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Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling.

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Editorial Board: Emmett A. Betts, Helen Bonnema, Godfrey Dewey, Wilbur J. Kupfrian, William J. Reed, Ben D. Wood, Harvie Barnard.

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1. Stress: Syllable and Phrase, by Emmett Albert Betts, Ph.*

*Reading Research Lab, Univ. of Miami, Coral Gables, Fla.

Consideration of stress is crucial to both the teaching of word perception and proposals for an initial learning medium or an all-out spelling reform. This consideration is especially valid for American English because it is a syllable-stress language. Furthermore, some "working" knowledge of pitch and juncture, as well as stress – grammatical patterns of language (speech) – are needed to introduce learners to the graphic system.

Syllabic Stress

There are two types of stress:

First, syllabic stress – the prominence, or importance, given to the first syllable of *given* /'givən/ to the second syllable of *about* /a-'bout/, and to the first of *marvelous* /'mar-və-ləs/.

Second, phrasal, or sentence, stress or variations in levels of energy used in speaking – the stress given to /'liv/ in *We will deliver it to you.* This last type of stress indicates the relationships between words in a phrase – for example, stressed *the* /'thē/ said in isolation versus unstressed *the* /thə/ in the phrase *the boy.*

Syllabic stress (prominence given to syllables in words) overlaps phrasal stress (prominence given to a word within phrases or sentences). It is distinctive from Spanish, for example, because English

is a syllable-stress language, having longer stressed syllables than unstressed syllables. Both syllabic and phrasal stress play roles in pronunciation and in the over-all rhythm pattern of speech. Both types of stress – syllabic and phrasal – are keys to the pronunciation of a word in connected speech.

Phoneticians have identified four levels of speech, but some settle for three. In dictionaries, three levels of stress are identified: heavy, medium, and weak.

Pronounce the words below to get the "feel" of relative degrees of stress:

1. Primary, or heavy, or strong stress:
   a. First syllable
      abbot /'abət/ — money /'mən-ē'/
      boxer /'bak-sər/ — onion /'ən-yən
      canopy /'kan-ə-p-ē/ — stammer /stam-ər/
      different /'dif-ə-rənt/
   b. Second syllable
      aloud /ə-'loud/ — narcotic /när-'kät-ik/
      forlorn /fər-'lorn/ — resemble /ri-'zem-bəl/
      First and second syllables
   c. granduncle /'grand-'əng-kəl/ — nearsighted /niər-'sīt-əd/
2. Secondary, or medium, stress
   a. First syllable
      lemonade /,lemən-'ād/ — represent /,rep-ri-'zent/
      mediocre /,mēd-ē-'ō-kər/ — unwise /,ən-'wīz/
   b. Second syllable
      almost /'ol-,mōst/ — raincoat /'rān-,kōt/
      deadlock /'ded,lāk/ — woodchuck /'wud-,chək/
      foresight /'fōr-,sft/
   c. Third syllable
      alphabet /'al-fə-,bet/ — lullaby /ləl.-ə-,bi/
      diadem /'di-ə-,dem/ — molecule /'mal-i-,kul/
      legislature /'lej-əs-,la-chər/
   d. Fourth syllable
      cuneiform /kyu-'nē-ə-,form/ — demōbilize/di-'mō-b ə-,līz/
      debilitate /di-'bil-ə-,tāt/ — irradiate /i-'rād-ē-,āt/
      decelerate /dē-'sel-ə-,rāt/ — repudiate /ri-'pyud-e-at/
   e. First and fourth syllable
      tablespoonful /,tā-bəl-'spün-,ful/
3. Weak stress, or no stress
   a. First syllable
      about /ə-'baut — collect /kə-'lekt/
      bemoan /bi-'mōn/ — debate /di-'bāt/
   b. Second syllable
      benefit ./'ben-ə-,fit/ — volleyball /,väl-ē-,bol/
      clever /'klev-ər/ — yachtsman /yäts-mən/
      coral /kor-əl/
   c. Second and third syllables
      government '/'gəv-ərn-mənt/ — stadium :/'stad-ē-əm/
      legible :/'lej-ə-bəl/ — talkative /tok-ə-tiv
   d. First and third syllables
      debilitate:/di-'bil-ə-,tāt/ — repugnant /ri-'pəg-nənt/
      republic :/ri-'pəb-lik/ — toboggan:/tə-'bäg-ən/

e. Third syllable
talebearer /’tāl-,bar-ər/ firecracker /fīr-,krak-ər/
untangle /,ən-'tang-gəl/

f. Third and fourth-syllables
unsuitable /,ən-'süt-ə-bəl/ vulgarity /,vəl-'gar-ət-ē/

g. Second and fourth syllables
tenderhearted /,ten-dər-'härt-əd/ unsupported /,ən-sə-'pōrt-əd/

Shifts in stress

1. Stress shifts differentiate two-syllable nouns from two-syllable verbs.

Word	*Noun*	*Verb*
abstract	/'ab-,strakt/	/ab-'strakt/
conduct	/'kän-dəkt/	/kan'dəkt/
conflict	/'kän-,flikt/	/kən-'flikt/
content	/'kän-,tent/	/kən-'tent/
contest	/'kän-,test/	/kən-'test/
contrast	/'kän-,trast/	/kən-'trast/
convert	/'kän-,vərt/	/kən-'vert/
convict	/'kän-,vikt/	/kən-'vikt/
digest	/'dī-,jest/	/dv-'jest/
estimate	/'es-tə-mət/	/esta-,mat/
exploit	/'eks-,ploit/	/iks-'ploit/
extract	/'eks-,trakt/	/iks-'trakt/
import	/'im-,pōrt/	/im-'pōrt/
object	/'äb-jikt/	/əb-'jekt/
permit	/'pər-,mit/	/pər-'mit/
protest	/'prō-,test/	/prə-'test/
rebel	/'reb-əl/	/ri-'bel/
record	/'rek-ərd/	/ri-'kord/
subject	/'səb-jikt	/əb--'jekt/
upset	/'əp-,set/	/,əp-'set/

2. Stress shifts tend to differentiate adjectives and verbs.

Word	*Adjective*	*Verb*
absent	/'ab-sent'/	/ab-'sent/
abstract	/'ab-,strakt/	/ab-'strakt/
deliberate	/di-'lib-ə-rət/	/di-'lib-ə-,rāt/
frequent	/fre-kwənt/	/fre-'kwent/
present.	/'prez-nt/	/pri-'zent/
separate	/'sep-ə-rət/	/'sep-ə-,rāt/
subject	/'səb-jikt/	/səb-'jekt/
suspect	/'səs-,pekt/	/sə-'spekt/

3. Stress shifts tend to differentiate nouns and adjectives.

Word	*Noun*	*Adjective*
compact	/'käm-,pakt/	/kəm-'pakt, 'k'äm-,pakt/
content	/'kän-,tent/	/kən-'tent/
invalid	/'in-və-ləd/	/in-'val-əd/
minute	/'min-ət/	/mī'nüt, mə-,-'nyüt/

4. Stress shifts tend to differentiate compound words & noun.

Compound		*Noun Group*	
blackbird	/'blak-,bərd/	black bird	/blak 'bərd/
clubhouse	/'kləb-,haus/	club house	/'kləb 'haus/
greenhouse	/'gren-,haus/	green house	/grēn 'haus/
nitrate	/'ni-,trāt/	night rate	/nīt 'rāt/
whitewash	/'hwīt-,wosh, /'hwīt-,wäsh/	white wash	/hwīt 'wosh, /hwīt 'wäsh/

5. Stress shifts tend to differentiate compound words from verb groups.

Compound		*Verb Group*	
hardware	/'hard-,wāər/	hard wear	/'härd 'wāər/

Syllabic Stress: Compound

The second element of compound words usually has a secondary stress, especially when the two elements are clearly related:

bookcase	/'buk-,kās/	lean-to pillowcase	/'len-,tü/
bookkeeper	/'buk-,kē-pər/	semifinal	/'pil-ō-,kās/
buttermilk	/'bət-ər-,milk/	telegram	/'sem-i-,fĭn-l/
firewood	/'fīr-,wud/		/'tel-ə-,gram/

1. Some compounds said in isolation have equal stress:

backbone	/'bak-'bōn/	handmade	/'hand-'mād/
backwoods	/'bak-'wudz/	lukewarm	/'lük-'worm/
fireproof	/'fīr-'prüf/	newfangled	/'nü-'fang-gəld/
hardhearted	/'hard-'hart-əd/		

2. The second element of a compound is unstressed when it has no close, logical relationship:

breakfast	/'brek-fəst/	freshman	/'fresh-mən/
cupboard	/'kəb-ərd/	seaman	/'sē-mən/
freedom	/'frēd-əm/		

Stress: Phrase – cautions

All one-syllable words pronounced out of context of connected speech are automatically stressed. *Can-is-was, the-a-an, it-he-them, and-or-than, at-of-to,* are categories of words that are stressed when pronounced in isolation, but are often unstressed in connected speech. This situation has two important implications in teaching word-perception skills:

First, the teacher and the pupils need to be aware of syllabic versus phrase stress in order to make the transition from the study of the sound-letter relationship of words in isolation to these relationships among words in connected speech. Pronouncing *is* /'iz/ as a stressed syllable in isolation is quite different from *is* /iz, z/ as an unstressed syllable in utterances.

Second, the final step in the development of word-perception skills is the recognition of the word within the structure of the word group – phrase or clause. To prevent extreme word-by-word reading – that is, pronouncing each word as it is said in isolation – the pupil needs a "feel" of the word in different contexts. Of course, this point has validity when the pupil – especially the beginner – has materials that are readily readable for him.

The teacher's insistence that the child should avoid the use of unstressed vowels – usually /ə/ and /i/ – for unstressed *the, an, his,* in phrases and clauses and for the unstressed vowels of *explain* and *again* violates not only the rhythm patterns of speech but also historical principles of American English. This practice not only produces word-by-word reading but also is a prime example of silliness, affectation, and dull scholarship.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 pp3–4 in the printed version]

2. Stress Phenomena: a Delineation, by Emmett Albert Betts, Ph.D., LL.D.

So-called "substandard" pronunciation can result from stressing the wrong syllable in connected speech, as in *insult,* /'in-səlt/ for /in-'sult/.

In words of more than one syllable, one syllable usually receives greater stress and is heard more prominently. This is *syllabic* stress. But in groups of words, *phrasal* stress is heard. In phrasal stress, there is considerable unstressing, e.g., of, *the, a,* and other function words.

In regard to a stressed syllable in a "stress group," Kenneth L. Pike issues this caveat:
The location of the stressed syllable within the stress group is not determined by any articulatory features (and for that reason may be determined by the pattern of a particular linguistic system). (*Phonetics*, The University of Michigan Press, 1962, p.119).

Stress Phenomena

1. Syllable stress is a term for designating the relative loudness – prominence or energy of utterance – with which a syllable is uttered. In reality, stress is the relative loudness with which the vowel /e/ of *getting* or the diphthong /au/ of *outing is* uttered. It is also the relative "softness" with which the first syllable of *(a)bout* and the last syllable of *runn(ing)* or *curd(le)* is uttered.

2. Phrasal stress – sometimes called sense-stress – is the emphasis given to syllables and words in word groups (phrases, clauses, sentences).
   a. Intonation, (phrase stress, pitch, and juncture) is the dominant rhythm of speech; syllable stress is superimposed on intonation.
   b. Stress patterns tend to function at the word level of language structure; intonation patterns at the syntactic (larger construction) level.

3. In American speech, the rhythm pattern alternates between stressed syllables and one or more unstressed syllables, as in *bumblebee* /'bəm-bl-,bē/ and in the successive syllables of connected speech.

4. Words of more than one syllable usually have at least one primary – heavy or strong – stress followed or preceded by lesser stressed syllables.
amount /ə-'maunt/ holy /'hō-lē/ staccato /stə-'kät-ō/

5. Primary, or heavy, stress is used when saying monosyllables in isolation, as *one-two-three, pear, can, is, the.*
   a. Monosyllabic words pronounced in isolation always have primary, or strong, stress.
   b. Stressed syllables are longer than unstressed syllables. For example, the stressed syllable /-'fuz/ of *confuse* /kən-'fyüz/ is longer than the unstressed syllable /kən-/.
   c. Stressed syllables are louder than weak stressed syllables. For example, the stressed syllable /-'baut/ of *about* /ə-'baut/ is louder than the unstressed syllable /ə-/

6. Secondary, or "half" stress, is lesser stressing as in *telegraph* /'tel-ə-,graf/. Note that the vowels have distinctive quality in the heavily stressed syllable /'tel-/ and the secondary, or medium, stressed syllable /-,graph/ as contrasted to the indefinite quality of the unstressed /ə/.

7. A tertiary, or "in-between," stress is noted by phoneticians as in the second syllable of *running* /'rən-ing/ versus the very weak stress of the second syllable of *runnin'* /'rən-(ə)n/. In the tertiary stress of /-ing/, the vowel is a little more definite than the weak stress of /-(ə)n/. This low stress is not indicated in pupils' dictionaries; instead, it is usually indicated as unstressing and no harm is done.

8. Every syllable in connected speech has some degree of stress. Hence, the so-called unstressed syllable has some stress – though it is a very weak stress, as the first syllable of *sardine* /sar-'dën/ or *receive* /ri-'sev/.

