

ESSENTIALS OF SPELLING

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Essentials of Spelling by Henry Carr Pearson & Henry Suzzallo

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HENRY CARR PEARSON & HENRY SUZZALLO

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BY

HENRY CARR PEARSON

PRINCIPAL OF HORACE MANN SCHOOL
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

AND

HENRY SUZZALLO

PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SOMETIME PROFESSOR OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

LOWER GRADES



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THE PEARSON AND SUZZALLO SPELLERS

Essentials of Spelling	For Grades Two to Eight
TWO-BOOK EDITION:	
Essentials of Spelling, Part One	For Grades Two to Four
Essentials of Spelling, Part Two	For Grades Five to Eight
THREE-BOOK EDITION:	
Essentials of Spelling, Lower Grades	For Grades Two to Four
Essentials of Spelling, Middle Grades	For Grades Five and Six
Essentials of Spelling, Higher Grades Adapted for use in Junior High Schools	For Grades Seven to Nine

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ESSENTIALS OF SPELLING, LOWER GRADES

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PREFACE

Vocabulary. — “ Essentials of Spelling ” represents an attempt to teach *only the essential words* of the written vocabularies of children and adults. These essential words are those that are used frequently by the majority of people, and not those used occasionally by a few. It is an effort to study the spelling problem scientifically. It advocates *fewer words* and *more drill*, for investigation has shown that the spelling vocabulary that is common to a group of adults is surprisingly small. In the three-book edition for Lower Grades, Middle Grades, and Higher Grades, — including work for grades two to nine, — the regular lessons present about 2400 important words, while supplementary lists contain more than 1200 words that are less important or less difficult. The words in the regular lessons for each half grade should first be carefully studied, and then, if there is sufficient time, the words of the supplementary list of that half grade should be learned.

The selection of these 3600 words represents a vast amount of labor extending over a period of several years. Thousands of children's compositions from the Horace Mann School and other schools have been examined, and use has been made of the scientific studies of adults' and children's vocabularies by Jones, Ayres, Pryor, Eldridge, Smith, Woolfolk, Cook and O'Shea, and Chancellor. All of the one thousand words of the Ayres Measuring Scale

are given in the course.¹ The resulting list contains not only words which children are most likely to use in their daily written work but also words which they will most probably use after leaving school. Furthermore, since these vocabulary studies have been made in various parts of the country, the composite list is free from the influence of any particular locality.

These words have been carefully graded on the basis of their use by children in written compositions.

This limited, basal vocabulary of 3600 words should be supplemented to meet the special needs of different groups of children. Since it is obvious that no single textbook can meet completely such varied conditions, teachers should add such words of local importance as are peculiarly needed by their pupils. Near the end of the book for Higher Grades (pages 49-54) are lists of words for rural, urban, and industrial communities from which such words may be chosen.

Finally, the vocabulary of every textbook needs supplementation from the personal vocabulary of the individual pupil. Each child is somewhat different from every other in his personal experiences and impressions. This leads to the spontaneous use of words not on the common list. These must be mastered if the individual's writing is to be free of misspellings. The personal spelling list of troublesome words for individual study is a necessity in final spelling efficiency.

Method. — Psychological evidence now shows clearly that correct spelling results chiefly from appropriate and

¹ The Ayres Measuring Scale is printed for reference on pages 62-71 of the book for Middle Grades, and on pages 56-65 of the book for Higher Grades.

continuous drill. In the Directions to Teachers (pages vii to xii) such a drill method is described in detail. It has been successfully used in a number of schools for several years, and represents results obtained from the best experimental data available.

Flexibility. — The use of this book is not confined to any single device. The Directions to Teachers show how some teachers may follow the plan of the book more or less rigidly, while others may use the book in a manner that will allow the pupil more initiative and judgment. The aim should always be to make it possible for pupils to acquire good methods of study.

Reviews. — Adequate review of all words in the regular lessons is provided; but the words that thousands of children have found most difficult to spell, including the so-called "Hundred Demons"¹ and others, are reviewed more often than the easier words.

The Dictation Reviews (in grades two to six) employ, with rare exceptions, only words previously taught. The sentences are short, and are better for this purpose than selections from literature because the pupil's time is not wasted in memorizing the spelling of unusual words.

Simplicity. — Since the words taught are the common ones found in children's written vocabularies, much time can be saved in developing their meaning. Furthermore, no artificial means are needed to awaken interest through pictures or other devices.

¹ The words selected by Dr. W. Franklin Jones, of the University of South Dakota, as "One Hundred Spelling Demons of the English Language" are marked with an asterisk in the review lists at the end of the books for Lower and Middle Grades. They are listed for reference and review on page 61 of the book for Middle Grades, and on page 55 of the book for Higher Grades.

No diacritical marks are given, except in the dictionary pronouncing lists and in a few footnotes, as it is believed that the main reliance in spelling should be placed upon the correct visualization of the word to be learned, and that this image should not be confused by such marks. When a word is first presented on the printed page, its division into syllables is indicated by a slight spacing, because it is believed that this will help the pupil to see the word accurately. When the word appears again, however, as a review word, syllabication is not indicated.

The dictionary pronouncing lists at the back of each book of the series show, from the fourth grade on, the markings found in Webster's *New International Dictionary*, Webster's *Secondary-School Dictionary*, Webster's *Elementary-School Dictionary*, etc. These lists are primarily for the teacher, but may also be consulted by pupils and will serve to familiarize them with dictionary usage.

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Method. — It has been proved by careful experimentation¹ that class drill under the direction of the teacher is more efficient than individual study by the unsupervised pupil. The time on the daily program devoted to spelling should be spent largely on class drill under the direction of the teacher; in other words, it should be devoted to *teaching* rather than to *testing*. The following procedure for the spelling period is suggested, but there should be sufficient change to insure variety.

In each group of words (in the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades) the two *new* words of the lesson are indicated by heavy type, while the review words appear in ordinary type. Write one of the two new words on the blackboard in its normal form and teach it in accordance with the following plan. Then erase it and write the other word, teaching it in the same way.

(a) While writing the word, pronounce it distinctly.

(b) Develop the meaning orally, either by calling on the pupils for a sentence using the word, or by giving such a sentence or the definition of the word.

(c) Show the syllables into which the word is divided, either by drawing vertical lines between the syllables or by covering parts of the word so as to expose only one syllable at a time. Call on pupils to spell orally by syllables. Have them indicate the part of the word that presents difficulties, or the part of the word they already know.

¹ See the *Teachers College Record*, January, 1912.