1-1-1970

Independent pupil activity in the language arts in first grade

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INDEPENDENT FIELD ACTIVITY IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS IN FIRST GRADE

BY

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A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION (READING SPECIALIST) AT THE CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE

Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1979
This research paper has been approved for the Graduate Committee of the Cardinal Stritch College by

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Date December 3, 1969
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Acknowledgements

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Sister Marie Colette, D.S.P. for directing this research paper.

Grateful acknowledgement is also expressed to my friends for their encouragement toward the completion of this work.
CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The task of engaging children in meaningful, valuable, educationally sound activities is a difficult task for the teacher of first grade children. It is probably her greatest challenge because it is a vital part of every school day.

Independent activity for pupils is a requisite in all classes, but poses a particular and unique problem in first grade, particularly at the readiness and pre-primer levels. Grouping causes the problem to be more acute. Each group has different needs. Even within a group, needs are different. According to Wilcox:

"The most persistent of teachers' questions have to do with the situation that confronts a teacher once she has studied and grouped her pupils and approaches the task of planning the daily program."

Just to keep children busy is meaningless. Activities must be adequate, well planned, balanced, easily prepared, and self-teaching while the teacher is engaged in teaching the other groups in the classroom. Burton puts it well when he says:

Great care must be taken in the selection of learning activities and experiences, lest they become mere busy work, wasteful of both time and effort. They may be regarded on a cooperative basis of both pupils and

teacher, but the teacher always must evaluate them in the light of certain definite criteria. Each proposed activity or exercise should be:

1. Recognized by children as useful in achieving their purpose.
2. Recognized by the teacher as leading to socially desirable ends.
3. Appropriate to the maturity of the group: challenging, achievable, leading to new learnings, providing for application of old learnings.
4. Varied enough to provide for individual differences within the group.
5. Varied enough to provide balanced development of the learner through many types of individual and group activities.
6. Possible within the resources of school and the community.2

Because the Language Arts make up such a tremendous and important part of each day, and because the teacher usually groups within the classroom, it is necessary to have on hand a variety of materials for the superior, the average, and the below average children. In this way, free time may be utilized well, so that there can, at times, be free choice of myriad materials, commercial, teacher-prepared, or of a creative nature, and so that interest is high while individual needs are properly cared for in the classroom or within the group itself.

Knowledge of the children involved is another important aspect to be considered in the use of materials. There are times when a child should have the option of doing what most appeals to him, whether the project be easy or challenging. On occasion, choice ought to be part of the school day. Available materials of this variety may be a source of enrichment to the child who feels self-confident in having

successfully completed a project that was too difficult for him previously or for the child who was challenged by a certain exercise and the new understands more fully his need for more practice or instruction in a certain phase of the Language Arts.

**Statement of the Problem**

It was the purpose of this paper to explore questions related to independent pupil activity in the Language Arts in first grade: Of what should this activity consist? What are the qualities of good independent work? What are some solutions to the problem of engaging pupils in meaningful activities?

**Scope**

This paper surveyed the literature of the past five years on independent pupil activity. Commercially-prepared exercises and projects which proved to be helpful in the classroom were also pursued. First grade teachers and members of summer school classes engaged in reading courses provided helpful information. The writer also drew heavily from projects which she used in her classroom in teaching Language Arts in first grade.
CHAPTER II
SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Need for Independent Activity

Training for responsibility begins early. Responsibility comes only as a result of frequent practice. Different types of responsibility are to be given to different children in the classroom. Too little responsibility is bad; too much is not good either. A child needs consistency from adults, particularly his teacher. Maturity and self-reliance for managing one's use of time are more than by-products of a child's hours spent in independent work in the classroom. This constant striving for maturity is an integral part of instruction in first grade, particularly in the Language Arts.

Language Arts is not an isolated subject, but a functional one. Independence, initiative, originality and creativity and inventions are natural outcomes of a well-balanced Language Arts program.

