

Widening Education Horizons

Education Week is just two weeks away, March 7-13. Teachers, how are your plans coming? Are you wondering what you will have for "Open House" day?

- Here are some suggestions:
 - Have the children dramatize a scene from their reader or history lesson. If they have not time to memorize the parts, let them read it.
 - If your children have been doing art work, have a display on the wall so that each parent may see his child's attempt.
 - Have the children make a scene of free hand drawing to illustrate a theme such as: Fun in Winter, Foods we eat for Health.
 - Have a display of vegetable models in plasticine by Grades I and II.
 - Have a spelling match by senior pupils.
 - Let the older children have a debate, suggested topic: "Resolved that the country has as many opportunities for boys and girls as the city."

There are only a few suggestions, you may think of better ones yourself.

Some Questions Parents Ask About the Teaching of Reading

Parents have many questions about how the schools are teaching reading today. They tend to feel that reading is taught differently nowadays from when they went to school, and they wonder how their children are going to fare under today's methods.

Teachers and others connected with the administration of our schools have reason to be proud of the reading materials and methods in use today. Many of them feel that if they could help parents understand what the schools are doing about reading, the parents would be enthusiastic, too, and more confident of the progress their children are going to make.

Accordingly an attempt is made here to answer as briefly as possible the questions parents most frequently ask about modern reading methods.

It is pointed out to parents that there may be local deviations from accepted practice. Not all of the teachers at work in our schools have had thorough training in teaching methods particularly in the teaching of reading. It is hoped, therefore, that this article may prove to be of some benefit to those teachers as well as to parents.

Should parents try to teach their child to read before he enters school?

In general this is not a good idea. The child's teacher will determine whether he is ready to undertake the difficult feat of learning to read. If a child is not ready to read, it would be unfortunate to force him to do so. In any case, he will enter upon his new tasks with much greater enthusiasm if he starts with the other children and if his interest has not been dulled by premature efforts to force the issue.

How can parents help when their child enters school?

When a child's parents understand what the school is trying to do, and when they co-operate with the school for the child's best interests, he has a better chance to be happy and relaxed about his new experiences and to meet them successfully. It helps if parents know the ingredients for success in learning to read: what is meant by reading readiness and how readiness for reading is developed. It helps if they know how the schools go about teaching reading these days, and if they accept the fact that today's approved methods are different because experience has shown that they are better.

Will my child start to read on his first day in school?

Don't expect your child to read the first day of school. In fact, it is better not to worry at all about when he begins to read. Don't put pressure on the teacher to speed things up. If the teacher does not start your child on reading lessons for some time after he enters the first grade, it is because she

is working on preparing him to succeed when reading is introduced. He will make faster progress after this preparatory period has been successfully accomplished than if he started without the preparation he needs. You can be sure his teacher is just as eager for him to succeed with reading as you are!

What is meant by "a reading-readiness programme"?

This is a programme of preparation for reading. It is planned to help children develop and practice many of the skills necessary in reading. For example, children learn how to handle a book, turn the pages, find and keep the place, look from left to right across the page. They learn how to study the details of pictures, both as to form and name, and how to think about and express in words the idea suggested by the pictures. Their attention is directed to things that are alike and things that are different in pictured objects. Gradually they are taught to notice very small differences in detail. Such habits of noticing details are very important in recognized words. One little stroke, for example, makes all the difference between the words, cat and eat.

When I went to school we had to be absolutely silent and pay attention to our lessons. Why have things changed?

In the model classroom today order and discipline are maintained but the atmosphere is more informal than it used to be. Many of the activities of the reading-readiness programme in Grade I are directed toward providing situations in which the children want to talk because they have something interesting to talk about. As the children gain experience in expressing themselves before the others—whether in large or small groups—they acquire power over words. Throughout the elementary grades, "talking things over" informally before and after reading is important in helping children get the most out of what they read.

Reading books are different today. When I went to school, I had only one reader per grade. What is the purpose of all the pictures in today's readers?

