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"A closed mind gathers no knowledge; an open mind is the key to progress."

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1965 pp2–13 in the printed version]

1. The History of First Grade Reading in the Public Schools of St. Louis, Missouri, by Elizabeth Aber Bueker*

*M.A. Thesis Washington Univ., St. Louis. Mo. 1936.

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Chapter I. Introduction.

Historians have given much attention to the various branches of the curriculum. They have written concerning literature, mathematics, art, science, and many other of its phases, yet there remains much to be done. There are many gaps to fill, and a great deal of undiscovered material to be brought to light. The field of reading is a particularly fertile one for this type of work Writers have dealt with the history of reading only in a very general way, careful investigation having failed to disclose any studies which have been confined to any limited section. This is not to insinuate that general studies are not valuable, but it is felt that a study limited to a small but representative area, and to a definite grade, would also be a worthwhile contribution.

Since writers have tended to slight the midwest, and since St. Louis is an old and typical city of that section, rich in Civil War history and the scene of the first school in what is now the state of Missouri, it appears that it would provide well for such a study, For these reasons, the above title was chosen for this thesis.

Courses of Study, Teachers' Handbooks, Superintendents' Reports, Reports of the Official Proceedings of the Board of Education, and the texts themselves have supplied the material for the study. In only a very few instances, as when making comparisons, have secondary materials been used.

The findings, which cover the years 1853 to 1933, arrange themselves into six rather distinct and separate periods and the descriptive titles given the same furnish the chapter headings, one chapter being devoted to each period. For obvious reasons a period which is yet in the making cannot be dealt with in the manner as can one which is definitely of the past. Hence Chapter Seven is limited to a few brief remarks intended not to give any vivid picture of the period 1918-1933, but rather to serve as a connecting link between the years last discussed and the immediate present. At the close of each chapter, a summary is made of the developments noted during the period under consideration and the final chapter is devoted to a general summary. Chapter 8, dealing with supplementary reading, is added in order that that phase of the work may be given a separate treatment.

Review of Similar Studies.

As has been stated, investigation failed to disclose any very similar pieces of research. However a few which are somewhat allied were found.

The best available history of methods and texts is given by Edmund B. Huey in his *Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* (1908). Due to the immense field covered the discussions are necessarily very general, and no one section is given any great amount of attention. The book is most valuable for purposes of comparison, and to one interested in the historical background of reading, it is quite indispensable.

G. Stanley Hall's *How to Teach Reading* (1886) might be classed as a monograph on the general subject. Mr. Hall traces the methods and materials from the days of the Hebrews and inserts a considerable number of his own convictions as regards pertinent questions. As in Huey's book, a very general treatment is used, and there are many so-called "gaps"; nevertheless it contains much valuable information.

A study made by R. R. Reeder, *The Historical Development of School Reading Books* (Education Review, Vol. 18, pp. 223–233, Oct. 1899*)* deals with the chanting tendencies in texts and the educational movements which were responsible for these changes. The study covers the years 1776 to 1899, and while it is comparatively brief, it throws considerable light on the history of reading in general.

Old Time Schools and School Books by Clifton Johnson, is, as the title implies, by no means limited to the field of reading. Yet it contains a goodly number of facsimiles of pages from some of the early primers and first readers and is, for that reason, mentioned here.

A History of *Education in Missouri by* C. A. Phillips gives among other details, a rather complete account of the developments of the various city systems, St. Louis receiving considerable attention. While this study is somewhat distantly related to the problem at hand, it is here listed since it does furnish a background for the same giving much insight into the early days of St. Louis Public School. history.

The various Histories of Education n the United States, especially that by Cubberly, have proven valuable in this study. They furnish examples for purposes of comparison and serve as a check on findings. The *Cyclopedia of Education* by Kiddle and Schem was a very good summary of practices common about 1876.

Chapter II. The ABC or Alphabetic Period (1853–58).

Just when or by whom the device of repeating the *names* of the letters as a key to the spoken word was originated, is unknown, [1] but this method of learning to read was very general among the Greeks and Romans and, in spite of protests by educational reformers, has persisted to fairly recent times even in. the western world. [2] *Webster's Spelling Book* of 1783, a typical ABC text, was sold at the rate of 1,000,000 copies annually as late as 1889, and in 1900 there was yet a great demand for it. [3] In view of these facts, it was not surprising to find in the *First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of St Louis, Missouri* (1853–54), that in the schools under consideration an ABC System devised by Henry Mandeville. D.D. was proclaimed "the only scientific method of teaching reading," [4] and that it had lately been introduced into the. primary grades. [5]

At the time the .Mandeville Series of readers was published, Dr. Mandeville was professor of Moral Science and "Belle Lettres" in Hamilton College, New York. His system was not entirely original, but was essentially that of the celebrated John Walker, the lexicographer, and was first published in his *Elements of Locution.* Walker, however, left the work so imperfect as never to command much attention, and it was only after Mandeville s reorganization that it was brought to the notice of educators. [6]

Dr. Mandeville's method was based on the theory, that to acquire an articulation which shall be at once accurate and tasteful, it is necessary first, to get an exact knowledge of the elementary sounds of the language, second, to learn the appropriate place of each of these sounds as determined by usage in syllables and words and third, to apply this knowledge correctly in conversation, reading, and speaking with a view to correct every deviation from propriety which may dilect in expressing them. [7]

He would have the child learn but one thing at a time, and master that perfectly before he left it. Nor was it thought sufficient even thus learned. Dr, Mandeville advocated frequent repetitions within the separate lessons, as well as in connection with review work. In his *Primary Reader* he took up the various parts of speech, one at a time, and suggested drilling upon them until the child comprehended their nature; or at least a few of their functions. Each word, as soon as learned, was joined to other words in fragments increased in length as the work advanced, until the child read a complete sentence and finally an entire story.

The first lessons in the Mandeville text consisted of the ABC's in their various forms. Following these were lessons in 2, 3, and 4 letter combinations. From the syllables, a gradual development was made to words and phrases. Lesson number 11 is a good example of the repetition which occurred consistently throughout the text.

Lesson XI.
Like a bee in the hive.
Like an ox of that man,
Like a girl from the mill.
Like a rose on this hill,
Like that rake near the barn
Like this spade with the rake.
Like this cat past the wall,
Like a muff of that girl
Like this yoke on the ox.
Like one wheel of a cart.
Like this screw for the lock.
Like the sheep in that yard.

In lesson number 30, Dr. Mandeville introduced questions, and by means of a lengthy note to teachers explained the 4 varieties of interrogation marks which he used. Religious and moral teachings were not omitted. The last lessons consisted of prayers and admonitions.

When Dr. Mandeville's system was first introduced it appeared rather formidable, but whenever it was in the hands of a good instructor the results were very gratifying and St. Louis educators were convinced that it was the most simple of all systems, and that reading could be well taught by no other method. [9]

But this enthusiasm was only short-lived, During the 3 years 1855–58 school officials were very discouraged concerning, the condition of reading. In fact, the subject, in so far as making

accomplished readers was concerned, was considered a failure. It was believed that this situation had developed because primary readers were not meeting the children's needs, and that too little time and attention was being given to reading in the lower grades. [10] Consequently, in 1858–59 two marked changes in the reading system occured, the adoption of a new series of texts and the introduction of a new method of instruction. [11]

Summary.

No developments of any note occurred within the period under discussion. Beginning Reading during those years may be summed up as follows:

l. The ABC or logical method predominated.
2. There was much meaningless repetition.

[1] Hall, G. S. How to Teach Reading, p.1.
[2] Huey, E. B., *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*.
[3] Ibid. p. 248.
[4] Tice. John H. The first Annual Report of the Board of *Education of* the City of St. Louis, Mo. (1853–54) p. 8.
[5] Loc. Cit.
[6,7] Loc. Cit.
[8] Mandeville, Henry *Elements* of *Reading and Oratory,* p 16.
[9] Tice, John H., *First Annual Report of the Board of Education* of *the City of St. Louis,* Mo. (1853–54) p, 8.
[10] Tice. John 11, *Third Annual Report, of the Board of Education of the City of St, Louis, Mo,* (1855–c36) p. 27.
[11] *Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of St, Louis, Mo.* (1858–59) p. 42.

Chapter III. The Word Method is Introduced (1858–66).

For many years before it was accepted in St. Louis, the word method of teaching reading had been advocated by prominent educators. The method originated in 1557 with the *Orbis Pictus* of Comenius, and was taught by various reformers, especially by Jocotot in France and Horace Mann in America. [12] *Worcester's Primer* of 1828 and *Bumstead's Series* of 1840 provided for it, but the ABC method went on with little disturbance from these protests and not until 1870 was the word method used to any extent in America. [13] By adopting it some 12 years earlier, 1858, [14] the St. Louis Schools showed considerable progressiveness.

The new system if instruction was used with *The Sargent Readers.* Epes Sargent, their author, was a staunch believer in the word method. He contended that the child's familiarity with certain words should be made the basis of instruction in reading, and that such a procedure is much more logical than beginning with letters to which he attaches no meaning. He believed that the child would learn such words as *mother, school* and *house* more quickly than words of 2 or 3 letters, as *ax, ox, cab,* or *pad.* Sargent would make the work as interesting as possible by means of explanation, yet he would not explain overmuch since a child must be taught to take many things on trust and so believe that a thing is so because you say it is so. [15]

As for the make up of the books themselves the beginning lessons in *Sargent's Standard School Primer* consisted of word lists as indicated above, Following these came the "I see ---- " type of sentences which the pupil was to read backwards as well as forward in order to make certain that he did not rely on memory. Until page 17 was reached several lessons appeared on one page but from this point the stories grew longer, and in many instances the moral note was very prominent. Page 31 offers a good example.

The Bad Boy

The bad boy is on the wall. He got on the wall to steal a ripe pear.
But a man, with a stick, is by. He saw the bad boy steal the pear and will whip him.
We must not take what is not ours. To do that is to steal, and to steal is a sin.
To lie is a sin, and he who steals will lie.

Section One of the First *Reader* was much like the *Primer.* Its first lessons consisted of word lists and easy sentences, and these gradually led to more difficult exercises. Beginning with Section 2, the child was taught to analyse words into their elementary sounds, and finally, to learn the names of the letters. By exercises similar to the ones given below and which the author describes as being carefully adapted to the child's knowledge of oral language and common objects," [16] this was accomplished.

Lesson 23

	O			E	
no	n	o	me	m	e
so	s	o	be	b	e
to	t	o	he	h	e
go	g	o	we	w	e
			she	sh	e
			the	th	e

We go. How do ye go? Lo! We go in the cars. Oho! So ye go. He, she, and we go, If it be so, may I go? No.
(This lesson was illustrated with the picture of a train..)

Lesson 25

am at or us
an on ox up

Go on, go up, go up, go on.
Go on, go up, go on.
Go up, go on, go on, go up.
Go up, go on, go up.
(Picture of a boy riding a dog)

So I am on. Yes, I see you are on.
But why do you not go on? The dog will not go on. So I see. I am on, but I do not go on or up.
If an ox go by, it is my ox.

At this comparatively early date, there is seen a tendency toward homogeneous grouping. Ira Divoll, Superintendent of Instruction, highly recommended that primary classes be divided into two groups, however he did not indicate any criteria for making the division. He also suggested that those concert exercises which led to sing-song tones be discontinued, and that in all cases the exercises should be short. [17]

Further directions to instructors, given at this time were:
Instruction in this grade should be to a considerable extent, oral and conversational. From the very off set, children should be taught in classes, and not individually. Constant use should be made of the primary charts and the blackboard. The skillful teacher will review the lessons on the

blackboard at least once a day... Every class in this grade should have at least four lessons a day in reading and spelling, each from 10 to 15 minutes long. [18]

In 1866–67, Wm. T, Harris, then Assistant Superintendent, examined the schools with respect to mode and proficiency of reading. He reported that in most cases a very satisfactory exertion was being made to overcome the bad habit of rapid and consequently indistinct utterance; and that by the use of various exercises, such as requiring the lesson to be read backwards before it was read in the ordinary manner, some teachers were securing a surprising degree of audibility, even from weak voices. [19]

Notwithstanding the fact that the methods in effect were proving successful, St. Louis educators were ever on the alert for better ones, and in 1867 an experiment conducted with a small group of children resulted in the word method giving way to another. [20] Chapter 4 discusses the experiment and the progress made under the system which developed from it.

Summary.

During the nine year period which has been discussed, the following trends have been noted:
1: A tendency to replace the logical method of attack with the psychological.
2. An attempt toward homogeneous grouping.
3. The passing of the concert method of recitation.
4. A wider use of blackboards and charts.

[12] Huey, E.H. *The Psychology & Pedagogy of Reading,* p27
[13] lbid, pp 258–9.
[14] *Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis, Mo*. (1858–59) p. 42.
[15] Sargent, Epes. *Sargent's Standard School Primer,* p, 2.
[16] Sargent, Epes, *The Standard First Reader for Beginners* "Introductory note to teachers."
[17] Divoll, Ira; *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis. Mo,* (1863–64) p. 65
[18] Loc. cit.
[19] Harris; W.T, 14th An. Rept. Bd Educ. St. Louis, 1866–7
[20] Harris, W.T, 16th An. Rept Bd Educ. St. Louis, 1868–9

Chapter IV. Experiments with Phonetics (1866–1892).

There have been numerous phonetic systems and their histories date back many years. [21] According to Hall, most of the early phoneticists "sought to develop a sort of mouth-consciousness by more or less elaborated drills in vocal positions" and some went so far as to introduce such combinations as *gnirlps, lmscht, lpts*. etc. [22] Graser taught the "fantastic; doctrine that the letters of the German alphabet were the pictures of the position of the vocal organs in pronouncing them. [23] It follows that much sport was made of these ludicrous methods and none of them were of long duration. [24]

About 1870, a phonetic system devised by Dr. Edw. Leigh began to be used rather extensively in this country, and such cities as New York, Washington, and Boston saw fit to introduce it into their schools. Huey describes it as "a spelling method but the word is spelled by its elementary sounds and not by the letter-names. The word is slowly pronounced until its constituent sounds come into consciousness, and these sounds are associated with the letters representing them." [27] Leigh provided for the 44 or more needed sounds by modifying the existing letter forms, and silent letters were printed in hair-line. [28]

In the fall of 1866, this system was introduced into the Clay School of St. Louis, as an experiment,, and Sargent's Primers, printed in the modified type were placed in the hands of a beginning class. [29] The outcome of the venture was all that was desired. A comparison with a class taught by the word method showed that the phonetic system possessed *great advantages* in correcting imperfections of articulation and provincialism, of pronunciation. [30] W. T. Harris, the principal .of the Clay School, had had little faith in the undertaking but he was completely won by its result. "Nothing like Dr. Leigh's system has hitherto been invented," was his comment. [31]

In 1867, the Board of Education observed the experimental group at work and was so pleased that the system was introduced into all of the primary grades in connection with the McGuffy *Readers* which were adopted at that time. [32] The teachers were not familiar with the phonetic system and many were very hostile towards it, but one quarter's work made converts of all. [33]

Instructors were expected to follow Dr. Leigh's method very explicitly and on no occasion to resort to former procedures. Louis Soldan, Asst. Superintendent of Instruction; gave warning concerning the havoc which would result were not the adopted method followed to the last detail, [34] and great care taken to keep from the children the names of the letters until the third quarter, when transition to ordinary type was made. [35]

After the system had been in use one year, school officials in general, remained very enthusiastic concerning it. [36] Mr. Harris, in the Report of 1868–9, summed up its advantages as follows:

1. Gain in time.
2. Distinct articulation.
3. Logical inconsistency of the ordinary alphabet makes the old system very injurious discipline for the young minds.
4. The most important feature of the phonetic system is the substitution of *analytic* drill during the first year of training for the loose word method in vogue. [37]

