

**THE SPRAGUE
CLASSIC READERS.
BOOK ONE. A PRIMER**

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The Sprague Classic Readers. Book One. A Primer by Sarah E. Sprague

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SARAH E. SPRAGUE

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CLASSIC READERS.
BOOK ONE. A PRIMER**



TO the loving little band
of nephews and nieces
and their myriad comrades
—near and far away—who
are just setting out in search
of that alluring Wonderland
to which a child's primer
forms the magic portal, this
series of readers is most
affectionately inscribed by
their lifelong friend,

THE AUTHOR.

September,
1902.

FOREWORD.

Dear Friends:—In all the wide universe of beauty, there is nothing so transcendently beautiful as the joyous, natural awakening and development of child nature. It is our happy privilege so to interpret life to the little child that he may assimilate from it only what is good and pure and true; ours to put him in harmony with his every-day environment; to help him understand and love nature; to teach him to appreciate and respond to what is truest and best in music, in pictures, in books and in people.

To accomplish these ends easily and without loss of nervous energy, the child must be kept supplied with happy interests for head, hand, and heart, pursuing none of these, however, to that dangerous fatigue ~~point~~ which is the sure outcome of the forcing process and as surely fatal to all healthy growth. Realizing the full significance of these facts, the writer, in preparing this little volume, has been content to walk hand in hand with the child, sharing his simplest pleasures, keeping, for the most part, in dear, familiar pathways, stopping often by the wayside to pluck a well-known flower or to listen to the song of some familiar bird. The child has alternately led and been led. The uncertain little feet have been guided to higher levels by steps both easy and pleasant. There has been no undue straining after quick results and there has been no loss of that fullness of joy which belongs to the child by divine right. The primer goes into your hands as a labor of love and with the hope that it may be helpful to you and to the little ones in your charge.

Cordially yours,

SARAH E. SPRAGUE.

PREFACE.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS of this primer may be found in the following fundamental laws of child nature:—Joy is an integral part of normal childhood. Activity is a necessity of child life. Frequent change—of a pleasing character—is indispensable to healthy development and growth. The forcing process is destructive to mental power. Play is the natural outlet for the inherent dramatic instinct of the happy, unfettered child. Love is the only force to which child nature really yields.

Every normal child is a passionate lover of music, of rhythm, of color, form and motion. These are the highest stimulants to his imagination, and through these, his varied emotions find their truest expression. These also—because they arouse and hold his interest—are of unequalled value in strengthening the powers of attention and retention.

In the above may be found the underlying thought and motive of THE PLAN. The expansion of the plan depends also upon the following facts:—No teacher needs to make learning to read a task to the child. Happiness should be an inseparable part of the child's work as well as of his play. Both his work and his play should be so wisely directed as to leave the child the feeling of perfect freedom. The mind of the child should be kept so full of purity as to leave no room for evil. As the craving for rhythmic effects precedes the child's power to grasp the full import of words, he should have many easy rhymes before he attempts the higher forms of verse. These should both precede and accompany his early lessons in reading.

PRIMER CHARACTERISTICS. The primer should be a decided factor in developing a genuine love of nature and in creating an abiding preference for what is best in people, in pictures, in music and in literature.

It should also be an index of all that fills the child's hours at school. It should indicate reading methods, but not dogmatize. As the primer's limits are soon reached, the teacher needs to strengthen, vivify and expand all its lines of work. The primer should be a reading book. Mere lists of words are out of place. They waste the reading space and are an insult to the teacher's intelligence. The vocabulary should be carefully chosen, thoroughly graded and as ample as the average child can use intelligently.

SEAT WORK OR HAND WORK. It affords a child the keenest pleasure to turn his restless activities into a useful channel. This gives his vague impressions a tangible form, calls into use the creative faculty and puts him into closer touch with the adult world. Thus his dignity and his ambition are satisfied. Moreover, the child's attempts to express, with his hand, the thought gained from his reading lesson, clearly show possible weaknesses therein and prove that suitable hand work is a valuable adjunct to such lessons. Only the simplest hand work is indicated in this book, but may be added to at the pleasure of the teacher. Much of this work should be done at the blackboard or work table.

METHODS. Before the child can read independently, he must gain the following:—Power to grasp the thought and feeling expressed by the sentences. Instantaneous recognition of common words and phrases. A practical knowledge of phonetic elements. Instantaneous recognition of the script and Roman alphabets. The power to read aloud or to translate into action, in a correct and pleasing manner, what has been gained, silently, from the sentences. Hence, the author would advise, in general, a wise combination of the best features of all standard methods—Thought, Word, Action, Phonic and Sentence—discriminating so as best to meet the needs of the individual school or individual child.

EXPLANATORY.—PAGES 8 AND 9. If possible, have white daisies present and arouse interest by an examination of them. Otherwise call

attention at once to the picture. By kindly, informal questioning, draw out phrases and sentences on page 9. Verify by having child show objects in picture. Teach new words by using blackboard as well as book. Finally, have lesson read as a unit. Then assign seat work. In all subsequent lessons, interest may be gained and new words and phrases taught in similar way. Never allow child to try to read new lesson till this has been done. Work with enthusiasm, but without hurry. Give phonic drills as needed.

PAGES 14, 15, 16, 17. Materials needed: Flag, building blocks and table. Children number to ten. Cuts indicate steps in dramatization. Teach figures with names of numerals. Afterward, use these pages for reading lesson. Easy dramatizations with little or no help may be worked out by the class for many of the subsequent lessons. For example, see pages 28 and 29, 30 and 31, 40 and 41, etc. Such exercises lend interest, deepen impressions and remove self-consciousness.

PAGE 22. Sing this to some simple melody and accompany with appropriate gestures. Afterward, use for reading lesson.

PAGES 36 AND 37. Teach this song now or earlier, as preferred. Accompany by graceful gestures. Later, use for reading lesson.

PAGES 64 AND 65. Teach here or earlier. Designate one half of class as "sunbeams," other half as "shadows." Cuts suggest method of use. Much better if sung to some cheery melody, or accompanied by march music in "double-quick" time.

PAGES 86 AND 87. Have children model objects shown in these cuts.

PAGES 95 AND 96. Explain relationship of king, queen, prince and princess and that "Baby Stuart" was little son of King Charles I. Also tell class about the artist, Van Dyck. See "Great Artists," Ed. Pub. Co.

PAGES 97 AND 98. Recall information given with pages 95 and 96. Explain that "Good morrow" was once a common form of greeting.

NOTE. For prismatic colors and alphabets, see pages 6 and 7.



ALPHABETS.

A a A a H h H h

B b B b I i I i

C c C c J j J j

D d D d K k K k

E e E e L l L l

F f F f M m M m

G g G g N n N n





ALPHABETS.

O o	<i>O</i> o	U u	<i>U</i> u
P p	<i>P</i> p	V v	<i>V</i> v
Q q	<i>Q</i> q	W w	<i>W</i> w
R r	<i>R</i> r	X x	<i>X</i> x
S s	<i>S</i> s	Y y	<i>Y</i> y
T t	<i>T</i> t	Z z	<i>Z</i> z

