

**FIRST YEAR
LANGUAGE
READER**

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First Year Language Reader by Franklin T. Baker & George R. Carpenter & Katharine B. Owen

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FIRST YEAR LANGUAGE READER



GOOD MORNING, DEAR CHILDREN.

See page 8.

©

FIRST YEAR

LANGUAGE READER

BY

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PREFACE

THE LANGUAGE READERS are based upon the general theory that the work in reading and the work in language should be brought into close relationship. Arguments for this theory are presented in the prefaces to the higher books of the series.

The main purpose of the reading work of the first two years must be to learn to read. By the general agreement of experience, nothing so hastens a child's progress as the *desire* to read and actual *practice* in reading. His desire to read is, in the first place, aroused by his teacher, and fostered by the pleasure he takes in the work. Not only the skill of the teacher, therefore, but the nature of the reading matter also, enters into the problem. For this reason, the editors and publishers have striven to make these books attractive to children in appearance and substance.

There is no absolutely best way of beginning the work. One of the best methods is to engage the pupils in conversation regarding objects which appear early in the book, and then show them that the things which they have said can be said in another way than by speaking, viz. by writing them on the blackboard in script or in print, or in both. When the

pupils have become used to this idea and have begun to recognize certain words as they recur, the book may be given them.

Their first task will be to accumulate a small stock of remembered words. These must appear again and again; and the teacher will see that there is a pleasure in identifying words and sentences as well as in the idea which a group of words conveys. Meanwhile, words must be pronounced and heard distinctly by both teacher and pupils. The element of sound is of great importance. The sound-word is to be brought into association with the word that is seen.

Just when the definite drill in phonetics should begin, teachers are not agreed. Some of them give this work at the very beginning; others postpone it until there is a stock of known words. It is probably safe to wait until the pupil knows fifty or more before asking him to attempt to analyze words into their phonetic elements.

When this work is begun, it should be, at first, an exercise apart from the reading, in order that it may get the pupil's whole attention. The oral word *dog*, for instance, is to be heard as *d-o-g*, and so pronounced by the pupil. When this has been done with a number of familiar words, a group of words similar in form, like *dog*, *log*, *hog*, may be analyzed into the initial sound and the two final ones, thus: *d og*, *l og*, *h og*, and the pupil be brought to see the similarity of form and sound of the *og* in each of the words. In like manner, drill in other sounds and phonograms will be given. When he is

able, by combining two known sounds and phonograms as *r* and *at* into *rat*, he has made the first step in reading for himself.

From this time on his work in phonetics should be not only an exercise in and for itself, but should be brought constantly into his reading lesson when he meets a new word or has forgotten an old one. He should be made to feel constantly that in his phonetic drill he has been given a tool whereby he may help himself.

There are many words of unusual form and spelling, whose necessity in discourse demands that they be introduced early. These should be learned as wholes, and not analyzed. So treated, they offer no difficulty.

The reading matter of this volume has been chosen with deference to the taste of children as manifested by many generations of devotion to Mother Goose and the folk tales of the nursery. It is believed that the familiarity of many of the selections is a guarantee of the children's desire to read them again. And in the child's earlier efforts to read he is not helped by having strange things set before him. The mere effort of reading presents enough of the new and difficult.

The teacher will naturally desire to make use of the children's liking for music. Most of the Mother Goose jingles have been set to music. A good arrangement of the old melodies has been made by J. W. Elliott.

It will be seen that one of the general plans of the earlier pages of this book is to present some familiar selection,—or something easy to learn, if not already familiar,—and then to make from this selection other lessons involving words in the selection or in previous lessons. This method may be carried out in the later lessons just so far as the teacher finds it necessary for the sake of repetition. For the convenience of those teachers who hesitate to induct the pupils at once into a “whole story,” a few lessons involving sentences about familiar objects are first inserted. These seven initial lessons may, however, be omitted.

Let there be no fear of repetition. To read and re-read will do no harm; it will fix words and phrases in the minds of the children. The fixedness of the known things and the power to get new things are two necessary objects in the first year of reading.

When shall the children begin to write? When they can and will. This may be at the end of the first month, or at the end of the third, or later. It is not good psychology or good physiology to insist that they all begin at the same time, however convenient it may be in “keeping school.” And to begin early is no guarantee of corresponding progress in the power of writing in the years to follow.

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