During the school year 1870–71; Dr. Leigh's plan was somewhat modified, the names of the letters being taught in connection with their sounds. This added what was necessary to complete the system. It has rendered the transition to ordinary print perfectly easy from any stage of progress." said Mr. Harris. [38]

Two years later (1872–73) the plan met with further modification. At the beginning of the first quarter of school work, the child was taught from charts or blackboard three or four letters per day, with their combinations into words. Within a few days, he began to use a book, but for the first two or three weeks knowing the characters only by their sounds. Finally; the names of the letters were learned. Usually the primer was completed in 17 weeks and the first reader in one quarter. [39]

As was stated above, McGuffy's *Eclectic Readers* printed in the modified type were used with the Leigh System of phonetics. According to Reeder, [40] these books (in ordinary type) probably attained the largest sale and widest distribution of any series yet published in America. In range of subject matter, it swept almost the entire field of human interests, morals, economics, politics, literature, history, science, and philosophy. Many a profound and lasting impression was made upon the lives of children and youths by the well chosen selections of this series,, and valuable lessons of industry.; thrift, economy, kindness, generosity, honesty, courage, and duty found expressions in the after lives of millions of boys and girls who read and reread these books, to the influence of which such lessons were directly traceable. [41]

The Superintendent's Report of 1868–69 shows that officials were, at this time deeply concerned with the condition of reading in the public schools. [42] The good teacher of reading was rare, [43]

and it was hoped that the new texts would remedy matters. [44] Whether the improvement made during the following ten years was due to them, to Leigh's phonetics, or to the combination, it is impossible to determine. Whatever may have been the cause, a great change took place and in 1876–77 if the St. Louis schools had any strong feature it was "'— this one of teaching the pupil to master the art of reading in the shortest possible time." [45]

It was the belief at this time "— that the child who is just commencing his education should have something consistent and logical, methodical and philosophical to employ his mind upon rather than something *without either analogy or system,* for those first impressions have sometimes the power to fix the whole bent of the mind," [46] and readers "— should be compiled from all ages of English literature and should embrace only the gems from that great storehouse of genius and wit so that the pupil shall be kindled and animated by the contents of the pieces" [47] There were but few stories in the McGuffey Series which did not measure up to the set standards. As has been quoted from Reeder, the texts were abundantly supplied with lessons in manners and morals, and literary gems were not lacking.

McGuffey believed that the smaller the word the more easily it is learned, hence the lessons in his primer began with words of two letters and advanced, step by step, to those of three, four, and five letters. Some very queerly constructed sentences resulted from this strict limitation of word length, as illustrated by these exercises taken from pages 6 and 7 of the primer:

Do we go?	Is he in?	Am I in?
	He is in.	Am I in it?
Do we go up?	Is he by me?	I am in it.
	Do we go in?	Oh! So I am.
We do go up.		
Ah! So we do.		

Apparently the inconsistency in sound represented by *o* in *do* and go did not occur to the author as a possible cause of confusion.

Although the stories were comparatively well illustrated; none of the pictures were in color. As a whole, they were larger than those found in the Sargent texts. The *Revised First Reader,* adopted in 1880, [48] introduced full page illustrations, and contained two of this type. It also gave a few suggestions for "Slate work."

During this period, first grade children had each week, 14 reading lessons of 15 minutes each. [49] Until 1884 no supplementary reading was introduced. [50] Some of the instructions given to teachers in 1882 were as follows:

1. Begin each new lesson with conversation on objects or pictures illustrative of the reading lesson to awaken interests and to develop the idea; then the printed word, the sound characters and the sounds.
2. Do not take up features of the pictures not mentioned in the lessons.
3. Be sure that the pupil knows at sight and can use in oral sentences each new word in the reading lesson before giving the next word.
4. As soon as the words forming a sentence are learned, require reading with appropriate expression.
5. Have pupils give oral repetitions of stories and descriptions of familiar objects. [51]

In 1887–88, a new element was introduced into the reading lesson. After the words had been analyzed into sounds, the latter were combined to form new words. [52]

While no explanation has been found as to why the Leigh system was abandoned the following report gives some idea:

1888: "After a careful investigation of the comparative educational merits of the phonetic characters and diacritical marks employed in the two different editions of McGuffey's *Eclectic Primer and Word Lists,* your committee recommends that the Primer and Word List containing phonetic characters (Leigh's) be discontinued at the end of the present scholastic year, and that the revised edition of Primer and Word List employing the same diacritical marks used in the other readers be substituted in its place." [53] One might deduce from this report that it was felt that some difficulty was found to exist in the transition from Leigh's phonetic symbols to the diacritic marks in the regular McGuffey Readers which followed.

The only available record which would indicate why the regular McGuffey texts were finally abandoned, was found in the report of Gist Blair, President of the Board of Education. 1892–93. To quote: At the beginning of the last scholastic year, the Board determined to substitute new and what some believed to be more modern books for those heretofore used in the grades, and on recommendation of the Course of Study Committee the readers were changed. [54]

In the texts which followed, no one method of instruction was featured and as courses of study advocated no change, it is assumed that during the ensuing period the actual word learning processes were much the same as those of the last years of the Leigh-McGuffey era, However, since there was such a vital change in methods of attack and presentation, the years 1892–97 are discussed under a separate chapter.

Summary.
The period 1867–92 was a fruitful one for the St. Louis Schools in so far as First Grade Reading was concerned. The development which took place during those years may summed up as follows:

> 1. The psychological method of attack which had previously received some emphasis, continued to gain in prominence.
> 2. The learner's instincts and interests began to be considered.
> 3. For the first time story telling received a definite place in the recitation.
> 4. Experiments established the fact that while the phonetic method has a place in beginning reading, it is not advisable to use it to the exclusion of all others.

[21] Huey, E.B, *Psychology & Pedagogy of Reading,* p. 266
[22–23] Hall, G. S, *How to Teach Reading,* p. 4–5.
[24]. Loc. cit.
[25] Huey, E.B, *Psychology & Pedagogy of Reading,* p. 260
[26, 27, 28] Ibid. p. 260, 266, 268.
[29] Harris, W. T, 16th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1868–9
[30–31] Loc. Cit.
[32] Ibid. p. 96.
[33] Loc. cit.
[34] Soldan, Louis, 18th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1870–1.
[35] Harris, W.T, 16th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1868–69.
[36,37] Loc. cit.
[38] Harris, W.T, 18th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1870–71.

[39] Harris; W. T, 20th An Rept 3d Educ St. Louis, 1872–73.
[40] Reeder, R.R, *Development of School-Readers,* p. 43.
[41] Huey, E.B, *Psychology & Pedagogy of Reading,* p. 252
[42] Harris. W.T, 15th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1867–68.
[43–4] Harris, W.T, 16th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1868–69.
[45–6] Harris, W.T, 24th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis; 1876–77.
[47] Harris. W.T, 16th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1868–69.
[48] 28th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1880–81, p. 298.
[49] 22nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1874–75, p. clxi
[50] Long, Ed H, 32nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1882–3.
[51] Long, Ed H, 35th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis; 1887–8.
[52] Long; Ed H, 35th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1887–8, p92
[53] Pub. Sch. Messenger, v 35, No 5, Jan 3, 1938, date 1888.
[54] Blair, Gist 40th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1892‾3; p 14.

McGUFFEY'S

NEW PRIMARY READER

PRONOUNCING ORTHOGRAPHY.

BY EDWIN LEIGH.

This print was first published in a pamphlet with this title; see also the second edition, "Pronouncing Orthography Explained and Exemplified."* For all practical purposes it will explain itself. Those who wish to know more of it will please address E. Leigh, New York City.

A special form of a letter is used for each sound of it; the hair-line letters are silent. The distinctions of sound are according to Webster.

Here are the eight pairs of vowel-sounds, as heard in the words —
eel ill, ale ell; air at, arm ask: urn up, all on; old folk, ooze foot.
ei, ae; aa, aa: uu, ao; oo, oo.

The eight pairs of consonants are as follows: —
well fail, this thin; is us, usual she: bee pea, do to; jet chin, get cat.
vf, thth; ss, ssh: bp, dt; jch, gc.

The diphthongs, semivowels (w, y), aspirates, liquids, and nasals, are: —
ice oil our use: we ye: hen when: fail far him pin sing.
i oi ou u: w y: h wh: l r: m n ŋ.

To preserve the spelling, some duplicate forms are used; their correspondence with the above forms for the same sounds will be noticed.
been, they many, there, love, nor was, rude crew put, ewe, blue blew.
e, ae, e, o, oa, uwu, w, uw.
by boy how, one quit, of laugh, size ice, iced, gem, kite quit, ox.
yoyow, ou, ff, zc, d, g, kqx.

The old capitals are used like their small letters; the forms of the new ones correspond with the small letters for the same sounds.

The accent is marked (′) when it does not fall on the first syllable.

* Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by Edwin Leigh, in the Clerk's Office of the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by Edwin Leigh, in the Clerk's Office of the U. S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868, by Edwin Leigh, in the Clerk's Office of the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.
Pat. May 19, 1868. Electrotyped by Lovejoy & Son.

2. Yes, mamma′, I have; I have read all the lessons in it, and my teacher says I can read quite well.

3. I am very glad, my dear girl, to know you can read so well. But can you spell well too? Can you spell all the words in your book?

4. Yes, mamma′, I think I can spell them all; I am sure I have tried to learn them, and I know I can spell all but a very few hard ones.

5. That is right, Mary. Many little boys and girls do not read well, because′ they do not learn to spell well.

6. So our teacher has often told us; and I am sure that those

Chapter V. The Froebelian Period (1992–1897)

In no country in the world has the spirit of the kindergarten been so applied to school work as in the United States. [55] Europe as a whole has been extremely slow in accepting it, and even in its native Germany, its progress has been relatively small. Its spirit does not harmonize with autocratic government and to this fact may be due its lack of welcome on the continent. [56]

Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852); the founder of the movement, was the son of a German clergyman, As a young man, he studied and taught in Pestalozzi's school at Yverdon, and while there became deeply impressed with the great value of music and play in the education of children. Moreover, he was convinced that the most needed reform in education concerned the early years of childhood. After serving in a variety of occupations, he finally returned to Germany and opened a school for little children in which plays, games, songs, and various forms of self-activity were the dominant characteristics. In 1840, he named it *Kindergarten,* the English equivalent of which is *child's garden*. [57]

The outstanding idea in the kindergarten is natural but directed self activity, based upon educational social, and moral ends. Froebel saw more clearly than any one before him had done, the unutilized wealth of the child world. He saw the desirability of the child finding himself through play and realized that the early work of the school was to gently draw out his inborn capacities and awaken the ideal side of his nature. Recognizing man as a social animal, he made of his school room a minature society where courtesy and helpfulness were prominent features. His "gifts" and occupations were intended to develop constructive and aesthetic power. [58]

The first kindergarten in this country was a German one, established at Watertown Wisc. In 1855 by Mrs. Carl Schutz, a pupil of Froebel. The first English-speaking one was opened in Boston in 1860 by Miss Elizabeth Peabody. In 1873, Miss Susan Blow, a student at Miss Boetle's Training College for Kindergarteners, New York City accepted the invitation of Supt. W. T. Harris to open in St. Louis the first public school kindergarten in the United State. [59]

Miss Blow's work was so successful that as early as 1885 school officials considered applying Froebel's Methods to the primary and intermediate grades. Supt Long was as firm a believer in the system as had been his predecessor Mr. Harris. He contended that the child's experiences in the first grade counteracted much of his kindergarten training and felt that this lack of harmony was the source of many of the difficulties which later developed. [60] In order to remedy the situation, he would:

> Begin the reading lesson in the same way in which the oral language lesson in the kindergarten is begun, i.e. with the expression of the results of an exercise with objects, conducted as in the kindergarten with a view to giving direct and definite mental exercises, confined at first to the contents of the reading lesson that the child may learn to recognize on the printed page the expression of what he sees, does, and thinks. New objects can he introduced and new forms made when needed yet the same methods should be pursued that the child may be able to recognize in the printed form the qualities, activities and creations with which he deals and of which he has expressed his thoughts in the oral language lesson. Through these agencies, the mental discipline of the earlier portion of his school days could be continued and his acquired knowledge could be used as a means of extending his knowledge of things and for giving further mental power. If he continues to recognize and represent activities and processes, he must consider living, natural objects, hence lessons on plants and animals must be included in his studies and must form the basis of a portion of his reading lessons. — It must not be understood that I advocate a new method of learning words.

> Words must be memorized, but while this is being done, the contents of the lesson should be such as to accomplish higher results than merely the exercise of memory. [61]

In 1892 it was decided to carry on an experiment in order to determine definitely the merits of the kindergarten plan as applied to primary work. The Crow School was chosen as the experimental organ, and its first-grade children received instruction according to the principles set forth by Froebel. Their attention was turned to the contemplation of nature as seen in familiar forms of plant and animal life, and words and sentences were allowed to follow naturally from the description of the facts presented. As a result such vivid and varied expression was given that repulsion and guidance, rather than encouragement was found necessary. In order to keep pace with the new ideas, words were quickly acquired, and advancement was much more rapid than by the old method. Furthermore, reading and oral expression generally took a more fluent and natural form, undoubtedly due to a closer comprehension of the meanings of the words expressed. [62]

The experiment proved conclusively that kindergarten methods would benefit all primary grades;, and while Mr. Long did not remain in office to see them accepted thruout the system, thru the encouragement of his successor Louis Soldan, they became generally used by 1894–5. [63]

The *New Normal First Reader* by Albert N. Raub had been adopted for general use in the fall of 1892. [64] and was used in connection with the Froebelian system. As was stated in the closing paragraph of Chapter 3, Raub was the proponent of no one method of instruction. Hence it is assumed that during the period under discussion, the actual word learning processes were little different from those of the last years of the Leigh-McGuffey era. The first lessons in his text dealt with familiar words, such as *man, cat, boy, dog, fox, sheep,* etc. In lesson 5, which is given below, sentences were introduced.

> **Lesson V**
> A dog
> A box
> A dog on the box
> The dog is on the box

Scattered thruout the text were exercises which were intended to develop reasoning power and judgement, and there were sentences to be completed and words to be matched. With one exception, the stories were little different from those of the McGuffey book. Morals, while not entirely lacking, failed to hold the important place which McGuffey had given them.

The 1894–95 course of study gave rather specific directions for the use of the *New Normal First Reader,* and in it the Froebelian influence was very evident. To quote from a synopsis of the same:

> Length of lessons not to exceed 20 minutes, with 20 lessons per week.
> General directions:- Stories and conversations about familiar objects precede the early reading lessons oral reproduction of story by pupils, selected sentences of words on first 25 pages written on board, read and copied; later, brief conversation on every reading lesson to stimulate mental activity. Pupils use new words in sentences and drill on them until they can read them easily at sight. Correct children's errors of speech. Require good expression in reading. Pay attention to the morals of the lesson. Encourage answers in complete sentences. [65]

The Raub text was discontinued in 1897–98 at the expiration of a five year contract made with the publishers at the time of its adoption. [66] Available records gave the book no adverse criticism; hence no definite reason for its abandonment can be stated. However, since texts featuring literature

were put in its place, the change may have been at least encouraged by the fact that several prominent educators of the time, dissatisfied with the content of public school readers, were, and for some years had been, insisting upon texts of real literary merit. [67]

With the coming of the new system, Froebel's Methods were not discarded. On the other hand; they have remained active in the primary grades even to the present time, but since 1897–8 they have ceased to be so generally distinguished as such.

Summary.