9. Weak (lightly stressed, unstressed or minimal stressed) syllables occur in the first syllable of *again* / ə -'gən/, and the last syllables of:

city	/'sit-ē/	horses	/'hors- ə z, -iz/
beaten	/'bēt-n/	battle	/'bat-l/

a. The quality of unstressed vowels tends to be indefinite as contrasted to the quality of stressed vowels.
b. The pitch of unstressed syllables tends to be lower.
c. Actually there is no such thing as an unstressed syllable because every syllable has some degree of stress.

The term weak stress comes closer to the facts.

10. Changes in stress patterns produce changes in vowels and diphthongs, as in subject (verb) /səb-'jekt/ and subject (noun) /'səb-jikt/ in which the stressed /e/ of the verb becomes unstressed /i/ of the noun.

11. Stress is a relative force--not absolute, depending on the loudness and pitch level of the speaker, the rate of speaking, and other factors.

12. Stress is a determiner of meaning, as in the adjective *compact* /kəm-'pakt, 'kam-pakt/ and the noun *compact* /'kam-,pakt/ and as in *(John) did* it. In English, syllable stress differentiates words that otherwise are the same.

13. Differences in stress often are heard with differences in pitch, or speech tune. For example, *digest* /di-,jest/, the noun, is pronounced with a higher pitch on the first (stressed) syllable; digest /da-'jest/, the verb, is pronounced with a higher pitch on the second (stressed) syllable. That is, stress and pitch are interrelated – the raising or lowering of one tends to produce a change in the other.

14. When words are emphasized to make the meaning clear – given sense stress – the alternation of different levels of stress is overridden, as in *I saw the* /'thē/ *John Smith,* rather than in I *have the* /thə/ book.

15. Syllabic stress is a complex phenomena – interrelated with phrase stress, juncture (especially pauses), word order in the sentence, the intention of the speaker, and other factors.

16. Stress and pitch patterns remain relatively the same when the tone of voice is changed, as in whispering, conversation, or shouting.

17. American English has different stress variations for many words.
a. There are regional variations in stressing the first or last syllables of *advertisement, detail, rodeo,* and other words. Many words are given different stress in different regions; that is, there are dialectal variations in many words.
b. There are stress variations to signal grammatical meanings, as for *content* (noun or verb), *minute* (noun or adjective), *deliberate* (adjective or verb).

18. Sentence-rhythm sometimes overrides word-stress, as in *second-hand* /'sek-ən-,hand/ *bookshop* versus *secondhand* /'sek-ən-'hand/ and I *have* /'hav/ *it* versus *I have* /əv/ *finished the book.*

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 pp4–5 in the printed version]

3. Five Fundamental Vowel Sounds, by Emmett Albert Betts, Ph.D., LL.D.

A syllable nucleus usually is defined as a vowel (e.g., *h(a)t*) or a vowel followed by a semi-vowel (e.g., *b(ai)t*). Vowel phonemes, of course, are subject to dialect and idiolect (speech pattern of an individual) variations.

Arthur J. Bronstein has issued this caveat regarding vowel sounds:

The classification of the phonetic data into a generally accepted phonemic system has, as yet, not occurred. As in other areas of study, neither your teachers, nor theirs, have all the answers, and this is one area, among many others, where the analysis of the evidence is not, as yet, conclusive. There is comparatively little disagreement as to the nature and number of consonant phonemes in our language. But there is much seeking and scholarly questioning about the vowel phonemes in our language. (The *Pronunciation of American English*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960, p. 144.)

Clifford H. Prator, Jr. discusses "The Eleven Vowel Sounds of American English," as in *b(ea)t, b(i)t, b(ai)t, b(e)t, b(a)t, p(o)t, b(ou)ght, b(oa)t, p(u)t, b(oo)t.* pp. 11-12.) This discussion deals with Prator's "The Five Fundamental Vowels," which he defines as "those which occur in almost all languages. . . " (*Manual of American English Pronunciation,* Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1957, p. 10.)

(Pronunciation symbols are those used in G. & C. Merriam's Webster's *New Elementary Dictionary,* 1965, and Webster's *New Secondary School Dictionary*, 1959.)

In most languages, five fundamental vowel sounds occur:

Sound	*Key Word*	*Comment*
/ē/	be	(the name of the letter *e)*
/ā/	say	(the name of the letter *a*)
/ä/	not	(the sound made when the doctor tells you to say "ah")
/ō/	so	(the name of the letter *o*)
/ü/	too	(the exclamation of delight "ooh!")

Say each of the above vowel sounds in the order given to note (1) the opening of the jaw from /ē/ to /ā/ to /ä/, and (2) the closing of the jaw from /ä/ to /ō/ to /ü/.

Is the jaw lower for /ē/ or far /ä/?

Is the jaw lower for /ä/ or for /ü/?

Say the five vowel sounds in order again to note (1) the decreased lip spreading from /ē/ to /ā/ to /ä/ and (2) the increased lip rounding from /ä/ to /ō/ to /ü/.

Are the lips spread more for /ē/ or for /ä/?

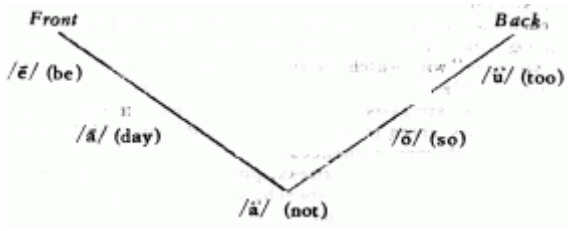
Are the lips rounded more for /ä/ or for /ü/?

Say the five vowel sounds in order again to note the shifting of the tongue hump (the spot where the tongue approaches the roof of the mouth) from front to back. Or, using a mirror to note the movement of the tongue hump from the front teeth toward the throat in saying /ē/, /ā/, /ä/.

Is the tongue hump shifted toward the throat on going from /ē/ to /ā/? From /ē/ to /ä/?
For which sound is the tongue humped closer to the throat, /ē/ or /ü/? For /ō/ or /ü/?
Which are the front vowel sounds, /ē/ and /ā/ or /ō/ and /ü/?
Which vowel sound is made mid-way between /ē/ and /ā/, and /ō/ and /ü/?

The five fundamental vowel sounds are easily identified and a mastery of these is a good prerequisite to the study of other vowel sounds.

A graphic device called the Viëtor triangle is used to show the relationships between the five fundamental vowel sounds:



Say each word below to decide which vowel sound you hear. After each word, record the vowel sound you hear, using the pronunciation symbols. The first one is done for you.

Word	*Sound*	*Word*	*Sound*
mail	/a/	body	- – - -
flow	- – - -	cave	- – - -
piece	- – - -	key	- – - -
swamp	- – - -	sew	- – - -
shoe	- – - -	rude	- – - -
they	- – - -		

Spelling Guides to Vowel Sounds

The need for updating the spellings of vowel sounds has been emphasized by Charles Kenneth Thomas:

Since Anglo-Saxon times, English vowels have changed their quality more completely than have those of most European languages. Changes in spelling have not, however kept pace with the changes in sound. As a result, spelling is an even less satisfactory guide to vowel phonemes than to consonants. (*An introduction to the Phonetics of American English*, Second Edition, The Ronald Press, 1958, p. 60.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 p5 in the printed version]

4. Tense and Lax Vowels, by Emmett Albert Betts, Ph.D, LL.D.

One of the characteristics of English pronunciation is relative muscular tension which produces phonemic distinction, as in *b(ea)t-b(i)t.* Tension causes three types of differentiation:
1. The tense vowel (e.g., *s(ea)t is* slightly longer than the lax vowel (e.g., s(i)t).
2. Tongue position is slightly higher for the tense (e.g., *m(oo)n*) than the lax vowel (e.g., *t(oo)k).*
3. A slight *rise* in tongue position for a tense vowel (e.g., *c(oa)t)* during pronunciation tends to produce a diphthongal allophone contrasting with a monothongal allophone (e.g., *c(au)ght).*

All vowel sounds require some activity of the whole tongue. However, one part of the tongue may be more active than another part.

Muscle tension is only one basis for classifying vowel sounds. Other classifications include (1) place of articulation (e.g., front or back of mouth) and (2) tongue position (e.g., high-tongue position of *s(ee)* and lower tongue position of *m(e)t.*

Tense and Lax Vowels

Vowel sounds are made with the tongue muscles either tense or lax. Differences in tension of the tongue muscles are accompanied by tension in certain other muscles.

First, this muscular tension can be felt by placing the fingers gently under the jaw and behind the chin. Alternate between the phonation of /ē/ to /i/ and /ā/ to /ē/ to note the differences in the muscle tension.

Second, the muscular tension may be observed in a mirror. The muscles bulge and the point of the larynx rises when the tense vowels are phonated.

Vowels used for testing tension of the tongue and adjacent muscles include:

Tense		*Lax*	
Sound	*Key Word*	*Sound*	*Key Word*
/ē/	*beat*	/i/	*sit*
/ā/	*bait*	/e/	*bet*
/ü/	*moon*	/u/	*took*
/ō/	*coat*	/o/	*law*
			slightly tense
		/ə/	*cut, banana*

These vowels tend to be lax: /a/ *cat,* /a/ *not.*

Tests: Initial Vowels Versus Initial Consonants

Articles *a* and *an*

The indefinite articles *a* and *an* are used to test vowels and consonants. In the system of language, article a /ə/ is used before consonants: *a book, a cook, a spoon, a quack,* and so on. It is also used before semi-consonants, sometimes called semi-vowels, /y/ and /mil: *a yacht, a yard, a year, a wafer, a wager, a waste, a wave,* and so on. It will be noted, too, that *a is* used before /yü/, sometimes called "long u": *a union, a ukulele.*

The article *an* /ən/ is used before vowels: *an apple, an eagle, an itch, an ocean, an ulcer.*

Sometimes *an* is misused before *union, uniform,* and other words beginning with /'yü/ because the writer does not know that these words begin with the consonant /y/.

Dropping the *h* in *honor* /'an-ər/, and keeping it in *history* /'his-tə-rē/ has been a source of confusion. When the *h is* silent, *an* is used before the vowel. When the h is pronounced, as in *history,* a is *used.*

Article *the*
Usually the word *the* is unstressed, as in a phrase, and, therefore, is pronounced /thə/, as in

The red book
The book is red.

In the above expressions, the word *the* is incidental to the other words in the constructions; to stress it would detract from the prominence of the other ideas.

Usually the unstressed /thə/ is used before consonants, as in

the bat
the cat
the hat

Likewise, the unstressed */the/* or */thi/* are used before vowels, as in

the apple
the elephant
the island
the outer space
the union

Rarely is *the* pronounced */'thē/, as* in this sentence when Dr. Smith is thought to be without equal:

Meet *the* Dr. Smith.

Or, in this sentence, meaning a particular or special place

This is *the* place.

Implication
Teach the child to read orally in a conversational tone, using the general melody, or intonation, of word groups. This emphasis on over-all intonation when he is reading at or below his instructional level results in rhythmical and meaningful reading rather than in dull, meaningless, word-by-word reading.

Unstressing is as important as stress in word groups; it makes possible reading by structures – comprehending the organization of ideas shaped by syntactic structure.

Summary
Before vowels, these unstressed pronunciations are used in connected speech:

/ən/	*an apple*
/the/ or /thi/	*the ox*
/tu/	*to Oxford*

Before consonants, these unstressed pronunciations are used in connected speech:

/ə/	*a cot*
/thə/	*the cat*
/tə/	*to town*

For special emphasis on rare occasions, stressed *the* is pronounced */'thē/.*

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 pp6–10 in the printed version]

5. English Orthography as Conspicuous Consumption, by Abraham F. Citron, Ph.D.*

* Wayne State Univ, Dept of Educ. Socio., Detroit, Mich.
Reprinted from *Nat'l Directory of Sociology of Education, 1976.*

I. Power Groups and Inefficient Orthography

How does it happen that a technological society, proud of its know-how, saddles itself with a miserably inefficient orthographic system reflecting gapping cultural lags?

Spelling today is an aspect of the conspicuous consumption life-pattern of middle and upper classes. After all, from the dawn of writing to pre-modern times, who ever thought that slaves, peasants or common people should read or write? From the inventions of writing right up to Luther and Gutenberg (in the West) letters were a part of the life-styles of leisure classes to the manner born. Clergy, nobles, warriors, land owners had time and tutors enough to get through the complexities of the system. Not only was it no handicap for these classes that spelling, writing, reading were complex and confusing, it was a distinct advantage, for such difficulties aided in keeping the lower classes from encroaching on privileged preserves. Written language was not patented for the poor nor handed down for common folk.

Since middle classes have become powerful and literate, they have taken over the attitudes of upper classes in utilizing literacy and skill in letters as a mark of status, and they have taken their place with upper classes as guardians of the quality and purity of the language. In general, the children of middle and upper class parents achieve some mastery of the written system, and, in general, the children of the poor have much more trouble with the system and many more of them fail to achieve a practical, operational level of skill. As long as the system works for the powerful, it is easy to take the posture, which is common, that those who do not master the system are either "slow" or "unmotivated" or both.

It is the upper and middle-class parents who have the time, money, education, institutions and literate life-styles to surround their children with literate models, literate attention, literate peers, literate fun, literate expectation, literate opportunity and encouragement, encouragement of course, toward literate careers.

