

Reading to Write

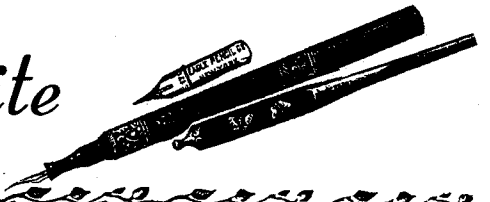
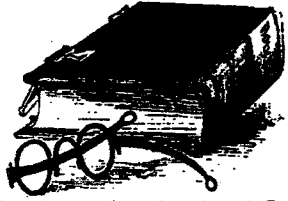
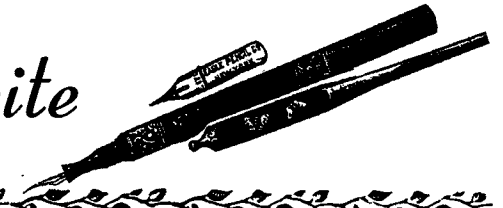


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Reading to Write



Forward

Do you remember learning to tie your shoes? When you were very little you would watch as other people tied your shoes and it seemed like such a really cool thing to be able to do. So you tried to do it for yourself. Those first solo attempts were probably not always too successful: maybe the bows slipped, or the laces tangled in a confusion of knots - eventually your shoes always became undone. Then someone, watching you trying hard, decided to give you a hand. That person sat down with you and explained the steps, the process, that went into tying your shoes. First you cross the laces, then you pass this lace in under, now you pull...etc. You'd had a basic idea before of how this all worked, but having the stages explained helped a lot. Then once you'd watched and received some guidelines, you practiced. Your fingers were clumsy for awhile, of course, but you got it.

Actually, most of the things you've learned in your life, you've learned in the same way as you learned to tie your shoes:

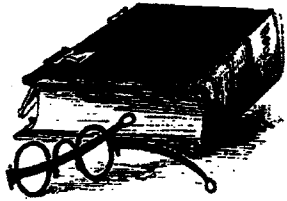
Example

Understanding the elements

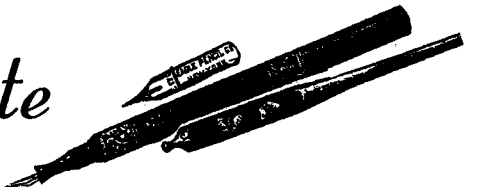
Practice

Learning to write is a complex process and learning to write well is not a goal that can be achieved if the learner is working without examples, some clear instruction of how and why language works as it does and then opportunities to practice are necessary. My goal in writing this manual was to provide young people with the preceding.

In this manual, the basic elements of grammar and composition are laid out in a series of steps that takes the pupil from being able to identify what a word is, understand the role of that word in a sentence, create sound sentences and paragraphs of her own and eventually put all those skills together to be able to express herself clearly and meaningfully.



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Throughout, the pupil is provided with both opportunities to practice and play with the concepts about which she is learning and, most important, examples of superior writing drawn from a wide selection of quality classic English-language literature.

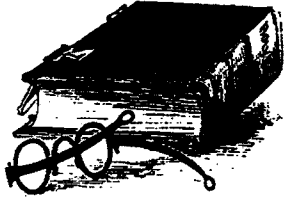
It is hoped that by proceeding thus, the young person will not only become more adept at writing, but also develop an appreciation for good books and pursue reading for pleasure. The lessons in this manual are set out in an order to assist the pupil to develop an understanding of the fundamentals of language before proceeding to matters of sentence structure, grammar and paragraph writing. However, any exercise in this book could be used out of context depending on the needs of the pupil and/or the goals of the instructor. The important thing is that the pupil always be allowed to use the means of example, instruction and practice to achieve the desired objectives.

Language Outcomes

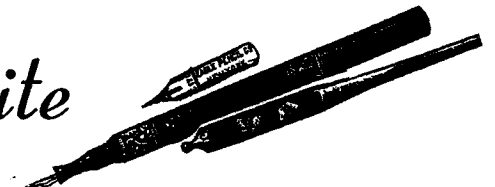
READING:

The student will be able to...

- read from a wide variety of literary texts both for information and for enjoyment.
- use simple organizational structures (ie: headings, layout) as means of locating specific information.
- use punctuation (ie: periods, commas, question marks) and capitals to recognize separations between ideas in a text.
- demonstrate an understanding of such stylistic features as quotation marks and paragraphing as means of organizing actions and ideas in a narrative text.



Reading to Write



Nouns can also be classified as either concrete or abstract. What we mean by a concrete noun is something which we can perceive through one or more of our physical senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, smell.

