

# **THE THOUGHT READER, BOOK I**

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The Thought Reader, Book I by Maud Summers

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**MAUD SUMMERS**

**THE THOUGHT  
READER, BOOK I**



THE  
THOUGHT READER

BOOK I

BY

MAUD SUMMERS

PRINCIPAL, GORPHE SCHOOL, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

*"Reading is thinking"*

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## PREFACE

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THE THOUGHT READER is written from the standpoint of images, not words. It recognizes the thought as the reality and the sentence as its outward expression. If the mind of the child is centered upon the thought, he will learn the written word as unconsciously as he learns the spoken word. The material for thought is developed along three lines—action sentences, games and stories.

There is a difference between learning to read and reading to learn. The child learns to read by associating thoughts already acquired with the written form. Therefore, the early reading matter should repeat the most familiar experiences of childhood, since the purpose is not to gain knowledge, but to acquire a new art. In this book the aim has been to suggest clear images by means of pictures, music, poetry, games and stories. The method is explained in "Suggestions to Teachers."

The relation of muscular movement to thought is now generally recognized. Mr. W. W. Speer, of Chicago, first utilized this fundamental principle of activity in the process of learning to read, and emphasized the importance

of a continuity of thought in the early lessons. Credit is due him for permission to use the action sentences which appear in the first ten pages.

Suggestions for this little book have come from many sources, but especial acknowledgment is due Miss Harriette Johnson, of Chicago, and Miss Isabelle Jackson, of Evanston, Ill., for valuable assistance.

The author is grateful to the publishers and composers for permission to use the songs which appear.

MAUD SUMMERS.



## SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

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**Purpose.**—Reading is thinking in response to written or printed words. A word has a twofold aspect—external and internal. The external is the spoken or written form; the internal is the thought or meaning. The purpose of a primary reading lesson is to establish a permanent association between these written or printed forms and the thoughts which accompany them. In conversation, thought is produced in response to spoken words, and a new word is learned by associating the sound with its meaning. These processes are coördinate. Both are thinking in response to stimuli produced by conventional forms. Listening might be called reading with the ears, while reading might be said to be hearing with the eyes. The analogy between the written and the spoken word is complete, the only difference being in the sense used.

**Fundamental Principles.**—In teaching reading, three things should be kept in mind. First, that self-activity is the law of mind, and hence of its growth. Second, from the whole to the part is the mind's order. The mind first grasps vague wholes, which are particularized by the process of analysis. The sentence should come before the word, the word before the letter, the letter before the analysis of sounds. Third, that the image-forming powers in reading as elsewhere must be developed. There is no more important school exercise than that which gives the child the power to bring into consciousness images of objects that are not present to the senses.

In reading, the thought is the reality. The sentence, whether composed of one or several words, is the outward form of this reality. The process of learning to read consists in associating the thought with this outward form. Only such thoughts as lie within the child's previous range of experience should be presented to him in the first reading lessons. Otherwise he will be forced to do two things at once — acquire a new thought and associate it with a new conventional form. Eventually the sentence must suggest the thought, for reading is the art of interpreting the printed page into mental pictures. Since reading is thinking, good reading depends upon clear thinking.

**Action Sentences.** — A child's life is largely made up of action, and his birthright is free motor activity. This fact, with the evolution of language, explains why *action sentences* should be used in the process of learning to read.

**Games.** — It is believed that games furnish a better field for the development of child nature than any other exercise ever employed in a school course. By means of them the power to think quickly, to judge, to act, as well as to learn politeness and self-restraint, can be unconsciously acquired. In play, the motor and constructive activities are called into being. One purpose of some of the games used is sense and motor training. The tendency of children to impersonate the life about them is sufficient reason for adding another element to several of the games — that of dramatic expression. Since these dramatic games so thoroughly engross the child's attention, they furnish excellent material for reading lessons. Rhythmic movement to music is also a valuable feature of the play period. Therefore, songs giving suggestive ideas for dramatic games have been introduced. In learning the song, the child is uncon-

sciously memorizing a poem, so an effort has been made to secure, not only good music, but good poetry. The Mother Goose Melodies also satisfy the instinctive delight which all children find in rhythm. The introduction of these, therefore, is in accordance with a definite purpose to lead to an appreciation of the rhythm of poetry.

**Stories.** — The reading matter chosen should be full of action — the action of real life. In writing the stories for this book, the aim has been to make use of thoughts and emotions which the child has lived, and those which are intimately related to his experience. The cause of the child's desire for narration, instead of description or reflection, is the universal tendency of childhood to find interest in action.

**Method.** — 1. **ACTION SENTENCES.** — When the child enters school, he has established the association between the *spoken* form and the meaning of several hundred words. Therefore, in order that it may be certain that he is familiar with the thought which the *action sentences* express, the child should first hear these spoken and then express their meaning in action. When he has a clear image of the action sentences, he should associate the written form with these images, that afterward they may be read as easily as they are understood when spoken.

In giving a sentence for the first time, advantage should be taken of the child's natural impulse to imitate. Imitation, through doing, to knowing, is the order in which the faculties act. If the word *Run* is selected, it should be written with a capital and period to indicate a complete thought. The teacher should first write the word, then perform the action, letting the child discover the meaning from the action. The same word is written elsewhere on the board in larger or