

ROBERT J. DIXSON

ELEMENTARY READER IN

# ENGLISH

A NEW REVISED EDITION



Regents Publishing Company, Inc.

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# Preface

This revised edition of *Elementary Reader* consists of reading selections designed for the elementary or low-intermediate student. It can be used for class work after the first six months or the first year of study, depending upon the students' progress. A slow class, or one which meets only a few times a week, may need more time before being able to read the selections.

Except for a few more difficult words necessary to some of the stories, the vocabulary range of the book is within the first thousand most commonly used words in the English language. The grammar constructions used are those studied in any basic first-year course.

The selections deal with modern themes and interesting folklore from the past. Long-time users of *Elementary Reader* will detect a change in format from previous editions. The units are now uniform both in length (8-10 pages) and in the kinds of exercises that follow the reading.

Ten comprehension questions follow both Parts I and II. These questions, and any others which a teacher may supple-

ment them with, test immediately whether the students have a basic understanding of the story. Teachers should pay close attention to vocabulary, since not all students will understand all the terms used in the stories. Answers to the exercises at the end of each unit should be written. The matching, multiple-choice, tense-changing, and other types of exercises may be supplemented at the teacher's discretion. Generally, the exercises use terms and structures from the story, so teachers have an additional opportunity to check understanding of vocabulary and grammar. The discussion questions are new in this edition. Teachers may use them for written work or for conversational purposes to stimulate the students to use the vocabulary and structures from the story as well as to generate new thoughts and to translate them into language.

*Elementary Reader* is the first in a series of three readers. The second, entitled *Easy Reading Selections in English*, is a reader for intermediate or low-advanced students. The third reader, *Modern Short Stories*, is for advanced students.

The same general plan of presentation is followed in all three books: selected readings, carefully graded as to level of difficulty, with vocabulary and conversational exercises.

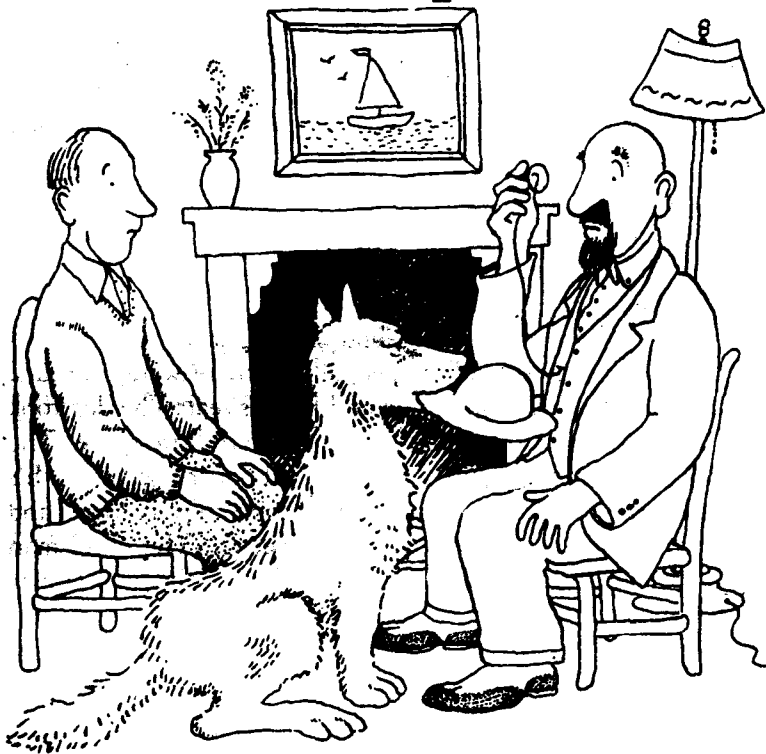
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# Unit 1: Dogs—Our Faithful Companions



## PART ONE

Most dog owners feel that their dogs are their best friends. Almost everyone likes dogs because they try hard to please their owners. One of my favorite stories is about a dog who wanted his owner to please *him*.

One of my friends has a large German shepherd named Jack. These dogs are often very intelligent. Every Sunday afternoon, my friend takes Jack for a long walk in the park. Jack likes these long walks very much.

One Sunday afternoon, a young man came to visit my friend. He stayed a long time, and he talked and talked. Soon it was time for my friend to take Jack for his walk, but the visitor didn't leave. Jack became very worried about his walk in the park. He



walked around the room several times and then sat down directly in front of the visitor and looked at him. But the visitor paid no attention. He continued talking. Finally, Jack couldn't stand it any longer. He went out of the room and came back a few minutes later. He sat down again in front of the visitor, but this time he held the man's hat in his mouth.