Effective teaching of the Language Arts, then, includes enrichment, enjoyment, and evaluation. The individual needs of every child in the classroom must be met. Carter says:

Effective teachers of reading have in mind instructional aims and objectives which they share with, but do
not impose upon their students. They have plans, designed to accomplish specific goals. They seek to bring about changes in attitude and growth in reading achievement. They know the needs of their children and strive to help their boys and girls fulfill them. The successful teacher selects materials to accomplish specific objectives. Her children do more than just read, work with machines, and do exercises. What is done, is done for a purpose. Busy work is not part of his program. Instead, teachers and children write, design and construct their own materials. Many books are utilized and all materials have for teacher and pupils a definite purpose. They are an effective means to an end. Capable teachers, with the cooperation of their students, follow procedures to utilize materials in the pursuit of their objectives. They employ many approaches, many methods and many techniques, for they know there is no one way of teaching reading. They have procedures which are designed to help their students. They are in control of the learning situation at all times and they do more than "just teach." They stimulate, inform, and guide.

The school must, first of all, provide a rich background of experiences and interests if the child is to have at his disposal, varied sources from which he draws. In this way he will have a need for his listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. Burton says:

One very important function of the modern school is to help children expand their backgrounds of experience. In the modern activity program, children have an opportunity to examine and manipulate objects and materials, to make written records, to express ideas and feelings by means of crayon, paint, or clay. They extend their horizons by making various trips about the community, as to the corner grocery store, the drugstore, to the bus or railroad station, to a fair, the park, or a zoo. All these and such accompanying activities as walking in the wind, scrounging the autumn leaves, rolling in the snow, playing in the sand, build up a meaningful background of experience, increase vocabulary and improve

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language and the other means of expression. Of course the teacher should constantly encourage the children to express their thoughts and feelings about their experiences and to use appropriate new words whenever possible.

The size of the task in learning to read suggests that the program be composed of varied activities.

Providing for Individual Differences

The child discovers best and learns best through activities in which he participates. However, the teacher must be alert to opportunities of this nature, and when these opportunities are not present, he must learn to create such possibilities for his students. Inventiveness is contagious.

Children can become more curious through imitation. If they are to become more imaginative, creative, and curious about thinking, the teacher's role must be one of inventor, provider, and improviser. By the same token, if children are to read more widely and richly, then this should be the practice of their teachers. If the situation fails to improve, the fault of not having curious minds to unlock the pathway to planets beyond this earth will not be in "our stars, but in our selves" and man's mind will be weaker because of it.

Working alone does not mean working apart from others. It gives the child an opportunity to get over his difficulties by himself. On the basis of his abilities and

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interests, he progresses to the next area of concentration.

Purchase, collect, and create a large variety of suitable practice materials of a kind that can be used with a minimum of assistance. Such materials can include workbooks, skill texts, vocabulary cards, and games suitable to the age and interests of the group. Such materials should be kept within easy reach and available for use in spare time throughout the day. ¹

There must be certain periods in the day when a child can work at a task that is not a chore, an assignment he can carry out with unhurried thought and activity. The activity should be open-ended and in keeping with his powers of absorption and concentration. Durrell, speaking of such work, says:

A closer adjustment is made possible between instruction and learning rate. The bright child can make steady progress and need not be held to the tedious exercises of a lower level. The slow child is not embarrassed by comparisons between his inefficiency and the success of his classmates. The dull child gains in self-respect from successful work and develops security through continued growth in reading.²

The activity on the part of the child, in most instances, because of necessity, will be a quiet activity, so that the teacher and children engaged in larger group work will not be disturbed.

The problem of keeping one or more other groups occupied profitably can be solved only in the light of knowledge of the children involved. Obviously, they must be engaged in quiet activities so as not to disturb the group reading with the teacher. It seems

²Donald Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading: Instruction (Yonkers on Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1956) p. 68.
desirable that such quiet activities be related to reading at least part of the time.\footnote{David Russell, \textit{Children Learn to Read} (Chicago: Ginn and Co., 1949) p. 501.}

The teacher starts the child, on properly prepared materials, in directions that are clear and easily followed, so there will be no unnecessary interruptions. The skill that is being practiced is one learned previously, but one that needs repetition.

