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Stamp stories for third and fourth grade children

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STAMP STORIES FOR THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE CHILDREN

Submitted by

Mildred Peabody

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First Reader: Donald D. Durrell, Professor of Education

Second Reader: Helen A. Murphy, Professor of Education

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CHAPTER I

PROBLEM AND GENERAL PROCEDURE

Problem

Definition of the problem.-- The problem is to develop a series of stories for children of third and fourth grade reading ability. These stories are to be controlled by such readability factors as found recommended through the research done.

These stories will be built about the stamps available to these children which picture the life and growth of our United States in an interesting manner. They will be so organized as to have a thread of interest joining them all in book form.

Justification.-- There are several reasons why the writer feels that there is a definite need for material of this type on the indicated level.

1. As a stamp club adviser for third and fourth grade children, the writer finds a need for factual material on their level about stamps and how to collect them.
2. Third Grade Social Studies cover a unit on communication. During this unit the postoffice and its services are developed. Pupils become quite interested in stamps and seek stories about them.

3. Fourth grade children study many explorers and begin the study of our country. To these children the need for stamp stories is evident, as they tie in with their classwork.
4. Children of upper grades whose reading ability is below grade level will find interesting facts here that will correlate with their historywork, and will encourage a worthwhile hobby.

Scope.-- This material is limited in range by the following factors:

1. This material is built for third and fourth grade readers for further reference.
2. The major part of the book will be stories of current and past American stamps of high interest.
3. An introductory section will take up simple techniques of stamp collecting through the experiences of two children.
4. The stories are of basic interest to those children collecting stamps alone or in a club, and will lead to a worthy leisure time interest.
5. The stamps chosen are mainly those obtainable by children.
6. Some stamps not obtainable are included because of their high interest value.

7. The vocabulary is checked by the Rinsland[1] Word List.
8. Sentence structure is built according to principles compiled by a study of research in this field.
9. Other factors of readability, as found through a study of pertinent research, are controlled as far as possible.

General Procedure

Study of research on readability.-- A careful study of available material on readability was made. The use of vocabulary lists to check for word difficulty was investigated and a satisfactory list chosen. Factors of readability in common use were selected for guides in controlling the level of the story. Particular attention was thus given to breaking down the two topics of vocabulary and sentence structure into sections which could be measured. The style of writing interesting to children, and the recommended plans for writing satisfactory material were both the subjects of a study of pertinent research.

Readability level for grade three.-- After choosing

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[1]Henry D. Rinsland. A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1945, 636 pp.

the most important factors of readability, it was necessary to find the level of each of these factors for grade three. The vocabulary level was chosen from the selected list, with the purpose of the stories in mind. A study was made of third grade basic reading books in the writer's school system in regard to these items. The result was set up to be a standard for the material to be written.

Choice of subject-matter for stories.-- A definite plan for choosing the stamps to be included had to be formed. By reference to current price range of stamps, those were chosen which would be representative of the many topics of United States life and growth, and still be inexpensive to children. Some stamps were added because of special interest to children, even though they would not be easily available.

Historical data was collected for these stamps both in regard to the stamps themselves and in connection with the person or topic pictured. Data from children's books was supplemented by more advanced material for the sake of accuracy.

Organization of subject-matter for stories.-- Guided by the pertinent research on style and on plans of writing for children, the writer organized the material with a slight narrative thread for introduction. Techniques of

stamp-collecting were organized in this fiction-type setting. Stories of stamps were organized under major topics.

Writing of stories.-- In accordance with the plans found to be recommended for writing for a particular audience, the writer, after becoming familiar with an abundance of subject-matter for a definite chapter, then wrote the story directly as she might tell it to the group in question. This had the advantage of making each story fit the natural language pattern of that level easily.

Checking stories for readability factors.-- Each story had each word checked for grade level with the chosen vocabulary list. Substitutions were made where necessary. Each story was compared with the evidence found in the third grade reading books for number of new words per story. The sentence structure was gauged by the research study, and changed where necessary.

Tabulating data.-- All information obtained as to the readability factors of each story was tabulated both to demonstrate itw level and to distinguish those particular words needing teaching.