German shepherds aren't the only intelligent dogs. Another intelligent dog is a Seeing Eye dog. This is a special dog which helps blind people walk along the streets and do many other things. We call these dogs Seeing Eye dogs because they are the "eyes" of the blind people and they help them to "see." Seeing Eye dogs generally go to special schools for several years to learn to help blind people.

One day, a Seeing Eye dog and a blind man got on a bus together. The bus was full of people and there were no seats. One man, however, soon got up and left his seat. The dog took the blind man to the seat, but there was very little space. The dog began to push the people on each side of the seat with his nose. He pushed and pushed until the people moved down, and finally there was enough space for two people. The blind man then sat down and the dog got up on the seat beside him. He lay down and put his head on the blind man's leg. He was very comfortable and soon fell asleep. Everyone on the bus had to smile at the intelligence of the dog in making space for the blind man and, at the same time, making a place for himself.

### *Comprehension*

1. What kind of dog is in the first story? The second story?
2. What did Jack like to do on Sunday afternoons?
3. Why did Jack become worried?
4. What did Jack do when he left the room?
5. What did he do when he came back?
6. What is a Seeing Eye dog? Why do Seeing Eye dogs have that name?
7. What happened when the man and his dog got on the bus?
8. Why did the dog push the people?
9. Where did the blind man sit? Where did the dog sit?
10. Why did the people smile?

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## PART TWO

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Dogs have been helping people for a long time. Most dogs are easy to train and are very faithful and loyal to their owners. Dogs which people keep as pets usually stay close to their owners or their owners' children to protect them. Some working dogs will even chase away wild animals. They will also find animals, such as sheep, that are lost. Working dogs help ranchers drive animals where they want them to go.

Great Danes, boxers, and Doberman pinschers sometimes work with the police to help catch criminals. They are in a special part of the police department called the K-9 Corps. K-9 is pronounced the same as *canine*, which is an adjective that refers to dogs.

Dogs like Saint Bernards have a good sense of smell. They can smell where people have been and can follow their trail. The Swiss have used Saint Bernards for 200 years to help find lost people. In the United States, bloodhounds help find missing people. These dogs can smell something which belongs to a person and then follow that scent to wherever the person is.

Because of their fine sense of smell, many dogs have worked with soldiers and hunters. Foxhounds follow the scent of foxes; hunters then follow the hounds. Beagles and bassets have short legs, so they can hunt in areas where the bushes are close to the ground. They are slow animals, so hunters are able to follow them on foot.

There are some interesting comparisons between humans and dogs in the area of smelling. Human noses have parts called membranes which help us smell. A normal smelling membrane in a human nose is about the size of a quarter. In a dog, that same membrane is much larger. There are also differences in our brains that affect smelling. About five percent of the human brain tells us of the sense of smell. In a dog, that figure is over thirty percent.

Dogs can also hear very well. They can hear a much higher sound than a person can. There are special whistles which people use to call dogs. People can't hear the whistles, but dogs can. It is interesting to note that all breeds of dogs have the same

superior sense of hearing. In other words, dogs with raised ears hear just as well as dogs with long, floppy ears.

Most people think of dogs only as pets and faithful companions, but dogs have worked alongside people for thousands of years. In addition to guiding the blind and hunting, they have served in many other areas of work.

Many dogs have been used to transport goods. In parts of Greenland, Canada, and Siberia, dogs are still used to pull sleds. No other means of transportation has yet replaced them. These dogs, such as huskies and Samoyeds, work in teams of eight to fifteen. They often pull loads as heavy as a ton, and they can cover a distance of forty miles a day.

Spaniels and pointers are the most popular of another type of working dog—the gun dog. These types of dogs search for game. When they find a wild animal or bird, they stop, stand perfectly still, and point their noses in the direction of the game. They are interesting to watch while they wait for their masters to shoot the game. They keep their muscles tense and their tails in straight lines with the rest of their bodies.

Retrievers have a special function in hunting game. They don't point their noses, but they find the hunted game and carry it back to their masters. Many of these dogs, such as golden retrievers and Labradors, have waterproof coats. The Labradors originally came from Newfoundland, where sailors used them to retrieve fish that had escaped from their fishhooks. Retrievers are very gentle animals, and they are becoming popular as pets in many parts of the world.

#### Comprehension

1. What are Great Danes used for?
2. Where are Saint Bernards used? For what? For how long has this been true?
3. What do dogs use their fine sense of smell for?
4. What kinds of dogs have short legs?
5. What are *membranes*?
6. What does K-9 refer to? What does *canine* mean?
7. Why can dogs hear well?
8. What do dogs do in Siberia?
9. What are pointers? What are they used for?

