

**A CONCISE AND
SUGGESTIVE MANUAL
FOR TEACHERS**

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A Concise and Suggestive Manual for Teachers by Andrew W. Edson

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ANDREW W. EDSON

**A CONCISE AND
SUGGESTIVE MANUAL
FOR TEACHERS**

THE EDSON-LAING READERS

A

CONCISE AND SUGGESTIVE

MANUAL

FOR TEACHERS

BY

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THE EDSON-LAING READERS

BOOK ONE, BUSY FOLK
BOOK TWO, LEND A HAND
BOOK THREE, NEIGHBORS
BOOK FOUR, WORKING TOGETHER
BOOK FIVE, OPPORTUNITY

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the principals and teachers whose valuable suggestions have helped in the preparation of this Manual.

A. W. E.

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CONTENTS

PART I

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

PART II

GENERAL OUTLINE OF READING

	PAGE
1. READING DEFINED	3
2. ENDS	3
3. ORAL READING	4
4. SILENT READING	5
5. EXPRESSION	7
<i>a.</i> Emphasis, Inflection, and Pauses	7
<i>b.</i> Word-Pictures	8
<i>c.</i> Dramatization	10
6. PHONIC EXERCISES	10
7. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS	11

PART III

STEPS IN LESSON DEVELOPMENT

1. EXPLANATION OF THE STORY	13
2. RECITATION BY THE TEACHER	13
3. RECITATION BY THE PUPILS	14
4. QUESTIONS TO TEST KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOP CONTENT	14
5. DRAMATIZATION	14
6. DRILL ON WORDS, PHRASES, AND WORD-GROUPS	16
7. STORY WRITTEN ON THE BLACKBOARD	18
8. STORY READ BY THE PUPILS	18
9. TEST WORK	19

PART IV

SUGGESTIVE STEPS FOR LESSONS IN BOOK ONE

	PAGE
1. THE KEY TO THE KING'S GARDEN	21
2. LITTLE ACORN SISTERS	24
3. THE LITTLE RED HEN	24
4. MY GARDEN	27
5. THE HOUSE THAT THE BOYS BUILT	28
6. THE THREE LITTLE PIGS	29
7. PETER AND NANNY	32
8. COME, BUTTER, COME	33
9. THE WHITE RABBIT	33

PART V

PHONIC EXERCISES

1. PURPOSE	36
2. EARLY EXERCISES	38
3. SELECTIONS I TO V	41
4. SELECTIONS VI TO IX	48
5. CONSONANT SOUNDS	50
6. VOWEL SOUNDS	51
7. KEY TO PRONUNCIATION	51

PART VI

REPRINTS

1. BOOK ONE:	
Foreword	55
Suggestions to Teachers	55
Word List	59
2. BOOK TWO:	
Foreword	64
Suggestions to Teachers	64
Word List	66
3. BOOK THREE:	
Foreword	74
Suggestions to Teachers	74
Word List	77

PART I

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE plan of the Edson-Laing readers is unique in at least three particulars. First, these basal readers have a distinct central theme, social — industrial — ethical, toward which nearly every selection trends. Instead of the usual compilation of miscellaneous selections, stories of high literary value are grouped about this leading idea.

In each book there is repeated reference to some distinctive line of wholesome thought, which has the background of a worthy motive. The keynote of Book One is *Busy Folk*; of Book Two, *Lend a Hand*; of Book Three, *Neighbors*; of Book Four, *Working Together*; and of Book Five, *Opportunity*. In each book the dominant social appeal, emphasizing the value of industry, kindness, service, and fellowship, is made by representing generous, outgoing activity.

The books introduce children at the very beginning of their school work to literature and life. The theme of the selections may not at first be recognized by the pupils, but soon the point of each story will dawn upon them with impelling force.

Secondly, these readers in the lower grades give unusual emphasis to the cumulative tale. Through it there is a constant reappearing of old words and a careful introduction of new words. The development moves forward by easy steps. By this plan children begin at once with stories of which they never grow weary; stories that are as fresh and interesting the hundredth time they are told or read as they were at first.

These cumulative tales have a rhythmical quality for which every child has an innate love; they give him something worth memorizing; and they help him in a most attractive way, with no break in the continuity of thought and interest, to a large vocabulary of simple, choice, basal words.

The folk tales in Books One and Two present a definite sequence and outcome which the mind easily follows. The story by its structure meets the child's first need of grasping a connected literary whole, and thus from the very start reading is a joyous exercise.

And, in the third place, these readers omit the traditional Primer and start directly with reading material of literary and ethical value. The time has gone by when good teachers find it necessary to have books of loosely connected, made-up sentences, merely to give the pupils a reading vocabulary. From the vocabulary of a classic tale any live teacher can easily construct sentences that will serve the purpose of supplementary drill exercises.

It is not expected that Book One will be placed in the hands of pupils until a considerable list of words and word-groups have been taught from the blackboard.

PART II

GENERAL OUTLINE OF READING

1. **Reading defined.** Of the various definitions of reading, the following are among the best: "Reading is thought-getting from a printed page." "Reading is thinking not at random but in lines prescribed by the written or printed page." "Reading is the apprehension of the thought and feeling expressed on a written or printed page. Oral reading is the apprehension and expression of the thought and feeling found in the words of a printed page." In all reading exercises, therefore, the *thought* element should predominate; it should rise superior to word-mastery and to oral expression, important as these may be.

Too much of class reading in the early stages has been and still is mere word-naming, phonetic drill exercises, a dreary droning over words and disconnected sentences, all of which has "a flavor of boiled water." Hamlet's answer to Polonius's question, "What do you read, my Lord?" "Words, words, words," might well be the answer of many children to-day if asked a similar question.

2. **Ends.** There are three clearly defined ends to be kept in view by the teacher of reading: An early facility in the art of reading; the formation of a reading habit; and the cultivation of a love of good literature.

Facility in the art of reading implies an immediate recognition of words, an apprehension of their meaning and use, and the ability to express the thought easily, clearly, and intelligently. Inability to read readily is frequently the cause of backwardness in school