

**TEACHER'S MANUAL
TO ACCOMPANY
FRYE'S GEOGRAPHIES**

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Teacher's Manual to Accompany Frye's Geographies by Alex John Frye

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ALEX JOHN FRYE

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TEACHERS' MANUAL

TO ACCOMPANY

FRYE'S GEOGRAPHIES

BY

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"Primary Geography," "Complete Geography," etc.*

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These notes relate to the *Complete Geography* of this series, and suggest how to use the material of the book, — the maps, pictures and text.

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TEACHERS' MANUAL.

I. GENERAL NOTES.

1. Ideas vs. Words.

No wide-awake teacher of to-day wastes his own time and that of his pupils by forcing them to memorize the exact words of a text-book. Such work is not *teaching*, and is not worth the smallest salary paid in the poorest school district.

The pupil who studies the text of a lesson and then expresses the thoughts in his own words becomes master of the lesson. A pupil who merely recites parrot-like the words of the text may not have grasped a single thought. Even if every sentence were backed by the proper thought, what a cruel waste of energy would result from trying to fix the exact words in mind for a day or at most for a week!

No teacher really believes in such work, for no teacher ever takes the trouble to force himself to memorize the text. He often drives pupils to this task because he does not know how to teach them to grasp an author's meaning. He thinks the meaning must be in the words and that the pupils must swallow them. *Such a teacher needs to learn how to teach!*

Definitions.—Of what use are definitions of hills, rivers, etc.? In daily life do we ever use them? Must a child *define* in order to *know*? Does he not know a

chair, a shoe, a horse? — yet has he learned to define them? Nay, he learns to *know* such things by *seeing* or *sensing* them.

Among countless objects that affect our life, why should teachers select the forms of land and water and claim that these few can best be known or studied through their definitions? Is it because pupils can hide ignorance in empty words and thus make a good showing in that form of examination which calls for husks instead of grains of thought? Let us hope not; yet if it be true, the number of teachers of this class is small, for the thoughtful teachers of to-day show by their work that they believe in the study of *things*, — not mere *word-shells*.

A pupil should learn to know a hill or a plain by studying the thing itself or a good picture of it. The teacher may use various devices to stimulate careful looking. Thus, he may tell the pupil to model, draw or describe it; and the attempt to express in either of these ways will lead to closer looking and so to the gaining of clearer mental pictures.

Let us illustrate by a *brook*. By one plan the pupil will learn the words, "A brook is a small stream of fresh water flowing over the land." By the other plan he will study the brook itself and may discover the following:

"A brook is running water. The water is fresh. The brook winds about. Where the brook is swift the bottom is steep. In some places the bottom is rocky; in other places it is muddy. The water moves slowly over the muddy bottom. The brook grows larger as it flows downward. In wide parts of the brook the water

moves slowly ; in narrow places it moves swiftly. The bottom of the brook slants downhill. The banks of the brook are in most places nearly parallel. The land slopes down to the brook on both sides and holds it in place." Etc., etc.

Which pupil knows more about a brook, the one who can recite the definition or the one who has learned the above facts by *seeing* and discovering for himself? Which pupil has gained the greater power in the study? Which has the knowledge better suited to his later life?

It is claimed that the "book" definition is better worded than any a pupil can make. What of it? The pupil will never use either. If such definitions are useful, why not also teach definitions of buttons, chairs, pins and countless other common objects?

The pupil has the *right* to learn to describe objects in his own words in order that he may gain in *power to see and express*. What right has the teacher to deprive him of growth, merely that in an examination he may appear to know what he does not really know?

Any examination that calls for *definitions* of geographical forms, and that does not give opportunity for the pupil to show his power to see and to think, is certainly far behind the times. Which is the better question, "Define a brook," or "Tell what you know about brooks and their uses"? Which tests the quality of the teaching? Which proves the ability of the pupil to see and to think?

The superintendent or school-board that gives broad examinations, based on the pupils' power to think, rather than on memory of details, wields a powerful weapon in the cause of good teaching.