CHAPTER II

PERTINENT RESEARCH

General Elements of Readability

The building of stories for children must have a definite pattern as to readability. In order to form this pattern, research must be made to show what forms seem the most desirable to follow. Most studies on this topic are found to have been conducted within the last twenty years, a period within which interest in writing scientifically to fit a particular reading group has been high. Factors which contribute to the readability of books are indicated by Gray and Leary[1] as they say:

> When each aspect of readability has been defined precisely for different readers, it seems reasonable to believe that all the facts may be synthesized and utilized in the production of more books which look readable from the point of view of format and organization, and which are readable if their content and style make them easy and pleasant to read.

Each person has his own concept of readability. Some give it a narrow meaning, largely concerned with vocabulary. Dale and Chall[2], longtime workers in this field,

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[1]William S. Gray and Bernice E. Leary. What Makes a Book Readable, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1935, p.56

[2]Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall. "The Concept of Readability", Elementary English, Vol. XXVI, p.23, January, 1949

after summarizing their own work and that of others, arrive at the following definition:

> In the broadest sense, then, readability is the sum total (including the interactions) of all those elements within a given piece of printed material that affects the success of a group of readers with it. The success is the extent to which they understand it, read it at an optium speed, and find it interesting.

Several investigators have tried to reduce this topic to a formula, which could be applied to any item of reading for purposes of rating it as to its best use. The process requires selecting some basic elements of readability, and deciding through research by what constant each one shall be multiplied, so that the final figure will be a rating of difficulty. In the field of children's literature, some of the best and earliest work is provided by Vogel and Washburne.[1] In their first published formula they made use of the following bases: the number of different words in 1000, the number of prepositions in 1000, the number of uncommon words in 1000 (using the first 10,000 words of the Thorndike list as being common), and the number of simple sentences in 75.

Any formula of this type is of value only to the extent that it can be easily used. For the average person it is difficult to count accurately and swiftly the number

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[1] Mabel Vogel and Carleton Washburne. "An Objective Method of Determining Grade Placement of Children's Reading Materials," Elementary School Journal, Vol. XXVI, pp. 373-381, January, 1928

of prepositions in a selection. It is also cumbersome for checking purposes to use 10,000 words as a common backlog. After several years of practical work in applying readability techniques to more than two thousand books, the authors[1] are found with a revised formula. This newer formula includes Grades I and II, uses 1500 common words rather than 10,000, and does not include the preposition count. These changes furnish data just as reliable and just as valid but make the work easier.

The three elements that go into this new formula are simple:

1. In a thousand words, from a systematic sampling of the book, how many different words are there?
2. Of this same thousand words, how many are not among the 1500 commonest in the English language?
3. Out of seventy-five sentences, sampled systematically, how many are neither complex nor compound?

It is not possible for any one study to cover the whole field. Vogel and Washburne deal with the voluntary reading of children. Dale and Chall[2] build a formula from a study of health materials. They find themselves in a position comparable to the first-mentioned study; a count of affixes is either inaccurate or too time-consuming. A

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[1]Carleton Washburne and Mabel Vogel Morphett. "Grade Placement of Children's Books", Elementary School Journal, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 359, January, 1938

[2]Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall. "A Formula for Predicting Readability", Educational Research Bulletin, Vol. XXVII, pp. 11-28, January 1, 1948

good prediction of readability is obtained by them with only two factors, one connected with vocabulary and the other with sentence structure. They find the relative number of words outside their own basal list of 3000 for a vocabulary measure. In sentence structure they are concerned with the average sentence length.

The small number of factors in this study contrasts with the eight phases chosen by Gray and Leary.[1] Many similarities are seen, however, in their description:

> Eight elements seem to meet the requirements set up for selection. They are: number of different hard words; number of easy words; percentage of monosyllables; number of first-, second-, and third- person pronouns; average sentence-length in words; percentage of different words; number of prepositional phrases; and number of simple sentences.

The excellent work done by Lorge[2] in this field is based on regular reading lessons. Some of his early reports explain that he considers readability largely a matter of comprehensibility, and uses this criterion in working out his formula. Thus when his directions are followed for finding a readability index, the user is handling material based on comprehension of school material.

