

**THE SPRAGUE
CLASSIC READERS:
BOOK TWO**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649710980

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

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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SARAH E. SPRAGUE

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If you ever wish to be of any real use in the world, do something for children. If you ever yearn to be truly wise, study children. If the great army of philanthropists ever exterminate sin and pestilence, ever work out our race's salvation, it will be because a little child has led them.

—David Starr Jordan.

The
Sprague Classic Readers

BOOK TWO

BY
SARAH E. SPRAGUE, Ph. D.

Children are God's apostles, day by day sent
forth to preach of love and hope and peace.

—James Russell Lowell.

Educational Publishing Company

Boston

New York

Chicago

San Francisco

Ed 759.C2.723

DEC 5 1940

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1902

FOREWORD.

"O'er wayward childhood wouldst thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces,
Love, Hope, and Patience — these must be thy graces,
And in thine own heart let them first keep school."

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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 Book One, 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 previously. 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 Book One 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