If children are to make consistent progress toward mastery of the skills requisite for independence in reading, they must have carefully planned seatwork that will provide graduated exercises to introduce and afford practice in these skills. Part of this practice may be based on the lessons, those contained in commercial workbooks— but not all of it.\footnote{Mildred A Dawson and Freida Dinge, \textit{Children Learn the Language Arts} (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1954) p. 76.}

The independent activities need to be self-educative in the well-managed first grade classroom. The differences in the working pace of children, the appropriateness of available space, the amount of time needed to construct and evaluate the materials, are further guide lines considered in the acquisition of independent pupil materials.

Certain general criteria can be suggested as guides in the selection or preparation of work-type activities. First, the activity should focus on a specific skill needed by the children. Busy work, or seat work, that serves mainly to keep children busy and in their own seats is not helpful. Second, there should be maximum emphasis on thoughtful reading, whether the activity calls for understanding a paragraph, for reading a single sentence, or for matching a word with its correct picture. Third, the activity itself should have interest value.

The teacher starts the child, on properly prepared materials, in directions that are clear and easily followed, so there will be no unnecessary interruptions. The skill that is being practiced is one learned previously, but one that needs repetition.
Ways of indicating correct answers should be sufficiently varied to make the activity fun. Fourth, the amount of time spent in coloring, pasting, cutting, drawing, keeping score in a game, or other such non-reading activities should be small in proportion to the time spent in actually reading. Fifth, directions should be simple enough that work can proceed independently, once the teacher has given instructions.

Materials for Independent Activity

Acquisition, organization, and use of materials have a vital bearing on the success or failure of a reading program. There is an urgent need to provide material that will enable pupils to achieve the essentials of Language Arts instruction. Basal readers, with their workbooks and teachers' guides, are an important part of a well-planned reading program, whether they are used basally, co-basally, or tri-basally. However, a reading program that provides for varying levels of reading achievement and aims to stimulate and satisfy the interests of the student cannot confine itself to the basal reader. Boys and girls must have access to a multitude of trade books, encyclopedias, globes, charts, films, filmstrips, and other instructional materials. Bluntly, there is no single tool for teaching.

Another aspect of independent pupil activity that merits consideration is the practicality of setting up work durably so that it can be used more than one time by an individual, or so that a bright child might use it early in the school year, and the less bright child would have it available for his use later in the year.

8 Margaret McKim, Guiding Growth in Reading (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950) p. 211.

Teachers can achieve greater interest in non-type activities, and at the same time, save themselves time and effort, if they plan materials that can be re-used in several ways. 10

Help in providing the classroom teacher with special materials for the individual needs of her students is a preventive measure that pays dividends and is one provision for the accelerated student, who may be neglected in independent activities.

If independent activities are attractive, the first grader will be highly motivated to use these materials and to learn from them. On the basis of this interest, he will acquire study habits which are the key to success in succeeding levels in school. Torrance says:

One of education's most important objectives is to give students the motivation and skill for life-long learning, and independent study should be the most powerful instructional tool for achieving this. Since one is more likely to use skills of independent study that have been practiced, these skills should be practiced from an early age.

**Types of Independent Pupil Activity**

Almost every publisher of a reading series now also has commercially prepared materials such as pictures, charts, films, filmstrips, records, tapes and the like for enrichment or additional practice on skills needed to complete

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the program satisfactorily.

Workbooks, which provide an objective record of word recognition and comprehension, comprise some of the independent activities the first grader uses. Workbooks give the pupil repetition of vocabulary and establish habits of word perception and word analysis. They offer an effective contribution to, but are only one phase of, independent activity.

Because additional practice is needed and because there is usually time for more independent work than workbooks provide, teacher-prepared materials are essential. Teacher-prepared materials offer warmth and interest. These materials can often be used individually, in pairs, or in groups.

Creative activities also have a place in the classroom. A child with a stimulated emotional desire is bound to create. His creativity could be expressed in linguistic, dramatic or artistic form. By organizing his experiences into a creative product, the child is integrating the outcomes of his reading experience into his life.

In effective first grade teaching, the teacher provides a balance of these types of activities thus providing variety while keeping high the interest and motivation needed for learning.

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12Russell, op. cit. p. 110.
CHAPTER III
INDEPENDENT PUPIL ACTIVITY

Listening

In the following pages, the writer wishes to enumerate activities that can be used in the first grade classroom as independent work while the teacher is occupied with teaching various other groups in the room.