Considerable advancement, especially from the psychological viewpoint, was made during the years 1892–97, and the several developments, which are briefly stated below may be attributed to the Froebelian influence:

1. The psychological method advanced to a much higher level.
2. Storytelling and general conversation increased in importance.
3. Definite attempts were made to develop the reasoning power and judgement of the learner.
4. Reading began to be a thought getting process.

[55–6] Cubberly, Ellwood P, *History of Education,* p 766–65.
[57–8] Ibid, pp.764–5, 767–8.
[59] Ibid p. 766.
[60] Long, Ed H, 32nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1884–5.
[61] Loc. cit.
[62] Cook, F.E., 40th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1892–3.
[63] 42nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1894–5, p. ix.
[64] 40th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis. 1892–3, p. 114
[65] Same as 63.
[66] 45th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1897–8, p. 146.
[67] Hall, G.S. *How to Teach Reading,* p.24. Eliot, President E. from Hardy, *Educational Review,* July, 1891, p. 145–6.

Chapter VI. The Sentence Method and other Factors of Motivation, 1897–1918.

This period witnessed a number of changes in the first grade reading curriculum; most of which tended to make the work more interesting for the young learners. Probably foremost among these factors of motivation was the so-called "Sentence Method." From available data, it has been impossible to determine a definite reason for the shift to this system. The texts adopted in 1897, *Baldwin's First Reader* and Arnold's *Stepping Stones to Literature* featured it, but they also made much of their literary content. Thus the question arises — Were the readers chosen because of their literary merit or because they provided for the sentence method?

There is considerable evidence in support of each argument. As was indicated in the preceding chapter, [69] leading educators had, for many years, deplored the scrappy content of reading texts. As early as 1886, Hall contended that "The prime object of the reading series should be, not as Dristerwig thought it should, the cultivation of the art of reading, nor training to good style, nor grammatical or linguistic drill, important as these are, *but the development of a living appreciation of good literature, and the habit of reading it, rather than bad,* for with this end, all others are secured. [70] Five years later, President Eliot made this statement concerning the subject — "I have paid some attention to the readers used in our public schools throughout the country. I have read an enormous quantity of them, and can express the conviction that it would be for the advancement of

the whole public school system if every reader were to be hereafter excluded from the schools... They are entirely unfit material to use in training our children... I believe we should substitute in all our schools real literature for readers. [71] And in 1891, Dewey, in speaking of the "utter triviality of the contents of our school primers and first readers" suggested taking up the first half-dozen of such books you meet and asking yourself "how much there is in the ideas presented worthy of respect from any intelligent child of six years." [72]

On the other hand, the "sentence method" had been suggested by the great Comenius and after lying dormant about 200 years, was popularized thru the experiments of Farnham in the schools of Binghamton, N.Y. By 1885 or 1890 it was quite generally used over the U.S.A. [73] In view of the fact that the St. Louis schools had heretofore been so progressive from the standpoint of experimenting with new educational theories and findings, it seems probable that the sentence method could have been accepted on its own merits and not merely because it happened to be the one used in a text which gained favor because of its literary content.

A third solution to the problem appears to be more logical than either of the foregoing ones. With the adoption of the Arnold and Baldwin texts school officials felt that they had "put into the hands of teachers and pupils text books embodying the best and most advanced educational thought in various lines of school work." [74] This statement probably signifies that the books were chosen for both method and content, and that the one had been given no more consideration than had the other. It may then be reasonable to assume that the sentence method was adopted not in a "hit or miss" sort of fashion but because it was believed to be an advanced educational step worthy of trial.

The method under consideration is based upon the theory that as the sentence and not the word or letter is the true unit in spoken language, so it is the natural one in reading, and that attention to letters, elementary sounds, words, and word meanings cultivated by the alphabetic, phonetic, and word methods must be displaced by sentence wholes. [75] Sarah Louise Arnold, the author of *Stepping Stones to Literature* was in complete sympathy with the system, and in her manual *Learning to Read*, she very definitely stated her. At this stage of advancement the child should learn that convictions in regard to it. Mr. Baldwin did not express himself so thoroly as did Miss Arnold. However, from his "Note to Teachers" it is gathered that their viewpoints were quite similar. Since instructors were directed to follow the methods as prescribed in the texts; the plan advocated by Miss Arnold is given at some length.

She considered reading as an art, and not mere word pronouncing, and believed that the reader interprets a selection "by virtue of his own experience reinforced by the experience of others as written down in books, or pictured with brush or pen. To the formal word mastery, then, must added study of the meaning of new words, or reading such experiences as explains the old. The content as well as the form of the word must be studied." [76]

In brief, Miss Arnold's opinion concerning the manner by which a child should be taught to read is as follows.

Before he enters school many forces have served as the child's teachers. He brings to the classroom not an empty head, but a mind stored with memories of varied experiences: The thoughtful teacher does not rush headlong into the routine of reading, writing and arithmetic, but she devotes the first few days of the term to lessons which help to reveal the experiences of the children. (Observations of and talks about things; conversations which lead the children to tell what they can do; story telling; picture drawing.) This is not a prodigal misuse of time. It is the part of thrift so to spend it in

the beginning, for the returns are evident in the ease and readiness with which pupils and teachers afterward work together.

In many cases the decreed exercises of the school are meaningless and purposeless to the beginner, Such exercises easily degenerate into dull and fruitless routine. The teacher's most important duty is to arouse interest, she must in some way cause her children to feel the need for reading. This done, the most important part of her task is accomplished.

There are various ways to create this "desire to read." Perhaps the teacher reads the children a story, pausing at the climax to say, "I haven't time to read the rest of the story now. How I wish you could read! Then you might take the book and read the story yourselves."

In order to give some sense of immediate achievement, the first lessons should be in sentences, expressing thoughts in which the children are interested, as:

This is Kate.
Kate can read.
Kate has a book.
Read it to me, Kate.

The sentences should be the children's own, obtained thru conversation. After a sentence has been written on the board it should be read as a whole, by the teacher, and afterwards by the children.

By repetition of these first sentences, the words are at last held in the mind and are recognized under new relations. The words to be selected for recognition are those which present fewest difficulties; not the shortest ones [79] (a, is, to) but the meaningful ones, (Kate, book, doll, kitty).

When the child can recognize at sight 100 to 200 words, he should begin to compare them and to place in groups those which sound alike, as:

book	fed	cat	fan
look	red	hat	ran
brook	bed	pat	can
			Dan

the pronunciation of one word serves as the key to many. Knowing *book,* all 10 monosyllables ending in *ook* can at once enter the vocabulary of recognizable words, (excepting *snook, spook).* The missing factor is the knowledge of the sounds of the separate letters, which are initials in these group words. When the need for them is felt, these sounds should be taught.

The too early attempt to classify words drives the children at once to their most difficult task. It is much easier for them to recognize *Hiawatha* and *arrow*, because they are long and different, than to name promptly *ran, can,* and *tan*, For the same reason the sentence *"Does the fat rat see the cat on the mat?"* is far more difficult for a child than *"Hiawatha lived in a wigwam with old Nokomis."*

(Ed. note, False reasoning — an illusion of those advocating *Look & Say*. It depends upon how words and sounds are taught. Certainly a long word looks different from a short word. But that doesn't mean they can tell the difference between *Nokomis* and *Notamis*, or *thin* and *then.)*

Thru ear training exercises, (the teacher giving a sentence or phrase and the child repeating it) the child should be taught to listen and to repeat exactly what he hears. Later, he should repeat words; and next, sounds of the letters. The last step is to have him analyze phonosyllables into their sounds. By the aid of type words, *(black* suggesting *back, crack, tack*) children will soon become possessors of a large vocabulary. [77]

"— It is supposed that the children who take the *First Reader* into their hands have already read from the board the sentences found upon the first 10 pages at least, and know the words and phrases which are included in these sentences. If this is the case, they will read all that is found upon these pages in the first two or three days after the book is given them.

The first 24 pages of the *First Reader* of *Stepping Stones to Literature* contain lessons which are intended to be mastered by the children with the help of the teacher, by the so-called ' word and sentence' method, without any attempt at phonic analysis..... During these lessons, therefore, the children will acquire little power to master new words independently. Their attention has not been called to the structure of the individual word. Stress has been laid, intentionally, upon the meaning of the word, the form of the sentence, and the thought expressed by it." [78]

The general makeup of the new readers showed a marked improvement in textbook construction. Both had attractive bindings and were fairly well supplied with colored illustrations. In accordance with the method advocated, even the first lessons were made up of complete sentences, and to quote Mr. Baldwin, "— the collecting of words into unnatural phrases or expressions for the sake of bringing together words or syllables having a similarity of sound" was carefully avoided. [79] In keeping with its title, the contents of the Arnold book had a truely literary flavor, giving to the young reader many worthwhile bits of poetry and prose. It also introduced "'silent reading" with handwork checkups.

Both texts were completed during the first year. In schools where there were two beginning classes, one group was supplied with the *Baldwin Reader* and the other, the *Arnold,* an exchange being made at the middle of the term. In small schools, having but one room to a grade, one class in the room used the one and the other class the other series. [80] Under either plan, blackboard lessons were used for five weeks before the study of the reader was begun. [81]

The records from 1897 to 1908 indicate no changes in method of instruction, however, they show that "supplementary reading," which had been introduced in 1883; (See **Chapter VII**) was becoming an important factor of the curriculum and that it was responsible for much of the improvement recently made in sight reading. [82]

At this time, the St. Louis course of study compared very favorably with those of institutions which represented the best practises of American pedagogy. Its reading materials as well as methods of attack, as the following quotation shows, were similar to those of the Horace Mann School, and it held much in common with the procedures of the Francis W. Parker School. [83]

From the first, the child's attention when he reads, should be centered upon getting the thought. Mere repetition of words and sentences is not reading. Reading is thought-getting, oral reading is thought giving.

In the first lessons, three sentences from "The Story of Ab" are generally given -

Ab was a little brown baby.
He lived in a cave.
The cave was in the woods.

Soon the children begin to differentiate words and some child will say "This is Ab" or "This is the cave."— When the children begin to get the sentences in this way, separate words are given them printed on strips of cardboard. To become familiar with these words, they match them to the words in the sentences they know. Phonetics are of little value in reading until the child has gained some proficiency in getting separate words rapidly. [84]

Usually about three months are devoted to the stories about Ab, and during this time selections are also read from *Stepping Stones, to Literature, Child Life* and Cyr's *Printer.* [85]

Period of 1908–1918.
In 1908–09 a new kind of seat work was introduced. The children were supplied with boxes containing familiar words and with these they built sentences and stories, pictures being used in this connection whenever suitable ones could be procured. [86] The selection given below indicates one of the possible "compositions" —

The big apple tree has many leaves.
Some of the leaves are green and some are yellow.
A bird has a nest in the tree.
Some eggs are in the nest.
They are blue.
They are round and little. [87]

From the reports of 1909–10 it is concluded that at this time Primary Supervisors in general were quite satisfied with the progress being made in reading. To quote —.

Oak Hill — 1st Division.
The quality of the work in reading is excellent. Work in phonics was started in the sixth week of school, and has been done so well that the children are now able to help themselves in getting the pronunciation of new words. Attention has been paid to clear enunciation and to phrasing in the reading. The children read two books for me last Wednesday. They read well and thoroly enjoyed the stories. [88]

The class has covered the first five books in this time. The children read as readily and with as good phrasing and expression as ordinary primary children, and they have a working knowledge of the consonants and the long and short vowel sounds. They thoroly enjoy the reading and word cards in the use of which they have developed great power. Miss Choisel. [89]

Supt. Blewett however, was convinced that while the reading had "'become very efficient in getting the content and feeling of the printed page, it had not commonly held up to a high standard in oral expression." [90] Thus, beginning with the following year, 1910–11, special emphasis was placed on clear, distinct, and expressive reading. Dialogue and dramatization were employed in securing the desired results [91] and by 1912–13 a decided improvement was noted. [92]. In her report for that year, Miss Fannie B. Griffith, one of the primary supervisors, said:

In teaching reading, the thought as well as the technique has been kept in mind. Generally, the enunciation, phrasing and quality of the voice have been good. The expression has been improved since the dramatization of stories during the Language Period. There is now little of the colorless reading that used to be heard so frequently. [93]

During 1913–14, games were first used in connection with the reading lesson. The year had opened with an exceptionally large number of immature children beginning first grade work, and some modification of method seemed necessary. [94] In order to hold the children's attention and get them interested in the makeup of words, games were introduced. These met with great favor and the matching games, especially, proved to be excellent correctives for guessing. Other games, equally interesting and which gave the children opportunity for physical exercise were also used with much success. [95] This same year Supt. Blewett suggested that instructors, insofar as possible; correlate the reading and language work. He recommended a new supplementary reader, *The Progressive Road* to *Reading,* which featured easily dramatized animal stories, for use in this capacity. [96]

"Audience reading" situations were first used during 1914–15. Until this time, the class was required on all occasions to carefully follow the child who was reading orally. But such a procedure, when carried out to the extreme, was found to be lacking in several respects. Children were not intensely interested in hearing read what they already knew, and were often, therefore, sources of confusion and annoyance. Audience reading was introduced in the hopes of remedying this unpleasant situation and the new scheme proved to be very worthwhile. [97]

For some time, St. Louis educators had been interested in the recent movement in education to measure the effectiveness of work in the various subjects, and during the school year 1914–15 a few "speed tests" were given to first year children. [98] It would have been most interesting to have examined the results of the same, however they were not available.

As early as 1910; one of the Primary Supervisors, Miss De Werthern, believed that the Baldwin and Arnold texts were not meeting the requirements. She contended that they proceeded too rapidly; and too many new words were introduced on each page; and there was not enough repetition to impress the words on the minds of young children. The pictures were not lively enough. [99] But in spite of these and later criticisms. [100] the books remained basic until 1918 when there opened for the St. Louis schools a new and modern era in first grade reading.

Summary.
During the period 1897–1918, several comparatively advanced steps were made in the field of beginning reading, and they were of particular significance in that they paved the way for the era which immediately followed. Those developments of chief importance were:

1. The introduction of achievement tests.
2. The introduction of audience reading situations.
3. The utilization of games and constructive seat work.
4. The correlation of reading with other subjects.
5. Wider reading on the part of the child as indicated by the completions, during the year, of two basic texts.
6. Supplementary reading made considerable growth during this period. This is discussed in **Chapter VIII**.

[68] 45th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1897–8, p. 146.
[69] same as 67.
[70] Hall, G.S, *How to Teach Reading*, p. 24.
[71] Eliot, Pres. from Hardy, *Educational Review,* July 1891
[72] Huey, E.B, *Psychology & Pedagogy* of *Reading,* p.305
[73] Ibid., p. 256, 272–3
[74] Soldan, Louis, 46th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1898–9.
[75] Huey, EB, Psychology & Pedagogy of Reading, p. 273.
[76] Arnold, Sarah L, *The Art of Reading,* p.14.
[77] Arnold, Sarah L, *Learning to Read,* pp, 7–63.
[78] Ibid. pp. 32–33.
[79] Baldwin, James, *Baldwin First Reader,* p. 3.
[80] Teacher's Handbook of Info. in 45th An Rept Bd Educ. St. Louis 1897–85 p. 282.
[81] Loc. cit.
[82] Blewett, Ben, 55th An rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1907–8.
[83] Huey, E.B, *Psychology & Pedagogy of Reading,* p,297.
[84] Barnum E.C, *Teachers College Record,* 1906, VII, p 80.
[85] Ibid, p. 77.
[86] 56th An Rept 3d Educ St. Louis 1908–9, p. 40.
[87] Loc. cit.
[88] Repts of Primary Supervisors, 57th An Rept Bd Educ. St. Louis, 1909–10, p, 87.
[89–90] Ibid, p. 96; 105.
[91] Blewett, Ben, 58th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1910–11.
[92] Griffith, Fannie B, 60th An Rept i3d Educ St. Louis 1912.
[93] Loc. cit.
[94] Griffith, Fannie B, 61st An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1913 .
[95] Loc. cit.
[96] Blewett, Ben, 61st An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1913–14.
[97] Gecks, T.C, 62nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1914–5, p, 84.
[98] Griffith, Fannie B 62nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1914–5
[99] De Werthern, Miss, 57th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1909–10.
[100] Gecks, T.C, 62nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1914–5, p. 50.

