

## PRIMARY READING.

## PRACTICAL HINTS FOR JUNIOR TEACHERS IN TEACHING BY ANY METHOD.

BY JAMES L. HUGHES.

1. Use the Black-board.—The reasons for the extensive use of the black-board until the pupils reach the Second Reader, are:

(a) *Children see the work done, and are therefore interested.* So far as the teacher is concerned, there are three ways of communicating knowledge, by talking about a thing, by showing it to them, or by making it or doing it before them. The third is better than the other two combined. A little girl will take more intense and prolonged interest in seeing her mother dress her doll, than she does in the doll itself, and a little boy will give more delighted attention to the making of a toy with a few sticks, a jack-knife, a hammer, and some nails, than to the most beautiful picture or toy that can be purchased for him. Printed words are unmeaning things to a child. Let him see you make them for him, and he will attend to you, and be interested in them.

(b) *The letters may be made large enough.* The letters should be made large at first, so that their distinctive parts may be brought prominently before the pupils.

(c) *The curiosity of the pupils may be constantly called into action.* Curiosity is one of the strongest instincts of childhood, and the wise teacher seeks to arouse and gratify it. The use of the black-board prevents the pupils from knowing what comes next, and so keeps them alert and expectant.

(d) *Habits of attention are formed.* In the average school the most listless and inattentive classes are usually the junior reading classes. It is no uncommon thing to find the pupil who is reading to be the only one looking at the tablet. This need not excite wonder when we remember how much unvarying routine there generally is connected with the lesson. With the teacher reduced to a mere pointer-guide, gliding methodically from "cat" to "rat," or from "hen" to "den," and the pupils droningly responding, it is not strange that their little eyes wander, and that they frequently look unconsciously at the teacher's face instead of the tablet, while they spell "g-o-o-s-e, goose." The teacher with crayon in hand is an object of living interest to her class. The crayon is a magic wand which compels attention in the hands of a skilful and enthusiastic teacher.

(e) *Words may be used specially adapted to the circumstances of the class.* The topics of most absorbing and immediate interest to the children may be made the subjects of the lessons, and only such words may be used as involve elements already mastered, and those next to be taught.

(f) *The special difficulties of the class may receive particular attention.* Examples of any difficult or peculiar combination may be multiplied to suit the circumstances of each case. Characteristic words which have been learned may be kept on a portion of the board set apart for the purpose, so that they may be regularly reviewed. By this means difficulties will rapidly disappear.

(g) *Word-building may be carried on.* This is at first a very profitable exercise. As soon as a word such as "at" has been learned, a list of words may be formed by prefixing a single letter, and giving its sound in each case; as hat, cat, sat, rat, mat, &c. These may still further be modified by prefixing or affixing other letters. This is a thoroughly practical way of teaching the sounds of the letters, as the pupils learn their use by using them.

(h) *Words may be marked to suit the pronunciation.* It is well for a few weeks to use only one sound or power for each letter. This enables the pupils to learn what reading is, without any of the

mental confusion resulting from the meeting with different sounds for the same letter. Having mastered this first great step, other sounds may be introduced and appropriately marked. The short sound of the vowels should be given first because more frequently used. Then the long sound may be added, and marked as in dictionaries. The short sound need not be marked, but should be given except when a mark is used to indicate some other sound. Two valuable methods may be practised to familiarize the pupils with the sounds of the letters. The teacher may mark the words, crossing out silent letters, marking vowels, &c., for the pupils to sound; or she may sound the word and require the pupils to mark it as pronounced. The same word should be sounded by the teacher in as many ways as possible, and the pupils should vary the marking to suit the changes in pronunciation. It is also a good practice for the teacher to mark the same word in various ways, and let the pupils change the sounds in accordance with the marking. They should also be asked to tell what the name of the word would be if its silent letters were sounded.

(i) *The teacher may vary the plan of teaching the reading lessons.* The system and method of teaching should be definitely fixed, but the plan should be varied as much as possible. The black-board greatly aids in preventing the adoption of an unvarying routine in conducting the reading lessons.

## SELECTIONS FOR MEMORIZING.

The systematic practice of memorizing brief selections from the best authors was first introduced by Hon. J. B. Peaslee, Superintendent of Schools in Cincinnati. It is one of the most important, and may be made one of the most interesting, of school exercises. The selections are taught in school as a part of the opening exercises, and form no part of the home work of the pupils. One selection is taught each week; two or four lines being taught at a time, so that only a very short time is spent each day.

The benefits resulting from the exercise are:

1. The memory is cultivated.
2. The moral nature is developed.
3. A large store of choice selections are fixed in the minds of the pupils.
4. Composition is improved; the vocabularies of the pupils are enriched, they become acquainted with the language used by the best writers, and learn to use these words in their most appropriate connection.
5. Expressive reading is taught in the most practical way possible.

## METHOD OF TEACHING THE SELECTIONS.

1. One line is written on the board by the teacher, and read by him distinctly, with emphasis rather overstrained, and pauses marked too distinctly.
2. The pupils repeat the line, imitating the teacher.
3. The teacher calls special attention to those parts of the line where the pupils have failed to imitate him accurately, and repeats the whole line, which is again repeated by the class. This is continued until the class recites the line correctly simultaneously.
4. A few individual pupils may then be called upon to recite the line.
5. The other lines are taught in a similar way. After each additional line is taught, the whole is recited from the beginning.

## FIRST BOOK CLASSES.

1.

Hearts, like doors, can open with ease  
To very, very little keys;  
And don't forget that they are these:  
"I thank you, sir," and, "If you please."