Your child's first little reading book, *We Look and See*, the primer of the reading programme, looks and is different from the first reader you had as a six-year old. Notice how colorful, how realistic, how appealing the pictures are. But there is more to these pictures than glamour. Look carefully and you will see that this first little primer is made up of a number of stories. Something happens in each one. Often it is amusing; always it holds a child's interest. Note that the very limited vocabulary is not sufficient to tell a story in itself. The plot of each story is carried in the pictures, and the words which the children read tell what the characters in the pictures are saying. The children enjoy talking about the pictures together in the classroom. Then it is a natural thing to turn to the printed words and read what Dick Jane or Baby is saying.

By the end of Grade I, the words a child reads are telling all or almost all of the story. However, pictures continue to be important in all readers for the elementary grades as they are planned as visual aids to good reading.

How do children ever learn to read without learning letters first?

Learning to read today is planned as an interesting, stimulating, and satisfying experience. The skilled teacher tries to make reading full of meaning for the children right from the start. The children's interest is stimulated because there is always something to think about. Amusing stories about children like themselves arouse their desire to push on and find out what happens next. It has been discovered that this method of reading for meaning is much superior to the old way of putting all the emphasis, in the first days, on the mechanics of reading.

When children have begun to get the feeling of what it means to read—as one child put it, that reading is just "talk written down"—their attention is directed to the letters in the words with which they have become familiar. We call the letters by name and build up an awareness of their sounds. Later we make sure that each child knows the entire alphabet in order. But he is not weighed down by these things before he even gets into the swing of reading.

If the children don't "sound out" the words at first, how do they know what they are?

The teacher introduces the children to each new word in a meaningful way. For example, when she is introducing the word *jump*, which appears on a page with a picture of a kitten jumping, the teacher will say, "When Baby wants her kitten Puff to play with a string, she holds the string high and says, 'Jump, Puff.'" While the children are thinking of the word *jump*, and what the kitten is doing, the teacher will show them a word card on which the word *jump* is printed, or she will print it on the board and have the children read it. They will find the same word in their books, and will see it many times in later stories, in games and in their Think-and-Do Boy exercises, until the form of the word *jump* becomes thoroughly

familiar to them. But it isn't just a combination of letters; it is a symbol that really means something to them.

In each reading lesson the teacher will present other words, a few at a time, the way she presented *jump*. The children will meet these words again and again in stories, chalkboard drills and workbook exercises. In his first year of reading a child will learn to recognize around 300 words at sight. By the end of the third grade, his stock of sight words will have grown to around 2000. These sight words will be his working capital in learning to get new words himself.

How do children learn to get new words for themselves?

The foundations for independence in getting new words are laid in Grade I, and training in specific skills continue all through the elementary grades. Our programme includes training in five approaches to get new words, as follows: (1) Children are taught to use meaning clues, to guess new words and to check on the appropriateness of words they have worked out by using other clues. For example, if a child were reading: "It began to rain. The little girl put up her—," he would expect the next word to be umbrella whether or not he had ever seen the printed form of the word before. Generally, however, the meaning clue alone is not enough to identify the new word. (2) Children are taught to use word-form clues—that is, to look at words with care, noticing their distinguishing characteristics and ways that new words are alike or different from words they already know. (3) They are taught to notice the pattern or structure of words—for example, that *bedtime* is made up of two words they already know, that *jumping* is made up of the familiar word *jump* with the ending *ing* on it. (4) They are taught to associate sounds with letter symbols and to work out the sound of new words for themselves through phonetic clues. This means that we do teach phonics as part of the reading programme, though we go about it somewhat differently from the methods used in the old days. (5) As children go into the middle grades they are taught how to use a dictionary to get the pronunciation and meaning out of words they can't figure out through using any of the other clues.

What do children learn in phonics as it is taught today?

