

**THE MASTERY OF WORDS: BOOK FOUR OF
THE SEE AND SAY SERIES. A SERIES OF
LESSONS BASED UPON THE ORDINARY
ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY, TO SECURE FOR
THE PUPIL PROMPT RECOGNITION OF WORDS,
ACCURATE SPELLING, AND THE POWER TO
HELP HIMSELF IN THE STUDY OF WORDS**

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PREFACE

"The Mastery of Words" is a spelling book for Grammar Grades. Part One is intended for Grades Four, Five, and Six; Part Two for Grades Seven and Eight.

Failures in spelling may be due to slovenly pronunciation; for such failures the remedy is clear speaking and attentive hearing. Or misspelling may arise from lack of attention to the form of the word; to cure this, the habit of thoughtful observation and comparison is necessary. Or failure may be caused by complete ignorance of the phonetic value of the letters which are combined to make the word. There is no remedy for this except a study of phonetics, which should be a constant factor in the teaching of spelling.

The lessons presented in "The Mastery of Words" require accurate observation of the word; they afford drill in repetition of the ordinary phonetic forms which are regular in the majority of words; they teach the pupil to analyze the word so that he is conscious of the essential difficulty to be grappled with; they provide frequent exercises in enunciation, thus helping to overcome bad habits in speaking; and they provide exercises which prepare for the use of the dictionary.

This book presents the essential vocabulary for ordinary writing. It wastes no time with words never to be used in writing. The vocabulary of speech is broad and varied. The vocabulary of writing is limited. Spelling is used in writing, not in speaking. Drill in spelling should be centered upon the words necessary for writing.

The vocabulary of "The Mastery of Words" is based upon the most recent and conclusive investigations of the Russell Sage Foundation in charge of Dr. Leonard P. Ayres, Professor Cook of the University of Colorado, Professor O'Shea of the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Jones of the University of South Dakota, and others. The researches of these scholars have clearly shown that many spelling books of the past have given undue attention to words which never appear in the student's vocabulary, still less in the essential vocabulary of writing. Because few persons have understood what this vocabulary should include, stress has been given to words never to be used except in the spelling lesson.

The author has taken pains to present words which are entirely phonetic, as well as those which vary from the type. Over and over again "type words" are presented. The words which are selected for special emphasis are so few in number that they can readily be mastered in the space and time allotted to them. These words are printed in black letter to assist the attention. Teacher or pupil may readily recall this entire list by turning back and drilling upon the black-letter lists on each page. By frequent review of those lists, the pupil will master a large group of words which are in common use—yet are frequently misspelled.

The book contains innumerable devices and suggestions to make spelling a live and interesting subject, in which children will take pleasure. One cause for the lack of interest in spelling is the deadly monotony of the ordinary spelling book. Repetition with variety has been secured in a marked degree in "The Mastery of Words."

An Appendix has been added to the advanced lessons, providing rules for spelling, phonetic tables, the Ayres list of the thousand words most commonly used, with a large variety of

exercises including games and contests in various forms, as well as suggestions for the ordinary spelling match. This Appendix will be useful throughout the course, each grade deriving from it such help as the teacher thinks necessary. After school days are over the pupil must become his own teacher. He will be wholly independent if he knows phonetics and can read the dictionary. "The Mastery of Words" provides him with this double power.

The author confidently expects that the completion of the course in word study provided in this book will enable the pupil to teach himself by the use of the dictionary and other common aids, and thus to increase steadily his power in the use of English after leaving the school. The school does not complete the training of the pupil; it only begins it. The textbook is useful if it gives the pupil the power to help himself.

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

The text provides for each grade lessons for thirty-six weeks. Every page presents exercises for a single week. Four advanced lessons of different kinds are given on each page, in addition to the drill exercise, which appears at the bottom of the page beneath a wavy line. It is expected that the advanced lessons will be given on four days of the week, but that on the fifth day the entire page will be reviewed, either by a written test, an oral-spelling match, or by some device which the teacher or the class may suggest.

The author advises that every ninth week should be given to review. Pages 11 and 20, Part One, give examples of such reviews. In this week the lessons may be varied, but they should bring again to the attention all words which have presented any difficulty to the pupils in the previous two months.

