

**THE SPRAGUE
CLASSIC READERS.
BOOK TWO**

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The Sprague Classic Readers. Book Two by Sarah E. Sprague

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SARAH E. SPRAGUE

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CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

Vogel

FOREWORD.

Christ it was who disdained not the use of objects and symbols, remembering that it was the childhood of the race. He it was who spake in parables and stories, laying bare soul of man and heart of nature, and revealing each by divine analogy. He it was who took the little ones in His arms and blessed them; who set the child in the midst, saying, "Except ye become as one of these." May the afterglow of that inspired teaching ever shine upon the path we are treading. May we bathe our tired spirits in its warmth and glory, and kindle our torches at the splendor of its light.

— *Kate Douglass Wiggin.*

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PREFACE.

IN GENERAL. Learning to read is one of the most important events in a child's career and in later years his only recollections of this interesting feature of his life should be a series of diversified but always pleasurable experiences, with no weariness of body, mind, or soul attached thereto. Therefore, it has been the endeavor to make the present volume a continuous joy to its little owner, reflecting all his dearest interests and, at the same time, broadening his mental vision as rapidly as it is safe to do.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS. The present volume, Book Two of the series, is based upon the same psychological laws and has the same general underlying principles and motives as the primer, although the scope is broadened to keep pace with the gradually maturing powers of the child.

THE PLAN. This provides for a thorough review of the vocabulary used in Book One, new words being added cautiously although with more freedom than at first. It also carries forward and expands some of the topics introduced in the primer. This serves the double purpose of increasing the interest while developing continuity of thought. Moreover, with the increased vocabulary the literary tone becomes constantly higher and of more permanent value. This will be noticeable in the increasing maturity of even the silent readings, games, memory gems, etc., and in the genuine culture value of the book as a whole.

GRADING. "Much easy reading makes reading easy" has become a maxim among the best primary teachers and all such teachers agree that there should be no long jump between the primer and the next book to be used, because of the discouraging effect upon the children. Accordingly, the author has made Book Two an easy continuation of the previous book, growing constantly, but very gradually, more difficult.

SEAT WORK OR HAND WORK. There should be the same care now as before to give the child proper hand work to supplement the reading lessons. However, while cutting, pasting, modeling, and the like may still be profitably used, construction work and blackboard illustrations of ideas are even more valuable at this point. Unfortunately these can not be illustrated in a book like this. Hence, the author is obliged to rest with a suggestion of the work needed, regretfully omitting details.

METHODS. In the judgment of the writer, it is better to allow the child, at first, the greater freedom of a judicious combination of methods, the phonic drills being given apart from the regular reading lesson. Thus

the ear and the vocal organs are trained without detracting from the interest of the lesson. Words and phrases are rapidly learned and the child begins at once to read. However, each teacher should be the best judge of what method or methods will best serve the interests of her little pupils at the outset and no dictation is here attempted. A fair reading vocabulary once attained, the child may be taught the alphabet and other necessary items without feeling the burden if the teacher is careful to let these things be done incidentally, having them take the form of games rather than required tasks.

PHONICS AND DIACRITICAL MARKS. Just when to begin this line of work and how far to carry it are open questions, to be decided, largely, by the individual teacher, the judgment based upon the needs of her pupils. No arbitrary rules could be enforced without gross injustice. A child of foreign parentage needs earlier and more frequent drills upon the sounds of the letters than do those familiar with English from birth.

After the child has acquired a reasonable facility in distinguishing and making the sounds of the letters, he may, very gradually, be taught the names and use of the diacritical marks. It is not well to make this work a part of the reading period since it leads the child away from thought interpretation which is, after all, the main purpose of the reading lesson. Greater progress is made when but one diacritical mark is given at a time. Take, for instance, the breve (˘). Teach its form and name and where to place it to express the short sound of the vowel. Give thorough drill—many exercises—before attempting any other mark. For help in this work see “Key to Pronunciation.”

EXPLANATORY NOTES. Pp. 9, 14, 17. These give lists of words properly marked to show pronunciation and may be used as models by child when trying to place diacritical marks. These pages show also typical lists of words, that are too difficult for child to mark at first.

P. 13. Have before the class dandelions, milkweed and thistles which have gone to seed, and let each child have one of each. Find the seeds, note the wing-like properties and compare with fresh blossoms from these plants. Have lesson read sentence by sentence, silently and aloud, new words pointed out and pronounced, etc. Before time expires, see that the lesson is read through as a unit.

P. 17. Have class read the picture. Compare picture of ducklings with picture of chickens. Explain that duck's eggs are often given to a hen to sit upon because a hen is a more careful mother than a duck. Lead class to understand cause of hen's anxiety.

P. 20. Teach class how to use this and, later, give other words to be

built upon similarly. Valuable exercise to promote syllabication and spelling.

P. 24. If possible, have sunflower in room and let child verify each point in lesson by showing petals, sepals, etc. If not, use colored picture on page 15 and let class reproduce it at close of lesson.

P. 25. Have child read the stanza. Bring out meaning by questions and objects if necessary. Explain that the cut represents a very old stone mill at Newport, R. I., and that no one knows, surely, when or why built. Memorize stanza.

P. 26. Building blocks and small flags needed. Use as reading lesson, one child taking place of teacher. Class build forts. Close by saluting flag and singing as indicated.

P. 28. Have real flowers of different colors in room or pictures of them. Let each child read silently, class judging from action if correct.

P. 29. If not season for roses have a paper rose for child to hold while reading. In this and other flower lessons, if possible, teach class to make the flowers for seat work. This is most fascinating hand work.

P. 34. See directions for use of page 20.

P. 42. Class may reach this lesson before October. If so, read again in October and verify facts from observation. Also verify the next four lessons by observation.

P. 54. Teacher should not tell class answers to these questions, but lead them to find out from nature.

P. 67. A purely imaginative game much enjoyed when played with spirit.

P. 73. Tell briefly the legend of the snow fairies weaving blankets to cover the roots of the flowers in winter. Will also need to explain "looms" and process of weaving. Show cuts of looms.

P. 92. Send class to blackboard to write names of months for spelling exercise. Help class, by questions, to conquer last stanza.

P. 93. Recall explanation of weaving. Illustrate by pictures of spinning and weaving. If possible, see work done.

P. 108. Better use this on a rainy day in order to make verification easy.

P. 124. Explain "hare." Recall facts about tortoise. Memorize closing proverb. If possible, have both tortoise and hare (or rabbit) present and precede reading lesson by an informal talk about these.

MEMORY GEMS. Teach these carefully, letting them impress their own lessons.



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