Listening Activities for the Above-Average Child

1. After listening to a story, children can supply an ending different from the one in the story. This can be written or illustrated.

2. Records are available on which directions are given and the student marks a worksheet accordingly.

3. The teacher can tape directions for children to do or write or draw. With headphones, these can be used in the classroom.

4. On cardboard a phonics clock can be made. This is round or square and has the consonants lettered around the edge. A clock hand is fastened to the center of the cardboard with a brass fastener. One child says a word. The child who is his partner points the hand of the clock to the letter with which the word begins.

5. After listening to part of a story, children can draw or write an ending to the story.

6. Pupils can make pictures of things that make high sounds or low sounds.

Listening Activities for the Average Child

1. The child can listen to an appropriate poem and draw pictures of whatever made the sounds in the poem.

2. Pupils can listen to a poem, and when possible, draw pictures of words that rhymed in the selection.

3. Pictures representing sounds of winter, of spring, of night, or something similar can be drawn or painted.

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LISTENING ACTIVITIES FOR THE ABOVE-AVERAGE CHILD—continued

4. After listening to several stories, children can classify them according to real or fanciful tales.

5. Pictures can be drawn to represent sounds such as Ring, Click, Brrr, or Bzzz.

6. After taking a walk for the specific purpose of listening for sounds, a composite list of sounds heard can be identified when children are back in the classroom.

Listening Activities for the Below-Average Child

1. After listening to sounds outside, pupils can draw a picture of whatever is making the sound.

2. Listen to sounds in the classroom. Draw pictures of the source of the sound.

3. Listen to sounds at home. Draw or paint pictures of whatever made the sound.

4. Listen to sounds on the way to or from school. Draw or paint pictures of sources of the sounds.

5. Draw pictures of weather conditions that made sounds.

6. Draw pictures of machines that make sounds.

7. Name five or six nouns. Children draw as many as they can remember.

8. As the children are dismissed from a group, the teacher says the names of the letters of the alphabet. As the letter the child’s name begins with is said, that child may leave the group.

SPEAKING

Speaking Activities for the Above-Average Child

1. The teacher can put pictures of nursery rhymes in a box. The child can then pick one out and say the nursery rhyme on tape for listening later.
Speaking Activities for the Above-Average Child - continued

2. On tape or on a Language Master the child can record endings to: When I grow up, The weather today, If I had a fish, On Saturday I, or something similar.

3. Record on tape or on a Language Master, original endings to: As tiny as a _____, As big as a ______, As cold as _____, As hot as _____, or something similar.

Speaking Activities for the Average Child

1. Plan a story from a picture. Then the child can dictate the story to an intermediate grade pupil. Have the older child write the story dictated to him by the first grade child.

2. Imitate sounds listened to.

3. Recite poems or nursery rhymes and record on tape.

4. Begin a Round Robin story. I went to the store and bought _____ Each child adds one more item to the list besides mentioning all the others.

5. Plan a dramatization of a story read.

Speaking Activities for the Below-Average Child

1. Make puppets and dramatize a story.

2. Make a TV out of cardboard boxes. Dramatize a story over the TV.

3. Have Show and Tell periods.

4. Read a story aloud. Record it on tape.

Reading

Reading Activities for the Above-Average Child

1. Make up riddles.

2. Unscramble scrubbled words such as: park, above, or fallen.
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Reading Activities for the Above-Average Child, continued

3. Illustrate lists of phrases or sentences containing a humorous element.

4. Scrambled sentences can be unscrambled and rewritten correctly or built with letters.

5. Build, illustrate, or write compound words.

6. Make crossword puzzles. Build them with letters or write them.

7. Make word dictionaries to use in writing exercises.

8. Illustrate with three pictures a given consonant in the initial, medial, and final positions in words.

9. From a known word, change the initial consonant and build as many new words as possible.

10. Choose the best title for a picture from four or five options.

11. Illustrate a story in four parts with the captions: First, Next, Then, Last.

12. Illustrate a familiar story in cartoon fashion.

13. On durable paper or cardboard, type or letter who, what, where, and then across the top. Underline each word with a different colored strip of paper under each word. Type ten or twelve sentences on the paper. The child then puts a colored strip of paper to match the one under who for all the parts of the sentence that tell who. The same is done for what, where, and then. An answer key with strips of paper already pasted on correctly makes it possible for each child to check his own.

