

same general meaning, but also their different shades of meaning. Take for example, the words "blend" and "mix." Both mean to put substances together so that their parts become united in some way. But their particular meanings are different. Mixing two colors means making two colors one. The blending of two colors is the gradual merging of one into the other.

As with words so with sentence forms. They are best learned together with the ideas they express.

The teacher has before him a given sentence expressing a certain fact or thought. The pupils can be exercised in producing other sentence arrangements expressing the same idea. One of the simplest example of this kind of exercise is changing the voice of the verb, another is filling up the ellipses and omissions so common in our language, as in contracted-compound sentences.

The arrangement of words and clauses in sentences admits of many variations. Modifying words may either precede or follow the words modified, though there is usually one arrangement that is best for the particular case. Pupils should as soon as possible be led up to the point where they can choose the best arrangement and give a reason for their choice. As an aid to this the following tests may be applied:

- (1) Which construction is clearest?
- (2) Which is neatest?
- (3) Which is most harmonious?

In examining the structure of sentences, a knowledge of the elements of grammar is essential, more particularly that part of it which treats of the analysis of simple sentences into subject, predicate and modifiers, and that which distinguishes between simple, complex and compound sentences. Here the teacher has an opportunity for skilful work in developing the grammar lessons in such a manner as to pave the way for constructive exercises in composition and while carrying on the two subjects separately use one for giving an insight into the other.

Grammatical analysis does, without doubt, give an insight into the structure and nature of sentences, which is of the greatest benefit to the pupils, by enabling them to view the different elements of the sentence separately and to distinguish between complete and incomplete statements. It is well, occasionally, to have pupils subject their own sentences to analysis to see whether they will bear such close inspection or not.

But though analysis enables us to take a sentence to pieces and exhibit its modifying phrases and clauses in their true light as equivalents of nouns, adjectives and adverbs, it yet leaves out of view the right arrangement of sentences, by the proper distribution of these elements, and this has more to do with good composition than any other part of grammar.

In addition then to analysis we need to examine the *position* of the various modifiers and to arrange and re-arrange these, noting the effect on the sentence of each arrangement. Pupils will soon see that modifiers should be placed as close as possible to the words modified. This rule covers at least half of all that belongs to the arrangement

of sentences, and is besides very easy to apply.

But besides grammatical analysis exercises are also needed in dissecting sentences containing several modifiers into the separate statements implied in them. This, too, aids the pupils in perceiving the effect produced by each modifier, and the true relation between the modifiers and the main thought of the sentence.

From the combination of separate statements into simple sentences we pass to the formation of complex and compound sentences, and, side by side with these exercises in expansion, give exercises in contraction from compound to complex, and from complex to simple, showing how one exercise is just the reverse of the other.

In each of the different kinds of sentences the construction may be varied in many ways.

- (1) By changing the voice of the verb.
- (2) By changing from the declarative to the interrogative form.
- (3) By using an introductory word and placing the subject after the verb.
- (4) By changing from direct to indirect narration.
- (5) By changing the number of the subject.

These are a few of the most common ways of varying the construction of sentences.

In connection with each kind of sentence we should teach the rules of punctuation.

In examining sentences we should be sure that pupils recognize the main thought and the true relation that the different modifying words and phrases bear to it. Attention to this is absolutely necessary. If pupils are ever to write with clearness, they must be able to keep all parts of the sentence in connection with, and in proper relation to the main thought.

In regard to the writing of what are called "compositions," there is, among prominent educators, a variety of opinions. But, on one thing they all seem to be agreed, viz., that if such exercises are given, the matter should be supplied and the pupils left free to concentrate their undivided attention on the form of expression. But though the teacher may choose the subject, and choose as familiar a one as possible, though he may even give heads or outlines for the pupils to fill in, he cannot give the general treatment or modes of expression. The pupils must choose their own treatment according to the state of their knowledge; they must also choose their own expression which depends upon what they have to say. When a whole class is set to work on a given theme, though the subject may be one, the handling will be as varied as the individuals. How is a teacher to deal with the results? If he examines them at all he must take them one by one, and, in his criticisms, points will be brought up out of all order and connection, and without reference to the fitness of pupils to understand them.

It is next to impossible to conduct a class by means of criticisms on essays.

In favor of essay-writing it must be admitted that it compels the pupils to use and develop their own powers, such as they are at the time. It turns their resources to account, and occasionally surprises even

themselves with the result. They feel that they can do something, and are encouraged to go on exerting their capabilities. This is just the spirit we want to arouse in our pupils.

Again it puts in practice what has been already taught and in such a way as to show the effect of the teaching.

The chief difficulties that show themselves in actual composition, are apt to be in reference to the use of relatives and connective words generally. This can be dealt with partly by requiring that the sentences be made shorter than the pupils are apt to make them; partly by requiring that the elliptical parts of sentences be filled up; and partly by selecting a muddled sentence, and setting them to analyze it. This helps to show where the difficulty of the construction lies, and how, by a different arrangement, or by the use of two sentences instead of one, the thought may be more concisely expressed.

Again, if the subject be a familiar one—if it be one on which the pupils have something definite to say, they are reducing their thoughts to words, under much the same conditions as they will have to do in after life. To fit them for doing this is one of the chief aims in teaching the subject at all.

In connection with reviews—in almost all of the school subjects, if the review be a written one, the pupils are obliged to give ample evidence of their ability to use the varieties of sentence forms taught in the language exercises.

Here the teacher has a chance to see how far the rules are reduced to practice, while the thoughts of the pupils are engaged chiefly with the knowledge matter of the review; and this again is much the same condition as that under which pupils are placed in after life in regard to written exercises.

These are a few of the points in connection with written work; there are many others that might be noticed.

But, besides written work, the pupils should be able to express themselves orally better than most of them do. I will mention only one point in regard to this, and that is the benefit of demanding complete statements from the pupils when answering questions orally.

Another thing worthy of note is the correction of sentences. As a rule, the pupils make far more blunders in speaking than in writing. These, wherever they occur, should be corrected at the time, whether the reason can be given or not, for the pupils become more and more confirmed in their present habits of speech, the longer they are practiced.

It is no great matter to live lovingly with good-natured, humble and meek persons; but he who can do so with the forward, wilful, ignorant, peevish and perverse, hath true charity.—*Thomas à Kempis*.

USE OF BOOKS.—One great object of the school in our time is to teach the pupil how to use the book—how to get out for himself what there is for him in the printed page. The man who cannot use books in our day has not learned the lesson of self-help, and the wisdom of the race is not likely to become his. He will not find, in this busy age, people who can afford to stop and tell him by oral instruction what he ought to be able to find out for himself by the use of the library that may be within his reach.—*Hon. W. T. Harris*.