

# INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH READER:

OR,  
A SELECTION OF PIECES,  
In Prose and Poetry;

CALCULATED TO IMPROVE  
THE YOUNGER CLASSES OF LEARNERS IN READING;

AND TO IMBUE  
THEIR MINDS WITH THE LOVE OF VIRTUE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,  
RULES AND OBSERVATIONS  
FOR ASSISTING CHILDREN TO READ WITH  
*PROPRIETY.*

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TWENTY-SEVENTH EDITION.

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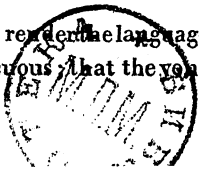
## PREFACE.

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“THE English Reader,” and “The Sequel” to that performance, having met with a favourable reception from the public, the compiler has been induced to prepare a small volume, on a similar plan, for the use of children who have made but little progress in reading. It has been his aim to form a compilation, which would properly conduct the young learner from the Spelling-book to the “English Reader :” and in prosecuting this design, he has been particularly careful to select such pieces as are adapted to the understanding, and pleasing to the taste, of children.

A work calculated for different classes of young readers, should contain pieces suited, in point of language and matter, to their various ages and capacities. The compiler, in conformity with this idea, has endeavoured to arrange the materials for each chapter, so as to form an easy gradation, which may be adapted to the different progress of the learners. Judicious teachers will know how to apply this arrangement to the years and abilities of their pupils.

Care has been taken to render the language of all the pieces correct and perspicuous, that the young learner



may improve in style as well as in reading, and insensibly acquire a taste for accurate composition.—To imbue the tender mind with the love of virtue and goodness, is an especial object of the present work : and with this view, the pieces have been scrupulously selected ; and, where necessary, purified from every word and sentiment, that could offend the most delicate mind.

As a work tending to season the minds of children with piety and virtue, and to improve them in reading, language, and sentiment, the compiler hopes it will prove a suitable Introduction to the “English Reader,” and other publications of that nature ; and also a proper book for those schools, in which, from their circumscribed plan of education, larger works of the kind cannot be admitted.

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#### ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE compiler has added to this edition more than twenty pages of matter, which he hopes will be found useful and interesting. He has also given to many of the pieces a new arrangement, calculated to render every part of the work more intelligible and pleasing to young minds.

# RULES AND OBSERVATIONS

FOR ASSISTING CHILDREN TO READ WITH  
PROPRIETY.

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THE compiler of this work having, in the Preface to his “English reader,” explained at large the principles of elocution, nothing on this head seems to be necessary, in the present publication, but to give a few plain and simple rules, adapted to the younger classes of learners ; and to make some observations, calculated to rectify the errors which they are most apt to commit. These rules may be comprehended under the following heads. They are comprised in few words, and a little separated from the observations, that those teachers who wish their pupils to commit them to memory, may more readily distinguish them from the parts which require only an attentive perusal.

I. All the simple sounds should be pronounced with fulness, distinctness, and energy; particularly the vowels, on the proper utterance of which, the force and beauty of pronunciation greatly depend.

The simple sounds, especially those signified by the letters, *l*, *r*, *s*, *th*, and *sh*, are often very imperfectly pronounced by young persons. *B* and *p* are apt to be confounded : so are *d* and *t*, *s* and *z*, *f* and *v*. The letters *v* and *w* are often sounded the one for the other : thus wine is pronounced vine; and vinegar, winegar. The diphthong *ow*, is, in some words, vulgarly sounded like *er* : as foller, meller, winder; instead of follow, mellow, window. When several consonants, proper to be sounded, occur in the beginning or at the end of words, it is a very common error to omit one of them in pronunciation : as in the words, asps, casks, guests, breadth, fifth, twelfth, strength, hearths. Not sounding the letter *h*, when it is proper to sound this letter, is a great fault in pronunciation, and very difficult wholly to correct.

When children have acquired any improper habits with respect to simple sounds, the best mode of correction is, to make them frequently repeat words and sentences, in which those sounds occur. When the simple sounds are thoroughly understood and acquired, the various combinations of them into syllables and words will be easily effected.

