

**PRACTICAL ENGLISH
COMPOSITION; BOOK IV
FOR THE FOURTH YEAR
OF THE HIGH SCHOOL**

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Practical English Composition; Book IV for the Fourth Year of the High School by Edwin L. Miller

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EDWIN L. MILLER

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PRACTICAL ENGLISH COMPOSITION

BOOK IV

FOR THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

BY

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PREFACE

THE present volume is the last in a series of four, one of which has been planned for each year of the high-school course. Originally designed some years ago, for the purpose of reproducing in the schoolroom as far as possible the methods which successful authors, from time immemorial, have employed in teaching themselves how to write, most of the exercises which they contain have since been subjected to the test of actual classroom use on a large scale. They will be found, therefore, to be pretty accurately adapted to the capacity of the pupils for whom they are intended. They may be used independently or as supplementary to a more formal textbook.

In each volume there are some exercises that involve each of the four forms of discourse; but emphasis is placed in Book I on description, in Book II on narration, in Book III on exposition, and in Book IV on argumentation. Similarly, while stress is laid in Book I on letter-writing, in Book II on journalism, in Book III on literary effect, and in Book IV on the civic aspects of composition, all of these phases of the subject receive attention in each volume.

In every lesson of each book provision is made for oral work: first, because it is an end useful in itself; second, because it is of much value in preparing the ground for written work; third, because it can be made to give the pupil a proper and powerful motive for writing with care; and, fourth, because, when employed with discretion, it lightens the teacher's burden without impairing his efficiency.

Composition is not writing. Writing is only one step in composition. The gathering of material, the organization of material, criticism, revision, publication, and the reaction that follows publication are therefore in these volumes given due recognition.

The quotation at the head of each chapter and the poem at the end are designed to furnish that stimulus to the will and the imagination without which great practical achievement is impossible. On the other hand, the exercises are all designed with the idea that the sort of idealism which has no practical results is a snare. Indeed, the books might be characterized as an effort to find a useful compromise between those warring types of educational theory which are usually characterized by the words "academic" and "vocational."

The specific subject of this book is public speaking. It will accordingly be found to contain exercises in logic, argumentation, persuasion, oratory, and debating. As a preparation for these, there is some review of description, narration, and exposition; and, in order that the student, when he has completed the volume, may be equally prepared for business, for society, or for college, attention is given throughout to spelling, punctuation, syntax, and those other matters of good usage of which college professors and business men complain with only too much reason that high-school graduates are ignorant.

The book also has a social aim. It is meant to direct the attention of pupils to current public questions, to arouse an interest in them, to form the habit of studying them, and to lay the foundations of skill in their discussion.

About one hundred recitation periods of forty-five

PREFACE

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minutes each will be required for the average fourth-year class to master this volume.

Teachers are cautioned against the idea that the books must always be taught in their entirety. Sometimes they should, sometimes not. It is hoped, however, that they will prove an inspiration rather than a chain; a stimulus to originality rather than a substitute for it; the starting-point for many original devices rather than the final word on any subject.

Chapters II, III, IV, V, and VI are mostly the work of Miss Flora Anderson, of the Detroit Central High School. Her skill and experience have also afforded invaluable aid in other respects. To Miss Eva M. Kinney, of the Detroit Northwestern High School, I also owe thanks for assistance in various parts of the book, especially Chapter V.

E. L. M.

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"Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Life of Addison*.

"Children learn to speak by watching the lips and catching the words of those who know how already; and poets learn in the same way from their elders."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *Essay on Chaucer*.

"Grammars of rhetoric and grammars of logic are among the most useless furniture of a shelf. Give a boy Robinson Crusoe. That is worth all the grammars of rhetoric and logic in the world. . . . Who ever reasoned better for having been taught the difference between a syllogism and an enthymeme? Who ever composed with greater spirit and elegance because he could define an oxymoron or an aposiopesis?"

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

Trevelyan's Life of Lord Macaulay, Chapter VI.