If common words such as 'would', 'could', 'through', 'photograph', 'knife', 'receive', 'leisure', 'light', 'knowledge', are examined dispassionately as functional tools, it will become obvious that forms such as these are designed for the use of well-to-do people who have time to play the complex, double-crossing learning games that these words require. Comparable to them are the huge, costly, inefficient, status-conferring autos possessed as much for show as go. Both the inflated, misformed words and the inflated, plush autos are toys of the leisure classes. [1]

So accustomed to it have we become that we do not perceive our spelling as deceptive, inconsistent, clumsy, frustrating and wasteful, but it is, and especially so to children. Our spelling devours study for years, squandering teachers' time and energy, blocks and frustrates children, renders writing more onerous and reading more difficult, strings out our words and inflates every cost of written communication. **Our forbidding spelling is one of the basic sources of academic discouragement and failure.**

II. Two Experiments with Phonemic Spelling

To obtain some data on student reactions to phonemic and traditional spelling of the same words, 621 sixth graders were tested in the Detroit metropolitan area. These were students in 26 different classes in nine schools located in inner city, outer city and suburban areas. Seven words were used as follows:

traditional spelling	*phonemic spelling*
believe	beleev
height	hyt
photograph	fotograf
receive	reseev
through	thru
tongue	tung
weigh	wa

(More strictly phonemic forms, 'bēlēv', 'hīt', 'rēsēv', were not used because extra time would have been needed in explanation.)

These words (in traditional spelling) were known to the students and many knew the traditional spelling of several before the test took place. Procedure was to indicate an experiment in spelling which had nothing to do with their school grades. The words were put on the board in traditional form; each was read aloud and used by a student in a sentence. Seven minutes were used to discuss and examine the spelling of the seven words. They were then erased and the students wrote them from dictation. Pencils were then put down and papers turned over. The phonemic forms were then worked out with the students and put on the board. Exactly as with the traditional forms, seven minutes were used to examine and discuss the phonemic forms. They were then erased and written by the students from dictation.

On the traditional forms, 1481 words were misspelled; on the phonemic, 764. The phonemic forms reduced student errors by almost half, or 48%. Statistical tests indicate that results such as these may be expected by chance less than one time in a thousand.

A second result is the sharp increase in the number of perfectly spelled lists, which was 192, or 31%, in the traditional forms, but jumped to 332, or 53%, in the phonemic forms. The phonemic forms encourage mastery because once a student gets the idea of spelling as the word sounds ("intuitive" spelling that all children use at one time or another), the words fall into a reliable pattern. If all students who missed no words or only one word on the traditional lists are combined, these total 301, or 48%; but when this is done for the phonemic lists, the total is 466, or 75%. The phonemic forms represent a system that greatly stimulates mastery.

What happens, in a test like this, to the spellers who have the most trouble with the traditional forms, that is, to the poorer spellers? If we define the poorer spellers as those who missed three or more of the traditional forms, they constitute 248, or 39%. On the phonemic forms, this group shrinks to 109, or 17% of the total.

There is, of course, Hawthorne effect in these results; the students were playing a new and interesting game. Even so, the traditional forms were familiar to them and the phonemic forms were new, and exposure time was only seven minutes.

In order to obtain data on the reaction of students to phonemic spelling over a longer time period, two suburban Detroit-area sixth grade classes were involved in a four-week experiment. The teachers volunteered their classes, and the students accepted the discussions and quizzes as part of

an experiment on phonemic spelling. The experimenter visited each class, one consisting of 21 students, the other of 22 students, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week, for a period of 25 to 40 minutes.

The first week was used for orientation, introduction, and explanation of the basic principles. (For example, in phonemic spelling all c's are hard.) On Monday they were given a list of 20 words in both forms and told that they would be quizzed on these forms on Friday. Although they had not formally studied these words before, they were taken from their spelling workbook, and certainly a number of the students knew the spelling of several words used before this experiment was begun. Words such as 'acre', 'believe; 'circle', 'chemistry', 'disappear', were used. Students were asked to write the words first in traditional form, then turn papers over. The words were then re-dictated and written in phonemic form. On this quiz 132 errors were made on traditional forms and 425, or 222% more, on the phonemic forms.

During the next week, the students were given only two words at each session but the words were selected so that, in all probability, few students would be familiar with their spelling before their presentation. During that week the following words were presented;

Mon.	Wed.	Fri.
ionosphere ionusfir	believable bēlēvubl	concession cunsesyn
acquiesce acwēes	caffeine cafēn	champagne shampān

Each word was defined, used in sentences by two students, and analyzed by syllables and spelling. Approximately three minutes per word were expended on each form. The students scored 80 errors (80 words missed) on the traditional forms and 56 errors on the phonemic forms, or 30% fewer errors on the phonemic forms.

During the next week, the students worked on three words on Monday, four words on Wednesday, and five words on Friday, a total of 12. On these they scored 247 errors on the traditional forms and 176 errors on the phonemic forms, or 28% fewer errors on the phonemic forms.

During the final week (Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 1975) the students waked on seven words each day, a total of 21. Scores were 477 errors on traditional forms and 284 errors on phonemic forms, or 40% fewer errors on the phonemic forms.

Total errors for the three weeks following the orientation week were 804 traditional and 506 phonemic, or 37% fewer errors on the phonemic forms.

It should be noted that if a pronunciation symbol was omitted in the phonemic forms, the word was marked in error. The placing of pronunciation symbols proved difficult to remember for some students. If the words are counted as correct in which one pronunciation symbol was omitted, all else being correct, the phonemic-form errors drop to 422, giving 47% fewer errors than the traditional forms, which is almost the same result as in the seven-minute experiment. All differences reported are significant at the 1% level.

A further interesting result is in the number of perfect papers: 113 for traditional and 165 for phonemic. (This is the normal count result for the traditional lists in which omission of any letter, improper order of a letter, or an improper addition of a letter, are scored as errors. The above conditions are also observed with the phonemic lists. In addition, if any pronunciation symbol is missing or improperly added, the ward is scored in error.) Under these conditions, the students scared 31.5 % more perfect papers in the phonemic forms. This again demonstrates the move toward mastery which was evident in the seven-minute experiment.

III. Etymological and Lexical Objections Do Not Stand Examination

Pedagogical objections to spelling reform are essentially etymological and lexical. The etymological case is that information carried in the spelling or derivation of a word is helpful, can enrich the reader's insight by revealing original root, components, and original meaning of an item. But in the vast majority of cases, the non-phonemic spelling need not be retained in order to retain the root and root meaning. For example, both the Greek 'psyche' (soul or spirit) and 'ology' (discussing or study) of 'psychology' can be retained in the spelling 'sīcalujē (si) (calujē).

Secondly, many of the so-called etymological spellings are erroneous. The "Greek" 'ph' was never used by the Greeks but was tacked on by the Romans to show that the words were imported. Ours is the only orthography which continues to drag around these phony 'ph's. Furthermore, someone long ago attributed 'delight' to 'light; but the true origin is the French 'deliter.' Yet, we continue to drag the 'gh.' In carrying these (and our spelling is littered with them) we are mis-educating our children.'

Thirdly, there is a class of etymological hand-me-downs that add so little that they should be dropped. An example is the 'gh' form, originally used to designate the old German gutteral, not heard in English speech for 600 to 800 years. [3] Letters such as these add nothing but the clue as to language of origin for words such as light', 'might', 'through', and should be dropped. Further, there is a large class of words, of which 'reign' is a good example (Latin, 'regere', to rule), in which phonemic spelling would obscure the Latin base, but since the meaning is the same in both languages, little is lost.

Finally, there is a group of words of which 'bouquet' (middle French, bosquet, forest or thicket) is an example, in which phonemic spelling 'bōcā', would obscure information on original meaning.

Thus, the etymological case becomes four classes: a large class of words in which original meaning is maintained; a large class in which the 'etymological' spelling is in error; a large class in which little or no meaning is carried by non-phonemic letters; a small class in which some original meaning would be obscured.

The lexical argument holds that the 'c' in 'muscle' must be maintained to signal the reader that 'muscle' is related to 'muscular', that we should maintain the 'o' in 'mode' and 'modular' regardless of pronunciation to show the reader the root and derivation relationship. [4] This appeal will not bear examination. At least 50% of the cases of root and derivations could well be maintained in phonemic forms; for example, 'sane' and 'sanity' would appear as 'sān' and 'sanitē.'

More fundamentally, there is strong evidence that readers are not dependent on similar spellings for a sense of the relatedness of words. First, illiterate persons use related words which are in their vocabularies as well as do literates. Second, a number of words in English are spelled similarly and hence falsely suggest a relationship which doesn't exist, yet the reader or listener is not fooled by it. Third, a number of these related words are not spelled to show the relationship, but no difficulties are experienced with them: reason-rational; mind-mental; male-masculine. Fourth, many words, although not derivational, are closely related in meaning. They neither sound nor look alike but this does not hinder us from recognizing and using their relationship. These are pairs such as: I and me, up and down, left and right, right and wrong, husband and wife, child and adult, circle and round. Fifth, we also have a number of pairs of words which look exactly alike but which have little or no relationship: 'bear' the burden – the 'bear' growled; send me a 'bill' – the bird's 'bill'; shed a 'tear' – 'tear' the paper; blow 'wind' – 'wind' the toy, etc. Our sense of the relatedness of wards comes through general usage – speaking, hearing, writing, reading. It becomes clear that the particular spelling of related words adds or detracts little to our powers of noting or using these relationships. It is a psychic assault on children to demand that wards like 'muscle' be spelled in this find-the-hidden-letters-game way. The word ought to be spelled in a clear, straightforward way as 'musl.'

This will allow children to invest trust in the word's construction, and will detract not a whit from their ability to relate to words derived from it.

IV. "The Learners and Users Vs. The Enrichers"

In an alphabetic system, non-phonemic or mis-phonemic letters pointing to historical roots or derivational relationships or whatever, have no business in a word. The nonphonemic spellings of yesteryear belong in dictionaries and reference works. The basic plan of an alphabetic writing system is to assemble letters to represent the way a word is pronounced. Despite irregularities and inconsistencies, this is the clear intent of the system.

The etymological and lexical spellers rejoice that our orthography has "developed and become enriched" beyond the mere representation of sound. The derivation of 'knight' is "Old English, 'cniht', akin to Old High German, 'kneht', youth or military follower." [6] The word carries the hoary, long-outmoded gutteral 'gh'. Thus, the ward as we have it lettered is a representation of its history. A phonemic form would render this word as 'nit', precisely according to the phonemes required.

The issue is between those who want to use written words as clean-cut sound signals and those who want to use them in addition as storage cabinets. The learners and users hold that the aura or medievality of 'knight' does not belong in the spelling, but in the idea, and that 'nit' can carry with it all the chivalry, kings, and castles of the clumsier, more difficult form. The learners and users claim that alphabetic writing is a code, not an artist's canvas to paint pictures of other cultures with letters. Everyone pays for the luxury of making our words storehouses of their history and unneeded lexical maps. But the learners pay especially dearly.

V. Will Consistent Spelling Aid Reading?

Experience with I.T.A.

The view of a number of linguists and reading specialists is that spelling reform will make little or no positive difference in the general level of reading skills. [7] This view is accepted by the educational establishment. But it is based on nothing but theory; no one has any hard evidence. The closest to hard evidence is the extensive experience in Britain and this country with I.T.A. (Initial Teaching Alphabet). The data emanating from such experience show that children learn to read more quickly and easily when using I.T.A. Also, with I.T.A. fewer "problem readers" develop. [8] (The big reason inhibiting the growth of the I.T.A. system is its use of 20 new and combined graphemes for a total alphabet of 44 characters.) The best evidence currently available points to the probability that a consistent orthographic system will improve reading skills.

The Law of Consistency

To be effectively learned, any cognitive content or skill must have a consistent pattern. We never waver in teaching children right from left; we never waver in teaching the order of the days of the week or the months of the year. We never waver in teaching that one and one are two. Imagine the confusion of children if we told them that two and two are four, except when they are five, or sometimes seven and a half. Everyone would say, "You can't use an inconsistent numbering system."

Yet this is exactly what we use in our letter system. Nowhere else in all academic training do we approach the inconsistency that we force on children in our orthographic system. For a total of 41 to 44 sounds in the language (phonemes), we use 561 different spellings; for our 26 letters we use 92 different pronunciations. [9] A computer-aided study at Stanford University showed that, using 51 phonemes, plus stress, plus position in the word, the spelling of the phoneme could be predicted in 80% of the cases. The spelling of the whole word, however, could be predicted in only 48% of the cases. [10] If we moved to as consistent a spelling pattern as possible, using our present alphabet, the held of spelling would be revolutionized, and there is a great probability that a marked general improvement in reading skills would result.

VI. Conclusion

Our current English orthography is highly traditional. Having been formed and used as a part of the power equipment of ruling classes, it represents, in a democratic, technological society, an immense cultural lag. Whether intended or not, this needlessly complex system functions to maintain middle and upper class holds on privilege, opportunity and power. The imposition of these forms acts as a limitation to the distribution of academic opportunity and constitutes a case of massive psychic child abuse.

The etymological and lexical objections to reform do not stand examination. Every child in a complex, technical society has a birthright to a consistent system of word construction. We ought to move forthwith toward the long-needed reform of our child-defeating orthography. Moreover, such reform will save us over the years billions of dollars in time, energy, paper, typing, reproduction, and printing costs.

References

1. Veblen, Thorstein. *The Theory of the Leisure Class,* Mentor Books. The Viking Press, (first pub. 1899) New York, 1953.

There is, of course, another root of our disinclination to examine critically our orthography. This is the reluctance to change habits which have become so comfortable. A graduate student put it: "I've learned one system, and I'll be dammed if I'll learn another." We are so trained to the crooked stick that a straight one appears weird.

