

THE FIRST READER

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The First Reader by William T. Harris & Andrew J. Rickoff & Mark Bailey

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WILLIAM T. HARRIS & ANDREW J. RICKOFF & MARK BAILEY

THE FIRST READER



JOHN AND HIS BOAT.

(SEE PAGE 90.)

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APPLETONS' SCHOOL READERS.

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FIRST READER.

BY

WILLIAM T. HARRIS, A. M., LL. D.,

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, ST. LOUIS, MO.

ANDREW J. RICKOFF, A. M.,

SUPERINTENDENT OF INSTRUCTION, CLEVELAND, OHIO.

MARK BAILEY, A. M.,

INSTRUCTOR IN ELOCUTION, YALE COLLEGE.

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FROM THE AUTHORS TO THE TEACHER.

THE teacher using this book can teach by any method which he may prefer ; but the experience of many years has convinced us that a judicious combination of the word and phonic methods is the best. It makes the shortest step from the known to the unknown ; it makes the pupil independent of the aid of the teacher sooner than any other.

This is the way we would use the book : We would teach the pupil to recognize the word "cat," and successively "a," "the," and "my," with the word "cat" and separately. We would do the same with the words to be found on the two succeeding pages. So far we would teach exclusively by what is called the "word-method."

While this is going on, we would be preparing the children for the next step (see page 8). This may be done as follows: At the close of each lesson, without reference to book or black-board, we would pronounce the words of the lesson, and other words, slowly and more slowly, till they were resolved into their elementary sounds. We would also exercise the children in doing the same. After three or four exercises of this kind we would pronounce the elements of familiar words very slowly, and have the children tell the words. In doing this, at first, the elements should not be entirely separated, but each should be made to glide into the next, the words being thus drawled out rather than distinctly separated into their elementary sounds. The object of this process, at this stage, is not to train the children to analyze and form words, but it is to lead them to notice the fact that the words which they use are composed of one or more different sounds, and that, by joining sounds together, they may make up words.

On page 8 the children begin, for the first time, to associate the letters of the printed word with the sounds of the spoken word. Here we symbolize the analysis of the word "rat" as we hear it spoken, by printing the letters which represent the elements farther and farther apart, till each one stands as a separate unit. So with the reverse or synthetic process. On the opposite page the same process is applied to other words. With the use of the black-board the ingenious teacher can carry

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out the plan to any desirable extent. While it is not necessary to arrest the progress of the class till all can give the sounds of all the words on the upper half of page 9, and recombine them into other words as on the lower half, yet extreme caution should be exercised lest they be hurried on too fast, and thus become confused. It should be recollected that the object here is not so much to teach them a few words, as to cultivate the power of making out words for themselves. The *sounds* of the separate letters in the middle of page 9 should be given, not their *names*. At the bottom of the page are three letters, the names of which may be learned. Pages 10 and 11 can be easily taught by following the foregoing hints. The phrases should be pronounced almost as one word.

In going over the review-lessons, as on page 12, the object of the teacher should be to make the class familiar, with the forms of the words. The columns should, therefore, be read downward and upward, and the lines backward and forward. The children should be practiced in finding given words. Some of the pupils may dictate words to be found by the others. Phrases and short sentences may be given, and the children be required to point out the words in their order. All this is to exercise them in a pleasant way upon the words, till they learn to recognize them at sight.

In making words, as on page 12, the combinations "ap," "ack," and "and," having been once learned, should be pronounced as one sound. The sounds of other letters being prefixed, new words may be formed. This exercise may be made intensely interesting to children, and should be greatly extended by the use of the black-board.

Children should be furnished with slates and pencils on their first entrance into school, and should be taught to write or "print" as they are taught to read. They should, by all means, begin to *write* as soon as they commence the second part of this book.

If possible, the first lessons in reading should be given on the black-board, the teacher printing the words thereon, so that they can be seen *by the whole class* at the same time. In this case the plan of instruction *should be the same as that which has just been recommended.*

LANGUAGE-LESSONS.

THERE is nothing more important in any vocation of life than a ready and correct use of language, and early childhood is by far the most favorable time for its cultivation. The language-lesson for the child in his first reading-book can be little more than oral, but the means to be used are not less abundant nor less varied on that account. They are to be found in everything which interests him, in everything which he can be induced to talk about. In this, as in most other things, he learns by doing, more than by being merely told what he should do.

Pictures have been found to be most prolific sources of amusement, and, as subjects for practice in composition, oral and written, are particularly well adapted to school-use, especially when in the hands of the children. Hence it is that no necessary care or expense has been spared to make the pictures of this book as attractive, varied, and suggestive as it was possible to make them.

We would at first let the children talk about the pictures, with no more restraint or direction from the teacher than may be necessary to give each one a chance to be heard, and to cultivate good manners. This being done, we would, by suggestive questions or hints, lead the children to some exercise of the judgment and imagination in regard to the relation, action, motive, character, etc., etc., of the objects represented. We would even lightly touch the faculty of criticism, by asking what special merits they find in the picture, what changes they would make, etc., etc.

As a preparation for the reading-exercises, we would provoke the children to use in conversation the new words which are to be found at the head of each reading-lesson; from which words, again, we would derive the new sounds which are about to claim special notice in the succeeding lesson or lessons.

Finally, we would spare no effort to make the reading-exercises easy and interesting. The degree of the child's interest will be the measure of his progress.



LESSON I.

Words and Phrases to be learned by Sight only.

cat

a cat

the cat

my cat

the cat

a cat