY

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PREFACE

THE publication of this reader is due to a strong belief in the great importance of reading in French instruction in America, and to a desire to provide, in the first year, more interesting and worthy texts, which will be an incentive to the student to continue his work in this field. There is no doubt that our recent intimate relations with France have given a new impetus to the study of the French language, and especially to the practice of speaking and writing it. This is to be applauded. However, we should not forget that the greatest value for the majority who study French in this country will always be a knowledge of French life, thought and literature, which comes almost entirely through reading. We wish then to offer, as early as possible, interesting reading that has such value, knowing that the time of our students for French study is usually all too brief, and that the number of other subjects competing for their attention is all too great. Without doubt, the great majority of college students who do not find their French reading interesting the first year fail to continue the language.

French teachers will not need to be told that much of the material in this reader is not new. On the contrary, if we can lay any claim to originality

in its composition, it is that we have not sought to introduce the largest possible number of new selections, but have brought together for the first time in one book, for first year work, a considerable number of the texts that have been most successful in early arousing the student's interest and in inspiring him for further reading.

In many of these selections it has been necessary to abridge and occasionally to change slightly the texts to make them suitable for first year students. There is no need to apologize for this practice with such selections as those from *Sans Famille* and *Les Misérables*. However, some admirers of Maupassant may regret that we have touched, however lightly, his two stories found here. We hope they will recognize that we have not done so irreverently, nor unnecessarily.

We are also not unaware of the possible charge that we have occasionally taken from the usual province of reading for second year in order to increase that of first year. We believe that second year can easily spare from its abundance anything that may really relieve the present poverty of good beginning texts.

Suggestions to the teacher as to the manner of using this reader are hardly in place here. We desire, however, to emphasize that it is intended primarily to teach, and to create an interest in, reading and not to furnish solely a text for grammar drill, however important it may be for this latter purpose.

The questionnaire and composition exercises at the end, which are suggestive rather than exhaustive, are also made to bring out the students' understanding of the text, as well as to furnish practice in speaking and writing.

For Part I of this reader we include a phonetic transcription in the symbols of the *Association Phonétique Internationale*. In spite of the decided progress in the use of phonetics in teaching pronunciation, there is still very little material of this nature suitable to furnish practice for beginning students, at the time when their pronunciation is being formed. Many of our best grammars, it is true, give the phonetic transcription of the words in their vocabulary, but this does not always represent exactly the pronunciation of these words in connected discourse, nor does it provide the needed drill.

We ask teachers to bear in mind that, in giving this transcription, we are not offering a treatise on pronunciation, nor even attempting to replace the grammar in that respect. It is hardly proper, then, for us to note where some other pronunciation might be acceptable, although we recognize, of course, that the practice of good French speakers is not invariably the same for every word or phrase in the language.

The pronunciation transcribed is from the reading, deliberate and clearly articulated, of a native Parisian.

While the skilful teacher may well employ his own method for this text, it is recommended, in general, that the phonetic transcription should first be carefully read, so that the correct pronunciation indicated by the symbols may be transferred to the regular text.

In conclusion we ought to state that we have had more particularly in mind beginning college students in preparing this text. Most readers, it is true, are announced as equally well adapted for college and high school use. If these claims are well founded there is no reason why this text should not serve as well in secondary schools as in college classes, since the first selections are very easy and can be taken up early. However, in case a teacher does not accept the principle that the same reading is equally suitable for both grades of students, it seems but fair that he should be told for which class a book is chiefly prepared.

H. A. S.

J. H. G.

MADISON, WISCONSIN,
January 20, 1920.

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