10. Where did Labrador retrievers originally come from? What were they used for there?

*Exercises*

- A. Use each of the following terms in a sentence:

to please someone, to take for a walk, visitor, to walk around, to look at, to stand it, Seeing Eye, generally, to get up, to sit down, to fall asleep, intelligence, to chase away, sheep, rancher, criminal, canine, sense of smell, soldier, scent, bush, on foot, comparison, membrane, quarter, to spread something out, more than half, whistle, superior, sense of hearing, floppy ears, faithful.

- B. Match the term in the left column with its **OPPOSITE** in the right column.

*Example:*     c 8. lost     e. found

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| — 1. large       | a. stand up   |
| — 2. long        | b. finished   |
| — 3. sit down    | c. in back of |
| — 4. in front of | d. hurting    |
| — 5. get on      | e. found      |
| — 6. began       | f. light      |
| — 7. helping     | g. small      |
| — 8. lost        | h. nothing    |
| — 9. something   | i. short      |
| — 10. heavy      | j. get off    |

- C. Change the following sentences from affirmative to negative.

*Example:* They try hard. (They don't try hard.)

1. He took his dog for a walk.
2. He walked around the room.
3. He sat down again.
4. They got on a bus together.
5. He pushed the people.
6. They will chase away wild animals.
7. They have a good sense of smell.
8. These dogs have worked with hunters.
9. The membrane is very large.
10. They can hear high sounds.

D. Change the following statements to questions.

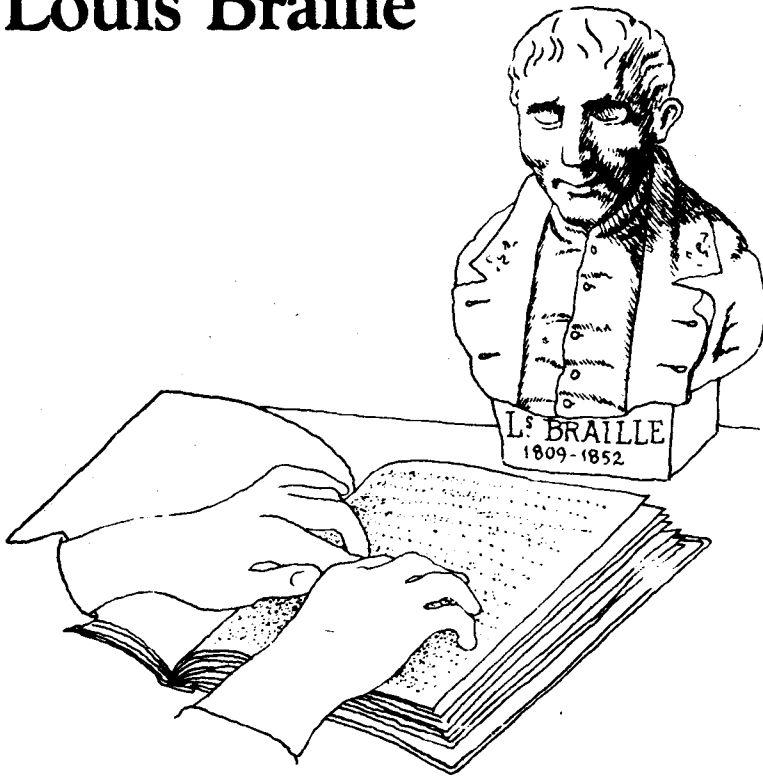
Example: They try hard. (Do they try hard?)

1. There was enough space for two people.
2. He continued talking.
3. Jack became worried about his walk.
4. The dog began to push the people.
5. Dogs have been helping people for a long time.
6. They sometimes work with the police.
7. Dogs can smell something which belongs to a person.
8. A dog's membrane is very large.
9. There are differences in the sense of hearing.
10. They originally came from Newfoundland.

*Discussion*

1. Do you have a dog? What kind is it?
2. What is your favorite kind of dog? Why?
3. How many kinds of dogs can you name?
4. What kinds of dog stories do you like to read?
5. How do dogs compare to other animals as pets or companions for people?

# Unit 2: Blindness and Louis Braille



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## PART ONE

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Dictionaries define *blindness* as "being without the sense of sight," but there are many degrees of blindness. Some blind people can tell light from dark; others also have a small amount of vision. Most blind people, however, cannot even see light.

We do not yet know all the causes of blindness. When a child is blind from birth, his or her blindness is called congenital. Blindness that occurs after birth usually comes from a disease of the eye or from an accident.

The two leading causes of blindness in the United States are cataracts and glaucoma. A cataract is a clouding or dulling of the lens of the eye. The lens is the part of the eye which light passes through. When the lens is cloudy, a person cannot see.

Fortunately, an eye surgeon can remove most cataracts with a machine called a laser.