2. Mont Follick. *The Case for Spelling Reform.* Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, London, 1965, p. 22.

A further note on erroneous etymology: One of the chief culprits in foisting false etymology on innocent generations was Dr. Samuel Johnson who, knowing nothing of the Germanic tongues and nothing of the process of language development, was dependent on contemporary "sources." when forced to choose among differing versions of a word for his *Dictionary* (published in 1755), he flew by the seat of his pants. The result was blunder after blunder in attributing source. Our spelling today, straight facedly follows most of Johnson's bungling shots in the dark.

3. W. Nelson Francis. "The English Language and its History," in *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary,* G & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass, 1975, p. 23a.
4. Typical of the lexical approach is that of Carol Chomsky in, "Reading, Writing and Phonology," *Harvard Educational Review,* Vol. 40, No. 2, May, 1972, pp. 289-307.
5. For a discussion of the origins of writing and differing types of writing, see Paul R. Hanna, Richard E. Hodges, Jean S. Hanna, *Spelling: Structure and Strategies.* Houghton, Mifflin Co, Boston, 1971, pp. 3-29.
6. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Op.* cit., p. 537.
7. Noam Chomsky & Morris Halle. *The Sound Pattern of English.* Harper & Row, New York, 1968, p. 49.

Kenneth S. Goodman, "Orthography in a Theory of Reading Instruction," *Elementary English, Vol.* 49, No. 8, Dec. 1972, pp. 1259-1264. This position is implied in this article. In a conversation in his office at Wayne Univ. 21, Feb, 1975, he was quite specific on this point.

8. John Downing. *Evaluating the Initial Teaching Alphabet.* Cassell & Co, London, 1967.

Sir James Pitman & John St. John. *Alphabets and Reading.* Pitman Pub. Corp, Nev. York, London, 1969, pp. 147-210.

9. Godfrey Dewey. *English Spelling: Roadblock to Reading.* Teacher's College Press, New York, 1971, p. 6.
10. Pichard E. Hoges and E. Hugh Rudorf, "Searching Linguistics for Cues for the Teaching of Spelling," *Elementary English, Vol.* 4, No. 3, May, 1965, p. 529.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 pp9–12 in the printed version]

6. SAMPLE OF THE INITIAL TEACHING FORM OF WORLD ENGLISH SPELLING

In the Summer 1973 issue of this Bulletin, excerpts from my father's autobiography were presented as an example of modified World English Spelling. It seems appropriate now during the Bicentennial's emphasis upon the past, to publish additional selections, again transliterated into the modified form of WES as set forth in Godfrey Dewey's *WES for Better Reading and Writing* [1] This variant of the more strictly phonemic permanent reform style of WES is intended for use only as an initial medium by pupils who will later learn traditional orthography.
Helen Bonnema Bisgard

boihuud difficultyz in the 1890'z
bie Harry M. Veenstra

our voi.ej to *america, when ie woz seven yeerz oeld, woz on wun ov the vesselz ov the *north *american *steemship *cumpany. wee left the *netherlandz urly in *aepril, and after 21 daez arrievd in *nue *york. after a long, sloe traen trip to *grand *rapidz, *mishigan, our family woz welcumd bie relativz hoo provieded a modest hoem.

ie woz soon enroelld in the naeborhuud scool. it woz thaer that ie becaem afraed ov a teecher, for such an odd reezon that ie shall tell sumthing about mie paerents. faather and muther wur kiend, considerat peepl, and ie doen't recaull ever heering faather speek harshly to muther, but thaer woz littl outward displae ov affecshon. ie never sau faather kiss or caress muther. whot nou seemz still mor straenj iz that ie can't re caull muther ever kissing mee. aull the peepl ie nue from north *netherlandz wur.the saem.

hou.ever, *miss *kwael, mie second-room teecher, often kisst the children, boiz az well az gurlz, and ie woz dethly afraed that sum dae ie miet bee subjected to that huemiliaeting ekspeeriens. fortuenatly ie woz spaerd. sins ie reely shuud hav been in a room with oelder puepilz, ie woz soon promoeted to the fifth room when ie had becum mor familyar with the *ingglish langgwej.

a fue daez laeter when ie caem back from lunch and enterd scool eeting a big, joosy appl, mie nue teecher, at the upstaerz window ov our classroom saw mee. az ie enterd the room she sed seveerly, "whot did yoo doo with the cor, *harry?" wee wur, ov cors, forbidden to throe eny trash on the florz. "ie aet it." that surpriezd hur. whot shee didn't noe woz that wee didn't get a nies, big appl every dae, and when wee did, the cor woz not to be throen awae, but to be eeten.

in a paetriotic holidae proegram, ie woz with a groop ov boiz, eech ov hoom reprezented wun ov the prezidents the *uenieted *staets had up to that tiem. *benjamin *harrison, hoo woz then prezident, woz the 23d to hoeld offis, soe thaer must hav been 23 boiz partisipaeting. thae wur aul in mie room, which indicaets that eether wee had a larj class or thaer woz a preponderans ov boiz.

ie represented *jon *kwinsy *adamz, and liek the uther boiz wor a whiet and bloo sash across mie chest. ie resieted: "it woz duering the for yeerz ie woz prezident that the furst raelroed woz bilt, aulsoe the furst steemboet crosst the oeshan." aulthoe ie thaut ie shouted loud, mie oeldest sister, hoo caem to heer mee speek, sed shee cuudn't understand a wurd ie sed – too soft, sed shee. ie had rehurst it soe often at hoem, ie felt shuur she noo it bie hart and must hav understuud mee!

wun yeer wee had a teecher hoo woz a strict disiplinaerian. hee had a streek ov croo.elty in him. a smaull bruuk ran back ov the bilding, and in the im eedi.et naeborhuud woz a blacksmithy. duering

a resess anuther boi and ie sau discarded neer the streem the frunt part ov an oeld buggy, the aksl and the wheelz, with the shafts still attacht to the aksl. wee sat on this aksl and perswaeded a cupl ov our classmaets to puul us akross the streem. eether acsidentally, az thae claemd, or purposly, az wee beleevd, thae dumpt us into the creek. wee caem out wet to the skin. it woz waurm wether and wee wur not uncumfortabl, but when our scoolmaster noetist our condishon, wee wur in for a spanking, for wee had been strictly forbidden to plae in the creek. thoe tecnically wee wur innosent, hee considerd us gilty and administerd whot hee deemd proper punishment. hee had on hiz desk a wuuden mallet, the common gavel uezd bie chaermen to caull meetingz to order. grasping this instrument and maeking mie pal stoop oever, the scoolmaster started beeting him unmursifully. with pants wet and strecht tiet, it must hav been very paenful, but the lad woz stubborn and proud, and did not wont to be a crie baeby. our teecher apparrently had desieded hee shuud crie, soe that it becaem a test ov enduerans until the boi fienally broek doun.

nou caem mie turn. profiting from the uther'z ekspeeri.ens, ie let out a loud belloe with the furst bloe. this satisfied the teecher, or purhaps hee woz sick and tierd ov the hoel bizness. at eny raet, hee let mee off rather eezy.

when ie woz thurteen yeerz oeld mie faather rented a stor and stockt it with paents and waullpaeper. hee reealiezd that if hiz bizness ventuer wur to be a sucsess, hee must uez az much publisity az hee cuud get. hee had a lot ov handbillz printed for caerful distribueshon. sins mie oelder brutherz wur helping mie faather with the paenting and paeperhanging, the task ov delivering the sheets woz plaest in mie handz. ie thaut mie brutherz' wurk woz eezy and that ie woz given aull the unplezant tasks. hou.ever thae did not luuk at it that wae and constantly toeld mee ie woz a laezy, guud for nuthing. ie suppoez oelder boiz often hav that opinyon about the yungest chield.

it seemd az if ie wuud never get rid ov thoez surcuelarz, but eventueally ie hit upon whot, at the moement, seemd a very neet solueshon. wun afternoon az ie woz starting out on mie detested wurk, ie stoppt to luuk at the nue hous beeing bilt nekst dor. not seeing the carpenterz thaer, ie cazhueally waukt up to the second flor whaer ie discuverd an oepening between the outsied waull and flor. it seemd maed to order for the rest ov mie handbillz. soe, without further thaut, ie kwikly droppt them in. noe sooner had thae disappeerd from siet than ie reealiezd the enormity ov mie criem. for meny yeerz ie hoept sumthing wuud happen to the hous which wuud eliminaet the possibility ov thoez billz beeing found, but the last tiem ie woz in *grand rapidz the hous woz still thaer. Noe freewae haz been constructed neerbie, but if ie ever heer ov wun beeing plannd, ie shall put in a bid for the hous and regaen posseshon ov thoez handbillz. mie nefue still haz the paent and waullpaeper bizness on *west *lenard street and cuud distribuet the anteek paeperz az sooveneerz.

wee heer a lot about tuf gangz nou-a-daez, but thaer wur sum then too. in our naeborhuud woz wun groop ov tufs caulld the "corner gang" becauz thaer hangout woz at the corner ov *alpien *avenue and *west *lenard street, the moest important corner in our aerea. often wee yunger boiz wuud see ten ov them eech toss in a diem to bie an aeth ov a barrel ov beer. wun ov the strongest ov them wuud hoist the keg to hiz shoelderz and leed them to the "boenyard" for sum ourz ov drinking and card plaeing. the hillz thaer wur cuverd with oek treez, and it wuz a nies shaedy plaes outsied ov the sity limits whaer *richmond *park iz nou situeaeted. plezant az it woz, noe wun els woz liekly to disturb the gang when thae wur carouzing thaer. the reezon the "boenyard" woz soe naemd iz that it held shalloe graevz for ded horsez and couz. the ground woz puer sand liek the doonz on *laek *mishigan, wurthless for agricultuer, but eezily scoopt out for dumping purposez. the absorbent soil woz aulsoe uezd for "huny dumping."

ie shall diegress from mie story to eksplaen this prosess. in thoez daez thaer woz a privy loecaeted at the back ov eech hous, eeven in the sity. the task ov remooving the maloederus contents woz

performd bie men dubbd "huny-dumperz" hoo peeriodically caem throo the naeborhuud with a big wagon on which wur a duzen larj metal barrelz with clamp-on cuverz.

hanging on the back end ov the wagon, swinging on a roep, woz a metal pael filld with a smoeldering, smoeking mateerial smelling liek burning ragz, prezoomably to cuver up the stench emanaeting from the barrelz. theez scavenjerz wuud tip oever the privy, then uezing long-handld dipperz transfer the refuez to thaer barrelz. ie can still vizhuealiez that wagon with horses at a trot, the smoeking smuj pot at the reer, leeving behiend the indescriebably obnokshus oeder. up to the hillz outsied ov the sity thae went. at the boenyard thae furst leveld off a hilltop, then constructed a fuut hie diek around the flattend aerea in which to dump thaer loedz.

wun dae, a fue ov us yunger boiz wur eksploring in the neerbie wuudz pretending to spie out the hangout ov the corner gang, when wun felloe sau a big, broun, flat invieting surfes. not awaer ov its naetuer, hee started to wauk on it. hee sank throo the crust. fortuenatly the muck woz not deep. hee woz baerfuuted, and found a nies, cleen spring-fed streem neerbie:

but to return to mie account ov the "corner gang." wun summer eevning az the roudy, noizy bunch woz congregaeted in frunt ov the drugstor, the tenants on the flor abuv, whooz windoez wur oepen becauz ov the heet, becaem soe egzasperaeted with the roudyz that thae emptyd the contents ov the ever-handy slop pael throo the windoe on thaer hedz. from then on, the felloez met sum uther plaes. ie can't help wundering whot wuud happen if sum prezent dae tenant shuud uez this method of dispursing unwonted loitererz. probably a dethdeeling bom wuud cum hiz wae.

a complaent agenst the corner gang woz that the felloez becaem obseen when thae wur drunk. ie felt pursonally indignant about intoksicaeshon becauz ov an insident which occurrd on a *nue *yeer'z dae.

annueally on that holidae it woz aulmoest a ritueal to goe from hous to hous wishing peepl a happy nue yeer. adults confiend thoez vizits to hoemz ov frends, but kids did not discriminaet in that fashon eny mor than prezent dae children when thae goe out on *halloween for treets. uezhueally wee wuud bee given applz, cuukyz, and candy, but at wun plaes the adults wur beeing survd a very intoksikaeting drink maed ov whisky to which raezinz had been added several daez befor. sum ov the men practically forst us to drink this poetent stuff. the raezinz didn't taest bad, but the whisky woz sumthing els! when ie got hoem ie woz, for the wun and oenly tiem in mie lief, just plaen drunk, and woz maed fun ov az ie reeld around. ie felt very mizerable until mie stumac fienally rebelld and rid it.

sum occurrenses duering mie boihuud gaev mee an understanding ov hou wun mae becum involvd in criem bie aulmoest imperseptibl steps. in the hous nekst dor to ourz, a larj family moovd in from a farm. it woz a happy-goe-lucky outfit. ie luvd to goe thaer becauz ov the lack ov restricshonz. wee rompt on the bedz az if thae wur tampoleenz, aet cuukyz whenever wee wisht, and on baeking dae wur given sliesez ov waurm bred fresh out ov the uven spred with butter and shuugar. thaer wur aet children just az in our family, three ov them boiz. ie doen't recaull that the oeldest wun ever did enything eksept shoot sparroez to sell to the sity for 2¢ a hed. sparroez wur plentyfuul, hee woz an ekspurt shot, and mae hav maed az much az moest ov the men in the naeborhuud. wurkerz urnd oenly $1.00 to $1.50 a dae.