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[1]Gray and Leary. op. cit., p. 130

[2]Irving Lorge. "Predicting Reading Difficulty of Selections for Children", Elementary English Review, Vol. XVI, pp. 229-233, October, 1939

In his work on readability Lorge[1] became familiar with the work of others who were attempting to derive measures of this factor. In 1944 he expresses his findings in the following comprehensive summary:

> One ar more measures of vocabulary load is used as a predictor in every study of readability. The more usual measures are the following:
> (a) Number of running words.
> (b) Percentage of different words.
> (c) Percentage of different infrequent, uncommon, or hard words.
> (d) Percentage of polysyllabic words.
> (e) Some weighted measure of vocabulary difficulty.
> (f) Vocabulary diversity (related to b).
> (g) Number of abstract words.
> (h) Number of affixed morphemes (prefixes, inflectional endings, etc.).
> (i) Percentage of prepositional phrases.
> (j) Percentage of indeterminate clauses.
> (k) Number of simple sentences.
> (l) Average sentence length.
>
> Less frequently, the prediction of readability is based on some measure of human interest, e.g.,
> (m) Number of personal pronouns.
> (n) Number of words expressing human interest.
> (o) Percentage of colorful words.
> (p) Number of words representing fundamental life experiences.
> (q) Number of words usually learned early in life (related to b).

Again evaluating readability formulae in 1949, Lorge[2] suggests that only four kinds of elements of expression have been considered. These four are vocabulary load,

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[1] Irving Lorge. "Predicting Readability", Teachers College Record, Vol. XLV, pp. 404-405, March, 1944

[2] Irving Lorge. "Readability Formulae--An Evaluation", Elementary English, Vol. XXVI, pp. 86-95, February, 1949

sentence structure, idea density, and human interest. Of these he finds vocabulary load in some form to be the most important. All four phases are measured in many different ways by various writers. Lorge's[1] own formula for computing what he calls a Readability Index makes use of only three predictors. He counts the number of uncommon words, finds the average sentence length, and discovers the relative number of prepositional phrases.

The formula developed by Flesch,[2] using material for the purpose of selecting reading in adult education, is also used for grading children's books, and is of particular interest because of the fact that it does not include a definite vocabulary check list for uncommon words. Flesch describes his formula and its value:

> The formula combines the measurements of three language elements: (1) the average sentence length in words; (2) the number (per hundred words) of affixes (prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings); and (3) the number (per hundred words) of references to people (by names, pronouns, or certain arbitrarily chosen "personal" words like mother, boy, people). In contrast to almost all earlier readability formulas, it does not take vocabulary diversity into account; instead, the account of affixes is designed to test the abstractness rather than the richness of the vocabulary used.

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[1]Irving Lorge. "Predicting Readability", Teachers College Record, Vol. XLV, pp. 407-413, March, 1944

[2]Rudolf Flesch. "A Readability Formula in Practice", Elementary English, Vol. XXV, p. 344, October, 1948

Each author of a formula finds many followers who are satisfied with the results. It is equally true that the results obtained from these different formulas vary as to grade index of the book studied. For the purpose of this study the elements used to judge readability were of the greatest importance. It would seem to be true that there are many different factors which may be used in some combination to predict readability, and that it should be possible to choose the most commonly developed ones from these.

Vocabulary As A Measure Of Readability

Nearly all the research workers in this field are agreed on the importance of vocabulary control to measure readability. Some of these writers have already been so quoted in the general part of this study. Lorge[1] explains his attitude in the following paragraphs:

> Vocabulary load; usually appraised in terms of vocabulary diversity or in terms of vocabulary rarity. Diversity is evaluated as the percentage of different words in a passage. Rarity is measured in many different ways: the relative number of uncommon or hard words, or the percentage of words not known to children at specified grade levels, or the relative syllables per hundred words. Diversity and rarity are, of course, related; and, obviously, the various measures of rarity are just different ways of measuring the same element.

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[1] Irving Lorge. "Readability Formulae--An Evaluation", Elementary English, Vol. XXVI, pp. 90-91, February, 1949

> In general, the best single element for the prediction of any aspect of expressional difficulty is vocabulary load. The other elements add somewhat to the prediction, but generally not too much.