14. For each letter of the alphabet, draw a picture of an animal. This could include birds, fish, and reptiles.

15. Prepare a story to read to the class.

16. Make up some jokes.

17. Make alphabetic code messages and have a friend decipher them.

18. Make original book jackets for books on the shelf in the classroom or library.
19. On a given page, find another way of saying the same thing. Example: (Jim was late.) Jim was not on time. p. 27.

20. Illustrate tall, taller, tallest, or small, small, smaller, smallest.

21. From a list of known characters in a story, categorize them according to: Boys, Girls, Babies, Mothers, Dads, Grandmothers, Grandfathers, Uncles, or Aunts.

22. Finish sentences such as these: One who farms is a __________. One who sings is a __________.

Reading Activities for the Average Child

1. Illustrate words that can be pictured.
2. Illustrate phrases that can be pictured.
3. Illustrate sentences that can be pictured.
4. Match definitions and words.
5. Match questions and answers.
6. Match words with pictures.
7. Match phrases with pictures.
8. Match sentences with pictures.
9. Complete sentences with ending phrases by underlining or drawing or writing the correct answer.
10. Word cards or phrase cards can be used to build sentences.
11. Illustrate pictures that begin like a familiar vocabulary word.
12. Illustrate several pictures for a given consonant.
13. Illustrate pictures for a given blend.
14. Clay model objects for a given initial consonant or blend.
15. Illustrate pictures for a given final consonant.

16. Lincoln logs, Zinker toys, or sticks or pegs may be used to build objects containing a given sound, initially, medially, or finally.

17. Match the proper initial consonant with a picture.

18. Find pictures beginning with a given consonant.

19. Using known vocabulary, change the initial consonant and make several new words.

20. Build new words from root words by changing the ending or adding an ending. (work, works, worked, working)

21. Paste experience charts on durable paper, and re-read occasionally.

22. Illustrate words that have opposite meanings.

23. Illustrate words or phrases for things that can do a certain action and those that can not. Examples: Can Fly: Planes, Birds and Bess. Can not fly: Horses, Trees and Clocks.

24. Cross out the word in a sentence that does not belong there. Example: John went with Jim to the thin store.

25. Illustrate a story in proper sequence.

26. Draw pictures of randomly listed words in alphabetical order.

27. Make a color booklet. Label each page with a different color name. The word red is printed in red, blue is printed in blue and so on. Children find or draw pictures using these colors.

28. On heavy cardboard, put two columns, one of letters, the other of pictures. For each picture in the first column, put a picture beginning with the same sound in the second column. Punch a hole next to each picture. Fasten a shoe lace in the holes next to the pictures in the first column. Children can put the shoe lace next to the corresponding picture in the first column. An answer key will make it self correcting. Variations of the same idea might include: Pictures on one side and consonant blends on the other side. Final consonants, numbers, or vowels might also be used in the same manner.
29. Circle the two words found in compound words.

30. Take a cardboard with various word endings, such as pig run hat car look can

31. In groups of four words, find three that belong together.

32. With a stamp set, stamp pictures on a piece of cardboard. In an envelope attached to the cardboard, put the words to match the pictures. The child matches the words with the pictures. If variations of the same pictures are used, the activity may be done over many times.

33. With a stamp set, stamp pictures on strips of heavy paper. Toward the bottom of the strip, stamp the name of the picture. Cut the strip apart in the middle with a pinking shears, making a variety of patterns. The child matches the top and the bottom of each strip.

34. Use pictures from old books or reading readiness materials. Paste these pictures in the proper sequence and label them First, Next, Then, and Last.

35. Hold up a picture with many details for fifteen seconds or so. Children then draw as many details as they can remember.