anuther boi, *peeter, a yeer oelder than ie, woz mie cloesest chum until a nue boi hiz aej, *jon, moovd into our naeborhuud. hee woz a hansom lad with curly haer, winning pursonality, very popuelar with the gurlz, and soon displaest mee in *peeter'z esteem. wee formd a threesom, but ie felt liek a tag-along and wozn't happy about it – jelus, very liekly. *jon got an after-scool job helping in a neerbie drugstor oend and manajd bie an elderly, whiet-haerd man. wun dae *peeter

handed mee sum pennyz and nicklz that hee and *jon wur saeving for sumthing, and askt mee az a faevor to keep this for them. hiz rekwest sounded reezonabl to mee, straenj az that nou seemz. ie woz pleezd that thae entrusted this muny to mee. ie hid it in our attic. nou and then *peeter added sumthing to this fund.

duering summer vacaeshon when *jon wurkt every dae at the drugstor, *peeter askt mee to goe thaer with him to get sum candy. when wee reecht the stor, *peeter waeted outsied until hee sau the oeld man goe to hiz living kwarterz back ov the stor for hiz afternoon cup ov tee. then wee went in. *peeter did not speek but meerly pointed at the candy hee wonted. *jon handed it to him. sielently wee went out. then *peeter toeld mee that if ie ever wonted eny candy ie cuud goe in and doo az hee had dun. ie must confess that ie went in a cupl ov tiemz when the oeld jentlman wuz out. then ie started to wunder about the muny bizness and becaem afraed. fortuenatly *peeter askt me for the muny soon after that. ie woz glad to be rid ov it when ie lurnd that *jon had taeken it out ov the till. hee had noe difficulty steeling it, for at that tiem storz did not hav cash rejisterz. larj establishments mae hav had a wae ov keeping recordz, but smaull plaesez liek this drug stor trusted thaer employeez or family clurks.

mie dad's stor woz conducted larjly on a cash and carry baesis eksept that when hee paented a hous hee often ekschaenjd guudz. sumtiemz the amount oed woz paed with baekery guudz, or guudz. it seemz to mee wee chaenjd milkmen mor often than enywun els. thaer wur several elderly men in our naeborhuud hoo kept a cou in thaer backyard. thae had a fue neerbie customerz and cuud wauk thaer root. uzhueally thae carryd thaer milk in a cupl ov canz and mezherd out to thaer customerz whotever amount woz desierd. milk woz not pastueriezd or bottld bie them – or bie the larjer daerryz eether. wee wuns had a milkman from a larj daery hoo droev up in hiz wagon, rang a loud bell, and hiz customerz wuud run out ov dorz with a contaener for the milk he pord into it. hee woz paed on the spot. practically everywun paed cash for everything eksept a maejor ietem such az a hoem. sins dad operaeted on a sort ov barter baesis, wun week wee miet hav *mister **schuur* (*dutch for barn) at our dor, nekst *mister **nieuwstraten* (nue streets) folloed bie **vroegindeweg* (urly in the pastuer), **vreugdenheuvel* (joiful hill), or **naaktgeborn* (born naked). theez wur aul actueal naemz ov our customerz.

the candy-steeling insident illustraets hou eezily and innosently wun can becum implicaeted in criem. if mie faather had lurnd ov it, he wuud hav turnd mee upsied doun and administerd stinging slaps with the soel ov hiz slipper, or if he considerd it a seerius offens, he wuud hav uezd the *klabots,* a devies uezd bie *dutch soeljerz to beet dust out ov thaer cloething. it had a siks-inch wuuden handl to which wur fasend a number ov 1/4" wied lether straps. thaer woz a bit ov family history connected with that *klabots.* faather'z oelder bruther woz a soeljer in the *dutch army. on the was to hiz poest in the *east *indeez he woz lost at see – acsidentally fell oeverbord, it woz suppoezd. sumhou hiz effects caem into faather'z pozzeshon. amung them woz this implement with mie uncl'z iedentificaeshon branded on the flat sied ov the handl. when faather administerd a spanking with this instrument mie boyish imajinaeshon liekend it to the scurjing inflicted in *biebl tiemz.

ie never haeted mie faather for "uezing the rod" when ie woz nauty. hee woz a guud, kiend, just man, and gaev punishment which ie very well nue woz dezurvd.

[1] 8-page leaflet available free upon request, from Phonemic Spelling Council, New York, NY, or Dr. Helen Bonnema Bisgard, Denver, CO.

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[Spelling Reform Anthology §3.3 pp48–54 in the printed version]
[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 pp13–18,1 in the printed version]

7. Viewpoints V.: on Spelling Reform, by Newell W. Tune

This, the fifth presentation of quotations from books on spelling reform, is offered as a sort of essay on the need for, value of, and hopes for an earnest effort at improving the relationship between letters in written word and the corresponding sounds of the spoken word. In each case, the author quoted had much more to say on the subject, but what has been selected is that which is the most pertinent, expressive and appropriate, and which stands by itself as a completed sequence of thoughts. Naturally such editing leaves some lack of continuity which did not occur in the original, but all too often today's reader cannot take the time to wade thru a hundred pages to get the germ of the idea which occurs, probably, on a page or two.

"Written communication is made possible by a language's orthography: the process of representing speech sounds in graphemes. This sound symbol process is a two-way circuit. Thus, the writer may translate his speech and/or thoughts into written symbols, and then read back to himself his transcription of the words spoken or the ideas in mind.

This sound-to-symbol and symbol-to-sound 'human circuit' does not necessarily imply a perfect one-to-one relationship; in the process of refining any communications code, there must necessarily be losses as well as gains. The longer the period of time during which a written language develops, the more likely there are to emerge certain inconsistencies between the meaningful sounds of the language (phonemes) and their graphic representations (graphemes).

Our American-English language is the product of historical development: speech habits change, resulting in adding a phoneme to a word here, dropping a phoneme from a word there, and slightly modifying a phoneme in other words. The original spelling grapheme representation of the sounds as earlier spoken) tends to persist even though the oral pattern changes, thus contributing a measure of inconsistency between our oral and our written language.

American-English is also the product of many borrowings from other languages in which the sound-to-letter system is different. In the process of adopting these foreign words, we often change the pronunciation and thereby lessen the consistency of spelling-to-sound originally present. But with all the changes in speech patterns and all the borrowings, American-English retains its alphabetical principle, a high percentage of the phonemes we utter in speaking are represented regularly by specific graphemes in our writing. It is a primary task of the speller to master the principles of our American-English system of writing. Just as the computer specialists must learn the machine language's capabilities and limitations, so also must the speller learn the capabilities and limitations of the written form of our communications system. It is the school's task to develop proficiency in encoding and decoding these graphic signals of our language."

Paul R. Hanna, Richard E. Hodges. "Spelling and Communications Theory," *Elementary English,* May, 1963.

"Proposals for a world language seem to be as old as civilization itself. The story of the Tower of Babel was probably popular long before Genesis was written. But most people have missed the purpose of the story. It was not intended to explain how language chaos began, but to emphasise that the chief obstacle to human progress and well being is difference in language. But even in those far off days people realised that without complete understanding cooperation was impossible.

But all natural languages are chaotic instruments. Built up by so many different peoples who always took the line of least resistance, with frequent borrowings from strangers, distorted by the slovenly, embroidered by the snobbish, misspelled, miswritten and misprinted, it is really amazing that there should be so much order as there is in many of them.

The task of bringing order out of chaos has been attempted by a great many tidy minded people. Having perhaps discovered the advantage of a methodically arranged library, they sought to do something similar with language. Ideas were classified, grouped and graded and to each was assigned letters or numbers in the hope of producing a new, strictly logical and almost mechanical means of communication. And having spent hours, if not years, at the task nothing happened. Their work was curious, perhaps even amusing to lookers on, but profitless. It could neither be sold or exchanged. It relieved nobody's troubles. Indeed its use would have imposed a considerable burden on the user. Hence, it failed. But at least, these pioneers stimulated others to attack the problem in a different direction.

Not only was language inventing the pastime of obscure amateurs, it attracted men who had made a name for themselves in other fields of learning – historians, mathematicians and philosophers; perhaps not so much as a means of communication as a scientific analysis of the flow of ideas.

Of course these reformers were regarded as cranks. Yet such great men as Descartes, Bishop Wilkins, Liebnitz and many others thought the experiment worth while – and we who respond to the same urge may take comfort from the thought that we are in such distinguished company.

The most important survivor, though, not necessarily the fittest, was Esperanto, the creation of Dr. Zamenhof, . . . which after much hard work succeeded in gaining a fair degree of popularity. That is to say, the name of Esperanto was known by every student – just as they knew the language of China. As for learning it, only a very small number of enthusiasts bothered to do that, and this was not because Esperanto proved to be unsatisfactory or difficult but because it is contrary to the nature of human beings to learn anything unless they are obliged or unless it offers them a definite advantage, usually in the shape of higher salaries or better business. Esperanto did neither.

This is an important point. It is for this reason that Esperanto, and indeed every other voluntary but unprofitable movement, has been a failure.

Reg Deans, *Universal language and Simplified Spelling.* (1954), Midlands Press, Leeds, England. pp.3–12.

In treating of the best manner of acquiring the orthography of our tongue, we ought first to ascertain the nature of its difficulties. We shall then be better prepared to decide what is remediable, and to devise the remedy.

I need not occupy any time to prove that the ability to spell with uniform correctness, is a rare possession amongst our people. It has not unfrequently been suggested that intelligence in the people is so necessary for the preservation of a Republican government, that no person should be allowed to vote who could not both read and write. If, however, the suggestion means that no persons should be allowed to vote but such as could write without failures in spelling, I tremble at the almost universal disfranchisement.

This almost universal illiteracy, in regard to spelling, seems to me to have two sources: – one, the inherent difficulty of the language itself, – the other, the manner in which, and the instruments by which, orthography is commonly taught. It is, indeed, contended by some that the whole, or

substantially the whole of our bad spelling, results from the untowardness and absurdity of the methods used in teaching. These objectors against present modes affirm that bad spelling is not a necessity, nor a thing of spontaneous growth, but a product wrought out laborously, and at a great expense of money and tribulation of spirit.

The spelling-book should have especial reference to the ease of the pupil, – to his facility in learning to spell and read. The pupil should not first be mistaught and then untaught, in order to be retaught, with the chance that the last two processes will never be performed. The native love of consistency or congruity in a child should not be obliterated or outraged by a perpetual succession of contradictions. He should be taught correctly at first, and then whatever new things are taught should be affiliated, as far as possible, to what is already known. . . .

After having repeated these letters and particles thousands of times, where the same sound is uniformly given to the same letter or combinations of letters, where each of the principle letters, in the rapidity of its changes from one sound to another, outdoes ventriloquism – where the first five vowels to which respectively he has been accustomed to give the same alphabetic sound, assume 29 different sounds, so that according to the doctrine of chances, it will happen only once in five or six times that he be correct, if he sounds them as he was taught; – where the 26 letters, and the some combinations of two or three of them assume hundreds of different sounds, without any clue by which to follow them as they glide from one to another; . . .

If it is a fact, as I believe observations will prove it to be, that false orthography is generally resolvable into an effort to use those letters whose alphabetic sound would come nearest to the sound of the word, then surely it is a very instructive fact. It shows that there has not been enough subsequent labor to enable the bad speller to unlearn what he was erroneously taught. . . Thus the knowledge of the *sounds* of the letters in the alphabet becomes an obstacle to the right pronunciation of words; and the more perfect the knowledge the greater the obstacle. The reward to the child for having thoroughly mastered his letters is, to have his knowledge of them cut up in detail, by a series of contradictions, just as fast as he brings it forward. . . In this way the child's previous knowledge of the alphabetic sounds of the letters misleads, four times in five; if he recollects them right, he will call them wrong, and be rebuffed; the more thoroughly he has learned and the more correct are his applications of the previous knowledge, the more infallibly he goes wrong.

Who has not seen the hapless child, when first carried from the alphabet into short words, after he finds that none of the letters with which he thought he was so well acquainted, will now answer their own names; but that all balk and tantalize him, and chatter in his face with unknown sounds, – who has not seen him gaze up in bewilderment into the teacher's face, with such a piteous and imploring look as would almost make statuary weep?

To elucidate the question, in what manner a spelling-book should be constructed to teach orthography merely, it is necessary to recur again, for a moment, to the structure of our language. This is so anomalous that no general rules can be devised, which correct spelling will not violate more times than it will obey. If we have rules, there must be almost as many rules as words, which belies the very definition of a rule. If our orthography, then, cannot be learned by rule, it must be learned by rote; for to learn and to remember the spelling of each word, as an individual, would be on almost interminable, if not an impossible process.

Horace Mann, "On Spelling Books," (190-?), pp2–30.

"It may be useful, however, to quote testimonials of a few practical men in order to show that this system of spelling (English) has really become one of the greatest national misfortunes swallowing up millions of money every year and blighting all attempts at nationa1 education.

I mean the misery endured by millions of children at school who might learn in one year, and with real advantage to themselves, what they now require four or five years to learn, and seldom succeed in learning after all."

