

B—Seven Phonetic Principles—

1. Vowels are short except when modified by position:

sat, rip, cot, cut, set, scratch, notch, fun, with.

2. Final **e** lengthens the preceding vowel:

cubs, plate, tube, shade, hose, size, glade, robe, mete.

3. In vowel digraphs the first vowel has its own long sound and the second vowel is silent:

heap, rail, slay, roar, tie, hue, sleep, plea, hoe, own.

4. Vowels followed by **r** have sounds modified, making the "murmur" diphthongs:

stir, mar, clerk, churn, jerk, cur, dirt, her, sir, corn.

5. There are four diphthongs, made by the union of two vowels in each case:

oi (oil), oy (boy), ou (out), ow (cow).

6. **C** is soft before **e, i,** and **y**; otherwise it is hard. **G** is generally soft before **e, i,** and; otherwise it is hard:

ice, city, fleecy, can, cut, cot, gem, gin, gypsy, got, gun, gang.

7. In open accented syllables the vowel is usually long:

no, notation, nation, diner, fry, so, caliph, me.

It is to be noted that the accepted rules for the syllabic division of words apply to the written or printed word and are made primarily for the writer, the printer, and the typist. These rules are in part arbitrary and in part based upon etymology and pronunciation. However, syllables in the spoken word are frequently different from syllables in the written word, e.g., **hunt er**, pronounced **hun ter**, and **din er**, pronounced **di ner**. The spoken syllable, in distinction from the syllabic division in writing, is the important factor in phonetics. These two kinds of syllables are being recognized by lexicographers in the case of an increasing number of words.

C—The Blend—

The stress is on the first part of a word; an initial consonant, or a consonant between two vowels, is usually

sounded with the vowel following, and so there is no difficulty in sounding a consonant if it is joined with the vowel following. For these and other reasons, in blending the phonetic elements to build words, blend the sounds in the order in which they occur:

ba d, dra g, plu m, ri d (not b ad, dr ag, pl um, r id), etc.

Diacritical markings are unnecessary until the fourth or fifth grade, when they should be introduced in connection with the study of the dictionary. In the earlier grades, before the dictionary is introduced, they are not needed, because in every word that is phonetic there is something that enables one to recognize the sounds of the letters—e.g.:

can is phonetic because the consonants have their usual sounds and the vowel is short.

cane is phonetic because the final **e** shows that **a** is long.

car is phonetic because the **r** shows that **a** has the Italian sound.

call is phonetic because the final **ll** shows that **a** has the sound of **au** in **haul** or **aw** in **crawl**.

was is phonetic because after **w**, **a** usually has the sound of short **o**.

rage is phonetic because final **e** shows that **a** is long and **g** soft.

(If we were to write "rage" we should have to use the macron to show that **a** is long, the dot to show that **g** is soft, and we should then have to cross out the **e**, which itself tells us the sounds of both **a** and **g**).

The spelling of phonetic words offers little or no difficulty to one familiar with these few phonetic facts. In unphonetic words, where letters do not have their usual sounds and where there is nothing to show what the real sounds are, the problem is quite different. Such words must be taught as sight words, and in spelling the pupil must visualize these words, and write them, and spell them orally, giving the letters in the order in which they occur. **Dun** and **done** illustrate the difference between a phonetic and an unphonetic word and the difference in the spelling problem.