It is assumed in many vocabulary studies that the words which are most often used are the easiest to learn. This is not necessarily true, according to Wheeler and Wheeler[1] who show that some of the words in the first part of the Thorndike and Gates lists are quite difficult to learn. A similar study of lists formed from words which children know might prove different. In any case the frequency-of-use technique in determining vocabulary difficulty is found by these authors to be most common. They call attention to these methods of vocabulary analysis:

> (1) determining the number of different concepts rather than number of words used, (2) determining overlapping vocabularies, (3) percentage of polysyllabic words, and (4) relation of the number of different words to the total used, suggesting that books having the wider range of vocabulary are certain to be more difficult.

Since the advent of vocabulary lists of manynkinds, it has become rather popular for supervisors and teachers to choose a list, any list, apply it without criticism, and thus evaluate reading materials. In reality the authors of these lists are not satisfied with the completeness of their work, and in most cases see their lists as having

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[1]Lester R. and Viola D. Wheeler. "Selecting Appropriate Reading Materials", Elementary English, Vol. XXV, p. 482, December, 1948

restricted purposes. Dolch[1] gives very valuable suggestions as to the use of vocabulary lists, suggestions developed as a result of an intensive survey of the field. He particularly calls attention to the following points:

1. Vocabulary difficulty is a basic element in reading difficulty.
   Words are to reading matter what bricks are to a house.
2. Vocabulary difficulty is only one part of reading difficulty.
   Mere sentence length is a factor in reading difficulty, over and above word difficulty.
   Unusual word order or order of sentence parts is also a factor in reading difficulty.
   Another factor, which might be called "idea difficulty", is of greater importance than either of the above.
3. Consider the problem of multiple meanings.
4. Meaning vocabulary and sight vocabulary are very different things.
5. Choose the size of list to fit your needs.
6. Study the words which are "not on the list".
   There are no means of tabulation which will completely cover any certain level of difficulty.
   For these reasons, it is wise to see if all the words "not on the list" are actually "beyond the list" or are more nearly parallel with it in difficulty.
7. Consider the source of a list.
   For instance, the word "puppy" and other names for small animals are very common to children but are relatively uncommon in use in the adult world. "Puppy" is listed by Thorndike as in the 5th thousand.
8. Special subject matter lists must be considered in some cases.

Of special consideration to this writer is the topic in regard to the source of the vocabulary list, since child usage and child knowledge are essential.

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[1] E. W. Dolch. "The Use of Vocabulary Lists in Predicting Readability and in Developing Reading Materials", Elementary English, Vol. XXVI, pp. 142-147, March, 1949

Sentence Structure as a Measure of Readability

The factor of sentence structure in regard to readability is in a peculiar position at the present time. Many people believe it does have an important bearing on the topic, but studies to date are not comprehensive enough to prove just how this influence is shown. It is possible to find investigations to prove many varying ideas in this field, but there are few surveys of a large size.

Uhl[1] states the belief that materials for beginners should have sentences without inversions, and with unbroken phrases. He would like to see short sentences with few relational words. He is careful, however, to add the following statement: "An occasional complex sentence or prepositional phrase, however, is not necessarily a blight on the style appropriate for even the earliest reading materials, as some persons seem to think".

Burk's[2] study of fourth grade books shows a variation in sentence length of from two to eighty words. In compiling her data she is impressed by the absence of definite

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[1]Willis L. Uhl. "The Materials of Reading", Thirty-Sixth Yearbook, Part I, of the National Society for the Study of Education, Public School Publishing Co., Bloomington, Ill., p. 225

[2]Cassie Burk. "A Study of the Influence of Some Factors in Style of Composition on the Interest, Comprehension, and Rate of Reading of Fourth Grade Pupils", Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. IV, pp. 303-352, June, 1936

factors of influence in sentence structure. A given type of sentence produced neither the highest nor the lowest comprehension scores in her prepared material at this grade level. After noting that the sentence structure seems to have no influence on comprehension, she does add that short, simple sentences, and direct conversation in some types of stories seem to encourage interest. Since her study tries to evaluate types of stories at the same time, the final result is inconclusive as to specific factors.