Max Mueller, quoted in: Kyril Evans, *A Phonetic Alphabet for the English Language,* Griffin & Richmond Co, Hamilton, Ont. Canada, 1957, p.12.

". . . that I should explain why I, though by profession an etymologist, was not frightened by the spectre of phonetic spelling, while such high authorities as Archbishop Trench and Dean Alford had declared that phonetic spelling would necessarily destroy the historical and etymological character of the English language.

. . .the older I grow, the more I feel convinced that nothing vexes people so much, and hardens them in their unbelief and in their dogged resistance to reforms, as undeniable facts and unanswerable arguments. Reforms are carried by Time, and what generally prevails in the end, are not logical deductions, but some haphazard and frequently irrational motives. . . I myself, however, am not a practical reformer; least of all in a matter which concerns Englishmen only – namely, the spelling of the English language. I should much rather, therefore, have left the fight to others, content with being merely a looker on.

What I wish most strongly to impress on my readers is that I do not write as an advocate. I am not an agitator for phonetic reform in England. My interest in the matter is, and always has been, purely theoretical and scientific. Spelling and the reform of spelling are problems which concern every student of the science of language. In every written language the problem of reforming its antiquated spelling must sooner or later arise; and we must form some clear notion whether anything can be done to remove or alleviate a complaint inherent in the very to life of language. If my friends tell me that the idea of a reform of spelling is entirely Quixotic, that it is a mere waste of time to try to influence a whole nation to surrender its historical orthography and to write phonetically, I bow to their superior wisdom as men of the world. But as I am not a man of the world, but rather an observer of the world, my interest in the subject, my convictions as to what is right and wrong, remain just the same.

I have expressed my belief that the time will come when not only the various alphabets and systems of spelling, but many of the languages themselves which are now spoken in Europe, to say nothing of the rest of the world, will have to be improved away from the face of the earth and abolished. Knowing that nothing arouses the ire of a Welshman or a Gael so much as to assert the expediency, nay, the necessity of suppressing the teaching of their languages at school, it seems madness to hint that it would be a blessing to every child born in Holland, in Portugal, or in Denmark – nay, in Sweden and even in Rushia – if, insted ov lerninq a langwaje which iz for life a barier between them and the rest ov mankind, thay wer at wuns tu lern wun ov the grate historikal langwejes which konfer intelektual and soshal feloship with the hole world. If, az a ferst step in the rite direkshon, foar langwejes oanli, nameli, lnglish, French, Jerman, Italian (or possibli Spanish), wer tout at skool, the saving ov time – and whot iz more preshus than time? – wud be infinitli grater than what has been(!) efekted by railwayz and telegrafs. But I no that no name in eni ov the doomed langwajes wud be too strong tu stigmatize such foli. We shud be told that a Japaneze oanli kud konseve such an idea; that for a peepel deliberateli tu giv up its langwaje woz a thing never herd ov before; that a nashon wud sees tu be a nashon if it chanjed its langwaje; that it wud, in fakt, komit 'the hapi

dispach, *a la* Japoneze.' Aul this may be troo, but I hold that langwaje iz ment az an instrument ov komunikashon, and that in the strugel for life, the most efishent instrument ov komunikashon must sertenli kari the day, az long az natural selekshon, or az we formerli kould it, rezon, rools the wurld." (the ! is mine, Ed.)

Max Muller, *Max Muller on Spelling,* April, 1876, *Fortnightly Review*, Reprinted by Isaac Pitman, Bath, Eng. 1876.

"Neither the Anglo-Saxon orthography nor the Old French was distinguished for its regularity. But when the two were thrown together, the result was a mass of confusion and anomaly hardly paralled, except, perhaps, in the spelling of the native Irish. The present system retains much of this chaotic character. It is, perhaps, too firmly fixed for extensive changes, such as alone could effect a material improvement. But it is not creditable to the English name, nor accordant with the practical spirit of the English people. With a multitude of signs for the same sound, and a multitude of sounds for the some sound, it poorly fulfills the original and proper office of orthography, to indicate pronunciation; nor does it better fulfill the improper office, which some would assert for it, for a guide to etymology. It imposes a needless burden on the native learner. To a foreigner it seriously aggravates the difficulty of acquiring the language, and thus restricts the influence of English on the mind of the world."

Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language. (quoted in: Kyril Evans, *A Phonetic Alphabet,* op. cit, (1957), p.11.

"The fact remains that our spelling is more than irrational – it is inhuman, and forms the bane not merely of foreigners, but of our younger generations, compelled to devote interminable hours to learn a system which is the soul and essence of anarchy. It is hardly surprising that one of America's leading linguists suggests that we stop teaching spelling altogether for a few years, at the end of which time a new system based on the sounds of the spoken language will have perforce evolved."

Mario Pei, in Kyril Evans, *op. cit.,* p.12.

"Since English seems likely to occupy an increasingly prominent place in international communication, it is worth pausing to inquire into its qualifications for so important a mission. We may assume without argument that it shares with the other highly developed languages of Europe the ability to express the multiplicity of ideas and the refinement of thought that demand expression in our modern civilization. The question is rather one of simplicity. How readily can it be learned by the foreigner? Does it possess characteristics of vocabulary and grammar that render it easy or difficult of acquirement? To attain a completely objective view of one's own language is no simple matter. It is so easy to assume that what we have in infancy acquired without sensible difficulty will seem equally simple to those attempting to learn it in maturity. What virtues can we honestly attribute to English and what shortcomings must we recognize as handicaps to be acknowledged and, where possible, overcome.

Prominent among the assets of the English language must be considered the mixed character of its vocabulary. English is classified as a Teutonic language. That is to say, it belongs to a group of languages to which German, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian also belong. It shares with these languages similar grammatical structure and many common words. On the other hand, more than half of its vocabulary is derived from Latin. . . All of this means that English presents a somewhat familiar appearance to any one who speaks either a Germanic or a Romance

language. There are parts of the language he feels he does not have to learn, or learns with little effort.

A second asset which English possesses to a pre-eminent degree is inflectional simplicity. The evolution of language, at least within the historical period, is a story of progressive simplification. The further back we go in the study of the languages to which English is most closely allied, the more complex we find them. Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, for example, as classical languages of early date, have inflections of the noun, the adjective, the verb, and to some extent the pronoun that are no longer found in Russian or French or German. In this process of simplification English has gone further than any other language in Europe. The complicated agreements that make German difficult for the foreigner are absent from English. However compensated for, such a reduction of inflections can hardly be considered anything but an advantage.

In the third place, English enjoys on exceptional advantage over all other major European languages in having adopted natural in place of grammatical gender. In studying other European languages, the student labors under the heavy burden of memorizing, along with the meaning of every noun, its gender. . . . In the English language all this was stripped away during the Middle English period, and today the gender of every noun in the dictionary is known instantly. Gender in English is determined by meaning.

The three features just described are undoubtedly of great advantage in facilitating the acquisition by foreigners. On the other hand, a serious criticism of English by those attempting to master it is the chaotic character of our spelling and the frequent lack of correlation between spelling and pronunciation. Writing is merely a mechanical means of recording speech. And theoretically the most adequate system of spelling is that which best combines simplicity with consistency. In alphabetic writing an ideal system would be one in which the some sound was regularly represented by the some character and a given character always represented the some sound. None of the European languages fully attains this ideal, although many of them, such as Italian, German or Finnish, come far nearer to it than English.

We are concerned here only with the fact that one cannot tell how to spell an English word by its pronunciation or how to pronounce it by its spelling. The English-speaking child undoubtedly wastes much valuable time timing the early years of his education in learning to spell his own language, and to the foreigner our spelling is appallingly difficult. To be sure, it is not without its defenders. There are those who lay stress on the useful way in which the spelling of an English word often (?,sometimes!) indicates its etymology. Again, a distinguished French scholar has urged that since we have preserved in thousands of borrowed words the spelling which those words have in their original language, the foreigner is thereby enabled more easily to recognize the word. And it has been further suggested that the very looseness of our orthography makes less noticeable in the written language the dialectal differences that would be revealed if the various parts of the English-speaking world attempted a more phonetic notation on the basis of their local pronunciation. But in spite of these considerations, each of which is open to serious criticism, it seems as though some improvement might be effected without sacrificing completely the advantages claimed. That such improvement has often been felt to be desirable is evident from the number of occasions on which attempts at reform have been made. It remains to be seen whether the extension of English (in commerce, diplomacy, and scientific fields) in the future will some day compel us to consider the reform of our spelling from an impersonal and, indeed, international point of view. For the present, at least, we do not seem to be ready for simplified spelling.

Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language, 2nd Edition*, 1957, Alberton-Century-Crofts, New York. pp.8–14.

The subject of the difficulties for a reader in ascertaining the pronunciation of any new and unfamiliar word in English has been the concern of many writers. Here are a few:

"So difficult is it to become thoroughly versed in either of these branches of learning (pronunciation and spelling) that an English dictionary is probably quite as often consulted to ascertain the pronunciation or the spelling of a word as to learn its meaning." (preface iii)

Soule & Wheeler, *Manual of English Pronunciation & Spelling*, Lee & Shepard, Boston, 1861, 467 pp.

The contents show 65 rules for spelling, 16 classes of words liable to be misspelled, 36 classes of words liable to be mispronounced, and 52 rules for determining the location of accents.

"First. Establishing a Standard of Pronunciation.
English as it is and as it should be are two quite different things. That no effective system for teaching absolutely correct pronunciation and enunciation has been generally used is self-evident from anything like a careful observation among the students of our various institutions of learning.

As we listen to the different pronunciations taught in various localities, and hear the different interpretations given to the diacritical marks of the dictionary, we feel that something more is needed to enable us to establish a standard of native pronunciation. Visible speech, symbolizing the positions of the organs as they mold the sounds, does not admit of misinterpretation."

Charles W. Kidder. *An Outline of Vocal Physiology and Bell's Visible Speech,* pub. by the author Emerson College of Oratory, Boston, 1896, p.14.

"The chief difficulty lies in the impossibility of representing sounds in our ordinary English spelling; because our spellings have no phonetic rule, and our alphabet is consequently ambiguous and scientifically useless. It is therefore necessary to use some symbols; but the general reader will not, and – owing to the defects of our general education – most often cannot master the significance of speech-symbols, nor follow any argument which employs them. And although he would admit the desirability of the letters having some fixed correspondence with sounds, yet he likes to think that ours in a manner share the pride of English liberty, and he would consider it almost an impertinence to enquire too narrowly into their behavior. He has moreover a suspicion of all fine distinctions, and a prejudice against anything which threatens the comfort of an accustomed convention. He gets on, so he thinks, amazingly well as he is, and does not wish to be disturbed or have new paths opened to him.

Robert Bridges (Poet Laureate). *A Tract on the State of English Pronunciation.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, Eng. 1913, p.AI.

"The main argument of the essay is as follows;
(a) That the present state of English pronunciation is critical; and that the conversational speech of Southern England is fixing a degraded form.
(b) that it is probable that for educational purposes some form of phonetic spelling will soon be introduced into our primary schools.
(c) That these two things taken together constitute a serious danger, because there are evident signs that the method of the New Phonetic is to stereotype the degraded conversational forms. The result

of that would be a needless and complete artificial break between our modern English and all older literary forms of it; and this no reasonable person can desire."

Robert Bridges, *op. cit*. p. A3.

Robert Bridges was worrying needlessly about something that should not happen. The government (or the educational authorities) can use whatever standard of pronunciation they want in teaching. Consequently, if they want to upgrade the speaking habits of pupils, using a phonetic teaching form would be the most likely way to achieve it after a time. Also this was written 2 generations ago – before the advent of radio with its examples of pronunciation along a more desirable dialectic form.

"The continuing argument of the Essay is as follows: Is English pronunciation at the present time on the road to ruin? and if so, can anything be done to save it? . . .(p. 9)

There is one remedy, and one remedy only, and that is that, *at least for educational purposes,* if for no other, we should spell as we wish to pronounce; and then our school boards would have the children taught to pronounce words as they are spelt, which is at present impossible. The spelling must of course be fixed at a standard very different from Mr. Jones'; that is, we must fix it as we judge words *should be pronounced,* and not as we forsee they are *coming to be pronounced* in the normal process of degradation. If we took this step, we should not only prevent further decay, but could actually restore sounds that our phoneticians assume are irretrievably lost. If, for instance, our recognized phonetic spelling spelt *pronounce* with *pro*, and *affection* with *af*, then the *o* and the *a* would be saved. If left to the phoneticians and the Fates they will soon be gone for ever.

Some persons will not readily believe that such a stealthy natural process as phonetic decay in speech can be stayed by so simple a machinery as correct spelling and primary education can contrive. But this is *a doctrinaire* notion. The *litera scripto* has an enormous power; and compulsory education is a modern engine that is still waiting for its tasks.

The reason why our books so little affect our speech is exactly because they are out of relation with it. So long as words are spelt independently of their pronunciation, it is plain that their spelling cannot be appealed to (for their sound). Indeed the appeal, when it is made, often leads to bogus pronunciations, which are altogether the worst form of mispronunciation; and this is another danger of our present spelling, and though small in quantity, yet an actual evil of a horrible kind and not to be disregarded among the arguments for reform."

Robert Bridges, *op. cit,* pp.14–15.

