

Reading in Primary Schools.

Intelligent Reading.

The teacher notices the readiness with which a pupil talks, and the slowness with which he reads, with wonder; sometimes with irritation. Let him stop and consider the cause. From the moment the child is born, the audible sign of ideas is put before it. But how is it with visible signs? Note the difference. Nothing is done with these until the child goes to school—say, at six years of age. Then only a little is done each day. The child appears before the teacher with a book, and names some of these visible signs. The book is shut. The child returns to his seat, and all his experience with visible signs is laid aside. How different from his experience with audible signs!

Evidently the same procedure must be taken with visible as with audible signs. Printed names of objects must be given to him, and he fastens them to the object. Games must be played with visible signs until he has acquired several hundred. With a suitable apparatus this could be done before he goes to school. Here is a new field of learning from the child that is to be planned out for the mother—which she will enjoy, as well as the child.—*From Hints and Helps.*

Word Drill.

My second grade was weak in word study, so I tried the following plan with good results: One morning I sketched on the board the picture of a tree without leaves. When the children came to the board they thought of words they wished put on the tree for leaves. These I wrote with green crayon, until the tree was full.

The next morning the children were Jack Frost, and with the pointer they showed me words they wanted changed to autumn leaves, naming the word and telling what colour they wanted it changed to, while I traced over the word with the colour.

Then the wind blew, and each child named a word he wanted blown off the tree, pointing to the word also. In this way the word was named three times, written twice, and pronounced three times, and the children were helped in getting the words.—*From Hints and Helps.*

Helping a Lower Grade.

Sometimes my third-grade pupils write stories for the second grade's reading lesson. The stories are seldom correct in the original form, but I examine them, mark the necessary changes, and the pupils re-write them. They are then passed to the second grade to be read. Thus the interest in the reading class is doubled, and the language class has been stimulated to do its best work.

The school affords but one set of readers for each grade, and my ingenuity is taxed to supply at least two lessons a week from outside sources. I often copy stories on stiff paper, cut them up, and distribute the separate paragraphs to the class. I have a set of Aesop's Fables that I have prepared thus for my fourth grade.

I keep a sharp lookout for children's stories which, if possible, I cut out and paste on cardboard.—*From Hints and Helps.*

The Reading Class.

To obtain naturalness in reading among young children I call for original dialogues which I reproduce afterward in writing on the blackboard and have re-read.

For instance, two children step before the class and one may ask, "What did Santa Claus bring you?" "He brought me a sled," the second replies. "What colour is it?" is, perhaps, next asked. "My sled is red and black." I then write the preceding conversation on the board and call upon two other children to read it. The original dialogue is, of course, delivered with natural expression, and the second speakers unconsciously imitate the tones.

For a word drill I arrange words in two duplicate columns, except that the order of the words is different. Two children, each having a pointer, see who can first point to a word uttered by the teacher. All the class will be attentive, because of the interest in the contest. Another device is to place a number of words irregularly on the board. The children watch in silence while I point from word to word, and then they tell me the sentence made.

For phonic drill I draw a circle on the board and place along the circumference phonic characters, from which the children can build words.

The following is a game that pleases the little ones: I say, for instance, "I am thinking of a word that rhymes with mat." A child asks, "Is it hat?" I reply "No," and at the same time write "hat." I thus form a column of words as each child guesses. If no child guesses the right word, I give it myself to finish the column, and then have each word in it spelled and sounded, thus securing a drill in phonics and in word forms.—*From Hints and Helps.*

New Words.

On Friday I divide the class into two groups and give them a word drill. The first pupil in one of the rows reads a word studied during the week, and his companion in the front makes a sentence with the word. Then he reads another new word which the first reader turns into another sentence, and so on, until all the words have been reviewed.

The mistakes are corrected promptly by the same children, and I have found that by following this plan the pupils rarely forget the new words. They become interested in this exercise, and in the reading class they pay good attention when I explain about new words.—*From Hints and Helps.*

The Thistle.

[Said by a child, standing before a thistle.]

You naughty, naughty thistle,
I think it a disgrace
To use so many horrid pins
To keep your clothes in place.

You should not be so thoughtless,
But try to do what's right,
Just think of other people, dear,
And stick the points in tight.

—*Mary S. C. Clark, in August St. Nicholas.*