36. Draw pictures in response to lead words such as: Hot, Cold, Spring, Summer, Christmas and the like.

37. In lists of words, find one that does not belong. The same thing can be done with pictures.

38. Draw pictures to describe words such as: on, under, over, between, around, or beside.

39. Make an alphabet picture dictionary, one item for each.

40. A Classification Booklet can be made by finding pictures to fit labels such as: Animals, Toys, People, Things, Ways to Travel, and the like.

41. Draw pictures of animals that say quack, moo, peep, bow-wow and car.
Reading Activities for the Average Child - continued

42. Various charts may be placed around the room and labelled Hard, Soft, Round, Square, Sweet or Sour. Pupils find pictures to describe these words and place them under the appropriate caption.

43. Other charts with captions such as Feel, Taste, See, Hear, and smell can be put up, and children can paste on this chart actual items to feel or smell or taste.

44. Draw pictures to finish sentences such as these:
I see a __________. I want a __________. Look at the __________. My __________ is here.

45. A variation of the same idea is to have children draw pictures that correspond to sentences such as: Jane got a __________. Jack likes that __________. I am on my way to __________.

46. To strengthen visual memory, place several, small familiar objects on a table. Cover them with cloth or paper. Remove the cover, exposing the objects for a few seconds. Replace the cover and ask the children to draw as many as they can remember. Gradually, the number of objects can be increased.

47. Place several objects under the cover of a table. Expose them for several seconds. Have the children close their eyes while one of the objects is removed. Children can draw or clay model the object removed, or can draw all of them indicating which one was removed. This is another strengthening of visual memory.

48. Another visual memory exercise is to have a child come to the front, have the other children close their eyes after having looked at the child carefully. While their eyes are closed, someone rolls up a sleeve or removes a belt or in some other manner changes the appearance of the child slightly. Children then draw their observations.

49. An alphabet block may be tossed into the air. The child tossing the block must give the name of a word beginning with the letter turned up on the block.

50. From readers, classify animals that were read about under Pets, Zoo Animals, or Farm Animals.
Reading Activities for the Average Child - continued

51. In sentences that have a word missing, underline the correct word provided under the sentence. Words that are confusing or look alike to the child might be used here.

52. Children can fill in the missing letter in words such as trai__, be_ __, schoo__ , and so on.

53. Interesting compound word pictures can be made by drawing a picture of a fire, a house, and then a firehouse.

54. From flashcards around the room, children can build sentences using these words.

55. Bingo or checkers can be played in twos or in small groups, using vocabulary recently studied.

56. On cardboard, make squares with 5 green or 7 orange or eight blue or six Red written on them. Colored pens or sticks or circles can be used to fill in the squares with the correct color and number. By varying numerals and words and capital and lower case letters, many squares can be filled in on the same cardboard.

57. Workbook pages can be re-used as independent pupil activity in the following ways:

If children had to write the correct letter for a picture or draw lines from letters to corresponding pictures, they could now cut out the pictures and the letters, and line the proper picture up under the letter and paste them down.

Where sentences had to be numbered in the order in which they happened, they can now be cut apart and pasted on separate paper in sequential order.

If pictures were to be numbered in sequential order, they can now be cut apart and pasted on another paper in the proper order.

If a blank was left for a word, cut out the correct word from the choices, and paste it in the blank provided. Sentences can then be re-read.

Where an extra word was inserted in a sentence and had to be crossed out, the sentence can be cut out, leaving out the extra word.

When pictures are described in riddle form or otherwise, and then numbered, the picture can be cut out and the corresponding riddle or description pasted under it.
Reading Activities for the Below-Average Child

1. Match like words or letters.
2. Match phrases that are the same in form.
3. Sentences that are alike can be matched.
4. Find given words in phrases or sentences and underline.
5. Match rhyming words.
6. Illustrate picture words that rhyme.
7. Illustrate pictures that rhyme with given vocabulary.
8. Match singular and plural noun forms with pictures.
9. Illustrate a familiar story which was read by the children or one that was read to them.
10. Match pictures that belong together, such as a cup and saucer or shoes and stockings.
11. Find pictures of vocabulary words that can be pictured.
12. Circles, squares, and rectangles on a sheet of heavy paper can have reproductions of these shapes and since in an envelope and children can match them. They might also arrange them according to size.
13. Pictures that have an important part missing can be finished by the child.
14. Copy patterns from the board. These patterns might be made with tinker toys, with pegs, with blocks, or with strips of paper.
15. Trace circles, squares, rectangles, or other geometric designs made with broken lines first with the finger, then with pencil and then with crayon.
16. Have children trace cardboard objects such as animals, ships, or planes. Then trace with finger, with pencil, with crayon, and then cut out the object and paste it on another sheet of paper and decorate fittingly.
17. Reproduce a series of pictures on a flannel
Reading Activities for the Below-Average Child - continued

board by illustration with paint or crayon or clay modelling.

