

**THE HORACE MANN
READERS:
FIRST READER**

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The Horace Mann Readers: First Reader by Walter L. Hervey & Melvin Hix

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WALTER L. HERVEY & MELVIN HIX

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THE HORACE MANN READERS

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FOREWORD

THE Horace Mann Readers represent a serious attempt to apply educational principles to the teaching of reading.

In the First Reader, as in the Primer, the editors have sought to combine the qualities of an attractive children's book with those of a well-constructed basal school reader.

In this attempt they have been inspired by the conviction (which they share with increasing numbers of teachers) that a school reader not only *may* possess qualities of intrinsic and permanent interest, but *must* possess these qualities, under penalty of subordinating spirit to mechanism.

Reading, after all, is essentially an affair of thought, imagination, emotion, and expression. And since it is thus primarily an affair of spirit, mechanical processes, essential as they certainly are, must stand to it in the relation of means to an end. All merely mechanical methods, therefore, are both wasteful and ineffective: wasteful, in that they fail to evoke the strongest motive; ineffective, in that they fail after all to teach children really to read.

In weaving together the stories and exercises which form the First Reader, the editors have had in mind these wise and helpful words of Professor John Dewey: "The child should have a personal interest in what is read; a personal hunger for it; a personal power of satisfying the appetite."

Children of six or seven years of age have a *personal interest* in the doings of children of their own age, especially in those experiences which they can live over in make-believe and play.

They also have a personal interest in nature stories and in fables; in the forms and activities of animals; and in those trades, occupations, and social (ethical) relationships that most intimately concern themselves.

Children have a *personal hunger* for stories having continuity, development, and variety in characters and incidents; stories that appeal to curiosity, stimulate imagination and thought, and arouse emotion; continued or related stories in which familiar and favorite characters reappear; stories, moreover, illustrated with pictures that correspond accurately to the text, yet suggest more than they tell.

The "*personal power* of satisfying the appetite" is developed by all exercises that tend toward independence in reading, — exercises in which the old is presented in new relations; exercises in grouping and analyzing words of like structure, and in recombining their elements.

It is hoped that both in respect to content and method the First Reader will prove to be in harmony with the foregoing principles, — a fitting sequel to the Horace Mann Primer and a suitable introduction to the Second Reader of the same series.

Acknowledgments are due to Mr. Gelett Burgess for his kind permission to use two poems, "Goop! Goop! Goop!" and "You Who are the Oldest," from *More Goops and How Not to be Them*, published by Frederick A. Stokes & Co.; to *The Youth's Companion* for the privilege of using the "Go to Sleep Story" by Eudora Bumstead; to Messrs. Milton Bradley & Co. for permission to use "A Kitten Rhyme" by Emilie Poulsson; to The A. S. Barnes Company for permission to use "The Snow Man" by Arthur Henry, from *Song Series — Book One*. The two little poems, "Mr. Frog" and "The Wise Old Owl," from *Small Songs for Small Singers* by W. H. Neidlinger, are used by permission of G. Schirmer — copyright, 1896.

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