Examples:

dog house music Mr. Trabb T.V. pudding roller blades gas
perfume table teacher children team scissors

An **abstract noun** cannot be directly perceived through use of the senses. An abstract noun is the name of an idea, a concept, or a notion. We cannot see, hear, touch, taste or smell it, but we might be able to perceive its effects. For example, one cannot see "love". It can't be heard or felt with the fingers, tasted or sniffed. However, when we do see a mother cuddle her baby to her breast, kiss it and stroke its hair and when we then hear the baby coo with delight, see it smile and watch it drift off to sleep we can see the effect of "love". The happy, secure, sleeping baby is the perceivable effect of the abstract idea of "love".

"**Courage**" can't be seen either in and of itself, but when a person risks his life to rush into a burning building to save another, the effect of this person's courage is evident.

"**Intelligence**" doesn't have a color or a beat or a scent, but a mark of 100% on a math test surely proves that "intelligence" exists.

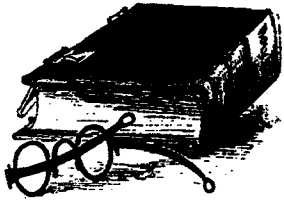
Examples of abstract nouns include:

love courage intelligence greed studidity cruelty kindness sloth
charity valor honor trust hate regret

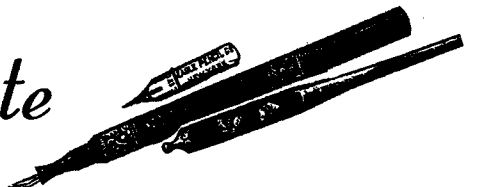
Finally, nouns can be either **singular** - meaning that there is only one of that particular thing being presently mentioned - or **plural**, meaning more than one.

SINGULAR: a cat a dozen the child a goose a book your teacher

PLURAL: the cats five dozen the children some geese some books your teachers

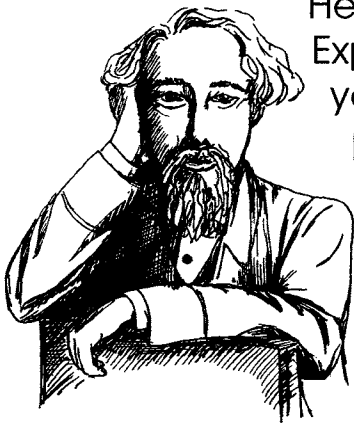


Reading to Write



Parts of Speech

Activity



Here is a passage from Charles Dickens's famous novel, *Great Expectations*. **Read** the passage carefully and every time that you come across a **noun** - whether it is concrete or abstract, plural or singular, common or proper - **circle it**.

Afterwards, make a list of **twelve** of the nouns you've found on a separate sheet of paper. How many different ways can you correctly classify each noun? For example, the word "expectations" itself is a common enough noun - it gives us the general name for the things which we expect in life. "Expectations" is also an abstract noun

because it is not through our five physical senses but rather through thought and understanding that we know what expectations are. And finally "expectations" is a plural noun - the "s" at the end of the word lets us know that the young orphan Pip has at least two things to look forward to as he makes his way in life.

Get started!

I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. From that room, too, the daylight was completely excluded, and it had an airless smell that was oppressive. A fire had been lately kindled in the damp old-fashioned grate, and it was more disposed to go out than to burn up, and the reluctant smoke which hung in the room seemed colder than the clearer air - like our own marsh mist. Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimney-piece faintly lighted the chamber; or, it would be more expressive to say, faintly troubled its darkness. It was spacious, and I dare say had once been handsome, but every discernible thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most prominent object was a long table with a table-cloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the



house and the clocks all stopped together. An epergne or centerpiece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite undistinguishable; and, as I looked down the yellow expanse out of which I remembered its seeming to grow, like a black fungus, I saw speckled-legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it, as if some circumstance of the greatest public importance had just transpired in the spider community.

I heard the mice too, rattling behind the panels, as if the same occurrence were important to their interests. But the blackbeetles took no notice of the agitation, and groped about the hearth in a ponderous elderly way, as if they were shortsighted and hard of hearing, and not on terms with one another.

These crawling things had fascinated my attention, and I was watching them from a distance, when Miss Havisham laid a hand upon my shoulder. In her other hand she had a crutch-headed stick on which she leaned, and she looked like the Witch of the place. "This," said she, pointing to the long table with her stick, "is where I will be laid when I am dead. They shall come and look at me here."

With some vague misgiving that she might get upon the table then and there and die at once, the complete realisation of the ghastly waxworks at the Fair, I shrank under the touch.

"What do you think that is?" she asked me, again pointing with her stick; "that, where the cobwebs are?"

"I can't guess what it is, ma'am."

"It's a great cake. A bride-cake. Mine!"

She looked all round the room in a glaring manner, and then said, leaning on me while her hand twitched my shoulder,

"Come, come, come! Walk me, walk me!"

I made out from this, that the work I had to do, was to walk Miss Hamisham round and round the room. Accordingly, I started at once, and she leaned on my shoulder, and we went away at a pace that might have been an imitation (founded on my first impulse under that roof) of Mr. Pumblechook's chaise-cart.