

It would seem that those who supply this pernicious literature to poison and dwarf the minds of our pupils are not even capable of writing correct English. This trash has the effect of transporting the young reader from the realities of every day life and placing him in an imaginary world full of impossible dreams and bewitching shadows. This imaginary existence possesses for him all the appearance of real life in addition to the fascination of the opium smoker's dream. He sees life through the rose-colored light of imagination, uncontrolled by any effort of reason. It is a kind of intoxication. It unfits him for the duties and struggles of ordinary life, and at the same time gives him a distaste for that exertion necessary to success. He is always expecting the inevitable prince or princess, by whose advent and favor he is to rise superior to the trials and cares of existence—waiting for the “fickle dame” to fling a fortune at his feet. His mind loses tone, fancy pictures take the place of stern realities, and instead of performing his allotted tasks bravely and earning success, he passes his days, like Micawber, “waiting for something to turn up.” There is but one remedy for this false idea of life's duties, and that, like most remedies, consists in prevention rather than cure. His taste for good literature must be formed and trained from the start by association with the works of standard authors.

“We should accustom the mind to keep the *best company* by introducing to it only the *best books*.” Pupils should have the best and nothing else. “They should see nothing, hear nothing, read nothing, but the best.” By a careful selection of what is beautiful, by rigidly banishing what is pernicious, by a never-ceasing vigilance in both directions, he will, in time, come to despise the coarse expressions—the slang—the lies of the sensational story, and fix his affections on those authors who appeal to the purer and nobler attributes of his intellect. When that time comes it may safely be left to their influence to mould his language and direct his thoughts.

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For the Review.]

Vertical Writing.

1. Are the advantages of vertical writing such as to justify its adoption by all the Halifax schools?

In my opinion they are. The following are some of the arguments in favor of its adoption:

(a) The posture to be assumed for vertical writing being “central,” i. e., directly in front of the writer, is the best from a hygienic point of view. There is least inclination to twist the spinal column, and the rays of vision from both eyes converge upon the writing. If the writing be placed to the right or left of the central line, there must be an uneven strain on the sight of the right or left eye, as the case may be.

(b) Vertical writing is more legible than sloping writing, and more nearly resembles print.

(c) It is more uniform and symmetrical in appearance. When the writing slopes the slightest change of posture gives a different slope. Not so with vertical writing, as it is always at right angles to the line of direction.

(d) It is easier taught. Children sooner comprehend

what is meant by upright than they understand the exact slope of 45° or 60°.

2. What position of the body favors legible and rapid writing without in any way affecting (injuriously) the pupils' health or development?

The direct “central.” The best posture for this end is for the front plane of the body to be parallel with the direction of the line of writing. The line of vision should be directly at right angles with this and not oblique. The desk should be high enough to enable the pupil to see clearly without depressing the chin, but not too high for the pupil to rest the whole weight of the fore arm. Both arms should rest on the desk at an angle of 45° with the front plane of the body.

This position is the one usually adopted for drawing lessons, and it is also recommended by eminent stenographers as the position for reporters to adopt in order to attain the highest speed in verbatim reporting.

3. What is the best way of holding the pen?

While a pupil is learning to write, I do not think a better way of holding the pen can be suggested than the way illustrated in Gage's Copy Books. This style is open to all sorts of modifications, depending on the size and formation of the hand. Where it is practicable, I think the thumb and two forefingers should share the work between them. In cases of malformation of the hand, the teacher should suggest the best method. For rapid writing the way of holding the pen should be modified so as to reduce the amount of friction to a minimum. This may be done by letting the penholder run in a parallel direction with the writing. This position gives more rest to the hand and is less likely to produce cramp in the fingers.

4. Should the best position in writing be insisted on in all pen and pencil exercises?

In my opinion it should, as it is only by constant practice the habit of a good position can be formed. If children are allowed to practise while sitting in a slovenly posture they will be careful to avoid the correct position when opportunity offers.

5. How can you best teach writing? by the use of ordinary copy-books or by the use of exercise paper and moveable head lines?

In the lower grades it is easier and secures better results to teach writing by means of blackboard lessons and exercise paper. The teacher can then explain each element to the whole class or grade at once instead of individually. Certain mistakes in writing are general mistakes with the majority of the class, e. g., imperfect joinings, irregular heights, omission of dots to the *i*'s and crosses to the *t*'s, irregular distances between words, etc. These can be dealt with one by one as they occur. The teacher can teach the elements of writing more thoroughly thus than by using copy-books in the earliest stage. After this movable headlines may be used, provided all the children in a class have a similar headline. The teacher should first write the copy on the blackboard, drawing the attention of the children to any new element introduced. This system I have found to produce a uniform style and general progress.

In the higher grades I think the pupils will be most benefited by the use of copy-books. A greater variety of