Chapter VII. The Period of Wide Reading, 1918–1933.

Without doubt; the chosen subtitle is most applicable to the period 1918–1933. Until 1883, one reading text had sufficed for the entire school year, and supplementary materials had been entirely taboo. [101]

The introduction of a school paper. *School and Home,* (1884) proved to be the doorway to stores of supplementary materials, and to the practice developed of adopting not one new text to replace one old one but of adding several new books to a list already in use. [102] By 1897, two texts were simultaneously adopted, [103] and some 20 years later, 1918, seven were added to the list. [104] This last adoption marks the beginning of the period under consideration.

Available records give little information concerning the methods of instruction used between the years 1918 and 1926 and in reply to a letter of inquiry regarding the same, Miss M. C. Gecks who for some years has been associated with the primary grades in the St. Louis system; states that there is little in print. Presumably instructors applied the methods given them at Harris Teacher's College

and followed to some extent the programs outlined in the texts. For the most part, the latter advocated a modified phonetic system of instruction.

As for the texts themselves, they were much more attractive and appealing than had been those used heretofore. Colored pictures were more abundant and the stories were of the type which children really enjoy. Animal stories were given a prominent place, especially in the *Progressive First Reader,* Seemingly the new books were well received and had a marked effect for the better on classroom activities [105]

1926–33.

During the school year 1925–6, the curriculum of the entire St. Louis system was completely revolutionized. Dr. L. Thomas Hopkins, then of the Univ. of Colorado, was engaged to oversee the work of reorganization and he was assisted by supervisors and outstanding classroom teachers. [106] As a result of these efforts, new courses of study were available for the fall of 1926 and that one which dealt with reading in the first grade remains in use at the present time, (1933).

According to this 1926 Course of Study, first grade children in the St. Louis Public Schools now learn to read by what might be called "a combination word, phrase and sentence method." In some of the schools, phonics is not introduced at all. In others, it is used to some extent but never as a distinct and separate subject. The children learn and use the phonograms only in the context. For the first 5 or 6 weeks, no books are placed in the hands of the class, stories of home life, of civic groups, of pets, playmates, etc., being written on the blackboard by the teacher. Thru these, the child becomes acquainted with some of the mechanics of reading and is somewhat prepared for the more formal work which follows. Thruout the year, and especially during the beginning period, classroom newspapers, magazines, and bulletin-board stories play an important part in teaching the child to read.

A comparatively large number of new texts were adopted between 1926 and the present time. They are listed in the appendix.

Summary.

In summarizing this period, it may be said that the trend appears to be toward more freedom for the child as well as for the teacher, and a greater application of psychology to all learning situations. Furthermore, reading seems to be actually becoming a vital; living process, a tool which the child can really use to accomplish various ends, and one which he enjoys using.

[101] Long, Ed H, 28th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis, 1880–1, p, 200.
[102] Long, Ed H, 32nd An Rept Bd Educ St, Louis, 1884–5, p, 182.
[103] 45th An Rept Bd Educ St, Louis, 1897–8, p, 146.
[104] Off. Proceed. Bd Educ St. Louis, v. XXV, p, 254, Sep 10, 1918.
[105] 62nd An Rept Bd Educ St, Louis, 1919–20, p, 589.
[106] Off. Proceed Bd Educ St. Louis v. XXXII, Nov, 10, 1925, p.502.

Chapter VIII. Supplementary Reading.

Many thoughtful men have declared that writing is not only greatly inferior to speech, but that it is a spurious form of knowledge [107] and it has been said that Plato's designation of Aristotle's house as "the house of the reader" was — "an intended disparagement, because he regarded the way of reading as unfavorable to clear and vivid apprehension, and as calculated to shut man away from the fresher resources of social intercourse and the inspiration of solitary thought. [108]

On the other hand, an examination of the biographies of some of our most able and beloved leaders is convincing proof that reading has played a leading role in the lives of great men and that an unceasing passion for the knowledge found in books has been, without doubt, an important factor in the shaping of many careers.

Germany, the birthplace of many educational movements, was the scene of the first attempt to enrich the curriculum thru reading. Here, in 1776, Frederick Eberhard Rochow published his *Der Kinderfreund — a* book dedicated to the interests of little children. [109] But, like many other very much worthwhile attempts, Herr Eberhard's plan was not quickly received; and until the latter part of the 19th century, it had met with little encouragement in the United States. In fact until the last 10 or 15 years of the century, public libraries were considered foes and rivals of the schools. [110]

Wm. T. Harris was one of the men who realized the importance of supplying children with good literature. To quote from a statement made by him in 1869, "— The printed page is the mighty Aladdin's lamp, which gives to the meanest citizen the power to lay a spell on time and space." [111] It is not known why Dr. Harris, feeling as he did, did not instigate some system of wider reading. He may have believed that the *McGuffey Series,* introduced about that time, provided amply for all needs; or there may have been other conditions which prevented such a move. What ever may have been the cause, until some 15 years later, the St. Louis Schools supplied first grade children with a one and only text which was read and re-read as many times as the length of the school year permitted. [112]

The exact date of the introduction of supplementary reading into the St. Louis system is not known. In 1881, Supt. Long was yet greatly opposed to it, contending that "More real progress is made by thoroly mastering a few lessons than by superficially reading many. [113] However, four years later, 1884–5, he stated that '— the use of supplementary reading in all grades of our schools — has passed the experimental period and has become a fixed factor in our means for teaching the children to read." [114]

As to the materials used prior to 1884–5, the records give no data, but they show that during that year a school paper *School and Home* was introduced; and it proved very successful. [115] None of the papers were available for examination. The only description found was this very brief and inadequate one by Mr. Long. They provide "— in each issue interesting and instructive material for classes of the various grades of the district schools." [116]

Supplementary reading in the St. Louis Schools was based on the theory that:

To read fluently and intelligently requires the ability to recognize rapidly the form of the printed word and its combination with other words so as to express a definite thought. As these combinations are many, these words must be presented in compositions differing from those in the regular reading book if we would cultivate and test the ability of the child to grasp the thought expressed by the combinations of these familiar words in new relations This is done thru u supplementary reading matter and since any one series of readers furnishes an abundant vocabulary, these supplementary lessons should contain only words from that vocabulary. [117]

Succeeding reports show that *School and Home* continued to be held in high esteem. In 1896–7, 50,000 copies were published one for each child in the school district. [118] Yet as early as 1888–9 officials felt that it did not entirely meet the needs of the situation.; The paper did not appear to

cultivate in the children a taste for the better things in literature, and in order to overcome this deficiency, schools which could, provided local libraries. **[119]** *Thompson's Fables* placed in primary rooms during the year 1897–8, was the first supplementary book furnished by the Board of Educ. **[120]** The year following the introduction of *Thompson's Fables* a significant note appeared in the Superintendent's report:

Discipline becomes easier and more genial when a good book can be put into the child's hands when he has finished the preparation of his lesson. **[121]**

Each year, supplementary reading became a more and more important feature and new books were added to the school libraries. In 1900, the Public Library affiliated with the school system and placed on its shelves a number of books suitable for the young reader. **[122]** Six years later; there was organized in the Wyman School a one room library **[123]** which has since developed into what is known as "The Traveling Library." This is maintained as part of the Educational Museum and at the request of teachers, delivers sets of books to the various schools; where they remain for five week periods. Two types of sets are furnished. One type, known as the "'Room Library" contains 20 to 25 different titles all selected to fit the needs of the special grade to which that set is assigned. Teachers use these for audience reading library hour, and other reading activities. The other type, consists of 20 to 25 books of the same title selected to add interest to the regular texts. **[124]**

[107–8] Hall, G. Stanley, *How to Teach Reading,* p. 16–17.
[109] Reeder. R, R, "Historical Development of School Reading Books, pub. in *Educational Review,* v, 18: 1899, p, 228.
[110] Hall. G, Stanley, *How to Teach Reading,* p. 39.
[111] Harris, W. T, 16th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1868–9, p, 27.
[112] Long; Ed. H, 32nd An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1884–5; p. 182.
[113] Long; Ed H, 28th An Rept Bd Educ St, Louis 1880–1, p, 200.
[114 –5, –6] Same as 112. pp. 199, 182.
[117] Loc. cit.
[118] Soldan, F.L, 45th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1897–8, p. 25.
[119] Long; Ed H, 36th An Rept Bd Educ St, Louis 18889, p. 25.
[120] Soldan, F. L, 45th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1897–8, p. 143.
[121] Soldan, F. L., 46th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1898–9, p. 182.
[122] 47th An Rept Bd Educ St. Louis 1899–1900, pp. 272, 280.
[123] Public School Messenger. v. 24. no 5.. p.33, June 30, 1927.
[124] Pub, Sch, Messenger, v. 27, Supplement F. p.3, Ap.27. 1931.

Chapter IX Summary.

From the old ABC system to one based upon word wholes then to the phonetic way of attack, to the sentence method; and finally to a combination of the latter three — this is, in short, the history of reading in the first grade classes of the Saint Louis Public Schools.

Since available records date back only to 1853, it is not known just when the ABC system was introduced. However, it seems probable that this was the first mode of instruction used. In 1858, it gave way to a method which undertook to teach children words before they were acquainted with the alphabet; and this step marked the beginning of the movement destined to replace the logical with the psychological. During the eight years which immediately followed, 1858–1866, there were attempts toward homogeneous grouping and an effort was made to abolish the concert recitation.

However, certain practices such as reading the lesson backward before it was read in the proper manner, were still being used.

Phonetics was very much in the foreground between 1866 and 1892, and various experiments featuring it were tried. As a result, the phonetic method gained a definite place in the first grade reading curriculum altho it was conclusively proved later that such a procedure should not be used to the exclusion of all others.

In 1892, Froebel's Kindergarten methods were applied to the primary grades. Their coming advanced to a considerably higher level the psychological way of attack, caused storytelling and general conversation to increase in importance and brought about definite attempts to develop the reasoning power and judgement of the learner. It might be added that Froebel's principles remain active, even today, altho they are not generally distinguished as such.

The year 1897 ushered in a system which made reading a more enjoyable process. By beginning instruction through sentence wholes, the learners early gained a sense of achievement and satisfaction; and hence were encouraged to master those processes which would enable him to interpret more of the printed matter. The correlation of reading with other subjects, the introduction of plays, games, constructive seat work and audience situations, and the use of supplementary materials, also gave zest to the learning of fundamentals.

The period 1918–33, designated as the period of wide reading; and during which a combination of word, phonetic and sentence methods has been generally used, is so close at hand that it is impossible to draw adequate conclusions concerning developments made therein. However, there has been noted a definite tendency toward greater freedom on the part of both teacher and child, and a wider application of psychological principles to learning situations.

As for the texts used, they have been many and varied, and until 1897, comparatively unattractive, Dr. Mandeville's *Primary Reader* (1853–58) would be interesting to a child of today only because of its queer illustrations. It contained no colored pictures; and there were few real stories. *Sargent's Readers* (1858–66) were but a small improvement, and even the well-known and almost immortalized *McGuffey Series* (1866–92) and Raub's *New Normal Reader* (1892–97) held little appeal for the eye. However, in 1897, there was a decided change. The *Baldwin and Arnold* texts adopted that year (1897–1918) were quite pleasing in appearance. They each contained colored illustrations and their literary content showed a marked improvement over that in previous adoptions. From the date of their introduction to and including the present time, authors and publishers have vied with one another in making texts attractive and, as a result, the greater number of modern primers and first readers are, in truth, master pieces of art.

Thus, step by step; first grade reading in the public schools of St. Louis, Missouri has evolved from a comparatively dull and uninteresting task to a process teeming with life and vigor. Children have come to actually enjoy it because they have found that it is the tool whereby they may gain access to a wonderful storehouse — one which is brimful of knowledge and worthwhile entertainment.

(Ed. note: The original thesis has tables listing the titles and publishers of all supplementary books — space for which we could not spare.)

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1965 pp13,14 in the printed version]

2. i/t/a and the 2nd grade curriculum, by Rebecca Stewart*

**(From a lecture by Rebecca Stewart, Bethlehem, PA. as reported in the i/t/a Bulletin, New York.)*

The term "second grade" may become obsolete as a result of the amazing advances being made by i/t/a first graders. Their progress is causing curriculum to undergo significant change. Grade level guides may become a thing of the past; at the very least, they will have to be thoroly revised.

These changes seem very worthwhile to the second grade teachers who have been working with i/t/a-trained children this year in Bethlehem. Among the advantages they have noted are the following:

1. the children have benefited from i/t/a's total language arts approach.
2. the boys do as well as the girls.
3. the children achieve early independence in learning.
4. there appears to be less regression over the summer — this may be due to the fact that there has been plenty of time to "'fix" the 44 i/t/a symbols — also, these children are attuned to print and continue to read and develop their skills over the summer.

Second grade teachers will have to be very independent and very creative if they are to take advantage of these gains and formulate a new second year curriculum which will meet the i/t/a children's needs.

What are some of the "differences" second grade teachers should look for in their i/t/a-trained children?
One immediate observation maybe that altho they read at advanced levels, these children are not as fluent in their oral reading, However, they have been well trained in basic skills, they have had wide reading experience and a great deal of advanced work in comprehension skills. As they proceed thru the 3.1 and 3.2 t.o. readers the teacher will have to do work on oral reading skills, She will find that this skill will develop easily and rapidly.

As the children move into t.o. readers which are one and two years ahead of their grade placement, is there a problem in comprehending the more sophisticated concepts in these books?
The Bethlehem second grade teachers have found that the children can handle 3.1 and 3.2 level concepts without difficulty. In some cases it was necessary to do some preparatory work but once this was done there was no problem in comprehension.

In Bethlehem, it has been necessary to upgrade materials in every area of curriculum. The children's advanced reading skill and their exposure to a wide range of reading will have a direct effect on the choice of books for other subjects. For example, traditional social studies books were used this year. The children went right thru them and said it was "baby stuff." It is suggested that a multi-text approach in science and social studies would be the best approach.

What change can be anticipated in the second grade spelling and writing programs?
During the first grade i/t/a program these children will have done an extraordinary amount of creative writing. By the end of the first grade, most of them will have gone thru the transition program and will have had an excellent introduction to t.o. spelling patterns. The task of the second year teacher is to see that she brings her class forward from this high level of achievement. It will mean that, for the most part, she will not be able to depend upon current curriculum guides. The children's abilities will determine the curriculum to a very great extent.

Since the children are able to do a great deal of creative writing, the teacher can use their work to teach formal writing skills. The children can learn to examine their own work for sequence of ideas and then for paragraphing and punctuation. Teachers should not rely on mechanical devices such as "a paragraph is indicated by indentation."

As was true in the first grade, the emphasis should be on the ideas expressed in a child's stories, rather than on the neatness of the paper or the absolute perfection of the spelling. These must be worked on, of course, but not at the expense of a child's freedom of expression.

The child's writing can also provide an excellent guide to his spelling needs. (Altho transition has occurred at the end of the first year for most children, the teacher will find that transition in spelling takes more time than the reading transition.)

