PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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PREFACE

Practical English for High Schools is a working manual to develop the power of effective communication of ideas in such situations as appear in ordinary life. It does not aim at the appreciation of literature, nor at effectiveness in the writing of fiction or the literary essay. It does, on the other hand, attempt to train pupils in the art of reading to get the thought in the most economical manner possible. The book is the outgrowth of the new movement to distinguish between English for work and English for leisure. It recognizes that all pupils may be trained in clear and correct speaking and writing, but that only the few may hope to attain excellence in the forms of expression that are peculiarly literary.

In carrying out the ideals expressed above the authors have observed the following principles:

1. That a textbook should be primarily a laboratory guide and not a treatise or an encyclopedia.
2. That the most important thing for a pupil to learn is not theory but a method of work.
3. That practice in expression has little value unless it grows out of a real situation and involves genuine personal experience and creative imagination.
4. That both good speech and good writing are matters of habit and, therefore, are to be attained by the repetition of activities which enlist the interest of the pupil and call out his energies.

5. That much of the material in the books now in use in the schools is overmature, ambitious, and unrelated to the thoughts and lives of young people.

6. That, on the other hand, greater stress should be laid upon certain subject matter hitherto almost completely neglected; for example, social letters, business letters, newspapers, and magazines.

7. That the best teaching requires a real social situation in the classroom, and that earnest coöperative effort, concentrating the attention of pupils and teachers on a common problem, is more likely to produce correct habits than memory drills or the exaction of perfunctory tasks.

Acting upon these principles the authors of *Practical English for High Schools* have boldly abandoned moss-grown tradition and have built a simple, concrete textbook, mainly inductive in method, emphasizing the actual things that boys and girls are interested in, stating grammatical and rhetorical theory from the point of view of function and not of classification, and yet summing up from time to time tersely the principles which have been developed. They have chosen their illustrative material not from Macaulay and Addison, but from the best work of students and of contemporary writers. They have realized that the way of art is long and have therefore included far more illustrations of important aspects of writing than is customary, in order to educate the pupil by contact. The illustrations, moreover, are drawn from various aspects of school life, as well as from community life, and thus serve to unite and organize the whole of the pupil's school experience. In short, the book is built freshly, from long observation of the actual life and work of high-school boys and girls, and it will, therefore, be found to make an appeal to them which the ordinary formal, distant compilation utterly lacks. *Practical English for High Schools* is practical not merely in the sense

that it recognizes the need of preparing for the work of the world, but also in the sense that it presents work to be done which is attractive and profitable and which seems so to the pupils themselves.

The material of this book has grown directly out of the teaching experience of the authors, and has been subjected to the test of actual classroom work by other teachers. Several of these have given invaluable assistance by suggesting changes and additions, and even in certain cases by contributing portions of the book in its preliminary form. The authors wish to express their sincere appreciation of the assistance which they have received. Special thanks are due to Miss Elizabeth Lodor, Head of the Department of English in the William Penn High School of Philadelphia; Miss Olive Hart, Head of the Department of English in the South Philadelphia High School for Girls; Miss Zeta B. Cundey, Miss Helen Lynch, Miss Doris Thorn Wright, Miss Mabel Holmes, and other teachers of English in the William Penn High School, Philadelphia; Miss Jessie Sherman, teacher of English in the Francis W. Parker High School, Chicago; Mrs. Nellie L. Hosic, formerly a teacher in the Findlay High School, Findlay, Ohio; Mr. E. H. Kemper McComb, Head of the Department of English in the Manual Training High School, Indianapolis, Indiana; Mr. Ernest R. Clark, Head of the Department of English in the East High School, Rochester, New York; Miss Sarah E. Simons, Head of the Department of English, High Schools, Washington, D.C.; and Mr. C. C. Certain, Head of the Department of English, Cass Technical High School, Detroit, Michigan.

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PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

I. SPEAKING AND WRITING ENGLISH

1. THE USE OF THIS TEXTBOOK

Spend one study period in examining this book. Discover the following:

1. The purpose it is meant to serve.
2. The manner in which it is intended to be used.
3. What parts of it are most interesting.
4. In what ways it will be useful to you.
5. Who wrote it, and when and by whom it was published.
6. How the index is arranged.
7. Whether there are other features of the book worth considering.

Be prepared to discuss with your classmates the points outlined above. In discussion try to be clear and courteous.

First of all, learn how to study.

2. WHY WE SHOULD PRACTICE SPEAKING AND WRITING

The purpose of this textbook is to help you in the speaking and the writing of English. To speak and write English well should be one of your highest ambitions. Why? Think it out for yourself.

