

**ACTION, IMITATION AND
FUN SERIES IV: PRIMER,
THE THREE BEARS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649348671

Action, Imitation and fun series IV: Primer, The Three Bears by Mara L. Pratt -Chadwick & Rebecca Chase

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Cover @ 2017

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MARA L. PRATT -CHADWICK & REBECCA CHASE

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ACTION, IMITATION AND FUN
SERIES

IV
PRIMER
THE THREE BEARS

BY
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EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

BOSTON

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

SAN FRANCISCO

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1905

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INTRODUCTION.

To the Teachers:

It is the writer's wish that these primers show forth the following:

1. That a primer may be based upon the classic.
2. That a primer may be constructed with reference to
 - (a) Action,*
 - (b) Imitation,
 - (c) Fun,

which, as every sympathetic observer of children must know, are the elements that enter most largely into the stories which little children like best.

As to the classic basis, certainly a vocabulary may be evolved as well from "The Three Bears," for example, as from cats and dogs. For cannot a child as well in the beginning say, *I see a bear as I see a cat?* And can he not build up day by day from the bear as well as from the cat?

Then, too, these tales are pedagogical to the primer grade. Every first grade or kindergarten teacher knows the delight with which little children listen as she reads them; hence that first of all elements—interest—is fully satisfied in these tales.

Again we find in these classic tales a second pedagogical principle—that of action; for in these olden tales most rapid and vigorous activity predominate.

A third principle, too, is in evidence—that of repetition; and a child loves the rhythm of repetition.

And still a fourth pedagogical quality is found in these classic tales, *i. e.*, the dramatic—personification—dialogue—or in another term,

* See Barnes' "Studies in Education," Vol. I.

imitation. Every teacher knows how little children love to personify; to put words into the mouths of animals; to fancy conversations between the flowers and the trees, and to build dialogue from the verse and from the story.

There is, however, yet another element which should come into child's literature and which is found in perfection in these old classics; and that is the element of the serial.

Most primers are now carrying something akin to a continued story, but a true serial is one that represents different ages of one act. For example, in the famous German picture book, "Slovenly Peter," we have in perfect serial story, the tale of a heedless boy's mishaps at home and at school.

The "Slovenly Peter" of which I speak is a book of serial pictures; funny, the children call them, and no picture book has ever been so popular in all Europe. Moreover, it has been translated into other languages for the children of other lands.

The Sunday newspaper, with its Katzenjammers, its Foxy Grandpa, and its Buster Brown, is showing us a lesson in pedagogy which it would be well for us as teachers to heed. These serial pictures are the Sunday delight of millions of little children and glad would the teacher be if, on Monday morning, she could arouse one-half the eagerness and interest in the primer reading lesson. It would look then as if, while we are instructing our children through our primers, they are getting their education through the Sunday papers.

The element of the grotesque, too, which enters so largely into these Sunday serial pictures, is one very dear to the child's heart, and is found again in these old classics; and we cannot afford to ignore that element in the construction of our primary reading books.

It was once my pleasure to look over several hundreds of papers written by school children in reply to the question, What is the funniest

thing that you can remember? In the papers from the upper grades there were, of course, the elements of adult wit; but in the papers of the little children was found an almost universal testimony to the truth that the grotesque is the principal element in a child's idea of "funny." Little girls in long dresses, little boys in big hats, topsy turvy conditions; and, above all, deeds of monkeys were predominant.

It has been suggested that, possibly, in putting these classic tales into a primer form, from which the child shall perform the labor of learning to read, we may take from the child his enjoyment of the classic.

If reading were taught in the old-fashioned, laborious way, this question would indeed be worthy of grave consideration; for to rob a child of joy in these classic tales would indeed be unfortunate and unwise. The manuscript of these primers was, therefore, given over to a primary teacher who made an honest test of them upon the children. This teacher reported in favor of the experiment, it being her opinion that since there is so little labor and so much play connected with the modern reading process, the child's interest was by no means deadened; rather was it heightened and the ambition stirred by the presence of reading material with which they were already familiar. That this should have been so seems probable and consistent when we recall that children love always to do things with which they are familiar.

Such being true, then, why may we not throw off primer traditions of passivity and colorless ethics and give to the first grades as well as to the third and those above, the kind of reading that they love; and that which is in harmony with the child's real interest.

MARA L. PRATT-CHADWICK.

CONSTRUCTION WORDS.

There is a certain list of words the mastery of which is absolutely essential to the child before he can acquire any ease or comfort in reading.

This list is no less essential to the compiler of a primer if the compiler would present thoughts that are sequential and reasonable.

It should, then, be the aim of any teacher who thinks of the child as a human being rather than as a first grade pupil, to see that this list is acquired as soon as possible.

TO BE LEARNED BY SIGHT.

are	do	should	would
any	does	some	were
	don't	says	where
been		said	what
	goes		won't
could		two	
come	here	too	you
		to	yes
	might	three	yet
		their	your
	of	there	
	one	they	
	once		

TO BE LEARNED BY SOUND.

ăn	hê	ôr	ũp
ăt	hĩs	ôn	ũntũ
ăm	hĩm	ôvêr	
<u>a</u> ll	hêr	<u>out</u>	<u>wh</u> y
ăs	hăs	<u>ôff</u>	<u>wh</u> ên
ând	hăve	<u>our</u>	<u>wh</u> ile
	hăd		<u>wh</u> ich
bê	<u>how</u>	<u>seen</u>	wê
bũt		<u>sêe</u>	
bỹ	Is	<u>say</u>	was
	It	<u>sh</u> e	will
căn	If	<u>sh</u> all	wênt
	I	sô	
dĩd	In	saw	
fôr	mê	this	} th in these words is marked thus: th
frôm	mỹ	thăt	
	<u>may</u>	thêrm	
gô	mũst	thêse	
gêt		thôse	
gôt	<u>now</u>	wĩth	
	nô	thrêe	
	nôt		

The above list includes the construction words that make up the Ward list, placing these primers in harmony with that series of books.