A variety of approaches can be used for spelling:

1. look for common spelling errors in children's writing — have children build individual spelling lists and keep them in notebooks or on cards. It has been found that children retain freedom in creative writing after transition. They tend to write first and look up words afterwards; this should be encouraged. When it comes to correcting their work the general guide can be that when formal instruction has been given in a spelling rule or pattern, the children, from that point on, can be expected to write correctly in t.o.
2. instruction can be based on patterns following phonetic rules; e.g. dine (silent e preceded by a long vowel)
3. words can also be developed on a structural basis, e.g. make, makes, making.
4. word lists can also be used as guides.

The i/t/a youngster knows what spelling is. He may very well become a better speller than the t.o. child. At the end of the first year at Bethlehem, testing showed the spelling of i/t/a and *Lo.* youngsters to be equally good.

What has been Bethlehem's experience with the disadvantaged-culturally deprived children?
These children will make the transition. They will probably have more difficulty with the spelling transition than the reading transition.

In Bethlehem, the few children who did not make transition at the end of second grade have been identified as Special Education children.

With these children it is especially important to let them know you're interested in their ideas and experiences. Many of these children have never had anyone take time to listen to them. Praise their work. In a paper full of errors, work on one error at a time.

These children will need a great deal of work in listening, observation, and oral expression skills. The first task should be to improve oral communication. Have the children focus on good enunciation. Tie this together with the development of listening skills. These children come from an i/t/a first grade with the understanding that writing is encoding speech and this will make the second grade teacher's task relatively easier.

Keep your eye on success. These disadvantaged youngsters very probably wouldn't have had *any* success in t.o. so the gains they are making with i/t/a are especially rewarding.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1965 pp14–16 in the printed version]

3. New Light on Beginning Reading, by Gertrude Hildreth, Ph.D.

*at the American Univ. of Beirut, Lebanon.

Altho ten years or more have elapsed since the publication of *Why Johnny Can't Read* deploring the lack of phonics in beginning reading and frequent editorials criticizing the prevalent Look-Say Chinese method of teaching beginners to read, much the same criticisms are still voiced today in the press and elsewhere. These may be summarized as:

1. Teachers are addicted to the Look-and-Say whole word method of teaching reading which is analogous to the memorization of Chinese ideographs while the teaching of phonics is bypassed;
2. The children not only do not learn to use phonetic analysis in word attack, but they are not even taught the ABC's in the beginning.
3. The little primers with limited vocabulary which produces such inane content that even the children ridicule it holds back the beginner's progress a year or more in contrast with Ivan of the Soviet Union.

What have we to say in answer to these criticisms after ten years or more of continuous debate on the issues? The answers may surprise even the experts who are seriously intent on the improvement of literacy.

Let's take each of these criticisms and explore them in order. First, we teach beginning reading by an antiquated Chinese method which in its very nature has prevented the spread of literacy among Chinese-speaking persons. To master reading and writing, Chinese children must memorize several thousand different characters or ideographs for even minimum literacy; & more thousands for advanced attainment.

Now let's examine English in print — basically an alphabetic and phonetic language in spite of its frequent inconsistencies. The entire vocabulary of several hundred thousand words is printed with 26 interchangeable parts, the ABC's, the building blocks of the words. The separate letters and certain letter combinations stand for sounds in the language that recur in the different words.

It seems reasonable to suppose, in fact the data prove that few teachers, no matter how modern their views, have failed to take advantage of this phonetic aspect of the language in teaching beginners to read. After ten years of unrelenting pressure from reading authorities and laymen, parent groups, church leaders, citizens' organizations and others, it is a rare teacher today who dares to slight sounding in some form or other in lessons for beginners.

The age-old method of teaching sounding was to drill pupils on the separate sounds of the ABC's, then to string them together to sound out the words. But sounding is also learned analytically by working with whole words. For example, a child who knows the word *look* finds familiar sound elements in *cook, book,* and *took*. These elements are *oo* and *ook*, The word *party* can be analyzed into *part, art, ty, y*, phonics elements that recur in other words in the very nature of the English spelling system. Other sets of words containing interchangeable parts are *mother*, *another, other;* even *brother* and *father*. Nothing here certainly to suggest the Chinese system of ideographs!

Even the children themselves, without the teacher's aid; often make these identity-of-sound discoveries as in rhymes such as *fish, dish, wish, swish.* They sound alike and the endings rightly look alike, too. A child spys *try* in *trying* also *ing* in *trying* and *crying.* Even a longer word such a

beautiful or *beautified* resolves itself into something like *beauty*, So it would be virtually impossible to teach English by the Chinese method because the children themselves would subvert the plan. The chief limitation in recognizing familiar and recurring sounds in English is the familiar fact that some words fool you. The alphabet is used inconsistently and a word may not sound as one might expect from the collection and arrangement of letters it contains, for example *laugh*, or *yacht*, or even *read*. This problem will be dealt with more fully later on.

A second criticism, one that is related to the foregoing, is that beginners in modern classrooms are not taught the ABC's. As a matter of fact the tots are more sophisticated in this area of achievement than people realize. What are the facts about alfabet readiness of typical school entrants? In the fall of 1964 when data were obtained for several thousand school beginners on the alphabet test of the *Metropolitan Readiness Tests*, consisting of a random sampling of 16 letters, the average score of letters recognized was 10, equivalent to nearly 2/3 of the entire alphabet sample. The upper population scored 14 out of 16 letters correct, nearly 90%, the lower quarter scored 5 correct out of 16, or nearly a third of the alphabet sample. These results are not surprising since the ABC's have been a part of the typical English-speaking child's cultural environment since the time he could focus his eyes on objects about him.

No doubt some of the high scorers on the test were youngsters who had gone to kindergarten where this learning was part of the curriculum. Some kindergartens, however, treat the ABC's lightly if at all, and the great majority of children have not attended kindergarten before entering first grade. In most cases the parents and home environment must have been the tutor, even tho the learning may have amounted to little more than saying and singing the letters in standard order and then pointing them out as separate forms. Infants build with ABC blocks as soon as they can walk and are addicted to ABC books by the age of three. Their attention is attracted and held by colorful cereal boxes and lettering on cans, T.V. shows and sign boards. Parents enjoy playing the alphabet game by naming over the letters as the child repeats them,. In the bus or grocery store the tots show off their knowledge by spelling out D-U-Z, S-T-O-R-E, V-I-M, K-R-I-S-P, and so on, ad infinitum.

Now on entering school here is a new array of words and labels to play with by spelling out or at least picking out the familiar items. A child says; "Here's my name. Barbara. It begins with B like Bobby's and has two B's in it." They spy the two eyes in *moon* and comment that *h* looks like a chair, *bed* looks like a short little bed, *s* is the garden hose, For those who cannot yet identify the ABC's and others whose knowledge is shaky, there are interesting games with letters on the flannel board, ABC flash cards, anagrams, filing name cards according to initial letter, copying one's name card printed in large letters, and many others.

The third commonly heard criticism is that the little readers used in American schools restrict the vocabulary so severely that nothing but nonsense can be written with it. By contrast, the Russian primer after a gradual start introduces toward the end selections from classical literature and even party politics. Armenian children nearing the age of seven are in their second book containing poems and Aesop's fables. How can we account for these contrasts in vocabulary and content?

The difference can be attributed largely to a factor the critics have generally overlooked an obstacle that stands in the way of the beginner learning to read the English language in contrast to Russian, Turkish and Armenian — the inadequacy of the 26 letter alphabet for spelling the English language and the confusing irregularities that occur in English orthography. Those who bewail the failure to teach the English-speaking beginner phonics and the infantile vocabulary of the little readers, should instead direct their ire towards these inherent obstacles.

There has been virtually no revision of English spelling since Noah Webster's day a century and a half ago, and practically no change in the alphabet itself since the time of Chaucer. By contrast, the Russian alphabet was revised in 1918 and again a few years ago. The Turkish government abandoned the Arabic alphabet in 1928 and adopted a modern phonetic system employing Roman

style letters. The Armenian alphabet which originally consisted of 34 letters, has been augmented twice and now contains 38 letters, a sufficient number for a one-to-one consistency between all the basic sounds of the language and the letter symbols.

The reason that Johnny needs more time in beginning stages of reading than Ivan, Ahmet, and Ara, is not because the teacher neglected phonics or gave him namby-pamby sentences to read, but because Johnny, unlike his other-language brothers, has to work with an antiquated alphabet system and archaic spelling, The other boys are not bothered by items such as two- and three-letter combinations that represent a single sound, *ch, ph* for *f*, or *ght* for *t* in the commonest words. There are no superflous letters such as *k* in *knife,* or *b* in *doubt.* A word like *trouble* can cause them no trouble because if there were such a word in their respective languages, it would be spelt *trubl. Shoes* would be şus (in Turkish, s-cedilla stands for the sound of *sh*). Each letter is assigned to just one sound of the language; never in combination to represent some other sound.

Think of the confusion young Johnny experiences with the various sounds of *ow, ou, au* in the commonest words, *low, now, thou. thought, you, aunt, haul. an* and *en* are bothersome in such words as *many* and *men.* The silent *e* at the end of a word does not in many instances follow the rule o£ "making the vowel say it's name," e.g. in *dance, give, done, lose, uncle.* A *y* does not always have the short *i* sound at the end of a word, e.g. *cry*, *try.* These irregularities in the encoding system make it impossible for the typical beginner learning to read English to advance rapidly in sounding out words independently. Altho English is approximately 85% phonetic, fully half of the words contain elements that do not follow any consistent sounding principles. In English it is often the commonest words that are likely to be irregular, for example: *many, could, know, how, to, read, one, word, come, build, heart, uncle, write, straight, ought, once, knee, ache, Wednesday,* and hundreds of others that early confuse the beginning learner.

With their more adequate alphabet systems and consistent sound-letter matching, Ivan. Ahmet, and Ara have only to sound out the initial letters or the first syllable of a bothersome or unknown word in Russian, Turkish, or Armenian for a clue to the word that fits in the sentence, e.g. *knee, gnaw, circle, scissors, phone, friends, pyramid.* They are able to identify and interpret at an earlier stage a large vocabulary of new words in reading that they already use in conversation. Words such as *gymnasium, liquid, beautiful, excursion, trapeze, machine,* present no special problems in either reading or spelling because all these words would be spelled with phonetic consistency. There is nothing to prevent a child who learns to read a language that is encoded with a consistent system for sounding out every word he meets no matter how many letters or syllables it contains, items on a par with English words such as: *procrastinate, numerous, pneumatic, mischievous, chemistry.*

Armenian children in beginning classes who know the sounds of all the letters and have had consistent practice in context reading have become habituated to the skills of reading by the end of the second year and by that time are largely independent in word recognition. The growth of vocabulary and word recognition skills are necessarily slower with a vocabulary that is erratically spelled. Young readers need more time to master a stock of words that do not respond to fluent "sounding through" than words that can easily be pronounced phonetically.

Altho the word stock of primers used in the U.S.A. does seem small in the initial stages, the children are sure to know the meanings of all the words they learn. This cannot always be said of the rarer polysyllabic words that Ivan, Ahmet, and Ara so glibly sound out. The capacity to grasp word meanings is always dependent upon the child's linguistic powers, his level of mental maturity, and his social backgrounds, not solely on his ability to "sound through" a string of words in a sentence.

Another major advantage of a consistent alphabet and spelling system is the ease of combining reading and writing lessons. These two processes actually become one with a phonetic sound-letter system, in fact, the daily reading lessons in Russian, Turkish, and Armenian combine the two by

giving writing drill on the same words and letters, even sentences, used in the reading lesson. As a result; practice in reading and spelling is mutually reinforcing from the first lessons. Recognition of the separate alphabet letters and skill in sounding-through words is gained in spelling and writing as well as in reading. By contrast, trying to link reading and writing in English leads to complications that maybe distracting rather than reinforcing because of the irregularities in our spelling.

With a consistent orthographic system spelling, instead of being a discouraging task, is merely a pleasant game a matter of recording the letters that match sounds in words. The child whose speech is normally developed by the time he goes to school should experience no unusual difficulty in spelling the words that are within his oral usage and comprehension. In fact, an efficient encoding system probably benefits spelling even more than reading because the reading context itself affords clues to word recognition and sentence meaning. In spelling, on the contrary, the writer has only the sounds of the letters or sheer memory of word forms to guide him.

I myself had no trouble in sounding through words in Russian; Turkish, and Armenian on becoming acquainted with the alphabetic systems of these languages. However, I was soon outdistanced by beginners learning to read because I did not know the spoken language in each case. Even after I had pronounced the words, many of them were quite meaningless.

The Armenian language easily absorbs words from other languages because of the extensive alphabet and consistent sound-symbol matching system. As I went about an Armenian quarter of the city observing street and shop signs containing transliterated English and French words such as *Florida, orange, college, hotel, salon, coifeur, garage, bureau,* these items offered no problem at all. Each of these words is easily deciphered simply by sounding-through from left to right.

Primers prepared for Russian, Turkish; and Armenian children like those in the U.S.A. all start out with highly restricted vocabularies several familiar words, a phrase or two. Now and then a three or four-word sentence, but the vocabularies in these non-English languages can be stepped up more rapidly as soon as the children catch on to the sounding trick for clues to word identification. Even with an efficient encoding system and regular spellings, teachers do not confine the beginning lessons entirely to drill on the recognition of betters or the pronunciation of their sounds. On the contrary, beginning lessons include a combination of work on separate sounds and the pronunciation of these sounds in words that are meaningful to the children. The words in turn are employed in short., simple sentences that are practiced immediately.

From this discussion, the fact seems obvious that the methods employed in teaching beginners to read are contingent upon the encoding and spelling system of the language. What seems to work best in teaching children to read English or German, may not be the best scheme for teaching Russian or Dutch reading.

It is possible to exaggerate the influence of the encoding system on the children's progress in the beginning stages of reading. After all, most English-speaking persons who attended school from the age of six learned to read without any special difficulty after three or four years of instruction and practice. More significant than the features of the alphabet may be the child's status of maturity, his readiness in language and in motor development, in background of experience and interest in learning to read at the time he entered school.

Sir James Pitman's efforts to ease the beginning reading task thru the use of a 45-letter augmented Roman alphabet for the English language on a transition basis has been heralded thruout the world. The results of objective research studies at the conclusion of the experiments will no doubt support the hypothesis that reading methods are dependent upon the encoding system of the printed language, and that learning to read in the initial stages is facilitated by an adequate alphabet consistently used in spelling.

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4. Intelligent Orthography? by Rolf L. Veenstra*

*Reprinted from *The Banner.* Oct. 22, 1965. Rev. Veenstra is a former missionary, now teaching in Michigan.

If it is true that all the races of the world are equally intelligent, why are some so much more advanced than others? And here we immediately discover that pure Providence causes one nation or civilization to excel another. Climate, for example, is one big factor. Did any great culture ever come from Antarctica?

Communication is another important factor. Not just the contact of one nation with others, but communication between individuals, by which the learning can be shared and thus the whole body politic make progress.

That is one reason why Western civilization, under God, has made such great strides in contrast to many Oriental civilizations, made up of people who are intellectually superior. Can you imagine the possibility of a space program, or even a large business corporation, if we were using the Roman numerals instead of Arabic, and had to multiply and divide such figures as MCXIV and DCLXXVIII?

On the other hand, that same Providence saw to it that we did not borrow our alphabet from the same source to which we owe our numbers. Anyone who has seen Arabic letters is not surprised that a person who has to read and write by means of that beautiful but impractical script has almost as great a handicap to learning as do the Chinese, with an almost endless number of characters. It did the Orient very little good to invent movable type printing long before Gutenberg, when a font of type for the Chinese alphabet would fill a whole room.

Unfortunately, our 26 letter alphabet is far from perfect. The letter *c*, for example, can be pronounced as a *k, s,* or *ch*. Such absurdity is the despair of foreigners and the cause of many dropouts from school. It is highly possible that American survival will be determined by such a "little" thing as our willingness or refusal to make a few changes for the better in our clumsy orthography.