Glaucoma causes the eyeball to harden and puts great pressure on the eye from the inside. If glaucoma is discovered in time, people can take medicine to control it.

One of the most famous blind people in the world was Louis Braille. Braille was born in 1809 in a small town in France where his father had a small leather-making shop. One day, when he was three years old, the boy was playing in his father's shop. He picked up a tool with a sharp point and fell on it, blinding himself in both eyes. Even though he was only a small child, he had to learn to walk with a cane in order to feel where he was going. Naturally, the people of the town felt very sorry for this little boy when they saw him, completely blind, feeling his way along the streets with his cane.

A few years later, Braille went to a special school for the blind in Paris. There he learned to read; that is, he learned to recognize the twenty-six letters of the alphabet by feeling them with his fingers. But the letters were several inches high and several inches wide, and this was a very primitive system of reading. A very short article filled several books, and each book weighed eight or nine pounds.

Later, Braille became a teacher in this same school. By this time in his life, he was also a musician. His mind was active, and he was always seeking to invent a way for blind people to become less dependent on people with sight. Braille wanted to find a better system of reading for the blind, but it wasn't easy. One day, on a visit home, he said to his father, "Blind people are the loneliest people in the world. I can tell one bird from another by its sound. I can know the door of the house by feeling it with my hand. But there are so many things which I cannot hear and cannot feel. Only books can free the blind."

One day, Braille was sitting in a restaurant with a friend. The friend was reading the newspaper to him. He read an article about a French army captain who had a system of writing which he could use in the dark. The captain called it "night writing." In this "night writing," he used a system of dots and dashes. The dots and dashes were raised on the paper so that a person could feel them with his or her fingers. When Braille heard this, he

realized at once that it was the answer to the problem of the blind. This was the breakthrough he had hoped and waited for. It was a turning point in his life, and it would be a turning point in the lives of many people.

### Comprehension

1. What is the definition of *blindness*?
2. What does *congenital* mean?
3. What are the leading causes of blindness in the United States?
4. How can a laser help people with cataracts? Who would use a laser in this way?
5. What is glaucoma? How can it be controlled?
6. How did Louis Braille become blind? In what year did he become blind?
7. In what school did Braille become a teacher?
8. What did his father do for a living?
9. What are dots and dashes? How were they used for reading?
10. Why did Braille think that blind people were "the loneliest people in the world"?

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## PART TWO

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The next day, Braille went with a friend to visit the army captain. He asked the captain about his writing system. The captain explained that he used a tool with a sharp point to make dots and small dashes in thick paper. A person could feel these dots and dashes on the other side of the paper. Certain marks meant one thing while other marks meant another. The tool he used was the same kind of tool which Braille had blinded himself with.

Braille was certain that he could develop the system to help blind people read. His goal was to give them better books. He worked day and night studying this new idea and trying to find a way to use it for the blind.

After experimenting with many different ways of making dots and dashes on paper, Braille finally arrived at a simple system. He used six holes within a small space. With these six holes in different positions, he could make sixty-three different combinations. Each combination indicated a letter of the alphabet or



a short word. There were even combinations to indicate punctuation marks. Soon he wrote a book using the "braille" system.

At first people didn't believe that this system was possible or practical. One time, Braille spoke before a group of people. He showed how he could write by making these holes in paper almost as fast as someone could read to him. Then he read back easily what he had written. But the people didn't believe him. They said that it was impossible to do this—that Braille had learned by memory what he had read to them.

The same thing happened everywhere. For one reason or another, people didn't *want* to believe Braille. Even the French government didn't want to hear anything about his system. They said that they were already doing everything possible for the blind.

Braille was now devoting all his time to his new system, but no one was listening. He became discouraged, and his health began to fail. He continued to work on the system, but by the 1850s he was a very sick man, and each year he became sicker. Somehow, even with all this disappointment, he continued to work on his system to make it better.

Braille worked out a system of marks for mathematics and music. One day, a girl who was congenitally blind played the piano beautifully before a large audience. Everyone in the audience was very pleased. Then the girl got up and said that the people should not thank her for playing so well. They should thank Louis Braille. It was Braille, she said, who had made it possible for her to learn music and to play the piano. She also told them that he was a very sick man and that he was dying.

Suddenly, after so many years, everyone became interested in Louis Braille. The newspapers wrote articles about him. The government also became interested in his system of reading for the blind. Some of Braille's friends went to his home to see him. He was sick in bed. They told him what had happened. Braille began to cry. He said, "This is the third time in my life that I have cried: first, when I became blind; second, when I heard about 'night writing,' and now because I know that my life has not been a failure." A few days later Braille died. He was only forty-three years old.