The study at the fifth-grade level by Halpin[1] is one of few which definitely try to show various sentence structures in order of difficulty as to their effect on comprehension. Her conclusions are:

Elements having no relationship to comprehension difficulties

1. Kind of sentence as to use; declaratory, exclamatory, imperative.
2. Position of phrase in sentence.
3. Inclusion or omission of "that" in introducing subordinate statements.
4. Position of dependent clause in complex sentence.
5. Order of adjective.
6. Position of participle.

Elements easy in comprehension

1. Simple sentence.
2. Short sentences.
3. Elliptical statement.
4. "It" anticipatory.
5. Noun in apposition.

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[1]Frances Halpin. Comprehension Difficulties of Various Sentence Structures, Unpublished Thesis, Boston University, 1943, pp. 64-67

6. Possessive with or without "of".
7. Partitive use of "of".
8. Compound sentences.

A similar study by Henley[1] with a variation of one grade does not show similar results. The form of study, the relatively small number of pupils, or the uncontrolled factors in either study may account for the differences. Henley does see basically an ease ofreadability in favor of short simple sentences.

Most of the material in this field is either a matter of opinion, based on incomplete studies, or seemingly contradictory. It would seem to be a matter of agreement that the sentence should be varied to avoid monotony, and and as simple as possible in conjunction with this.

Interest as a Factor in Readability

There is no question but that interest is an essential at any level if the book in question is going to be widely read. Ease of vocabulary and sentence-structure will cause this interest to be aroused more readily. It is assumed in this study that the general topic for the book considered is already fixed in that it is centered about social studies experiences of proven interest. There is

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[1]Ruth Evelyn Henley. Comparison of the Difficulties of Various SentencesStructures, unpublished thesis, Boston University, 1938

a possibility that some elements of style might enhance the motivation already present. Gates, Peardon, and Sartorius[1] find that a combination of factors affects the interest of boys , in the following order; surprise, plot, narrativeness, animalness, liveliness, conversation, fancifulness, and repetition. For girls these factors appear in a slightly different order; surprise, conversation, plot, narrativeness, liveliness, fancifulness, repetition, moralness, and animalness.

Dolch[2] is of practical help to thw writer in that he offers three possible plans which are often used in writing for children. In the first plan he finds people taking any reading material, comparing the words with a check list, substituting easy words for hard, and hoping for a book that has all desirable qualities. The second plan he sees used in many school readers, in which someone tries to rewrite material in an easier vocabulary, again with one eye on a list. The third, and most successful, plan begins with the writer studying his audience. Dolch explains as follows:

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[1] Arthur I. Gates, Celeste C. Peardon, and Ina C. Sartorius. "Studies of Children's Interests in Reading", Elementary School Journal, Vol. XXXI, p. 670, May, 1931

[2] E. W. Dolch. "The Use of Vocabulary Lists in Predicting Readability and in Developing Reading Materials", Elementary English, Vol. XXVI, pp. 147-148, March, 1949

> If the writer is writing for children of a certain grade, he sits in the grade room of various schools for several days and follows the children to the playground, listening to how they express themselves. Then the writer, when he has the "feel" of his audience, sits down to write, keeping the audience right before him in his mind's eye. He writes directly to them. After he has written, he may actually read the material to the desired audience and watch their reaction or talk with them about it. Then, when he thinks he has "hit it right" he takes out his word list and figures his percentage. If he is wrong, he may alter a word here or there, but he will not need to do much. He will have found the level of his vocabulary and language pattern beforehand. He will have created at that level, not just "adapted" to a level.

Jean Ayer[1] a well-known author of children's books which have graded standards, has some suggestions along this same line when she advises that the writer cultivate the acquaintance of the children for whom he is writing. In writing, he will pretend that he is writing for these same children. It may need some symplifying, but this should be done without spoiling the rhythm of the writing, and without weakening the narrative. She believes it will often be possible thus to shorten sentences, divide long paragraphs, and substitute easier words for hard ones by using a word list.