II. In order to give spirit and propriety to pronunciation, due attention must be paid to accent, emphasis, and cadence.

When we distinguish a syllable by a greater stress of the voice, it is called *accent*. When we thus distinguish a word in a sentence, it is called *emphasis*. It is difficult to give precise rules for placing the accent; but the best general direction is, to consult the most approved pronouncing dictionaries, and to imitate the practice of the most correct speakers.

There are, in every sentence, some word, or words, on which the sense of the rest depends; and these must always be distinguished by a fuller and stronger sound of voice, whether they are found in the beginning, the middle, or at the end, of a sentence. It is highly improper to lay an emphasis on words of little importance. Words put in opposition to each other, are always emphatical: as, “*Here* I am *miserable*; but *there* I shall be *happy*.” “Children,” says Beatrice, “are not often taught to read with proper emphasis. When books are put before them which they do not understand, it is impossible they should apply it properly. Let them, therefore, read nothing but what is level to their capacity. Let them read deliberately, and with attention to every word. Let them be set right, not only when they misapply the em-

phasis, but also cautioned against the opposite extremes of too forcible and too feeble an application of it : for, by the former of these faults, they become affected in their utterance ; and by the latter, insipid." That children may be enabled to apply the emphasis, with judgment, they should carefully study the subject, and ascertain the meaning of every difficult word and sentence, previously to their being called to read to the teacher.

As emphasis consists in raising the voice, cadence signifies the falling of it. Towards the close of a sentence, the cadence takes place, unless the concluding words be emphatical. It should always be easy and gradual, not abrupt ; and should never be expressed in a feeble and languid manner. Even the falling of the voice may be managed with spirit and variety.

III. As the art of reading greatly depends on the proper management of the breath, it should be used with economy. The voice ought to be relieved at every stop ; slightly at a comma, more leisurely at a semicolon, or a colon, and completely at a period.

A due attention to this rule, will prevent a broken, faint and languid voice, which is the usual fault of ignorant and vulgar readers. It will enable the

reader to preserve the command of his voice; to pronounce the longest sentence with as much ease as the shortest; and to acquire that freedom and energy, with which a person of judgment naturally expresses his perceptions, emotions, and passions, in common discourse.

The comma marks the shortest pause; the semicolon, a pause double that of the comma; the colon, double that of the semicolon; and the period, double that of the colon. A dash following a stop, shows that the pause is to be greater than if the stop were alone; and when used by itself, requires a pause of such length as the sense alone can determine. A paragraph requires a pause double that which is proper at a period.

The points of interrogation and exclamation, are uncertain as to their time. The pause which they demand is equal to a semicolon, a colon, or a period, as the sense may require. They should be attended with an elevation of the voice. The parenthesis, unless accompanied with a stop, requires but a small pause. It generally marks a moderate depression of the voice.

IV. Let the tone of the voice, in reading, be the same as it would be in speaking on the same subject.



To render this rule proper and effectual, children should be taught to speak slowly, distinctly, and with due attention to the sentiments they express. The mode of speaking is then only to be imitated by the reader, when it is just and natural.

V. Endeavour to vary and modulate the voice, according to the nature of the subject, whether it be in a solemn, a serious, a familiar, a gay, a humorous, or an ironical strain.

It would be highly improper to read an interesting narrative, with an air of negligence; to express warm emotions of the heart, with cold indifference; and to pronounce a passage of Scripture, on a sublime and important subject, with the familiar tone of common conversation. On the other hand, it would be absurd to read a letter on trivial subjects, in a mournful strain; or a production of gaiety and humour, with grave formality.

VI. In reading verse, the same general directions must be observed, as have been given for reading prose.

Narrative, didactic, descriptive, and pathetic pieces, have the same peculiar tone and manner, in

poetry as in prose. A singing note, and making the lines jingle by laying too great a stress on the rhyming words, should be particularly avoided. A very small pause ought to be made at the end of a line; unless the sense, or some of the usual marks of pause, require a considerable one. The great rule for reading verse, as well as prose, is to read slowly, distinctly, and in a natural tone of voice.

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WE shall now caution young readers against some faults which many are apt to commit. In doing this, it will unavoidably happen, that a few of the preceding observations will, in some respects, be repeated : but this confirmation of the rules will, it is presumed, be no disadvantage to the learners. A display of the various errors in reading, incident to children, may make a greater impression than directions which are positive, and point only to the propriety of pronunciation.

