

**BEGINNINGS IN ENGLISH:
ORAL AND
WRITTEN LANGUAGE
FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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Beginnings in English: Oral and Written Language for Primary Schools by Frances Lilian Taylor

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BY

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PLAN AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The characteristic feature of "Beginnings in English" is the prominence given to Oral Language. The purpose of the book is not only to furnish such material as will win ready response from the children in conversation and story-telling; but also to correct by new and varied devices some of the most common errors in speech.

The Sentence.—It is the aim of this little book to lead the child to use the sentence in talking, to tell stories in sentences, and to use freely all kinds of sentences before he is obliged to distinguish between them or classify them according to kind. The experience of many teachers shows that too early and too persistent drill in composing "telling sentences" crushes spontaneous expression and results in a dead monotony of style.

Interest and Variety.—Interesting material together with models simple enough for imitation are necessary aids in securing response in oral language. One of the strongest features of the lessons here presented is the great variety of models which have proved suggestive in the schoolroom. Many of the sentences, descriptions and short stories are the spontaneous expression of children.

The Story.—The power to retell a story easily and well can best be acquired during the first three years of school life. No better preparation can be made for oral recitation in all advanced studies that require continued narration of facts or events.

Stories given for reproduction need to be carefully chosen. Those which are intended to arouse invention should be short and connected closely with the child's experience. For the development of expression and the training of the memory there are many short stories of both literary and ethical value.

The habit of telling stories in one long, unbroken, compound sentence should be discouraged. To secure freedom and fluency is not enough; constant improvement in correct English should be the aim of the teacher. Children should be trained to tell stories without constant repetition of connectives, and to begin new sentences without hesitation or superfluous introductory words. No better models can be found for beginners than the classics which have been rewritten in simple form for second year children.

A New Feature.—Dialogues, especially planned to teach the correct use of words commonly misused, are a new feature of language teaching presented in these pages. Correct expressions must be heard until they sound right to the speaker before they become a part of language. It is believed that children will be led through their universal love of the dialogue to use in conversation the word forms which they have read and repeated in their little plays.

Dramatizing of Stories.—One of the most successful means of language teaching in many schools is the dramatization or playing of the stories the children hear and read. The very definite help in playing the stories found in these pages will prove suggestive in a similar use of other stories.

Spelling.—The study of language includes a knowledge of spelling. To closely relate the spelling lessons to the work required in written language is a time-saving process. Classified lists of words for spelling have, therefore, been prepared with special relation to the subjects chosen for conversation and sentence making. These words furnish material for supplemental lessons and help the child to spell many of the words that he needs to use in written exercises.

Handwriting.—No kind of manual work is more closely related to vocation than good handwriting and the memorizing of the correct forms of letters should be as carefully taught as correct spelling. The dictation exercises of Part One furnish a series of script copies which repeat three times the alphabet of small letters and once the alphabet of capitals. Typical lessons in sense training are also presented as a means of quickening observation and awakening keen interest in the accurate reproduction of the copy.

Written Language.—The lessons in written language are planned to secure accuracy rather than fluency. It is intended that the child's progress in oral expression shall be from one to two grades in advance of his attainments in written expression. All exercises for pen or pencil in Part One are, therefore, limited to a small stock of script sentences varying in style, which are presented for accurate copying and dictation. Thus the child is "taught by doing" to write, spell, capitalize and punctuate a few model sentences before he is asked to discriminate between them or to incur the risk of error in unaided composition. Even in Part Two much aid is given in the required written work, the chief aim from first to last being the prevention of errors.

At this stage of progress particular care is needed to prevent stereotyped forms of expression which, later on, retard originality.

Grade of Work.—From first to last, this book is designed for beginners in the study of language and is adapted to the second year of school life. The elementary character of the work, together with the abundance of simple reading lessons, makes it suitable as an introduction to any series of language book

CONTENTS

Stories to Read and Tell

Stories to Dramatize

Stories to Change and Make Longer

Subjects for Conversation

Subjects for Description

Dialogues for Reading and Acting

Pictures for Study

Poems to Read and Memorize

Script Copies for Writing

Models for Making

Word Lists for Spelling

PART I

**"Language is primarily something spoken
with the mouth and heard through the ear."**

—Sara Cone Bryant



1—A POEM TO LEARN

Hail! Ho! Sail! Ho!
Ahoy! Ahoy! Ahoy!
Who calls to me so far at sea?
Only a little boy.
Sail! Ho! Hail! Ho!
The sailor he sails the sea.
I wish he would capture a little sea-horse
And send him home to me.

—JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.