This type of advice is found so often, that it is quite possible that it is the most pratical, and the most valuable to follow until such time as larger studies can

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[1]Jean Ayer. "The Mechanics of Writing for Little Children", Elementary English Review, Vol. XVI, pp. 169-175, May, 1939

with assurance say exactly what factors technically handled will give better results. Present research and practice indicate that the best procedure in writing for children is to know the audience well enough so that the story may be easily written in their language. A check list for vocabulary is probably a basic precaution after writing. Sentence structure at the third grade level, to the extent that it is not taken care of by a feeling for the language pattern of the grade, may be checked by a few fundamental rules as reported. Other factors are not in common use, and therefore are not to be considered essential.

Lorge[1] who has developed a widely used readability formula, nevertheless has this to say on the subject:

> Readability formulae are no panacea. They do not tell anything about the kind of ideas expressed or the interrelationships among them. At best, they are yardsticks. If they are not inflated into a recipe for writing, they are a useful adjunct in the objective evaluation of written and spoken materials. Their use, however, cannot be a complete subctitute for the wisdom of experience.

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[1]Irving Lorge. "Readability Formulae--An Evaluation", Elementary English, Vol. XXVI, p. 94, February, 1949

CHAPTER LLI

DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURE

Readability Factors Used in This Paper

According to the research done in Chapter Two, the following readability factors were of importance at the level of grades three and four. They were thus chosen to guide the author in writing the stories.

1. The choice of vocabulary used must be carefully made in order that the difficulty does not become too great for the reading and understanding of the child.
2. The number of new words per story must be kept low, so that the child may understand it easily without becoming confused or bored innhis attempt to read it.
3. Though the study indicated that no one rule must be rigidly followed, sentences must be so constructed as to allow for easy comprehension.
4. The topics chosen for stories must be within the experience or the interests of children of this age.
5. The language style in general must be patterned after that of the third and fourth grade children who will be reading the selections.

Vocabulary Standards

The vocabulary list by Rinsland[1] seemed appropriate to use for preparing material for children, because of its derivation. Data was gathered from more than 200,000 individual papers written by children from Grades I to VIII. Administrators were asked to furnish the most natural and the freest compositions available. These included personal letters, expositions, original poems, stories, exam papers, conversation pages recorded from Grade I, and projects.

> "Of the 25,632 words found in the study, the 14,571 words occurring three or more times in any one grade are given in alphabetical order in the following pages. For each word are given the following: First, on the top line is given the actual or raw frequency with which that word occurs in each grade and the total frequency for all grades; second, on the second line and directly under the raw frequency is given an index symbol of the frequency group by the hundred, five hundred, and thousand into which the word falls.
>
> It seems reasonable to conclude from the data given and the frequencies of the words that this vocabulary should furnish much more than 90 per cent of the words for Grade VIII and perhaps more than 98 per cent of the words for Grade I--with the percentages for the other grades falling between these limits.
>
> Perhaps writers should list, in basic readers and basic texts, at least all words with a frequency of three or less in this study, and all words not listed.

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[1]Henry D. Rinsland. A Basic Vocabulary of Elementary School Children, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1945, pp. 7-21

The general method of using this list would follow the plan described by Buckingham and Dolch (1936); that is, one first decides how many words would be considered a word load at the lowest grade level in which the writing is accomplished. Then a definition as to what constitutes a distinct word must be decided.

"After this decision, the most frequently used words in terms of raw frequencies, would be used, and/or some words of a rarer frequency in a lower grade, and/or some words of a higher frequency in the next higher grade.

GRADE III

FREQUENCY PER HUNDRED THOUSAND RUNNING WORDS

		From	To
La1	First hundred	159.2	4096.0
1a5	Fifth hundred	2440	31.4
1b5	First thousand(900-1000)	9.7	11.0
2a	1000-1500	5.32	9.61
2b	1500-2000	3.38	5.19
3a	2000-2500	2.21	3.25"

It was decided to limit the words to the first 2500 on this list, and to list others as new words. Many of these others would be special interest words dealing with the field of stamp-collecting or proper nouns connected with the stories of the stamps.

