

# New Composition and Rhetoric For Schools

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A REVISION

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## PREFACE

During the twelve years in which Herrick and Damon's *Composition and Rhetoric for Schools* has been in use, the authors have seen no occasion to alter their general views as to the function of such a text-book. The following statements are therefore repeated from the preface to the first edition with such slight changes as are necessary to make them conform to the present text.

1. In the earliest years the critical aim in teaching should be subordinated to the constructive, stimulative aim; the pupil should be encouraged to write freely and even unconsciously at first, to form habits of thought and of invention before his expression is minutely criticised and pruned. For this reason Part I has been made in the main a preliminary course of constructive work. In these chapters, the processes of work that a conscientious writer follows are described, as nearly as possible in the natural order in which these processes occur in a writer's experience.

2. Much, if not all, of the usual freshmen course of rhetoric in colleges can properly be included in the secondary course in English without requiring more time than is already devoted to the subject. In view of the fact that only a small percentage of the students of secondary schools enter college, it seems desirable to present to the high-school pupil all the elementary facts of style. Many of the best text-books designed for schools, however, are purposely incomplete in treatment; they take it for granted that the student will pursue a further course of instruction.

3. In the secondary course, the text-book in rhetoric is often too markedly separated from the work in composition. Frequently it is assigned to be taught during one year of the course, or one term of a year, and is afterwards dismissed from the pupil's attention. The authors of the present book believe that the text-book should accompany the pupil as far as possible through

his course—at least for three years. Part I is intended to provide for a year's class-work in composition; Parts II, III, and IV are intended for a second year of more systematic drill in the principles of rhetoric; Part V provides work for an additional year.

4. From the design of Part I it results naturally that some topics are treated twice in the book. The authors feel that in the practical study of an art this repetition is not only desirable, but even essential, in order that the young writer may be taught to consider again and again, under new aspects, the few old and rather obvious rhetorical truths. The application of these truths in new circumstances is the important matter. The aim of the authors in this particular has been to prepare a book for teaching, not a systematic treatise.

5. With this aim in view, ~~much attention has been~~ given to the exercises. A school-book on writing should present rhetorical theory as a necessary comment upon the exercises, not the exercises as an appendix to the text. In spite of the extended exercises provided for each chapter, teachers will probably find it wise to supplement rather than curtail this part of the book. Again for the sake of practical results in teaching, a large part of the illustrative material in the exercises has been taken from the writing of young students. Beginners learn by observing the defects and the excellences of compositions within their own power of emulation, not by the exclusive study of masterpieces. For the same reason it has been deemed wise to leave these crude examples of writing in as natural a state as possible. Only the grosser blunders have been removed, for, while each extract has been chosen to illustrate one specific error, the other obvious faults of composition that appear will provide opportunities for exercising the pupil's critical skill. Further, it is assumed that the study of literature will accompany the course in composition, and that illustrations of effective writing to supplement those given in the text will not be hard to find.

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In preparing the present text, the general plan of the original book has been kept unchanged, though

the chapter on grammar has been shifted to Part I to accord with the current practice of reviewing grammar in the first year of the high-school course. It will be observed that the book begins with the whole composition, takes up the paragraph, the sentence, and the word in turn, and then reverts to sentence, paragraph, and whole composition, in the order mentioned. Thus, with the single exception of the word, each of the elements of composition receives first an elementary, and later a more advanced treatment. Some teachers may desire to reserve Part III for the later years of the course, in which case the double treatment of the elements of composition will be complete. The attention of teachers is called to the emphasis laid upon the sentence and the word. From the period in which the paragraph occupied the center of the stage in rhetorical instruction, we are now fortunately emerging. It may safely be asserted that with high-school pupils, as with other people, a command of the English sentence and the English vocabulary is essential, and that if anything must be neglected, it should not be these two things. But it is not necessary to neglect other things because the sentence and the word receive a treatment proportionate to their importance.