Have you not often said concerning some older person, "I like to hear him talk"? That is because, whether you are conscious of it or not, you appreciate art in speaking just as much as you do in a picture or in a lovely, natural scene. You admire the well-proportioned speech, the tactfully expressed reply, and the certain graceful turn given to words. Do you want to stop with admiring? Do you not want to acquire the same skill? Then begin by noticing carefully your own speech. Doing so may make you stumble for a time, but soon, if you observe older people, you will find yourself in the possession of new words, new ideas, and a growing power to express yourself well.

Look at the question of using good English from another point of view also: Does it pay?

How does it pay a salesman to be able to speak well?

How does it pay a politician to be able to speak well?

How does it pay parents to be able to speak well?

How does it pay a clergyman to be able to speak well?

How does it pay a newspaper reporter to be able to speak well?

How does it pay the boys and girls in your class to speak well?

What are you going to do when you finish school? Can you think of any occupation wherein it would not pay you to speak well?

Why should you be able to write English well? Do you remember that letter you received, or that book you read, of which you said, "I enjoyed every word of it! I saw all the events happening just as if I had been there. They fairly stood out on the page." To write up occurrences in such a way as to produce that effect is to write them up artistically. It is to succeed in communicating your ideas

to your reader. That means pleasure or information for another, and satisfaction — to say nothing of tangible reward — for yourself.

Discuss in class the value of practice in speaking and writing correct English.

3. HOW SHALL WE LEARN?

You have now answered for yourself the question, " Why should we be ambitious to speak and write English well? " The next question is, " How shall we learn? "

The answer is, " Practice, and keep practicing."

Here is what one boy did to make himself a better speaker and writer:

About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this in view I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rime, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again.

I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious.[1]

This boy's way may not appeal to you. Are you resourceful enough to invent a way of your own, which will lead you to observe and practice? That is what it all amounts to in the end — *watch* everything you read, *listen* to everything you hear, *select* the best, and *use* it in your own speaking and writing.

Good speaking and good writing come by observation and practice.

PRACTICE

1. Prepare to speak to your classmates for one or two minutes on the topic, "Some reasons why pupils in high school should practice speaking and writing." Make a brief outline of the points you wish to present and, if necessary, glance at this outline while speaking. It is best, however, to fix firmly in mind the main steps in your outline so that you need not consult it. Above all, do not write out beforehand what you mean to say.

When you have taken your place before the class and made your speech, your classmates will try to tell you:

[1] Classes which have access to Franklin's *Autobiography*, from which this passage is taken, will profit by discussing other passages, especially those referring to the Junto.

(*a*) How many points you wished to make;

(*b*) Whether each of your points was clear;

(*c*) Whether the reasons you offered seemed convincing.

2. At the next study period write out in full your speech on "Some reasons why pupils in high school should practice speaking and writing." Seek to improve the speech as much as possible, bearing in mind the suggestions given to you by your classmates. Observe the following directions for the form of manuscript:

The Form of Manuscript

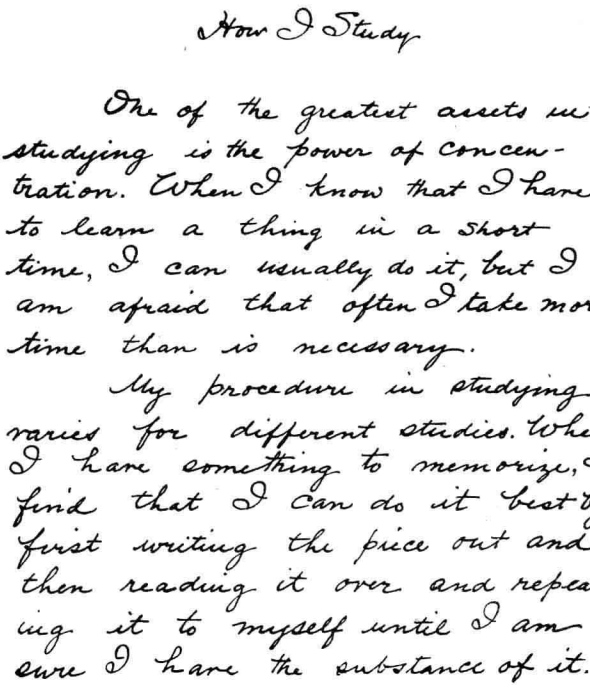
1. Use paper about 8 by $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size.
2. Write with black ink on only one side of the paper.
3. Write each word plainly, with no breaks between the letters except where an apostrophe is used.
4. Dot the *i's* and cross the *t's*.
5. Leave a space of a quarter of an inch or more between words.
6. Place the title about two inches from the top of the paper and equally distant from the right-hand and left-hand edges.
7. Begin the first word and each of the principal words of your title with a capital letter.
8. Begin the first line of your composition at the paragraph margin, that is, about two inches from the left-hand edge of the paper.
9. Leave a margin of at least an inch at each side of the page and at the bottom.
10. Indent each new paragraph to correspond with the first.
11. Break only long words at the right, and those words only between syllables.
12. When you have finished, number the pages with Arabic numerals, placed near the top and at the middle of the page.
13. Write your name, the name of your class, and the date at the upper left-hand corner of the first page.