The words in certain lessons are arranged horizontally instead of in vertical lists. This varies the page and approaches more nearly the arrangement used in reading or writing.

In the work of each week eight words at least are selected for special emphasis; these are written in heavy type. They are common words which present some difficulty and which are frequently misspelled. Rapid reviews of black-letter words should be given at frequent intervals.

All words should be used in sentences over and over again. It is not necessary to cumber the pages of the spelling book with the repetition of this direction, but it should be the common, everyday practice. Words belong in sentences, and it is only in sentences that they will be written and read. Do not be satisfied with the bare spelling of isolated words.

One dictation exercise a week is provided. These exercises are associated in a natural and normal arrangement, not in formal and isolated columns. Such exercises afford a reasonable and useful test of spelling ability. Verse and prose alternate with exercises in the use of homonyms. These exercises may be varied at will by the teacher, according to the need of her class. In the Appendix a summary of phonetic sounds, type words, and diacritical marks is given, with other material which the class may use for frequent reference. The teacher may readily supplement or vary her exercises by reference to the Appendix.

From the beginning pupils should be taught to find help in the dictionary. Exercises are provided which train them to find words in alphabetical lists, to understand the dictionary marks, and to develop the habit of reference to this indispensable book.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE TEACHER

The art of teaching spelling is to secure interest, eagerness, and alertness on the part of the class. Repetition without thoughtful attention accomplishes little; it may even be harmful.

Joy in the work insures growth. The spelling lesson rightly conducted should insure the fun which children find in a race.

Vary the form of the lessons from day to day. Refer to the Appendix for devices which afford drill and secure variety.

Use every word in the lesson as a type of a group. Have the pupils extend the list until they recognize the phonic element belonging to all the words of the list. Practice of this sort lays the foundation for a clear understanding of a rule of spelling later. It is useless to teach a rule without such a foundation in experience.

Various exercises are given in the sixth grade in which the children search through their own vocabulary and make lists which will illustrate a rule of spelling. Teachers who desire to do so may, in connection with these exercises, teach the rules of spelling which are placed at the end of the book.

Words do not present equal difficulty to all pupils. Require every pupil to keep a list of the words which he has failed to spell correctly. At intervals test him on all the words which he has previously misspelled, using the list in his record book. Try occasional spelling matches, using these lists.

Spelling is for use in writing; therefore provide for the use of each new word in writing, and do not be satisfied with the oral spelling, which appeals merely to the ear. Written spelling trains the eye and fixes the form, besides affording to the teacher a sure test of the pupil's ability.

Pupils are frequently required in the exercises of this book to name a rhyme for every word in the lesson. The purpose

in this is twofold: to secure recognition of the group (thus mastering a number of words rather than a single one) and to discover equivalents, that is, the various signs for the same sound. Thus, "bite" rhymes with "kite," "might," "white," "sight," and "bright." This list given by the pupils affords just the opportunity to sort out these words; they should be written upon the blackboard in columns. Training of this fashion will do away with half of the misspelling, for the pupil will use again and again correctly words which sound alike but which are spelled differently. This is important practice which can be carried on with all the zest of a game.

Pupils should get the habit of studying a word to see just what is hard about it. The word "any" is hard for one who does not look and remember. It sounds like *enany*, but it is written *any*. The same difficulty occurs with the word "many." The pupil who recognizes that the difficulty comes through the use of the vowel *a* to represent a short sound of *e* should also have his attention fixed upon the fact that only one *a* is used. In these two ways the word varies from the phonetic type and is therefore a stumblingblock.

Teach the pupils to watch for silent letters; have them noted in oral spelling. Thus, in "numb" the *b* is silent; in studying the word "ought," have the pupil tell what letters are silent. Have him also name other words in which the same group of letters is silent. By comparing sound and form the difficulty in spelling is overcome.

All general customs in spelling which may be illustrated by a considerable number of words should be worked out by the class. This is a social group exercise, infinitely more valuable than the lesson prescribed by the teacher. Make much use, then, of the group exercises, in which the pupils make lists to illustrate the rule, or to prepare the way for it.