(Phonetic analysis) is the more exact term to make for themselves the tie-up between the sound of a word which may be familiar to them and its printed form which is new. In the first year, ear-training or auditory perception is the first step. Children are encouraged to listen for words that begin alike. They catch on quickly to the fact that *ball, baby and bump* begin with the same sound and they soon learn to identify this sound at the beginning of other words. Next, they learn to associate an appropriate sound with a given printed symbol—the sound of *b* with the letter *b*, the sound of *d* with the letter *d*, etc. They are taught to recognize consonants at the beginning and at the end of words in this way.

From this point the child goes on to the substitution of one sound for another in words. For example, if the child knows the printed word *jump*, he may be able to recognize for himself such words as, *bump, lump, dump, pump*. Specifically, to recognize the word *dump*, he may merely note that it looks like *jump* except for the first letter. Then he substitutes the sound of *d* for the sound of *j* in the word and the meaning of *dump* with the sentence. If it makes sense, he knows that he has figured out the right word. In the second grade the work of the first grade is reviewed and a great deal of time is spent on vowel sounds in one-syllable words. Gradually there is built up a knowledge of vowel principles which will help the child decide with the word sounds to try first when sounding out a new word. The child is taught that, when he has sounded out a word, he must check to see if it makes sense. If it doesn't fit the sentence, he must try again.

In Grade III the work of the two preceding grades is reviewed and children are taught to apply what they have learned about consonants and vowels in short words to words of more than one syllable. This involves teaching them the principles of syllabication so that they can divide a word into syllables, sound out the syllables, and blend them into word wholes. In Grades IV-VIII we review the phonetic skills taught previously, applying them to more complex words. Major emphasis in word perception in these grades is on developing skill in the use of the dictionary—ability to locate words efficiently in the dictionary, ability to work out the pronunciation of words from the aids the dictionary gives, ability to select the meaning that fits the sentence.

What should I do if my child seems slow in learning to read?

Parents have learned not to worry unduly when their child deviates from the average in learning to walk or talk or in cutting teeth. But they find it less easy to accept a child's deviation from the expectation that he will learn to read at age six. Yet it is just true that children do differ in reading readiness and in the speed with which they learn to read. If a child is a little slow at first, it will help greatly if par-

ents accept this causally and neither worry about it themselves or worry the child about it. Talk the situation over with his teacher if you like. She will ask to talk with you if she feels that there are special obstacles in his path, such as health problems or emotional insecurity. But at home don't make an issue of slowness in reading. Encourage the child, give praise for what is accomplished, and be confident that with good teaching, real progress, however gradual, is being made.

Should parents hear their child's reading lessons at home? If not, what can we do to help?

In general parents do not need to supplement the classroom work unless the teacher asks them to and provides specific suggestions. Usually teachers like to have the reader the children are using for reading lessons stay at school until the work in it is finished—so that the stories will be fresh for each day's lesson.

When your child does bring a book home, make a pleasant occasion of it. Let him read one of the stories to himself and then tell you about it in his own words. Encourage him also to read some of the stories aloud to you, giving him help freely if he gets stuck on, or misses, some of the words. Remember it takes many, many repetitions of words to establish them permanently in the child's vocabulary. Don't criticize or nag him about the words he misses for this will only make him feel tense about reading both at home and at school. The important thing is to enjoy the stories with him and to share with him the pleasure to be gained from books.

Where Are They Now?

It was a cold stormy day. The North wind was piling the snow against the door.

Betty was anxious about the animals outdoors. "How will they keep safe and warm?" she asked.

"Many animals are having their winter sleep," said her teacher. "The bears and squirrels are curled up in their winter homes. The gophers and chipmunks are safe in their holes. The frogs are buried deep in the mud at the bottom of the pond. They do not come out till spring."

"But what about the animals that stay out in cold weather?" asked Betty.

"These animals are dressed for the cold," said the teacher. "Deer, wolves, cats, and rabbits have heavier fur coats to keep them warm. "But storms make it very hard for animals. In a blizzard, even their coats cannot always keep them warm. The deer go deep into the thick woods, where they will not feel the wind so much. The mice scurry into their holes in the haystack. The rabbits burrow into the snow, letting it cover them like a blanket. Birds, like the prairie chicken, do this too. On a day like this, few animals will be about. They will have found sheltered places and will take naps till the storm is over."