1. Avoid too loud, or too low a voice.

An overstrained voice is very inconvenient to the reader, as well as disgusting to the hearer. It ex-

hausts the reader's spirits; and prevents the proper management and modulation of his voice, according to the sense of his subjects; and it naturally leads into a tone. Too low a voice is not so inconvenient to the speaker, as the other extreme : but it is very disagreeable to the hearer. It is always offensive to an audience, to observe any thing in the reader or speaker, that marks indolence or inattention. When the voice is naturally too loud, or too low, young persons should correct it in their ordinary conversation : by this means they will learn to avoid both extremes, in reading. They should begin the sentence with an even, moderate voice, which will enable them to rise or fall as the subject requires.

## 2. Avoid a thick, confused, cluttering voice.

It is very disagreeable to hear a person mumble, clip, or swallow his words ; leaving out some syllables in the long words, and scarcely ever pronouncing some of the short ones ; but hurrying on without any care to give his words their full sound, or his hearers the full sense of them. This fault is not easily cured. The best means of mending it, is, to endeavour, both in conversation and reading, to pronounce every word in a deliberate, clear and distinct manner.

3. Be careful to read neither too quickly nor too slowly.

A precipitant reader leaves no room for pauses; fatigues himself; and lowers the dignity of his subject. His hearers lose much of what is delivered, and must always be dissatisfied with a reader who hurries and tires them. Children are very apt to read too fast, and to take a pleasure in it, thinking that they who pronounce the words with the greatest rapidity, are the best scholars.—The heavy, dronish, sleepy reader, who often makes pauses where there should be none, is also very disagreeable. If he hems and yawns between the periods, he is still more so.

4. Study to avoid an irregular mode of pronunciation.

It is a great fault in reading, to raise and fall the voice by fits and starts; to elevate and depress it unseasonably, without regard to sense or stops; or always to begin a sentence with a high voice, and conclude it with a low one; or, on the contrary, to begin with a low voice, and conclude with a high one. To avoid these errors, the sentence should not be begun in too high, or too low a key; regard

should be had to the nature of the points, and the length of the periods : and the reader's mind should be attentive to the subject, sense, and spirit of his author.

5. With the utmost care avoid a flat, dull, uniform voice, without emphasis or cadence, or a proper regard to the sense of what is reading.

This is a practice to which children who do not love learning, and who are tired with their lessons, are very prone. When this mode of reading becomes habitual, it is painful to the hearer, and very difficult to be remedied. The best means of cure are those prescribed for the preceding error : for if the mind be attentive to the sentiments delivered, the voice will be adapted to their nature and importance.

6. Reading with an improper tone is a great and common fault of learners, and must be carefully avoided.

No habit is more easy to be contracted than this, or harder to be overcome. This unnatural tone in reading is always disgusting to persons of sense and delicacy. Some have a squeaking tone. Persons whose voices are shrill and weak, or overstrained, are apt to fall into this tone.—Some have a singing or canting note : others assume a high swelling tone.

These lay too much stress on every sentence, and violate every rule of decent pronunciation.—Some affect an awful and striking tone, attended with solemn grimace ; as if they wished to move the reader with every word, whether the weight of the subject supports them or not.—Some have a set, uniform tone of voice, which has already been noticed.—Others have a strange, whimsical, whining tone, peculiar to themselves, and not easy to be described. They are continually laying the emphasis on words which do not require or deserve it.

To avoid all kinds of unnatural and disagreeable tones, we should read with the same ease and freedom that would mark our common conversation, on the same subject. We do not hear persons converse in a tone : if we did we should laugh at them. “Do not,” says Dr. Watts, “affect to change that natural and easy sound with which you speak, for a strange, new, awkward tone, as some do when they begin to read. We should almost be persuaded that the speaker and the reader were two different persons, if our eyes did not tell us the contrary.”

We shall close these rules and observations, by a remark of considerable importance to young persons, who are desirous of learning to read well. Few rules on the subject are intelligible to children, unless illustrated by the voice of a competent instructor.

They should, therefore, pay great attention to the manner in which their teacher, and other persons of approved skill, perform the business of reading. They should observe their mode of pronouncing the words, placing the emphasis, making the pauses, managing the voice, and adapting it to the various subjects they read; and, in all these respects, endeavour to imitate them as nearly as possible.

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