"The Obstacle to spelling reform is this: It is necessary to have some new symbols, and there is a real inconvenience in extending the alphabet. An easement of this difficulty appears in the fact that some of our present letters are phonetically useless, and if they were discarded from the lower case to make room for the new symbols, we should not need to increase very greatly the present number of letters for the purposes of simplified spelling. But on the other hand we cannot discard our phonetic duplicates, the scientifically unnecessary letters, without intolerably disfiguring the spelling of a great many words. It seems to me that the most prejudices can best be overcome by gradual steps and that simplified spelling is a fair field for experiment. If we were really free agents and might spell as we choose for a few years, then I think we should soon evolve something satisfactory.

If all editors and publishers, or even a moderate proportion of them were to agree to omit the final e in all spellings where it was both useless and misleading, and to print for instance, *hav, giv, liv, infinitiv, lov*, instead of the present *have*, *give, live, infinitive, love*, everyone would be accustomed to it in a week or ten days, and would regard the old spellings as wrong, and ugly. The success of such a first step would remove the prejudice against all innovation, and would clear the way for other reforms."

Robert Bridges, or. *cit.,* pp.

"The present fixed spelling of English is largely a product of the first half of the 17th century. During these 50 years writers and printers, and probably the printers more than the writers, were gradually reducing to uniformity the varied orthography of the 16th century, which in so many words left ample scope for a choice between different forms according to the habits, tastes, or learning of author, scribe or printer. With the printer the tendency towards uniformity had no doubt in some degree a physical reason; with continuous practice it became more and more natural for the compositor's hand to go to the some compartments of his case in setting up the some words, instead of hesitating between two or three alternates.

That English spelling, being finally settled in this manner, and representing three types not fully (and in many instances not at all) assimilated to each other, abounds in anomalies and irregularities needs no demonstration. Every spelling reformer has no difficulty in adducing copious examples to support his contention that some change towards a more regular system is absolutely necessary.

Wm. A. Craigie. S.P.E. Tract No. LIX, *Some Anomalies of Spelling.* Clarendon Press, Oxford, Eng. 1942, p.Aa2.

"Although the total number of words included in this survey is considerable, it will on examination be evident that the reduction of all the anomalies to a consistent spelling would not materially alter the appearance of any ordinary printed page. Many of the changes could also be made without introducing any confusion or presenting real difficulties to readers, however much the new spellings might be distasteful to them. Such forms as *det, dout, lern, dremt, preest,* etc. could not be misunderstood, and would soon become familiar and appear as natural as *debt, doubt*, etc. Such changes have frequently been made in various languages, as they were in the earlier stages of English, without finding any difficulty in meeting with public acceptance.

The question of the possibility or advantage of change becomes more difficult when the normalized spelling would reduce to a common form those homophones which at present are differentiated and on that account or immediately recognizable. There can be no doubt that the reduction of these two to a common form would frequently prevent a prominent identification of the written or printed word. If the postal *mail* were respelled as *male*, the meaning of 'male-carriers' might well be in doubt in certain contexts, . . . This problem of course, applies to all homophones with distinctive spellings, whether these have etymological justification or not. They form one of the features of English vocabulary which have to be taken seriously into account before it can be decided whether the present orthography, with a standing of some three centuries, can be usefully modified or replaced by one on a more phonetic basis."

Wm. A. Craigie, *op. cit.* p.331.

Wm. Craigie apparently never realized that a phonetic spelling would also differentiate between homographs which are now confusing, in exchange for obscuring the meaning of homophones. While there are 1/3 homophones than homographs, the exchange would be more advantageous than disadvantageous. Certainly we now use the homophones that are homographs in such a manner that the context makes meaning clear just as we always carefully use words with multiple meanings, some of which have as many as 100 different meanings. Yet we do not feel a need to have different spellings for such words as: spring, fill, bay, cut, frame, free, hang, high, joint, lay, light, line, matter, pass, pipe, pit, and hundreds of other such words.

"English people have the useful habit of reducing long words to a single syllable, like: prop(eller), gym(nasium), (omni)bus, mac(intosh), and the shorter words are just as easily understood. But that would be impossible with an Esperanto or German type language. An ideal language would have no long words. English makes the nearest approach to this ideal. On the average 70% of our words have one syllable, 25%, two, 4%, three, and l% more than three.

"There are two sorts of English: the commonly spoken and the rarely spoken literary. The former when well and carefully spoken is quite as simple as any artificial language and is sufficient to express all ordinary needs and need not be inferior to 'literary' English even when written. Simple, homely English is not a difficult language. Pronunciation is easy and definite; grammar and syntax is not difficult and its vocabulary though extensive is shared by most European languages. Of course it has many defects because it has grown naturally. But surely the time has for us to correct its irregularities and to eliminate its worst defects.

Undoubtedly its greatest defect is its spelling which has been left so for behind by pronunciation change as to be a source of ridicule and a great obstacle to the intellectual progress of the English-speaking people. With very little alteration a greatly improved language could be devised.

The simplification of English spelling is not a difficult matter, yet it is not so easy that it can be done – if it is to be done well – without a good deal of careful study. Most of the advocates of simplified spelling – even the 'experts' – disagree about the ways words should be spelt or even about the letters that are to be used. Hence it is unlikely that any system will be satisfactory to everyone. But is disagreement inevitable, at least among reasonable people? Disagreement means that equally good reasons can be found for at least two solutions of any problem and the acceptance of either depends on personal preference. Later we shall find why, apart from obstinacy, inventors of spelling systems do disagree.

It is widely supposed that a system of reformed spelling that alters the appearance of nearly every word, will create insuperable difficulties. Yet similar changes have been successfully made in other countries – Holland, Norway, Turkey, Russia; all with considerable benefit, and in spite of a lot of opposition from ignorant and unreasonable people. After many years of discussion a committee appointed by the Dutch and Belgium governments produced a scheme of spelling reform for the Dutch and Flemish languages based largely on enunciation.

It was officially sanctioned by both governments in 1946 and has since proved satisfactory, thus disproving the arguments that spelling reform cannot be applied to a living language. English would no doubt need for more drastic changes than most of those that have been successfully transformed. But we should not evade the task for that reason. Fortunately nearly everyone believes in simplified spelling for when writing an unfamiliar word we invariably spell it the common sense way – if we dare! . . . .

Most people will agree that mental effort can be just as tiring as work – a good deal more so if you are not used to it. Hence, these mental gymnastics (spelling) must contribute to our fatigue. Often

we have to stop when we are writing to debate within ourselves the 'correct' spelling of certain words . . . Everyone knows that these interruptions prevent us from concentrating on our task. But a system of writing in which there are no alternative symbols, in which every symbol can represent only one sound, will eliminate all uncertainties.

Learning to read and spell must be very easy because you and I can do it – without much trouble. But let us not assume that everyone has been equally fortunate. Regardless of intelligence, the task occupies a large part of children's education and is far from complete even when they leave school. Indeed it is a burden to most people all their lives. Because it is one of the most complex skills that man has developed, it requires a high degree of intelligence. But it is not an art to which reason can be properly applied. It is necessary to repeat some absurd incantation after nearly every word. We must spell it till we have learned it thoroughly. It is only by frequent repetition and constant practice that we can maintain this habit. If our vocations are such that we have frequent opportunities for doing so, we may easily forget our initial difficulties and assume that the burden on children's minds is unimportant. Let us see if it is.

According to "Reading Ability" (published by His Majesty's Stationery Office): 'In some secondary modern and mixed schools, less than 1% of 15 year old pupils are superior readers and over 50% are backward. Only 3% read as well as the average grammar school pupil.'

Such children are about to leave school and for the majority of them their formal education is finished. Most of them will remain semi-literate all their lives.

Many otherwise intelligent children acquire feelings of inferiority and disappointment as a result of their early attempts to read. Sometimes they are annoyed by the innocent amusement or ridicule their mispronunciation arouse. Having learnt to say a word like 'love' they apply common sense to 'move' only to find themselves wrong. Before long they have learned to expect a trap that will advertise their inferiority in every word. Once this progress begins, they associate reading with unpleasantness and naturally seek to avoid it. They may even carry over their feeling of inferiority to other subjects.

It is a very serious matter for children who fail to develop reading ability. A quick accurate reader possesses a key which opens to him fast stretches of knowledge whilst the poor reader reads so slowly that he has not time to read much and reads so inaccurately that he is little better off than when he began. He appears to be mentally retarded though when freed from pedantic control often shows a good deal of initiative and ability to directions were reading is of no importance. Can we blame children if at their most impressive age, they turn to occupations that require no intelligence. 'What! Read a book? Not likely; we're playing football!' . . . The majority of poor readers, because they find it difficult to mingle with educated people, are to a large extent, cut off from cultural activities. Some psychologists claim to have traced delinquency and crime, by way of dislike of school and then truancy, to early reading difficulties. Dr. Follick estimated that 65% of adolescent delinquency was due to illiteracy.

Frequent complaints are made by employers of young people who have just left school, that they are unable to spell correctly. Often their mistakes show no resemblance to the sound either.

'A recent Army education officer's report says that 18% of National Servicemen of the Pioneer Corps are illiterate, between 20 and 25% have only the reading ability of a child of 12, and 80% are educationally backward. It should provide food for thought.' (Yorkshire Evening News)

Reg Deans, *Universal Language & Simplified Spelling*, 1954 Midland Press, Leeds. pp. 24–30.

"No one questions the value of correct spelling. It is standard equipment that everyone needs for successful participation in daily life. Accuracy in written expression has decided prestige value. Individuals have failed to obtain or hold positions because of lapses in spelling. . The bugbear of uncertain, inaccurate spelling can affect one's whole career. The individual who tries to excuse himself with 'Spelling is one of those little things I never did learn,' or 'I can't spell, but then they say spelling is correlated with intelligence – morons spell well sometimes,' gets little sympathy from his friends. Correct spelling enables the reader to progress through written material more readily and understandingly. It creates a favorable impression on the reader.

To feel self-assured without having to refer to a dictionary every time one writes a note, letter, or order, and without having to experiment on scratch paper to reassure oneself that the word looks right, is a social asset, indeed. The ability to spell correctly automatically allows the writer to concentrate on thought and good form in composition.

The perfect speller is rare because no person in his lifetime can have enough experience with every word in the English language to spell each one correctly. Common observation indicates that the spelling maximum for the typical literate person stops beyond the spelling 'demons' and rarely reaches the loftier heights of polysyllable words derived from Latin or Greek origins. The country's annual spelling contests are carried on by the remnant of 'scholastics' who regard spelling a diversion on its own account. Spelling contests flourish in English-speaking countries where spelling, because of phonetic irregularities, is something with which to conjecture.

In spelling, the word forms must be recalled from memory well enough to reproduce them without any external cues, whereas in reading, the task is to recognize the printed symbols and to recall their meaning.

The spelling errors of bright and duller children are very different, as Carroll's study indicated. The bright tend to generalize more, to apply their previous learning to new words, to spell phonetically and more rationally; the slower learners tend to jumble up the spelling haphazardly. Bright children are more likely to derive spelling of new words from others already known, whereas dull children have a much less systematic approach in attacking new words. Brighter children make better use of rules. The more capable and intelligent person frequently has more writing, hence more spelling to do.

English spelling is entirely arbitrary. It frequently follows no systematic patterns. Efforts to simplify our irrational English spelling have met with scant success. A number of words, such as 'theater' and 'theatre,' are spelled in two different ways. Furthermore, English spelling is largely non-phonetic in character. Observe the many ways in which the element pronounced as 'shun' may be spelled correctly. Hence, to a certain degree, errors are inherent in the words themselves. These spelling oddities contribute to the numerous 'demons' that require intensive practice, sometimes quite out of proportion to the importance of the words either in ordinary written or spoken composition. Written English need not necessarily be spelled correctly to be comprehensible. Writing can be effective, even forceful, and still be incorrectly spelled.

As in reading, the non-phonetic character of English spelling creates a problem in the school. . . Phonic rules help little in spelling the demons: 'yacht,' 'design,' or 'tongue.' Only close observation and good auditory and visual memory for the succession of letters in these words help the learner. . .

Certain groups of words are spelled in such a way that they can be classified under a rule. Occasionally, one or more words violate the rule and cause spelling errors. A bright child often makes such errors because he is trying to rationalize illogical spelling usage. Silent letters also cause trouble. About one half of all errors are due to the omission of silent letters.

English spelling reform is a slow process. Many systems simplifying spelling have been proposed, but never universally or even widely adopted. Melvil Dewey's scheme had some adherents, and one

magazine adopted the system. In this scheme, silent final 'e' was dropped and 'f' substituted for 'ph' and 'gh' in 'ough.'

Some simplification comes about naturally (by the way of courageous dictionary publisher like Noah Webster), such as 'publick', 'critick,' 'politick' and 'musick' within the lost 100 years have lost their final 'k.' Yet Britain still clings to: *colour, glamour, honour, humour, labour, mould, vigour*, – not being influenced by the 'Americanisms.'

The illogical absurdities and freakish difficulties in our word structure will no doubt persist for generations to come. No one can expect radical changes in spelling to be affected quickly, even though they are highly desirable in many instances. So long as this is true, school children will invariably experience difficulty in learning to spell.

Spelling tends to be taught in many schools as an academic discipline rather than as a practical tool for writing. This tendency is shown both in the methods of teaching employed and in the word lists assigned for study. Memorization of isolated words arranged in vertical lists is the usual method of practice – a time consuming feat which usurps the time that children need for spelling practice while writing for some real learning purpose. Too often children are prevented from doing content writing until they 'know how to spell,' with the result that the most valuable time for learning opportunities are lost. Children have too little use both in and out of school for the school-taught spelling.