"The worst of the storm is that it makes it hard for animals and birds to find food. Seeds, berries, and grasses are soon covered by the deep snow. We can help them by putting out food that they will like, in places where they can find it easily."

Things to do

1. Make a list of animals that hibernate. Make a list of those that stay out all winter.
2. Find out what food is eaten in winter by deer, mice, birds, and rabbits. Why do we not like rabbits near our trees in winter?
3. Draw some pictures of animals in a storm.
4. Put pictures of animals that hibernate, and those that do not, in your scrap-book.

Commandments for School Teachers

1. Thou shalt have other interests beside thy classroom.
2. Thou shalt not try to make of thy children little images; for they are a live little bunch, visiting the wriggling of their captivity upon thy teacher unto the weary minute of the day, showing interest and co-operation unto those who give them a reasonable freedom in working.
3. Thou shalt not scream the names of thy children in irritation for they will not hold thee in respect if thou screamed their names in vain.
4. Remember the last day of the week to keep it happy.
5. Honor the feelings of thy children that their goodwill may speak for thee in the little domain over which thou rulest.
6. Thou shalt not kill one breath of stirring endeavor in the heart of a little child.
7. Thou shalt not suffer any unkindness of speech or action to enter the door of thy room.
8. Thou shalt not steal for the drudgery of many papers the precious hours that should be given to recreation; that thy strength and happiness may appear unto all that come within thy presence.
9. Thou shalt not bear witness to too many precious schemes of busy work, for much scattered efforts is a weariness to the soul and a stumbling block to wee fingers.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's room—nor her children, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. Work out thine own salvation with fear and trembling, only don't let anyone know about the fear and trembling; when it rains and the wee ones muddy the floor; when it blows and the door slams; when Tommy spills the ink and Mary drops a newly

Dark Lightning

By Helen Topping Miller

Synopsis

Gary Tallman, young petroleum engineer from Alabama, misses his bus in Texas and Mona Mason, wife of a cattle rancher, gives him a lift. Gary is injured when her car crashes in a ditch and the Masons nurse him back to health. He falls in love with Mona's daughter Adelaide, but, unwilling to propose until he has a job, Gary plans to leave for Mexico. Meanwhile he tells Harvey Mason that he suspects there is oil on the property. Despite the protests of Oliver Kimball, husband of Mason's older daughter, Grace, Harvey engages Hickey to drill a well and persuades Gary to remain until after the test.

CHAPTER XIX

Gary had heard voices in the Mason living room—voices raised a little too loudly, Harvey's voice—and another that he knew belonged to Oliver Kimball. He went back, intending not to intrude unless he should be summoned, but in the back hall Mona Lee caught at his sleeve and drew him aside. "You go in, Gary," she whispered, pale with a desperate kind of excitement. He came out and brought some big oil man with him. They're arguing in there, and Harvey's beginning to get mad. I listened upstairs. I couldn't help hearing because Harvey talks so loud, though I couldn't get all that other man was saying. Something about not being able to sell our oil if we get it. I want you to go in, Gary. I'm going to speak to Harvey."

But she had walked away quickly to the living room door. "Harvey, Gary's here if you want him," she said.

Harvey got to his feet, and his face was red. "Come on in here, Gary. You know Oliver—and this is Mr. Paterson—Tallman's bossing this oil job for me," he explained.

Oliver jerked his head in a brief greeting, but his look was cynical and remote. Paterson got up to shake hands but Gary looked at his own hand and scrubbed it on his trousers before he offered it. "Sorry, I've been working—I'm pretty dirty. How do you do, sir?" Paterson was a type he knew. Suave, assured, superior, lawyer turned salesman and contact man—the oil business was full of men of his sort.

"I don't think you need any outside help to get at the bottom of this proposition, Harvey," Oliver said, with dry contempt only thinly veiled in his tone. "You're not going to lose a cent by accepting Paterson's proposition. On the other hand, you stand to lose plenty if you refuse to listen."