The Exercises have been practically written anew in order to bring the illustrative extracts up to date and to provide fresh material for teachers to work with. Great care has been taken to get illustrative material within the range of the high-school student. The text also has been pretty thoroughly rewritten, with a view to attaining as great a simplicity of treatment as is compatible with exactness. But the various changes in the book imply no sympathy with the idea that a text-book in rhetoric and composition should be so artificially simplified that the function of the teacher is reduced to that of putting a

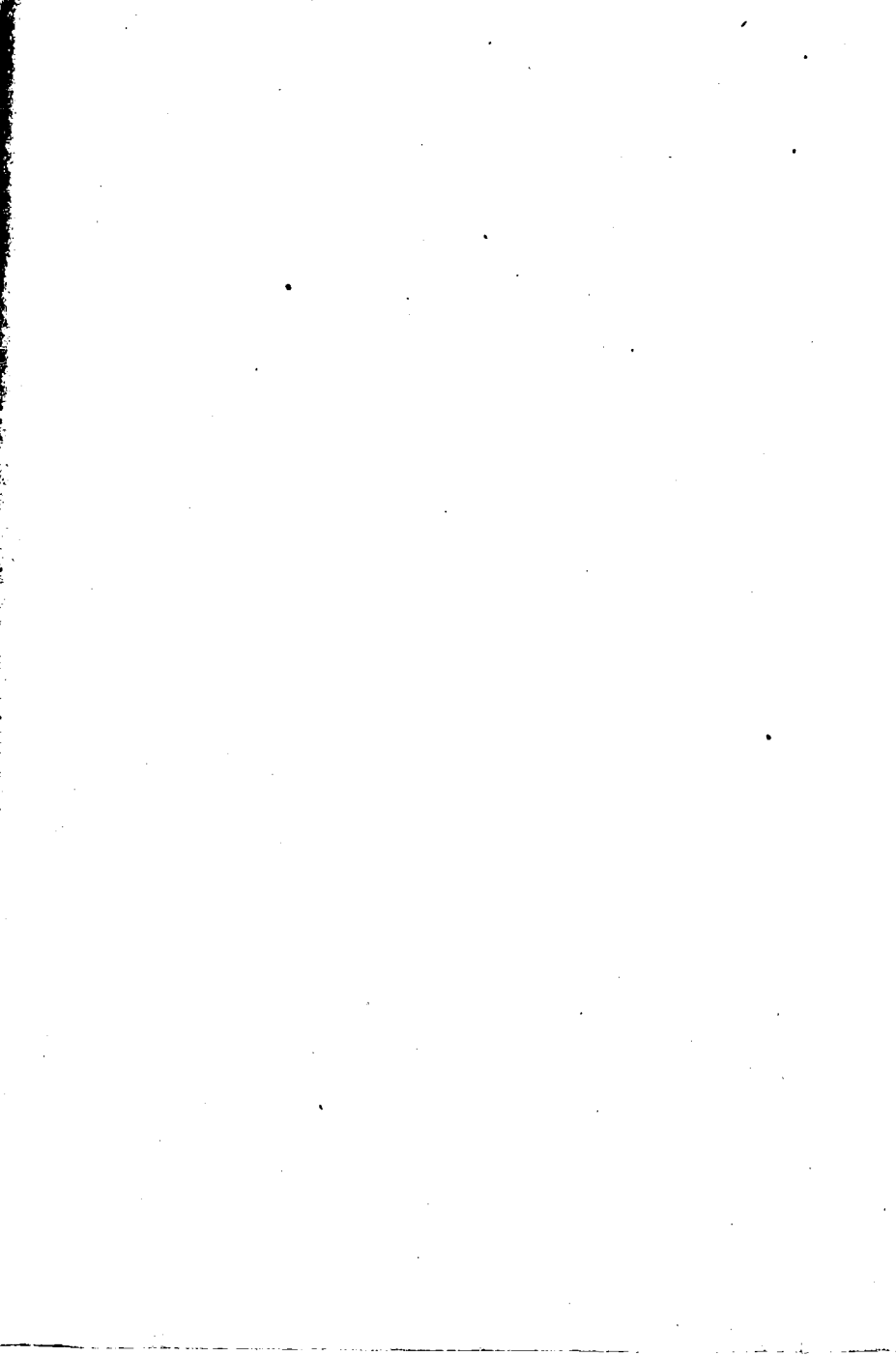
few questions. No text-book should presume to usurp the place of the teacher. Full as the Exercises in this book are, most teachers will find it well, not only to add exercises of their own, but to expand the questions, give collateral information, and so on. For example, in dealing with the ballads on page 31, it may be well to read some ballads to the class before the students are set to work on the precise task indicated. Many such additions to the necessarily bare and blunt questions in the Exercises will occur to every teacher.