Without constant application, spelling remains a school-taught trick, or mental feat, rather than a useful tool. When the pupils finally do come to writing something, the formal spelling practice they have received has little 'carryover.' This gap between formal spelling lessons and the children's practical spelling needs in writing leaves the pupil by the end of the elementary-school period ill-prepared to write legible English. A group of pupils who filled out requisitions for supplies, made so many spelling errors that their orders could not be interpreted; and the practical business man is still looking for a clerk who can spell.

It may be argued that children will not develop their writing vocabulary if they are taught to spell only the words they are inclined (need) to use. The answer is that we must be concerned first of all with children's practical needs in writing; literary growth and development is another matter to be considered after this first objective is attained. The fact that it is often not attained with formal spelling lessons re-emphasizes the need for practical results in spelling first of all.

Children are no longer expected to memorize the spelling of some 4000 words – a nearly impossible feat for the average pupil – by the end of the eighth grade. Some children may finish the sixth grade with no more than 1000 memorized word spellings, and slow learners with no more than 500 to 700 correct word spellings."

Gertrude Hildreth. *Learning the Three R's*, (2nd edition), Education Publishers, 1947. pp.479–499.

"A man, it may be argued, has a right to spell as he chooses, and to express his thoughts when he has any, as best he can; while, when he suffers from a dearth of those rare articles, he has still more reason to rejoice in liberty of choice in respect to the language he selects to cover his poverty of thought. Hence there are doubtless good and sufficient reasons for every specimen of *'English as she is wrote*,' which is the object of this little book to rescue from oblivion, and which have, one and all, been written with the sober conviction, upon the part of the writers, that they conveyed the meaning they desired."

Anon. (Mark Twain?). *'English as she is wrote*,' D. Appleton, 1897, Prefatory. A companion to: *English as she is taught,* Mark Twain. 1887.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 pp19,20 in the printed version]

8. FRUSTRATION, The Basic Roadblock to Lerning and Teaching, with Suggestions for a Practical Solution via a Preventive Approach, by Harvie Barnard* (in SR-1°)

*Tacoma, Wn.

°SR-1 refers to "Spelling Reform, step 1", a simplified spelling program now being introduced in Australia, wherein the sound of short-e, as in bet and let, is used wherever this sound appears in English speech, as in *eny, meny, redy, sed,* and *bred.*

Uncounted thousands of case studies have been made to determine the basic psychology of scholastic failure, resulting in as meny explanations as there were investigations. The multiplicity of situations and causes has obscured the common denominator fundamentally responsible for the impedance, confusion and blocking which characterize the failing pupil. Yet there is a definite answer, – an explanation provided by teaching experience and sound psychology which may be expressed in a single word, FRUSTRATION!

This concise, apparently simple answer, demands further explanation as to what frustration is, as well as its causes and the possibilities for its avoidance. At some time all of us have experienced this condition which arouses the emotions-often unexpectedly and sometimes with destructive consequences. Spontaneous outbursts of anger, fear, fury and violence often result. Men are driven to expressions of vilification, castigation, swearing and fighting, while less agressive persons are depressed into meek subservience, hopelessness, despair and depression. The submissive and yielding personalities are likely to assume attitudes of defeat and failure, while the more assertive, proud, overbearing or vengeful are more likely to rage inwardly or to display symptoms of wrathful, vindictive or stubborn independence. These manifestations of blocked desire are the outward expressions of failure, – a condition which might be defined as the inability to overcome, evade, ignore, or triumph over frustration.

From the standpoint of the child, or enyone placed in a new or unfamiliar situation, there is one basic cause or element of frustration which is universal. The fundamental blockage, which is often totally frustrating, is essentially the obstacle of communication, or more precisely, the lack of it. Academically the ability to communicate has long been recognized as a basic skill, and in the arts and professions the ability to communicate, whether in language, music, art, science, or teaching, communicative ability ranks high in the scale of social success or human accomplishment.

In the primary and elementary grades it is communication in all its forms which receives most of the emphasis. In the form of listening, reading, writing, speaking, the study of literature and various related subjects, communication is emphasized thruout the school years. It is now generally recognized that communication, or the lack of it, is the basic ability or skill which determines literacy, academic achievement and ultimately success or failure in most areas of competive life.

Since frustration is recognized to be a direct consequence of inability to communicate, and appreciating that this deficiency affects a large segment of our people, (including meny of the so-called educated as well as the drop-outs), it would appear vitally important to attack this problem at its source, beginning with primary schools, or earlier when possible.

In spite of all the expenditure of money, energy, and mental effort to upgrade educational processes, we still have the problem of dropouts and a high percentage of functional illiteracy. Perhaps we have overlooked the fact that education begins at birth, (or shortly thereafter), and that it is during the preschool years that mental processes are largely developed, lerning capacities established, neglected or confused. Since the public schools cannot be held responsible for pre-school mental attitudes, nor for the great differences in preschool environment, public education cannot be held wholly responsible for academic failure cc preschool frustration.

In fairness to the teaching profession and the public schools, it should be emphasized that preliminary to the teaching of reading and writing, the child should receive, if at all possible, the benefits of preschool training in the skills of *verbal communication,* speech, both listening and talking. Without this pre-training, or the development of what is known as pupil "rediness," there will be serious lerning problems, "slow lerners," retarded students, and more or less frustration. Furthermore there will be definite frustration of the teacher as well as of the pupil. It is this double frustration which makes both teaching and lerning extremely difficult-a situation which is all too prevalent in our present public education system.

At this point it should be obvious that the beginnings of frustration, as all experienced educators well know, originate with the pre-school environment of the child. If the child is not prepared, or "redy" for the methods and processes of our more or less formalized and graded school system, there will be a high probability of double frustration. This situation is very likely to lead to student failure in almost direct proportion to the extent which frustrating factors have existed in the environment of the pupil prior to the beginning of public school experience.

Altho meny conditions have been observed to contribute to pre-school frustration, six major causes are summarized briefly as follows

1) ISOLATION; deprivation of normal human contact, e.g., being left alone;
2) REJECTION; being neglected or put aside for other parental interests, e.g, being allowed, or made to feel left out of family concerns or activities;
3) DEPRIVATION; being denied or refused things granted to others, e.g, food, companionship, understanding, a gift, or enything considered desirable to the child or person so deprived;
4) HUMILIATION or ridicule; being laughed at, or made the object of crude or spiteful attempts at humor;
5) PUNISHMENT (unjustified); especially mistreatment which *seems* unfair, particularly when administered as a result of an error or accident due to inexperience, confusion, ignorance, or circumstances beyond the control of the child;
6) CONFUSION; whether caused by accidental circumstances, misunderstanding, or by the deliberate intent of others, such as teasing or needless thwarting with intent to frustrate.

If the developing (pre-school) child escapes all or most of these six basic causes of frustration, he (or she) is indeed fortunate. But if the young person is by accident of birth or environment subject to habitual or frequent situations involving one or more of these factors of frustration, the psychological hurt could be seriously damaging to the unfortunate victim.

The symptoms of such psychological harm commonly appear in one or more forms of abnormal behavior, such as: a) social withdrawal, b) fearfulness, c) self-imposed retardation, d) avoidance tendencies toward parents, teachers, all authority, or society in general, (a generalized distrust of others), e) difficulty in lerning and remembering, f) inability to reason logically (confusion), as frequently evidenced by general "slowness" and inability to read or write at grade level. Unless the child is rescued at the earliest opportunity from the frustrating circumstances which have led to these abnormal behavioral patterns, the pupil is likely to become "unreachable" by conventional classroom procedures. In some cases the damage may have become severe before literacy has been established, (or even well begun), in which cases the inevitable result will be failure, dropping out with the usual consequences:

1) delinquency,
2) court ordered institutionalization, and in meny instances,
3) release of the unskilled person into a competitive environment for which the illiterate has little or no adequate preparation.

At this point the animal instinct for survival becomes the governing influence, and we have the desperation effort to preserve life, (his own), at eny cost. The inevitable and predictable outcome is quite certain; deviant behavior, crime, the conversion of a potentially useful life into an enemy of society, – a burden and a thret to the social order we have constructed.

Thus, thru frustration in early childhood, a psychological profile of unhappiness and failure may have been established prior to the beginning of elementary teaching. And to the degree to which this has occurred, the pupil is likely to have lerning difficulties, not only in the primary grades, but thruout his academic experience or until the time of giving up, dropping out and leaving school.

There is no simple nor instant solution to this problem of pre-school frustration. But the sad truth is that frustration does not necessarily begin pre-school enymore than it ends pre-school. Frustrating influences exist all along the line. The question, as well as the problem, is, do we recognize this perplexing manifestation of vexation and confusion wherever it exists, – whether it be in the home or in the bastions of entrenched academia? That, is the *key question!* It is much like the scholar who sought the truth with such great intensity and concentration that he could not bear to be disturbed. When at last Truth came knocking at his door, he sed, "Go away, I am looking for the truth," and Truth turned away, puzzling.

And in view of our present decline in academic competence – as evidenced by the general deterioration at all levels of instruction – there seems to be a question as to whether or not the problem is recognized for what it is, let alone the making of a determined effort to solve it. The reason is fairly obvious. Those who occupy the chairs of evaluation and judgement – the

"administrators" of our present educational system, are not likely to be the first to point out the deficiencies, the defects, or the malfunctions of the machine which *they* have set up and over which *they* have virtually *total control*. And this brings us to another problem: if the present administrators cannot recognize, or will not admit the existence of the problem, who is going to assume this awesome responsibility?

There has been and still is a great clammoring for a "return to the three R's." People say, "Let's get back to fundamentals! Let's cut out the frills, the trimmings and the 'extracurricular' activities which are responsible for so much diffusion of effort and funds for education." But if all this chopping out of subject matter was accomplished, would all this elimination and revision have eny significant effect on the "basics" and the bolstering up of the 3 R's? Meny educators have debated this question very seriously. Few thotful people are redy to abondon the advantages and benefits of a broad and varied spectrum of subject matter which provides a definite stimulation for meny students as well as an outlet for diverse interests and a wide diversity of abilities. Meny of these educational "frills" teach something very useful and develop traits of personality and character which are rarely taut in the conventional academic classroom. Where, for example do students lern to apply themselves with more energy, determination and perseverance than in athletic contests? Where do they lern the basics of obeying the rules, cooperating for the good of the group, or living up to the unwritten rules of sportsmanship eny better than on the team-whether it be basketball, football or baseball? Besides these benefits, what about those subjects which prepare young people to get and hold a productive job, – like typing, writing, mechanical drawing, and graphics?

This brings us right back to the three R's! They can't be dodged, overlooked, slighted or bypassed! So we must make a determined beginning somewhere, and as the great Wm. J. Bryan phrased it, "The place to begin is at the beginning," and in education the beginning would be as soon as possible. As far as the public schools are concerned, this would be kindergarten, or earlier. As a starter, the following general guide lines are suggested:

1) Continue and expand the Head Start Program, providing strong professional, financial and political support, not simply for minority groups, but for all children who might be likely to benefit;

2) In the primary and elementary grades, set up and maintain an active "D.E.F." program – Detect Early Failure. This would he an on-going effort for early recognition of those children needing special catch-up aid, if not at the Head Start level, then beginning with the primary grades or until reading ability is established,

3) For those not having the benefits of either Head Start or the D.E.F. program, a later and intensive effort to develop "reading rediness" should be implemented. The teaching of reading and writing with the objective of developing these basic skills before permitting the children to proceed into areas of lerning where efficient reading and writing were basically essential, should replace the "pass them along" policy.

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[Spelling Reform Anthology §10.1 p152 in the printed version]

Section 10

The Teaching of Spelling

There seems to be no unanimity of methodology in teaching spelling, so we present here some ideas on that subject.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1976 p20 in the printed version]

9. How to Teach Spelling by Newell W. Tune.

No doubt many of you teachers have asked "How should I teach spelling?" In the past teachers were offered lists of "spelling demons" and told that these are the words most pupils miss in writing. So the teacher gives her pupils a list of 10 irregular words to be spelt on the next spelling bee a week later. Ten anomalies totally unrelated to each other present too much of a learning job for young pupils. To learn the irregular spelling of one does not help in learning the other nine words. How much more efficient it is to learn the spelling of one word family or group of words with the same rhyming ending? For example, if the word the pupil needs to learn is "sight", prepare a list of all such rhyming words: go thru the alphabet: first is "fight," then "light, might, night, right, sight, tight, wright." But we omitted the exceptions – and they should be taught concurrently with the more frequent "ight" spellings. The first would be: "bite," next might be "cite," but I would not present it now because this would not be in the pupil's speaking and reading vocabulary. Then: height, knight, mite, rite, site, write. Naturally the teacher should explain the meaning of all these words and tell why they are written differently from the first group.

When presented in this manner, it is much easier for a child to learn two dozen words than the ten spelling demons that are unrelated to each other. By the time that the teacher has covered the school year, she will have taught the largest part of the word families and given the pupil a sound basis for using analogy, as well as the exceptional spelling – of each rhyming sound. And, more important, she will have done it in a way that makes the learning of spelling irregularities a much easier task.

We would like to hear from teachers who have used this method and also other methods, with their opinions of the amount of success obtained.

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Without guaisle

Whenever she looks down the aisle,
She gives me a beautiful smaisle;
    And of all of her beaux
    I am certain she sheaux
She likes me the best of the paisle.

From *Rimes without reason,* by one who has been stung by the spelling bee.
Spelling Reform Assoc, Lake Placid Co.

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