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5. Progress, by Leslie De Mar

This life is truly something; our needs are much the same.
On food and clothes and shelter has everyone a claim,
But wants of life are many – no land does hold them all.
So we must barter plenty and on each other call.

The tongue is often stronger than color, race or creed.
We could make our frendships longer, if we'd heed the voice of need.
Let's appoint a special mission, our alphabet to improve,
Our verbs must be more regular; let's quit this ancient groove.

"See how easy is our language – you can learn it now apace.
And we all can really profit from the labors of each race,
And when there comes another within our gate or shore,
And he does learn our language, he's a stranger soon no more."

This world would be a unit; around it one could move,
And talk and trade and marry whenever he would choose.
Our President could start it; his praises'd be global sung.
Make the English language easy – the world wide common tongue.

Want we an easy spelling, and the simplest reading found?
Give us just as many symbols as we have basic sounds.
Then for each single symbol, its sound will be its name,
And just to say a word slowly will really spell the same.

If we turn our back on progress, the future will indeed grow dim.
We may regret our lack of foresight; when the others round us win
The battle against illiteracy with a well-spelt foreign tongue.
And we too stubborn to make a change for the benefit of our young.

Leslie De Mar, Aubrey, Texas.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1965 pp17,18 in the printed version]

6. The Language Curtain, by Victor N. Crassnoff.

Godfrey, Illinois.

In the last forty years Russia has come up from a state of industrial and technological obscurity to its present position of world power. During this period, starting from scratch, Russia has developed an. industrial empire which, guided by central scientific and technological research, has built before our very eyes the most formidable military machine and has helped Russia to take the lead in the interplanetary travel race.

How was this feat accomplished? How a country of no industrial and technological background could pull itself out of the mire of virtual illiteracy and industrial inexperience and in less than one generation's time catch up with the rest of the world in the matter of scientific knowledge and the art of technology?

Strangely enough the key to this miracle was the English language.

The world's scientific and technological knowledge is a matter of a painstaking cumulative written record. The most complete record of it is in English. The United States Patent Office file, for instance, is no small part of this record. This record is readily available to anyone who can read English. To avail themselves of this store of knowledge, the Russians right after the revolution had inaugurated the policy of compulsory study of foreign languages in their schools, so that today in Russia every professional man and woman has a working knowledge of one or more foreign language, predominantly English.

Besides serving as key to the world's store of knowledge, English had served the Russians extremely well in one other respect The world's record of knowledge speaks of many new and unfamiliar things to the Russians, things for which there are no words in the Russian language. To fill this deficiency, the Russians reached deep into the English language and have taken from it the words nonexistent in their own language and thus within a very short time developed the Russian language to the point of its complete adequacy for the requirements of the present tag civilization. So great is the influx of English into technical and scientific Russian that very little knowledge of Russian is needed by English speaking scientists or technicians to understand the Russian writings in their particular fields. Two years of study with a good teacher plus a good dictionary, which are readily available, is all that is really needed for this kind of understanding of Russian.

It is true that up to about the middle of this century the Russian contribution to the world's store of knowledge was quite meager. It was only in the last decade the rumbling of the Russian industrial might has begun to be beard around the world, To the man in the street, of course, it was Sputnik that turned his thoughts toward the industrial machine that put it in orbit, but there are lesser rumblings not as dramatic, perhaps, but of great immediate importance, for they spell the forthcoming bid of the Russian industrial machine for world markets. Of coarse, we all know about the five ton satellites Russia is throwing into space, but also there are, a bridge which spans the Dnieper River at Kiev built without a single rivet, its seams – 33,000 feet in all – fused by an automatic welding machine, the prefabricated method of construction of oil tanks in which steel sheets are welded at the manufacturing plant, carried to construction site in rolls and there assembled by machines; also the method of manufacture of steel pipe in which the edges of two

long strips are fused by an automatic welder and the double-thick strip is rolled up as a flattened rubber hose would be on a reel. These "flat-welded" pipes are cheap to produce and cheap to ship and all that needs to be done at the building site is to force air under great pressure between the two strips and they round into a pipe. These are some of the improved technics of which the Russians themselves tell is in their illustrated monthly "U.S.S.R." published in English and circulated in the United States in exchange of a similar magazine "America" published in Russian and circulated by the United States in Russia. Undoubtedly there are many other such developments of which we know nothing yet.

The competition from Russian technological improvements might well come from other countries as well, since no country is averse to improving its competitive position at the expense of somebody else's ingenuity For instance, in one of the July, 1950 issues of "The Financial Post" a Canadian Weekly newspaper, we read "First Canadian – possibly the first in North America – use of natural gas in blast furnace operations. Injection of natural gas into blast furnaces to boost iron yield and to cut coke consumption is one of the hottest new developments on the steelmaking front. *Several Russian steel-makers have been using the process for some time,* (the italics is this authors) The new process promises to improve the economics of the whole Canadian steel making operation at a time when imports competition has reached a new peak."

The world at large no longer can afford to remain blind to the fact that having caught up with the rest of the world technologically, industrially and language-wise, Russia now has become an important contributor to the cumulative record of world's technological and scientific knowledge. The Russian contributions to this record; however, is in their own language, a language little known outside of Russia. So at least for the present, the Russian portion of the contemporary world's record of knowledge is lost to the world at large.

Four months prior to the date the Sputnik, the first manned satellite, was put in orbit a Russian periodical "Radio" in its June issue of that year carried a full set of instructions to amateur radio operators complete with drawings of the orbit, visibility points timetable and so forth of a satelite to be launched later that year. A timely spotting of that article would have taken the element of surprise out of that highly dramatic event and would have greatly reduced its propaganda value. As it was, this article did not come to light until the summer of 1959 and then only by accident. This is about the extent of our vigilance regarding Russian technological and scientific developments.

While the world at large, lacking the knowledge of the Russian language, has almost no access to the Russian portion of the written record of current technological and scientific developments, the Russians, on the other hand, having mastered the foreign languages, have a ready access to the entire record.

In Russia, the study of foreign languages begins in the senior years of the pre-college school and is continued through college. With an annual enrollment of three million into first grade, the annual total enrollment in English in Russia runs far into the millions. In the United States total yearly enrollment in Russian was about ten thousand in 1960, perhaps today it is 25,000. It is only in the last few years our colleges began to offer Russian as an "elective subject" so that today in the United States there are almost no professional men who are able to read Russian unless they are native Russians and there are very few of these.

The current record of day to day technological progress of such highly industrialized countries as the United States and Russia is a maze of books, pamphlets, trade and professional magazines,

scientific and patent papers, manuals of operation, news items and many other forms of publications. The catalogue "Newspapers and Magazines of the U.S.S.R. for 1960," for instance, offers for subscription in the United States close to 500 nonfiction periodicals. Literally tons of this material cross the ocean either way each year. In Russia the contents of this material are readily assimilated almost the minute it is published, for 50% of her professional people read English and the material is made readily available to them through spot libraries of the enterprises for which they work. In the United States, this material is put into the filing cabinets uncut and unread where it gathers dust awaiting its possible perusal.

An educational system with compulsory study of foreign languages solves the language barrier problem for the Russians. Our educational system with its "elective subject" study of foreign languages, on the other hand, solves nothing and leaves us with the "language curtain" that keeps us in the dark of the current Russian technological developments and on occasion provides such dramatic surprises as the Sputnik. Not knowing what the Russians are doing, we are in line for many more surprises, for a seven foot coil of flat-welded, four inch, quarter inch pipe unfurls into 900 foot length, saving 30 welds, inspections, etc.

Leaving the decision of the study of Russian to immature and uninformed teenagers is a derelection of duty in the matter of training the growing generation for the coming economic struggle with Russia.

Comments by E. E. Arctier

Dear Mr. Tune:
Thank you for permitting me an advance reading of that vital *Language Curtain* of Victor N. Crassnoff's. I myself have long felt that in Russia we are up against a giant whose potential most of us haven't begun to realize yet. But that both her spectacular up-swing and our low realization of it should be so much a matter of foreign language learning and *not* learning, comes as a new flash of insight, and I thank Mr. Crassnoff for it.

If I have my facts straight, Soviet children begin a foreign language in Fifth Grade and continue it till they leave school three to five years later. Some 45 to 50% of them make English their choice. Now we know how difficult our lawless spelling makes reading and writing English for our own fifth graders, even tho most of them have been hearing and speaking it for all the ten years before. How does it happen, then, that the Soviet fifth grader can take on even the worst of that spelling – *one, two, four, eight, is, was,* are, *were, height, might,* without any such experience of hearing and speaking the language?

Perhaps because their preceding four years of reading and writing in their mother tongue has developed their minds and character to the point where they can cheerfully make the best of a bad situation – as so many of our fifth graders can't. For not only Russian but the dozens of other native tongues in the U.S.S.R. in which elementary education proceeds, are so highly phonemic they just naturally call out and develop whatever endowment of the higher mental attributes – consistency, sense of analogy, of cause and effect, of the relationships of words – which the beginners naturally bring to their first classroom. The unimpeded exercise of these higher mental faculties is one of the supremest pleasures of life to children as well as adults. So, having had this pleasure in learning to read in their own native tongue, Piotr and Katinka do their best to get it out of their English lessons,

too. And what disillusion our unreasonable orthography brings, is compensated in various other ways. They are devoted little patriots and they know how important a wide-spread knowledge of English is to the further power and glory of their vast motherland.

Few of our youngsters, on the other hand, commence a foreign language before seventh grade and not half of them do it even then. Most of the other half have their hands too full with their English, to attempt another tongue, even if they wanted to. Which, by and large, they dont. The spelling we have been inflicting on them these six years past has dulled their minds to the point where they want to get thru each semester with as little outlay of meticulous application as possible. There are more rewarding fields – sports, movies, parties and dances, T.V., boy friends and girl friends – for whatever mental outlay they are ready to make.

So it would seem that this wide study of Russian which Mr. Crassnoff so rightly advocates has a prerequisite in the USA. That prerequisite is the regularizing of our English spelling. Only thus can learning to read and write their own mother tongue become a prime developer of those higher mental faculties which the study of Russian would demand. For the ease of learning stops with its spelling. Its inflections and grammar are very much more difficult than are ours. But that should not mitigate against it. There are hundreds of thousands of American youngsters whose minds are crying for something really challenging to use them on. And there are numerous ways of stimulating many others to a, least a reading knowledge of Russian print. What about a wide extension of the correspondence plan – why not a Soviet overseas boy friend or girl friend for ever youngster studying Russian. I'm here to testify what zip and tang to my declensions and conjugations my French boy friend and German girl friend gave me in my high school days.

To get back to the civilizing of our spelling. Have any considerable number of our schoolmen and statesmen ever wondered whether our *whose, choose, lose, shoes, bruise, booze,* and their hundreds of fellow atrocities might not have a lot to do with the persistent unpopularity of our U.S. thruout so much of the foreign world? Our power and wealth would be grievance enough, especially to countries which had once been dominant themselves. Why should we add to this the outrage on the mind which the learning of the above imbecilities perpetuates. The worst of it is that this sense of outrage may be largely subconscious – and thus so much more deep-seated and persistent. In most foreign lands the children who study English begin it at the same early age as their Soviet compeers. Who knows with what deep-down resentment the phonemic young German, Russian, Italian, Latin American, African may tackle such rhyme words as the foregoing, when they might so much better have come to him with the honest consistency of: *hooz*, *chooz, looz, shooz, boooz, booz, skrooz, krooz?*

I've been meaning to write to our State Department to this effect for quite some time. I wonder if some fellow Bulletineer – one who doesn't so easily stop with just good intentions would care to join me in doing it now?

Cordially, E. E. Arctier.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1965 pp19–20 in the printed version]

Book Reviews

7. Read, Dick, Read, by Donald Barr *

How can we best teach our children to heed – and understand – the printed page?

*Dr. Donald Barr is Headmaster of the Dalton Schools in New York City and Associate Program Director of the secondary schools section of the National Science Foundation.

This is Reading, by Frank G. Jennings. Teachers College, Columbia Univ. 196 pp. $4.25.
Reading Without Dick and Jane, by Arther S. Trace, jr. Regnery 185 pp, $4.50.
Fox in Sox, a tongue twister for super children, by Dr. Suess. illustrated. Random House. 62 pp. $1.95.

In the first chapter of his first novel, written 42 years before he became Prime Minister, Disraeli lightly sketches a "backward," boy who had been taught to read "on the new system, by a pictorial alphabet, and who persisted to the last....in spelling A-P-E, monkey, merely because over the word there was a monster munching an apple."

"And quite right in the child....,:" growls the character who speaks for Disraeli, "*Pictorial* alphabet! pictorial fool's head!"

And here is a description of how most American children are introduced to reading in 1965; it comes from a new book, *This is Reading*, written by a respected educational entrepreneur and journalist, Frank G. Jennings, and published by Teachers College o£ Columbia Univ. "......a simple picture and a whole word of two or three letters, both well known in his daily spoken vocabulary. Word and picture are handled and talked about. The teacher writes the word, usually printing in large block letters, and games are played with them. This process goes on until the child acquires about 75 words in a so-called sight vocabulary."

Passing over Mr. Jennings' spinster commas and orphan pronouns for the moment, let us consider the operative words in this passage: "picture," "whole word," "daily," and "games." What do they really mean?

First: "picture," Between 1826 and 1965, printing technology has improved wonderfully, and the pictures in schoolbooks have grown brighter and better, more copious – and more dominant. Even so, Disraeli could already perceive what "the new system" was – instead of seeing the written word, then translating letters into sounds, identifying the spoken word, and lastly considering what the spoken word might mean, the child was now invited to look at the written word, then look at pictures of the meaning of the written word, and lastly guess what spoken word might have about the same meaning. Thus meaning became a means, not the end, of reading.

Second: "whole word." When we ask a child to associate a whole printed word with a whole spoken word" we ask him not to think about the parts of the printed word (the letters) nor the parts of the spoken word (the phonemes). We ask him to learn *by rote* – by purblind nasty old 18th-century rote! – that A-P-E stands for a certain pair of sounds. "Never mind why – it just does!" we say in

effect; and we give the poor little child an eye-catching picture of a primate to remind him, so that he will not be forced, as a mnemonic device, to puzzle out the connection between the letters and the sounds. Under this system, many children may never acquire the habit of responsible attention to the details of the printed page – or to anything else.

Third: "daily." If we put off teaching the simple rules for translating letters into sounds, we can only make a child memorize the written equivalent of a rather small number of whole spoken words. What words are these to be? Why, clearly they should be useful, socially central words, daily words. So we begin the practice of "vocabulary control" – the deliberate restricting of the verbal experiences of a child for several years. We create a new kind of writing, a whole new rhetoric for children – not stories, not poems, not histories, not articles on science, but a series of demonstrative shrieks: "Look, Dick! See Jane run! Look, Jane look! See Spot! Run, Spot, run!" And we create a whole mythological America inhabited by scrubbed, friendly, depersonalized people and dogs. The unique emotional shallowness of this mythology may actually be a worse threat to some children's security than the bloody bumptiousness and malicious pathos of Grimm and Anderson.

Fourth: "games." If we are going to substitute memorizing for figuring out, and if we are going to control a child's reading vocabulary so that he cannot have access *on his own* to anything interesting in the way of stories, we are going to change the tone of the learning experience. Children are avid for mastery, for the sense of powerful insights. The "new system" withholds or defers the full joy of competence; instead of being thrilling in itself, learning to read has to be disguised and sweetened up with synthetic gaiety. As a result, some children may not make a good transition from habits of play – play is activity contained in the present – to habits of work – work is activity which reaches toward the future.

