

**A LANGUAGE
SERIES: BOOK I**

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A Language Series: Book I by Robert C. Metcalf & Augustine L. Rafter

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ROBERT C. METCALF & AUGUSTINE L. RAFTER

**A LANGUAGE
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A
LANGUAGE SERIES

BOOK ONE

BY

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W. P. 6

PREFACE

At the beginning of their school life, children have more or less ability to tell what they know. The English that they use in talking may not be very good, and usually they are not able to write it at all. During the first three years at school, however, they improve in speech, and learn also how to express their thoughts, in a simple way, in writing.

During this period of the child's life, a large proportion of time should be, and usually is, given to cultivating the power of observation by the study of plants, animals, and other natural objects that may be obtained in the vicinity of the school.

It is not to be expected or desired that this form of study should be methodical or thorough, but it should serve the purpose of leading the child to acquire a store of varied information for more careful study in the near future. It is agreed generally that the systematic study of the English language should begin in the fourth year of the pupil's school life, and for many reasons it is thought desirable that children should be provided at this time with a well-graded textbook in English. The main objects that have been kept in mind in the preparation of this series are : —

1. A presentation of the subject matter that will lead the pupil to express his thoughts spontaneously and with some degree of accuracy.

2. The exposition of a plan for a careful and somewhat thorough study of familiar objects.

3. A closer and more systematic correlation of observation and expression.

A reference to the table of contents will disclose the manner in which the aims thus indicated have been carried out. It is not to be assumed that the child at this period possesses a very large fund of knowledge; therefore, to the end that his knowledge may be increased, lessons on subjects suitable to his understanding are supplied in the form of pictures, such natural objects as can be obtained easily, and interesting stories and poems. Interspersed among lessons of this character are exercises for the purpose of fixing in the mind of the pupil *correct language forms*.

The order of presentation of a lesson is as follows:—

1. Furnishing the pupil with the means for acquiring correct information.

2. Skillful questioning of the pupil for the purpose of arranging properly and crystallizing this information in the mind.

3. Requiring of the pupil natural and orderly oral and written expression.

It is a truism, but worthy of note, that oral reading of choice selections from suitable literature is a powerful aid in the language work of a schoolroom, because it accustoms the ear to the sound of good English, and thus fosters its use in the speech of the pupils.

In courses of study in English, grade teachers often are advised to give frequent dictation exercises and to require the pupils to commit to memory a number of poems; but in the multiplied duties of any grade, a teacher has little

leisure to compose and to write upon the blackboard suitable dictation exercises, or to search through one or two volumes for a particular poem and then to spend time in copying it.

It is one of the purposes of this series to free the teachers, as far as possible, from unnecessary, uneconomic copying, thereby allowing them the maximum amount of time to devote to their pupils.

Book One is designed for use in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years of the elementary schools. The authors, in the preparation of this series, have had before them the new course in English, prepared under the direction of the Board of Superintendents of the City of Boston, by a committee consisting of an assistant superintendent, principals of districts, a Boston Normal School teacher, and teachers from each of the grades.

Some of the ablest teachers of English have tested the lessons of this series in their classrooms, a fact that may justify the claim that the lessons have been standardized, and that they are suitable for the grades for which they are intended.

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