It was considered best to have some guage as to the number of new words which a third or fourth grade child could handle easily without losing understanding or interest. In this connection a book tabulation was made of several third grade readers, this level being chosen to represent the lowest level for which the material was being prepared. Data was obtained for the number of running words, the

number of new words, and the frequency with which a new word appeared. It was planned to use a similar measure on the stories written. Table I shows the results of the book tabulation.

Table 1. Vocabulary Data from Third Grade Reading Books

Reading Books	Number of Running Words	Number of New Words	Ratio of New Words to Running Words
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading for Interest.....	32700	592	1 to 55
The New Alice and Jerry Books..	42000	565	1 to 76
Work-Play Books..	40067	656	1 to 61
Curriculum Foundation Series	32773	419	1 to 78
Mean.....	36885	558	1 to 66

Sentence Structure Standards

As shown in Chapter Two, research studies provided the following results to be considered in sentence structure. One study showed that no given type of sentence rated the highest or the lowest in comprehension. The short, simple sentence and direct conversation seemed to encourage interest.

The various writers seemed to agree that although sentences should be as simple as possible, they should be

varied to avoid momotony. One author stated that occasional complex sentences or prepositional phrases did not hurt even the earliest reading material.

The present author has tried to write in third-grade style as to sentence structure. The stories have been checked to eliminate long, unwieldy, or awkward sentences. Much direct conversation has been used. The author has tried to make the sentences as simple as is consistent with interest and variety.

Subject Matter for Stories

The first seven stories are an attempt to interest the children in collecting stamps and doing it correctly. These stories stress the need for care and neatness in handling the stamps. They show the child how to remove the stamps from envelopes, mount them, measure the perforations, use the stamp catalogue, and handle a water-mark detector. The remainder of the stories were chosen because of the interest in these topics by the children, and because they cover a wide range of subjects. The story of each stamp is written to provide background information and to arouse interest in acquiring more knowledge.

Book Style

The research studies read indicated that the one best way to get correct book style for a particular audience was to be well acquainted with the conversation of the group. The writer has taught at this grade level for eight years, and during this time has written many stories for seatwork and originated many others for the story hour. These have seemed to meet with the approval of the children. This background of familiarity has been combined with the more formal standards listed. The first story was written freely to fit the group, then checked for vocabulary and sentence structure. Very few changes had to be made. After several stories were written they were tried with a third grade group before continuing.

It seemed desirable to have a central theme to tie the stories together. A typical American family, with with a girl in the third grade and a boy about two years older, was chosen. These children become interested in the pictures on stamps, and are guided by the help of an older boy through the techniques of stamp collecting. Much conversation was used throughout the stories to keep it interesting. Agood home relationship with an interested mother and father was emphasized. A family trip to visit National Parks pictured on stamps closed the book.

Summary of Readability Data from Stories

These stories have been written by one familiar with the third grade language pattern. This is a basic check on readability. The stories have been put in the hands of third grade children to note their reactions. They were able to read them easily and with understanding. Several requests were made for other similar stories. A stamp club of third and fourth grade children found great interest in looking up their own stamp stories for club reports following the use of those in this book. These reactions are the best proofs of readability.

The stories were checked by the method chosen, some words were changed, and the following words were listed as new in each story on that basis.

New Words Listed by Stories

Sorting Treasures

- treasures
- great-grandfather
- Virginia
- sighed
- grinned
- suggested
- raiding
- chuckled