A hostile but carefully researched exposition of "the new system" and its consequences has now been written by Dr. Arther S. Trace jr, whose previous book on education, *What Ivan Knows that Johnny Doesn't*, compared American curricula unfavorably with Russian and provoked in the school world a marvelous display of patriotism.

It is instructive to compare Prof. Trace's *Reading Without Dick and Jane* with Mr. Jennings' *This is Reading*; the angry scholar arraying his damning quotations and statistics and saying precisely what he thinks with grim humor; the journalist cascading information and misinformation, panegyric and insult, with an airy disdain for syntax. In the Jennings book, one comes across sentences like this: "Count Rutherford made electric sparks jump little gaps, as had Franklin long before him, but then the Italian, Tesla, made a veritable Jovian bolt, and his compatriot, Marconi, used to hurl words across the Atlantic." Does Mr. Jennings mean Rutherford, who was not a Count and whose work was primarily with atomic structure, or Rumford, who was a count and whose great work was with the mechanical equivalent of heat, or perhaps Ruhmkorff? Tesla was a Croatian, not Italian. Somehow blunders like this destroy whatever confidence one might have in Mr. Jennings as an expositor of the subtle and mooted notions of educational psychology; and of course one wonders, too, how his editors at Teachers College ever passed over such errors.

Prof. Trace's title and most of his anger come, of course, from the most famous of the "basal reader" series, a sequence of non-stories about two non-children named Dick and Jane. All literate people share Prof. Trace's revulsion; even Mr. Jennings admits that such books "occasionly assault the

child's intelligence with a story and idea content that would bore a five-year-old." (How that particular adverb got there one cannot even speculate). A few serious and gifted writers have tried to do something better for American children. Some of them have submitted to the prevailing rubrics of vocabulary control and rote repetition, doubtless convincing themselves that such constraints are really a fecundating challenge to the artist, like the rules of a Petrarchan sonnet. Others build theoretical commitments into stories and poems – they try to illustrate cutely the rules that associate sounds with letters, so that a child can puzzle out a little phonics for himself.

One of the most productive of this latter group is Dr. Seuss, who started several decades ago with the enchanting *And to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street*, a plain and wonderful child's tale, and has grown more and more didactic and less and less enchanting ever since. His new effort, *Fox in Socks*, lacks all charm. It is mere calisthenics. The phonic guile shows: "Slow Joe Crow sews/Knox in box now." It raises an important question: When we have an effective intellectual implement to give a child, why set up elaborate situations so that the child' "finds" the implement, "discovers" that it is an implement, and "explores", its effects? If you have a door-key a child needs, *why hand* it to him buried in a boxful of hairpins; clips and coins? Why not say, "Here is a key"? Our schools are full of this counterfeit induction, part of the current mystique of discovery. There is a trickiness about it that at best is smarmy and at worst may contaminate a child's best pride with doubt.

Very young children are, of course, capable of genuine induction. Merely becoming aware of language is a brilliant achievement in abstract thought. Consider: there are two media thru which we pass bits of intelligence to one another, Time and Space. Speech, like music, is organized in Time. One word follows another, and the word uttered is instantly gone – irretrievable except by an act of remembering. And yet the new infant, squirming in the bassinet without a concept in his head, perceives patterns in the welter of recurring noises, makes comparisons of sounds which have already sped into the silence of the past, and discovers the very existence of meaning. Pictures are organized in Space.

All the parts of a notion are presented together; there is no set order in which they are seen, and therefore no true logic; but they do stay there to be scrutinized over and over, compared and contracted, thought about. Of all the expressions of intelligence, writing is uniquely organized in *both* Space and Time. We write and read in sequence and therefore with possible logic; but all the elements stay within the reach of scrutiny and thought. We can pause and we can skip; we can go forth and back repeatedly. This fact – that we take something which happens in time and record it faithfully in space, so that it exists in orderly permanence – is the whole secret of reading. The rules of translation are simple; they could be simpler if languages like English had no past or a poor disposable past; but they are simple enough. With these rules explicitly known – with competence and its healthy glory – the teaching of reading begins.

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8. Phonics for the Reading Teacher, by Anna D. Cordts.
Reviewed by Newell W. Tune

Published by Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1965, $3.95 pp 270.

At first we thought, Oh, just another book on phonics, but a careful perusal discloses it to be more important than that. True, there have been quite a few books on how to teach with phonics, but any book by such a well-known phonics advocate as Anna D. Cordts deserves our attention. Let us hear what she says in the preface.

"With the upsurge of interest in the teaching of reading in the nation's schools, "phonetic" instruction has come into prominence. After having so long been held in ill-repute, phonics has regained respectability.

Whatever brand of phonics is used or whatever role phonics is playing in a given school system, whether as *the* method of beginning reading or as part of the total reading program, teachers by their own admission find their knowledge of phonics inadequate to give them confidence and joy in their teaching.

While not all upper-grade instructors in our elementary schools are as badly off as the fourth-grade teacher who, confessed that he did not know one phonic, from another, few teachers have more than a superficial knowledge of phonics or have had any training in the science of speech sounds. Older teachers continue to rely on the methods with which they are familiar, and younger teachers depend largely on the manuals that accompany the basic reading systems.

Research and educational experiment have pointed the way to more effective methods of teaching phonics, from the child's first experiences in listening to speech sounds straight thru to the point where the youngster achieves independence in reading These improved methods unfortunately are not yet generally in use in the classrooms of our elementary schools. How often have teachers asked, "Why is it that so many children in school are tone deaf? They seem unable to hear when words begin alike, even the most familiar words like: *big, boys, bears, beetles, bananas;* or words like *milk*, *mouse, mace, music,* and *monkeys*."

Should anyone be expected to *hear* that because words start with the same consonant, they all begin with the same sound? Why must auditory discrimination still be made as difficult and confusing as it always has been? It will no longer be so when, children are given the opportunity to hear likenesses in sounds that are identical. Auditory discrimination will then be a delightful experience for the beginner in school and at the same time lay the groundwork for his growing into reading.

Again one sees how deeply rooted are the traditional methods of teaching in the way the vowels and consonants are being taught. Rather than to tell pupils the sounds and drill them in isolation, how exciting it is for children to *discover* the sounds in words they have already learned to recognize in reading; and having learned the sounds, to associate them with the letters in working out the new words in reading or the unfamiliar components in the words. Then how gratifying it is to have identified the word without "sounding it out" and checking it against the context "to see that it fits in the sentence," as the children say.

It is the pioneer task of this book to provide the teacher with a background in the science of phonetics as a crucial foundation for effective instruction on all levels in reading instruction on all levels in reading and the language arts. It attempts to build not only a knowledge of the speech sounds but also that clear understanding of sound-to-letter and letter-to-sound relationships of vowels and consonants that is essential to effective teaching. Tables showing these relationships amplify the discussion in the text and serve as a ready reference for the teacher.

With a knowledge of the science of phonetics it is reasonable to assume that the sounds of the letters will be taught correctly. Mispronunciation of the consonants, particularly the troublesome plosives, confusion of single sounds in the children's reading vocabulary with blends, and of one-letter blends with single sounds, and the confusion of diphthongs with the so-called digraphs, and digraphs with diphthongs, will be a thing of the past.

The author hopes that the book will clarify the function of phonics in the reading program and illustrate the flexibility of phonics in relation to and in conjunction with other ways of identifying unfamiliar words in reading; and that it will help the teacher to become a critical judge of the validity of "phonetics" instruction provided in the reading materials she is now using. For by no means are all exercises dealing with sounds, in fact, reliable phonics.

As teachers become more fully aware of the value of effective instruction in phonics, the author believes they will find new confidence, hence greater joy, in teaching reading, and thru more meaningful teaching they will heighten the pleasure that children find in one of the most rewarding experiences of childhood – the achievement of independence in reading,"

In a language in which the sound-to-letter and letter-to-sound relationships are as irregular as in English, the reader when engaged in identifying an English word "phonetically" may not associate the right sounds with the letters in the word,

Since phonics is dependent upon the context for its validity as a feasible means of independent word perception in the English language, one should expect no more of phonics as an aid in reading the English language than to enable the reader to approximate the word's identity so closely that with the help of the contextual clue he can guess the word. When he is able to do this, phonics may be said to function effectively in word perception in reading.

In the beginning, the whole-word method of recognition is adequate as a means of word perception in reading. The simple monosyllable words which usually are nearly phonetic are easily taken in stride by the new reader – not because of the sounds of the letters in the words, but often because of association of word and picture, and because the word fits into the meaning of the sentence.

There comes a time, however, when the whole-word method of recognition alone, even with an obliging context and pictures, may not be adequate. The task of learning a few words by look-and-say is relatively easy until the list grows to a fair size. Not only is the learning of each new word a slow; monotonous, repetitive process, wasteful of time, but the learning of most words does not help as a means of attacking a new word. It is then that the various techniques for independent word perception are needed.

During the first year in school, while the reading vocabulary is still sufficiently limited to be recognized and re called on sight; some educators think that children normally have no need for word analysis techniques. But in the second year, when the number of different words children

encounter in reading has more than doubled, and when in the fourth year it is five times as great as it was in the child's first year in school, there are far too many unfamiliar words to be recognized and recalled on sight, except perhaps by the ablest students and that rare individual, the gifted reader.

It is then that the reader needs to know how *to identify* the unfamiliar words by the most appropriate means and to do it so quickly that he remains in communication with the author of the text while he works out the new word.

A new word may be identified by means of comparison in conjunction with phonics and the contextual clue, as illustrated by the reader who identified the word *Saturn* in a sentence. It started like *sat* and ended like *turn.* Also *Saturday is* in the child's vocabulary and offers its help.

Altho any known component in a new word may be useful to the reader in identifying the word, the known component at the beginning of the new word is by far the most useful.

However, looking for a known component in an unknown word is not an unmitigated good. It can be misleading, as we observed when John latched on to the little word *go* in *government,* or when George thought he saw the word *over*in *government.* Teachers too have been misled as one was when she pointed out the word *hen* in *then.* One ambitious youngster reported that she found the word *yes* in *eyes, he* in *the,* and *bat* in *bathroom.* The English language is really something to exasperate a saint!

From this it can be seen that it would be difficult to overestimate the value of contextual clues in children's word perception in reading. Some words in the English language depend entirely for their identification upon the meaning of the rest of the words in the sentence – words like *row, how, read, lead, live* and *primer.* Furthermore, how would the reader know without benefit of context, that *naive is* not *nāv or nīv:* that *create is* not *krēt;* that *idea is* not *i.dē;* and as Ernest Horn has pointed out, that *altogether is* not *al.to.get.her.*

It has been found expedient in teaching reading to consider the vocabulary as consisting of two types of words, one known as sight words and the other as phonetic words. Such a classification, however convenient, is not scientific. Exactly what is a phonetic word and what then must be taught as a sight word?

A phonetic word has been defined as a word that is spelled as it is pronounced, and pronounced as it is spelled. In his article on pronunciation in the introduction to Webster's *New International Dictionary,* 2nd Edition, John S. Kenyon points out, "It has been said and it is probably true, that one cannot be entirely certain of the pronunciation of any English word solely from its spelling."

A phonetic word has also been defined as a word in which the sounds can be spelled in only one way, and the letters can be pronounced in only one way. Consider the words: *sat, saw, say, sail, safe.* Can the letters in these words be pronounced in only one way? Take the letter *s*. It is pronounced (s) in *sat,* (z) in *is*, (sh) in *sure,* (zh) in *pleasure,* and it has no sound at all in *isle* or *island.* The vowels in *sat, saw, sail, say,* and *safe* are even more irregular. The letter *a,* which is pronounced (ă) in *sat,* is pronounced (ô) in *hall,* (ā) in *safe,* (ä) in *car,* (â) in *care,* (i) in *senate,* and (ə) in *aroma.* According to this definition, then, neither *sat, saw, say, sail,* or *safe is* a phonetic word. But are not these words usually considered as being phonetic? Take the words *tune, rude,*

true, due, grew, juice, few, fuel, duty, fruit, and *suit,* Every vowel in these words stands for more than one sound or it may have no sound at all in a word in which it occurs.

According to definition, then, none of these is a phonetic word. But because words like these as well as the words *sat, saw, say, sail* and *safe* conform to certain rules of pronunciation, they are usually regarded as "phonetic" words in teaching reading. (The illogic of this reasoning should be apparent – Cordts is confusing phoneticness with regularity. And regularity seems to be anything that occurs in more than three or four words).

A study of the children's reading vocabulary shows that with each successive level of reading the number of "phonetic" words increases. On the preprimer level about 20% of the basic words in the children's readers are "phonetic." On the sixth year level, the % is reversed. Then more than 4/5ths of the words children meet in their readers and textbooks are regarded as being "phonetic."

Two chapters on Instruction in Phonics, and Phonetics and Phonics Defined are followed by the various dictionaries' ways of indicating the sounds of the letters and the more precise way of the International Phonetic Association. How many pitfalls in teaching phonics could be avoided if teachers had a knowledge of the various phonetic symbols to guide them! Yet some of the dictionaries with their many duplications of symbols for the same sounds and the variations in the use of the various diacritic marks, are more apt to cause confusion than clarifying the scheme of sounds. Only lately have the newer dictionaries like the Thorndike-Barnhart and Websters 3rd International become more scientific and included the schwa symbol, ə for the obscure sound in unaccented syllables such as *about, silent, pencil, lemon, circus.*

Unfortunately, Cordts makes no distinction between the two different sounds in *and* and *odd,* representing them both by the symbol, ɔ, the symbol that the I.P.A. has always reserved for the sound in *awe,* not the sound in *ah, cot, dot, not.* Perhaps the speech in her district does not distinguish between: *aud* and *odd, or-are, auto-otto, awning-oning, baudy-body, cawed-cod, caught-cot, calling-collie, daughter-dotter, Fawkes-fox, Paul-poll, Pauley-polly, fawn-fon, hauling-holly, lawn-lon, Maud-moll, naughty-knotty, saught-sot, sawed-sod, taught-tot.* And of course, has not heard the mnemonic (because I just made it up). *Maud Modle taught her tot – her daughter, to dot her i's and not for naught be naughty, solving a knotty problem.* This is unfortunate indeed as these words need distinguishing to prevent their being pronounced as homophones.

"In their clinical studies of children's abilities in reading, Donald D. Durrell and Helen A. Murphy found that among the many factors that determine a child's success in learning to read his ability to notice the separate sounds in spoken words is a highly important one. It was found that every child who came to the clinic with reading achievement below first-grade level had a marked inability to discriminate sounds in words. Being able to discriminate between the sounds in spoken words ranks high among the abilities that determines both a pupil's readiness for phonics and a pupil's success in learning to read."

This book, with its test questions at the ends of each chapter fills a long sought need and will serve quite successfully as a textbook for teaching teachers the use and limitations of phonics in teaching reading.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1965 pp22–23,1 in the printed version]

9. Let's Read Series for Beginners, by Clarence L. Barnhart, reviewed by Helen Bowyer.

*Published by Clarence L. Barnhart, Bronxville. N.Y.

The war between the Look-Sayers and the Phonickers is widened nowadays by the linguists who claim a better approach than either to the all-underlying problem of our schools: Already the *Bulletin* knows of four series of readers aimed at getting their method into our first and-second grades and the educational press is awash in reports of researches which would seem to imply more series in the offing. This article, however, will confine itself largely to *"Let's Read,"* the series produced and published by Clarence L. Barnhart, the eminent co-creator of the Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionaries.

Not that he originated the method they embody. That was the work of Leonard Bloomfield who, till his death in 1942, was perhaps the most outstanding linguist of the English speaking world. In 1937 Clarence Barnhart became ardently interested in the MSS. in which Dr. Bloomfield had organized his ideas, cooperated with him in its further development and set about finding a publisher for it. So firmly, however had Look-Say established itself that it was not till a dozen years after Bloomfield's death that it issued from the Wayne State University Press as the big book *Let's Read,* under the joint authorship of Bloomfield and Barnhart.