18. Arrange pictures from comic strips in sequence. Have a key for self-correcting.

19. Use parquet blocks and reproduce a given design or make an original design for someone else to reproduce.

20. Clay model objects and put them in boxes with labels such as Big, Small, Animals, Toys or the like. The same thing can be done with pictures that have been cut out of magazines.

21. On a hectographed sheet with capital letters, pupils can build under them the lower case letters to correspond to the capital letters. Or lower case letters may be hectographed, and the corresponding capital letter can then be the one to be found.

22. A color chart is made up of geometric designs. An envelope containing geometric designs to match accompanies it. The color and the name of the color are incorporated into each geometric design to facilitate the learning of the color names.

23. A chart may have captions such as: Toys, Animals, Colors, Numbers. Children can find pictures for the captions or may draw pictures or clay model them.

24. Commercially prepared jigsaw puzzles or teacher-made puzzles may be used.

25. Using a stamp set, stamp objects on a paper from smallest to largest or vice versa, or stamp pictures according to a given classification.

26. On a piece of durable paper or cardboard, stamp or print or paste some letters of the alphabet, in either lower case or capital form. Put lines under each letter extending to the end of the paper. The child uses commercially prepared letters and may do the following: Find like letters, Find the capital letter then the lower case letter is given or find the lower case letter then the capital letter is given, Find the letter that comes before the given letter or the one that comes after it, Build a word that starts with the given letter and then also a rhyming word, Build a sentence using one of the capital letters as the first letter in the sentence, or build a word that begins with the preceding letter in front of the given letter and a word that begins with the letter following the given letter.
Reading Activities for the Below-Average Child—continued

27. Stamp four or five pictures on the top row of a piece of cardboard. Under each picture put a different colored circle. The same pictures used in the top row are stamped on the cardboard in various places. The child has colored circles in an envelope to match the ones in the top row. He then matches the colored circle with the same object represented by that color in the top row.

28. On heavy paper put pieces of wallpaper about two inches square, cut out with a pinking shears. Many varieties of wallpaper can be used on the same sheet. Then the child, from an envelope filled with more pieces of the same, matches the pieces of wallpaper on the cardboard.

29. Illustrate pictures to show Help, help! or Come here.

30. Illustrate pictures to suit the captions: I can jump, or I cannot jump.

31. Answer yes or no to simple statements such as: Fish can fly, or Birds can.

32. An oval shaped piece of cardboard is used. A sentence is printed, one half on top and the other half on the bottom part of the oval. The oval is cut apart in the middle. The child matches the top and bottom and reads the sentence.

33. Make and use a tachistoscope for learning words.


35. Read stories and books silently for enjoyment.

36. From a list of four words, find three that rhyme.

37. Tagboard is divided into squares, four rows of squares, four squares to each row, like a checkerboard. Paste or draw circles in graduated sizes in the first row of boxes, squares in the next, then triangles, then half circles. Other shapes may be used. An envelope containing identical pieces is clipped to the back of the tagboard which the child is to match with the ones on the board. Similar checkboards could be used for matching words, pictures, and capital or lower case forms of the letters of the alphabet.
Reading Activities for the Below-Average Child - continued

38. Draw pictures of how people looked before a certain event happened and how they looked after it happened.

39. With clay, model the letters in a word and then study the word.

40. Write a new word or a difficult word on tagboard. Punch holes through the tagboard, outlining the word. Then use a finger for tracing the word until it becomes familiar.

41. Print difficult words in broken lines. Go over the word with finger, pencil, and then crayon until the word becomes familiar.

