Exposition in Class-Room Practice

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EXPOSITION IN CLASS-ROOM PRACTICE
EXPOSITION

IN

CLASS-ROOM PRACTICE

BY

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PREFACE

A FRIENDSHIP of many years' standing and a strong common interest in the squad teaching of English in secondary schools have led the authors to undertake the preparation of a new text-book on exposition. The following are the most characteristic features of the book:

1. It treats of practically all the forms of exposition actually carried on in secondary school work, and only of those.

2. Being intended not to supplant, but to supplement, other more general treatises on composition and rhetoric, it covers the field of exposition in detail, aiming to develop a thorough understanding of the various phases of explanation, by means of an abundance of illustrative material and copious exercises,—all the outgrowth of extended trials in the classroom. Experience has shown that detailed presentation of this sort in print, paralleling, as it does, the rather discursive methods of oral instruction, materially lessens the burdens of the teacher by decreasing the amount of explanation he is now forced to give his pupils, and, for various reasons, to repeat again and again. It is believed that by the use of this text, time may be saved for the more inspiring phases of English work.

3. Since structure and style are adequately covered in numerous school text-books, these elements of ex-
pository writing receive here but casual notice. The treatment of exposition in this book centers about choice of subject and content, with particularly detailed presentation of such phases of explanation as experience shows are least well done by pupils in secondary schools.

(4) In order to make clear to pupils the practical nature of many of the tasks set and the general standard of attainment to be expected of them, much of the illustrative material has been selected deliberately, not from standard literary sources, but from newspapers and magazines.

(5) An unusually large space has been devoted to the subject of outlines and the use of outlines, for the reason that to the outline all study of structure eventually reduces itself.

(6) The summary has been treated with a degree of detail heretofore lacking in school text-books. We believe this form of exercise to be of distinctly more value than those which call for the mere determination of the way in which paragraphs are developed. The ability to write a summary such as truly brings out the central idea of an original text is in itself concrete evidence of the relative values of structural material. Abundant practice in framing good summaries is, moreover, the only form of training that will lead to adequate and economical recitation in advanced classes in English, history, and other subjects.

(7) The chapters on Informal Opinion and Criticism, Appreciation, and Answers to Questions in English contain, we believe, distinct contributions to school "literature" on exposition in secondary schools.

(8) To enable individual pupils, of themselves, to do
their best in their individual work and to be most helpful to their classmates, we have devised ten sets of systematic and searching questions, here called Guides for Criticism. The increasing foreign element in our population, the growing tendency of the uneducated to improve the opportunities of their children by sending them to high school, and the operations of an elective system for some subjects of instruction, side by side with a non-elective like English, are together productive of conditions for the teacher of English that seem to grow more burdensome day by day. We are convinced that it is virtually impossible to obtain proper results—especially in large high schools—unless instructors are given much more free time for the correction of themes and for conferences with individual pupils, and are assigned school work on a basis of the number of pupils taught rather than of the number of hours of instruction given; or unless their burdens are in some other way so reduced as to enable them to afford needed aid to the incompetent and needed stimulus to the dilatory. In this connection, experience has shown that with guides for criticism of the kind here given, pupils can and do make for themselves very many of the corrections that now must be made by their instructors. Even though a pupil may follow up but a few of the hints afforded by any one guide, he will have improved his written work to an appreciable extent.

(9) So far as is possible, the separate parts of the book are developed independently; i.e. the various phases of exposition are presented in a series of flexible units, which can be used in one order or in another, in part or as a whole, according to local needs.
PREFACE

For aid in furnishing material and for valuable criticism, the authors wish to express their indebtedness to Mr. Daniel B. Duncan, of Columbia Grammar School, New York City, and to Messrs. F. M. Crouch, Edwin Fairley, and Charles M. Stebbins, of Boys' High School, Brooklyn.

T. C. M.
G. R. C.

AUGUST, 1906.
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