"Mind stating the proposition, and what happens on the other hand?" Gary asked politely. "Oliver bickered a little. 'I don't see why we should. We've made it perfectly clear to Harvey.' " "Perhaps I can make it plain in a few words, Mr. Tallman," Paterson was blandly agreeable. "I happen to represent the people who own the refinery nearest to Mr. Mason's project. We don't at this time wish to buy any more oil. However, the people I represent are willing to take over the lease on this property—mineral rights only, you understand—and hold it for future development."

"You figured this out, did you?" Gary said to Oliver, smiling coolly. "Very clever job."

"It's a holdup. I don't care who figured it out!" shouted Harvey. "I'm not going to lease, and I'll sell my oil! I'll sell it if I have to peddle it all over Texas in milk cans. You go back and tell your hijacking outfit I said so!"

"You're quite certain then, Mr. Mason, that you don't wish to protect yourself by coming in with us?" Paterson rose and pulled his perfectly cut vest. "Your well is only spudded in now. Plenty of trouble can happen before you hit the sand. We could save you from all that, you know."

"I can save myself," snapped Harvey. "Good day, gentlemen." "They aren't telling all they know," Gary said when Oliver's car had backed viciously out of the drive. "Something's stirring—and it may not be pretty."

Very early next morning, Gary looked up from examining the cuttings in the slush pit and saw the man in the brown suit walking across the field. "Ouch!" he said to Hickey. "I knew it. Here it comes." (Continued)

NEW HAVEN W. I.

The regular meeting of New Haven Women's Institute met at the home of Mrs. Thomas Devaux on February 3, with an attendance of 15 members.

The President occupied the chair. Roll call was answered by each member paying a dime. School committee reported that potted plant; when visitors appear at the precise moment when all small heads have forgotten everything you thought they knew. And again I say unto you—knave—for upon these commandments hang the law and profits in thy school-room.

coat hooks needed to be put up in the school. The sick committee reported that fruit had been sent to several of the sick in the district.

The new school committee was appointed as follows: Mrs. Michael Murphy, Mrs. Clarence Friswell.

The secretary reported that the Variety Concert held in Clyde River hall was a huge success both

socially and financially. Correspondence was read and discussed, including a letter from Estelle Bowness concerning Education Week; one from Red Cross announcing the annual dinner; one from Mrs. Doyle, Prov. Pres. on the formation of Women's Institutes.

Two letters of "thanks" for Christmas gifts; several "thank you" notes for fruit; and a letter of appreciation from Pte. Alger Pollard for a parcel received while in hospital, were received and read.

The next meeting will be held at the home of Mrs. Roland Buchanan Sr. Roll call is to be answered with a "White Elephant Sale." A contest put on by Mrs. Lloyd MacKinnon was won by Mrs. Brewer Boyle.

RURAL YOUTH COMPETITIONS

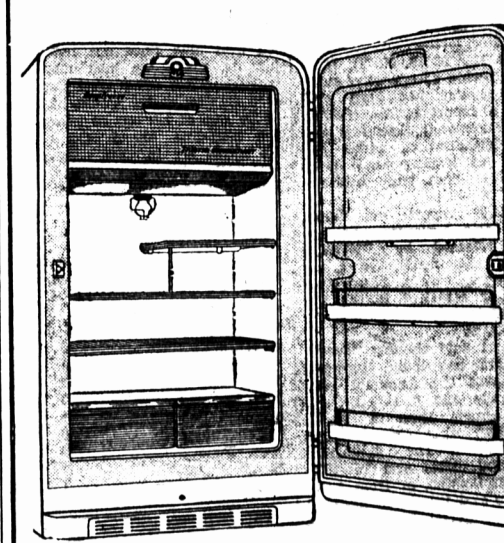
Open to members under 31 years of any rural organization. DEBATE within your own organization on a set topic before judges appointed by the Junior Farmers Debating Committee. Choose two teams of three. The two teams in the Province with the highest scores will compete in a final debate for the Simmons and MacFarlane Trophy.

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