42. Print a word on tagboard. Put split peas on the letters of the word. When the peas have dried, go over the word with hand or fingers until the word becomes familiar.

43. Use wire to form words causing difficulty. Study the words.

44. Use felt markers, crayons, or paintbrushes or hands in going over large forms of words that may be causing difficulty in reading.

45. On wet sand, from four to six inches deep, use fingers to trace words used in reading.

46. Trace words needed for a story on sandpaper. Rub over the word on the sandpaper until it becomes familiar.

47. The same effect may be gotten from using a tray of salt and tracing the words in the salt tray. The salt need be only half an inch deep.

48. Learn the names of the boys and girls in the class by tracing over large forms of their names.

Writing Activities for the Above-Average Child

1. Write a story containing given words.

2. Complete a story by filling in missing words.
3. From a known word, write three new words changing the initial consonant.
4. Change the initial consonant from a known word. Use the new word in a sentence.
5. Final consonants may be changed in the same manner.
6. Arrange four or five sentences from a story written on the board in proper sequential order.
7. Use as many words as possible that begin with the same sound in one sentence.
8. Finish a rhyme—I love my mother, yes I do, For she _______________________.
9. Write sentences putting in a word that does not belong. Give these sentences to someone else to cross out the misspelled word.
11. Write the contraction for two given words.
12. Write opposites of words given.
13. Write the root words in given words.
14. Change words in a sentence without changing the meaning.
15. Use the 's in writing sentences.
16. Finish the sentence by adding a line: Once there was a _______________________.
17. Write words that mean the same thing.
18. Find words that are opposite in meaning and write them.
19. From given lists, categorize phrases according to What I See, That I Do.
20. Using sentences such as "I can paint" (1) or "My paint is gone" (2), write another sentence using paint as it was used in sentence (2).
21. From a given word, make a list of words changing one letter in each word from the one above it, as in Blab, Blah.
Writing Activities for the Above-Average Child - continued

1. Write new words from root words by changing the endings, as: work, worke, worked, working. Then use each one in a sentence.

2. Write the correct form of the above in a sentence in which one of the words is missing.

3. Each child may make his own vocabulary cards by writing on cards the vocabulary to be learned.

4. Put words listed on the board in random order, in alphabetical order on paper. Or the child can look through books or picture dictionaries and write his own words.

5. From words listed on the board, classify them in proper order under headings such as: Animals, Toys, People and the like. Extra words that do not belong may also be added.

6. Write compound words showing a division between the two words.

7. Write rhyming words found in readers or words that can be spelled by the pupil without help.

8. Correct capitalization in sentences such as these: John and Mary came.

9. Write group stories. Paste them in a scrapbook. Read them from time to time.

10. Some creative writing can be done. Leads such as: If I were a dog _______ or If I were a chair _______ or If I had three wishes _______ might be used.

11. Write letters to people to thank them, to invite them, or to cheer them when they are ill.

12. Copy a poem from the board.

Writing Activities for the Below-Average Child

1. Write lower case letters in manuscript.
Writing Activities for the Below-Average Child - continued

2. Write upper case letters in manuscript.
3. Write upper and lower case letters in manuscript.
4. Copy sentences from the board.
5. Make a calendar of the month. Add interesting events that occur during the month.
6. Make a Christmas ABC book with illustrations:
   A is for Angel
   B is for Baby or Bell
   C is for Candle
   D is for Donkey
   E is for Evergreen
   F is for Frankincense
   G is for Gold
   H is for Holly
   I is for Inn
   J is for Joseph
   K is for Kings
   L is for Lamb
   M is for Manger
   N is for Nazareth
   O is for Ox
   P is for Poinsettia
   Q is for Quiet Night
   R is for Reindeer
   S is for Star
   T is for Tree
   U is for Us
   V is for Visitors
   W is for Wreath
   X is for Kisses
   Y is for Yule log
   Z is Zzzz Sleep in Peace

   These, then, are examples of work that might be given to children to do independently while the teacher is occupied with another group. Occasionally, the whole class may wish to participate in one of these activities. At other times, small groups may be the ones participating, and at other times children may do an exercise when they need this type of practice or when they are ready for a given activity.
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