14. Manuscripts are more easily read when not folded. If convenience demands folding, the following method of folding and indorsement is to be recommended:

(*a*) Place the manuscript before you on the table as though you were about to read it. Make the edges even and fold the end farthest from you to meet the end nearest you. Make the edges even and crease.

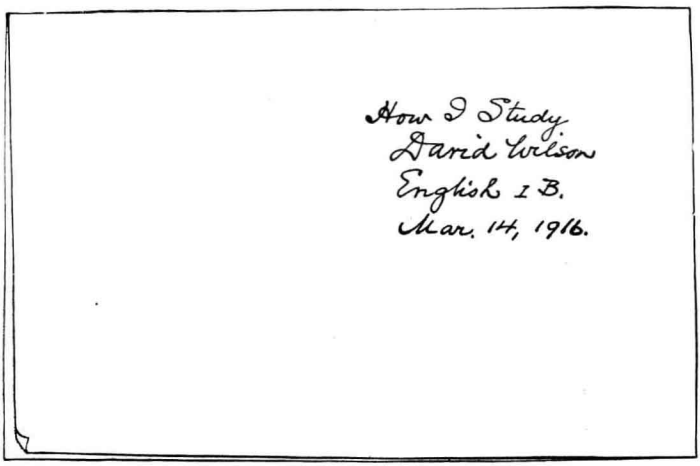
(*b*) Without changing the relative position of the manuscript, write upon it the title of the composition, your full name, the designation of your class, and the date on which it is written or on which it is to be presented, as may be required.

The following illustrations will give a clear idea of how a good manuscript looks when finished, and when folded and indorsed.


How I Study

One of the greatest assets in studying is the power of concentration. When I know that I have to learn a thing in a short time, I can usually do it, but I am afraid that often I take more time than is necessary.

My procedure in studying varies for different studies. When I have something to memorize, I find that I can do it best by first writing the piece out and then reading it over and repeating it to myself until I am sure I have the substance of it.



MANUSCRIPT CORRECTLY FOLDED AND INDORSED.

Prepare to tell at the next recitation what changes you made in your speech in writing it out. Perhaps you will be called upon to read the manuscript so that all may see for themselves. In any case, *preserve the manuscript for future use.*

Much careful planning should precede writing. Revise with great care all manuscripts that are to be read by others.

4. WHAT TO SPEAK OR WRITE ABOUT

Having discussed the reasons why you should practice speaking and writing, you will be interested in the question, " Upon what topics should pupils in high school speak and write? " Prepare to discuss this question in class. Make brief notes on the following:

1. What you talk about in your other classes, at home, and elsewhere. Name something you have talked about within the last twenty-four hours.

2. What you have heard older persons talk about at home or elsewhere.

3. The topic of the most interesting conversation you have heard recently.

4. The topics discussed in the papers and magazines that you read.

5. How magazine writers get the information necessary for their articles.

6. The topics that you like best to read about in the newspapers.

Practice

1. Make a list of ten topics about which you know something or about which you could readily learn. Put a star before each of those which you think could be made to seem interesting to the members of your class.

2. Select the most promising topic, and in a note of one sentence write out the substance of what you would say about it. Add a sentence, if necessary, explaining the sources of your information, and copy the note to hand to your teacher. For example:

How I Prefer to Spend my Leisure

The most enjoyable way to spend one's leisure time is in reading, because through reading one can have good company and visit attractive scenes no matter where he is or what the weather may be. I have a small library of my own; hence I can speak from experience.

OUR CAMP AT TROUT LAKE

Camping by Trout Lake proved to be a succession of new and interesting experiences, among which were learning to pitch a tent, to build a fire outdoors, and to paddle a canoe. I spent eight weeks there last summer, and kept a diary from which I can select the best points.

5. DISCUSSING THE TOPICS

If called upon, place your entire list of topics upon the blackboard and answer such questions as may be asked. These are sure to include:

(*a*) Why do you think the class would be interested in the topic?

(*b*) What would the class gain from your presentation of the topic?

(*c*) How would you collect the material for a speech on the topic?

As you discuss the lists, — your own and those of your classmates, — new topics will suggest themselves to you. Add these and others to your list as you think of them. Try arranging your topics in groups or classes. Give a title to each group or class.

He who keeps his eyes and ears open finds plenty of topics on which to speak or to write.

6. ANALYZING A SUBJECT

Prepare to speak or write on one or more of your topics, as the teacher may direct. Be sure to write out in a single sentence the particular point of view you will adopt and also to make an outline of your principal points.

Suppose, for example, that your subject were "Games." This would be so general that a talk on it would sound like