The next step was to break up its contents into an orderly succession of units for class size use. In 1963 and '64 six of a projected eight reader series appeared and went into action in a scattering of first and second grades thruout the land. The seventh has recently been completed and the eighth will be ready for the coming September.

What is the need for them? Wherein are they superior to the various series of Look-Say and Phonic readers now in use in our first and second grades? In one tremendously important respect they score heavily. Books 1 to 4, which take up most of the first grade, protect the beginner from the unreason of our spelling. Throughout their combined vocabulary of 589 words, every letter or letter combination (i.e., *ng)* has just one sound. C is always decoded as in *cat,* never as in *cent; g* as in *get,* never as in *gem; s* as in *gas,* never as in *has.* It is not till well towards the end of Grade One that Book 5 introduces even our ubiquitous double consonants, *staff, less, fizz, doll, mutt, ebb,* etc. And not till then it puts over that ridiculously needless *ck* which grimaces at our common sense from *buck, truck, check* and scores of their silly ilk. But as none of the foregoing doubles have a different sound from their respective singles, and as ck might as well be *kk,* they are admitted into the elect category of the one-sign-one-sound words, as i.t.a. also admits them.

As for the vowels – those great trouble-makers of our orthography, these first five readers use only the five short ones as sounded in *cat, kid, gun, met, not,* and presented in that order. All of the 1087 words to which Book 5 raises the first year vocabulary are monosyllables, so no problem of stress arises. From all of which one might suppose that these first year books of the Bloomfield-Barnhart series would be delightfully easy to teach and ideal material with which to begin the job of learning to read.

But learning to read requires not only words but words organized into sentences and stories. And what kind of sentences and stories can you organize out of monosyllables – even monosyllables building up to 1087 by the end of Book 5, if every last one of them must be based on a short vowel?

How can you get along without the ubiquitous little words, *he, she, me, we, be, who, do, to, you, are,* which haven't a short vowel among them? And how without the all but indispensable little *is*, *his, as, has,* whose final s fails to sound as in *gas,* however well their vowels meet the first year requirements?

In sizing up the reading matter of these five books, one has to remember that its vocabulary is taught in patterns. *Cat is* taught along with *bat, fat, hat, rat, sat, mat,* etc. in the first 10 pages of Book 1, after which other consonants replace *t,* fore and aft, and produce a lavish crop of three letter monosyllables such as *Dad, ham, map, gas, yam, jab.*

This patterning may, as Barnhart claims, have rich benefit in store, but even at the end of Book 1 what it offers in reading content runs to the like of:

Nam had a fat cat, Pal.
Pal had a tan tag.
Can a fat cat tab a rat?
A fat cat ran at a rat.

Books 2 and 3 add 216 more three letter monosyllables to the first grade reading vocabulary. These follow the same pattern as in Book 1 except that the vowel between their two consonants is *i, e, u,* or o (taught in that order). Such diversity however, as this offers, does little for the reading these two books offer. As witness this selection: "Ed had a pet pup. Ed fed it a big bun. Did a pet pup get big?" What first grader retelling this little story but would change it to: `'Ed had a pet pup. *He* fed it a big bun. Did *the* pet get big?"' But *the* is not allowed to enter the first grade vocabulary till the middle of Book 4 and as for *he,* it is deferred till Book 7.

The 294 new words of Book 4 devote themselves largely to consonant blends such as. *blab, Fred, glum, tusk, wept, yelp,* The unobtrusive slipping in of *the* (which Let's Read considers irregular) does something to limber up the reading, but the continued absence of *he* still vitiates selections such as this one – none too engaging in any case, to a first grader; "A fat man had a red vest. Did the fat man snap the vest? Did it fit him? Not a bit! If the fat man can get slim, the man can snap the vest."

The 498 new words of Book 5 continue the learning of the consonant blends and consonant clumps, these last taking in even such 4-letter endings as in *prompts, strength.* Here also the digraphs *ch, sh, th,* appear for the first time with the values they have in *chin, shin, thin.* And here, as already noted, the doubled consonants and *ck* are accepted as regular, or at worst semi-regular.

But again, what of the reading content? Well, this little jingle has a certain Mother Goose appeal:

Sis had a frock and sat on a rock,
Nick had a spud and fell in the mud.
Mud gets on the frock; its such a big shock.
Nick slops in the mud and picks up the spud.

Then, too, there's a touch of beauty to "A Spring Bud," an earlier selection which ends with, "At dusk, mist clings in drops on the bud." But as for most of the reading fare which this book offers children now seven years of age, this reviewer must concur with Dr. Carl A. Lefevre in stigmatizing it as "this ingenious but un-English material."* *(*Elementary English,* March, 1964, pp. 199–203, 261).

But Barnhart refutes this view. Reading, he says, is a three step process which goes from sight to sound to meaning – with meaning incidental in the beginning stages. The children find the game of getting symbol and sound together so rewarding they work happily at it, even when the two produces *no* meaning. As witness their pleasure in decoding the nonsense syllables. *baf, jan, mic, ruc, sud, bev, de p, ob, pog,* with which Books 1–3 abound. By the end of second grade most children will have become so adept at the mechanics of reading, that they will be able to get the meaning out of any print that interests them. And can you predict that of most of their grademates taught in the usual way?

Meanwhile, what of the rest of the vocabulary which *Let's Read* series sets out to teach? What of those 3913 words of the Bloomfield-Barnhart total which are not monosyllables based upon the five short vowels? Book 6 deals with 538 of them. Except for a light sprinkling of easy compounds, these too, are monosyllables but now based on the long and broad vowel sounds spelled as follows:

1. *ee* as in *bee, beet, green, deer. ea* as in *pea, clean each, hear.*
2. *oo* as in *moon, tooth, cool, poor.*
3. *ai* as in *aim, faith, pain, air. ay* as in *day, gray, spray, prayer,*
4. *oa* as in *oat, groan, roast, roar. ,*
5. *ou* as in *pout, loud, count, sour, ow* as in *cow*, *growl, brown, flower.*
6. *aw* as in *jaw, sprawl, dawn, au* as in *haul, launch.*
7. *oy* as in *boy, toy, troy. oi* as in *boil, coin, moist.,*

This list omits the broad *a* sound of *father. far, are, palm;* the shorter *oo* sound in *wood, should, put, pull*, *woman,* and the long *i* sound of *my*, *sigh, eye, height,* all of whose spellings it considers irregular and defers to Books 7 & 8.

The reader may remember that World English spells these three sounds with *aa (faather), uu (shuud), ie (lie),* and i.t.a. by three of its augmentations.

Besides these 12 spellings of the 7 long and broad vowels which it considers regular, Book 6 introduces a class of words it calls "semi-regular." These are words which end in silent *e,* as in *geese, lease, moose, raise, coarse, louse, gauze.* One wonders why? E at the end of *gave, mete, site, cure,* has some excuse in that it lengthens a stem vowel but what justification can it offer when the stem vowel is already long?

Most children will begin Book 6 at the beginning of second grade and finish it around Thanksgiving. By then it will bring their thus-far vocabulary up to 1625 words – more than twice as many as most basal readers provide by then. What about the sentences and stories which can be organized out of it?

Well, late in Book 6 appears this little selection – good for the child's nature lore as well as his training on the vowel digraphs *ow, oo, ea, ee, ou, ay.*

> Hear the cow moo! Hear the sheep bleat! Hear the pig grunt! Hear the pups yelp! Hear the hen cluck! Hear the chicks peep! Hear the ducks quack! Hear the owl hoot! Hear the bee buzz! Hear the hound bay! Bay at the moon!

But it owes its readability to the fact that it doesn't *need* any of those ubiquitous little words whose irregular spelling still rules them out of action. But right on the heels of it comes this. "Each day

Bess gets up at six and milks our brown cow. Bess milks the cow out in the milk shed. Bess gets the milk in a big pail. Bess sets the pail down on the ground. Bess sits down on a stool and milks the cow."

Substituting *she* for the last four Bess'es wouldn't turn the story into immortal prose, but it would make it less "un-English." Unfortunately, *she* must still be ruled out – its *e is* not the short *e* as in *let* and not a digraph as in *seem* or *team.*

Almost at the end of Book 6, comes this gem "Tess got grease on Beth's blouse. Can Mom rinse it out and press the blouse?" Good practice, of course, in that silly tailend *e* on words which have no slightest need for it. But in the phonemic U.S.S.R., the Thanksgiving of their second year find the small Ruskies reading poems, fables, myths, anecdotes and excerpts from the longer writings of Tolstoy, Neckrassov, Semontov, Chekhov and the best of the postrevolutionary writers. Some of this writing, to be sure, is simplified a bit, but not to the point where it ceases to be children's classics and a childhood introduction to good literature.

By Thanksgiving of their second year, most children will finish the 1684 monosyllables which the Bloomfield-Barnhart system classes as regularly spelled, and will begin on the 3316 which the Big Book lists as irregularly so. Concerning them, Book 7 which introduces the first 942 such words, has this to say to the teacher:

> "There is a great difference between the work of Parts 1 to 6 and almost all the pupil's later work in reading. Books 1 to 6 have taught them a system in which each letter or combination of two (in one case three) letters represent the same sound or sounds of his language.
>
> "If our system of writing were completely phonetic, the rest of our work would consist simply of further practice in these habits. But our system of writing is not completely phonetic; the pupils now have the difficult task of forming a great many new and special habits for single words or classes of words in which the letters represent sounds other than those which they have so far learned."

They do indeed! You can't depend on even the single letter vowels of Books 1–5 to keep the sounds they have in *cat, let, sit, hog, nut. ,* They think nothing of depicting the quite different sounds of *was, what, ciné, even, her, fir, island, fight, do, no, won, worship, woman, sure, unite, busy, bury.* As for the dozen spellings which *Let's Read* selects for the seven long and broad vowels of Book 6 – well! To be sure *ee* does restrict itself to its sound in *deed,* and *deer,* but *ea* spreads itself from *bread, steak,* to *bear, earth. oo* operates impartially in *boot* and *foot,* and *ai* in *said, mountain, aisle,* as well as in *hail. Ay* serves the sailor in "Aye, aye, sir" and *ow* digresses from *now* to *know. Au is* equally at home in *aunt, haunt, daughter, laughter,* and *ou* distributes itself insouciantly among *loud*, *should, soul, through, thorough, rough.*

Count up this welter of spellings for the twelve vowel sounds thus far presented, and ask yourself if any child should be required to squander his time and brains upon it, when, as both World English and i.t.a. demonstrate, *one spelling* apiece is all the twelve require.

As for the rest of the orthographic chaos with which Book 7 deals, this reviewer is only too glad to pass it up on the excuse that there hasn't been time to size up the children's reaction to it. But it makes Barnhart's statement, "Our system of writing is not completely phonetic" the prize

understatement of the Education Press this year of little grace, and richly substantiates Dr. Lefevre's observation that "English spelling is notoriously inconsistent with its phonemics."

The first third of Book 7 still sticks to monosyllables, but they may now be monosyllables – modified by the suffixal *s,'s, es,* This is made possible by the long deferred teaching of the *z*-sound of *s,* as in *eggs, John's, boxes.* And – praises be! – permits the long-needed use of *-is, his, has.* On the heels of these irregularities comes the equally irregular, but equally urgent *he, she, me, we, be,* and such other little staples of daily intercourse, as – *to*, *do, who, you, your, they, their, I've, you're, they're.* So much these late admitees do to limber up the practice of reading of Book 7, one wishes they could have been unobtrusively slipped in the earlier books, as *the* was slipped over in Book 4.

But the aim of the Bloomfield system is not so much to give the child worthwhile reading as he goes along, as it is to prepare him to handle that on his own at the end of the course. The chief role of Book 7 is to begin familiarizing him with the immense inconsistency of the spelling with which this future reading will face him. From time to time one is struck by the ingenuity with which it goes about this task. There's precious little content to the three lines which follow, but how well they fix in the mind the possessive forms of *you, she, they,* as well as the dozen other irregular spellings of its 24 words. "If you have a mouse, it is yours. If she has a mouse, it is hers. If they have a mouse, it is theirs."

By the time the children finish Book 7, most of them will be "going on eight" if not there already. And tho by then they will have a vocabulary of 2726 words (hundreds of them plurisyllables) they have had hardly a glimpse of that immemorial heritage of childhood classics – poems, riddles, folk lore, fairy tales, hero stories – which any good wun-sien-wun-sound alphabet could have given them at six. For that minority whose parents read this mind and emotion developing material to them perhaps the continued commonplaceness of Book 7 may do no great harm. But what of those millions of children whose parents have never read it themselves; whose homes contain little reading beyond the daily paper, who must depend on their readers for the beauty, wonder, whimsy, they inherently crave – and which can never do for them after their eighth birthday, what it could have done before.

Nothing but phonemic spelling can get enough of this life developing reading into our first and second grades. And who in the length and breadth of our land knows more about phonemic spelling than the co-creator of the pronunciation key and parentheses respellings of the Thorndike-Barnhart school dictionaries?

Buried in a committee of the U.S. Congress lies a bill to create a national spelling commission which could do away with our *one, lone, gone – aisle, guile, tomb, bomb, comb,* and make the like of his parentheses respellings the entries of a U.S. Official Dictionary! Wouldn't participation in such an abolition of our "reading problem" be a more self-realizing job for a man of Clarence L. Barnhart's caliber than any approach, however linguistic, to a print which continues as grossly misspelled as now?

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1965 p24 in the printed version]

10. Carlton Press, Inc. NEW YORK N.Y.

Dear Reader:
Johnny can't read because he can't SPELL. When he learns to spell given words in his vocabulary, he has no trouble recognizing them in context. But he does have trouble learning to spell them. (After a lifetime of struggle, adults still have trouble with many common words). Thus –

1. Simplified spelling *must* be the solution to our reading problem.
2. Classroom tests show that use of stable orthografy in primary grades would shorten the duration of school attendance and lower the cost of education.
3. It would also lower the percentage of "drop-outs".
4. Eliminating useless silent letters offers substantial savings in typing and printing.
5. Stabilizing our orthografy would expedite acquisition of English as the de facto international language – to the inestimable advantage of the U.S. forever.

Although most people favor basic reform they resist radical change. Thus, the new orthografy must be a compromise between the erratic and the ideal. Revised spelling need not create the "chaos" that some conservatives fear. It could be introduced at the kindergarten level and arbitrarily extended through the primary grades only. Third graders could be given a special course in "old reading", so they could make normal use of the obsolescent texts. Its simplicity enables adults to read the new orthografy thru mere "exposure". Thus we would have an orderly transition period of "optional" spelling.

Leo G. Davis now offers two revolutionary texts that should be in the hands of all interested in progress and promoting English as the common world tongue.

k-a-t spelz cat is a fonetik reader for clinical research. Using the distinctive symbols "A-E-I-O-U" as long vowels and "a-e-i-ɑ-u" as the short, it is a complete text for teaching the beginner to read and write a fourth-grade vocabulary with minimum effort, after which he should have no difficulty learning to read traditional literature.

the davis speller is an author's text for preparing special primary lesson material and/or transliterating major texts for revised editions. It offers two systems of revised spelling, the ten-vowel "fonetik" for permanent reform, and the five-vowel "stable" for temporary use in learning to read traditional literature.

Words that need no "fixing" are not listed.
For the most part only common root words are treated. The "fonetik" section offers over 3200 modified spellings, while the "stable" section offers over 2100.

But every category of words and/or phonemes is treated comprehensively, offering a basic pattern for orthografik reform, and its orderly implementation.

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