In the preparation of this revision, Professor Herrick has been unable to take any share beyond reading the proof and offering suggestions thereon. For all differences between the earlier book and the present one, Professor Damon is responsible. Some of the obligations expressed in the prefaces to the two earlier editions remain. As was said there, the authors have borrowed so largely and so obviously from the common sources of rhetorical doctrine that acknowledgment is superfluous. Yet, now as then, their indebtedness to their teachers, Professors Adam Sherman Hill and Barrett Wendell, of Harvard University, must be gratefully acknowledged. So far as the present book reproduces the earlier one, acknowledgment for assistance in collecting illustrative material for the Exercises must be made to Professor Edith Foster Flint, of the University of Chicago, and for helpful criticisms on the text to Professors Robert Morss Lovett and James Weber Linn, of the University of Chicago, Professor George Wyllis Benedict, of Brown University, and Mr. George Warrington Latham, of McGill University. In the preparation of the present book, much assistance has been received from the comments of Mr. Howard Bristol Grose, Jr., now of Princeton University, Mr. William Thomson Hastings, of Brown University, and Mrs. Arthur

Upham Pope, formerly of the Lincoln School, Providence. Some of the business letters in Chapter XI were furnished by Mr. Leon E. Truesdale; some of the illustrative material in Parts IV and V by Messrs. William Thomson Hastings, Stanley Bates Harkness, and Lawrence Grose, of Brown University. Special acknowledgment is due Mr. Arthur W. Leonard, of Phillips Andover Academy. Mr. Leonard gave helpful comment on both copy and proof, suggested new questions for the Exercises and new material for the text, provided no small share of the illustrative extracts in Parts I-III, and was of material assistance in recasting the chapter on punctuation.

Thanks are due Professor George Lyman Kittredge, for permission to quote from *Words and their Ways in English Speech*, and Houghton, Mifflin and Company, for permission to quote from Hanus's *Industrial Education*, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

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# PART ONE

## ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC AND PRACTICE IN COMPOSITION

### CHAPTER I

#### COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC DEFINED

**1. Expression the Object of Our Study.** We spend a large part of our lives in letting other people know what we want, or think, or feel; that is, in expressing ourselves. We may express ourselves in many different ways: by a nod of the head, a clenched fist, a shrug of the shoulders; by painting a picture; or by chiseling a statue out of a block of marble. But by far the greater number of our ideas are expressed in words, spoken or written. This book treats the important subject of expression by means of words.

A word is a very wonderful thing. It is a sound, or a combination of sounds, which, by the unspoken agreement of perhaps millions of people, represents some one thing, person, state, or quality. To all English speaking persons, "bread" means one thing, "butter" another; "poverty" one thing, "riches" another. But the unspoken agreement about words goes much farther than this; it stamps certain words as incorrect, and it dictates the ways in which words are put together to form sentences. For example, Englishmen and Americans who wish to talk and write properly do not say "complected," but "complexioned;" not "John come down the road," but "John came down the road." One of our tasks is to learn what words we may use and how they should be



combined to make sentences. Questions dealing with these matters are called questions of usage, under which term grammar is included.

Another of our tasks is to learn how to say what we mean clearly and effectively. We have to learn, for example, that to use ten words where six will convey the idea equally well is to waste time; that to use the pronoun "he" referring to three or four different persons in the same sentence, or to write disconnectedly, confuses the reader; that to use very big words for very simple ideas seems affected and weak. Questions of this sort are known as questions of rhetoric and composition.

## 2. Correctness in Speech and Writing a Necessity.

The English of educated Englishmen and Americans is a standard from which we depart at our own peril. It shows ignorance to mispronounce words; e. g., to say "strenth" for "strength," "goin" for "going," "lawr" for "law," "Eyetalian" for "Italian," "waren't" for "weren't," "nooz" for "news," "usylly" for "usually," "most" for "almost," "haow" for "how," "extry" for "extra." It also shows ignorance to use words which are not standard English; e. g., "ain't," "hain't," "bust," "Doc.," "disremember;" or to transgress the rules of grammar; e. g., "You was," "I seen him when he done it," "He don't care," "Between you and I," "Please Mr. Walter, the cook says the sugar, are it on the list;" or to spell "receive" "receeve," "athletics" "atheletics," "audience" "audiance," "their" "thier." Carefulness in pronunciation, in the use of words, in grammar, and in spelling will bring its own reward in the form of a justifiable self-respect. Failure to talk and write correctly brings much the same penalty as bad manners.