The New Stamp Books

- Scotch tape
- album
- blank
- mounting

Using the Stamp Catalogue

- catalogue
- condition
- toga

Measuring Stamps

- gague
- perforations
- spaces

Secret Marks

- watermark
- detector
- Postal Service
- liquid
- Carbona

Stamp Pictures

- commemoratives

Stamps Have Stories

- Volunteer
- organized

The Volunteer Firemen

- drifting
- Jones
- midnight
- New Amsterdam
- Peter Stuyvesant

The Statue of Liberty

- Statue of Liberty
- America
- France
- Independence

Virginia Dare

- Roanoke
- Englishmen
- Sir Walter Raleigh
- colony
- North Carolina

The Charter Oak

arbor
charter
Connecticut
deserved

Francis Scott Key

Star Spangled Banner
tingling
Admiral
Fort McHenry

First Transcontinental Railroad

driven
Promontory Point, Utah
Arizona
Nevada
California

The Liberty Bell

chosen
Declaration
London
tolled
Justice Marshall
Philadelphia

Pony Express

equipment
rider
Missouri

Viking Ship

Leif Erickson
Columbus

Planning for a Vacation

signed

National Parks

Old Faithful

Grand Canyon

Yosemite

Acadia

Grand Canyon

blame

mighty

Colorado

Boy Scouts

uniform

scout

badge

British

Africa

England

foggy

Yosemite National Park

exclaimed

glacier

cliffs

darkness

ranger

Acadia National Park

Mt. Cadillac

Frenchman's Bay

foam

navy

overlooking

famous

Yellowstone National Park

Geyser Basin

Morning Glory

elk

herd

erupt

spout

The same type of vocabulary count was made on these stories as had been made earlier on the third grade reading books. The results, listed in Table 2, indicate fewer new words in ratio to running words than the average textbook checked.

Table 2. Vocabulary Data from Stories Written

Stories	Number of Running Words	Number of New Words	Ratio of New Words to Running Words
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treasures in the Attic.....	618	8	1 to 77
Sorting Treasures	670	8	1 to 83
The New Stamp Book.	900	4	1 to 225
Using the Stamp Catalogue.....	321	3	1 to 107
Measuring Stamps...	270	3	1 to 90
Secret Marks.....	236	5	1 to 47
Stamp Pictures.....	226	2	1 to 113
Stamps Have Stories	268	2	1 to 134
The Volunteer Firemen	393	5	1 to 78
The Statue of Liberty	333	4	1 to 83
Virginia Dare.....	251	5	1 to 50
The Charter Oak....	334	4	1 to 83
The Liberty Bell...	315	6	1 to 52
Francis Scott Key..	342	8	1 to 42
Pony Express.....	281	3	1 to 93
First T. Railroad..	179	5	1 to 35
Viking Ships.....	167	2	1 to 83
Boy Scouts.....	268	7	1 to 38
Planning for a Vacation			
Vacation.....	459	15	1 to 76
Yosemite Nat. Park.	381	4	1 to 95
Grand Canyon.....	252	3	1 to 76
Yellowstone.....	669	6	1 to 111
Acadia.....	272	6	1 to 44

The mean was figured for the ratio of new words to running words, using the data in Table 2. The result of one new word in every 78 running words was regarded as high evidence of readability.

Other factors were checked in the stories and corrected. The final check was in their actual reading by third grade children, with good results in interest, motivation to do further work in stamp-collecting, and in ease of reading.

CHAPTER IV

STAMP STORIES

Treasures in the Attic

Sorting Treasures

The New Stamp Book

Using the Stamp Catalogue

Measuring Stamps

Secret Marks

Stamp Pictures

Stamps Have Stories

The Volunteer Firemen

The Statue of Liberty

Virginia Dare

The Charter Oak

The Liberty Bell

Francis Scott Key

Pony Express

First Transcontinental Railroad

Viking Ships

Boy Scouts

Planning for a Vacation

Yosemite National Park

Grand Canyon

Yellowstone

Acadia

TREASURES IN THE ATTIC

Bob and Betsy were very quiet. They sat in front of the window, watching the snowflakes fall slowly to earth.

"What a vacation!" Bob said. "Here we are up in the country, no place to go, and nothing to do."

"And it's snowing again," added Betsy.

Dad had said, "Mother needs the rest, and the fresh air will do you good." So here they were at grandmother's farm for their February vacation.

Grandmother came in with some old clothes in her arms. From one hand hung an old three-cornered hat.

With a smile she put the clothes in a chair and said, "When your father was a boy he always wanted to celebrate Washington's birthday by dressing up in old costumes from the attic. I thought maybe you would like to dress up, too."

Bob jumped up and reached for the queer looking hat.

"What kind of hat is this, grandma?"

Grandma nodded her head and said, "I knew you would like that hat. I made it for your dad when he was Washington in the school play. That's his costume over there."

Bob's bright eyes looked over the chair and he asked, "May I really try it on?"

Grandma nodded only once and Bob raced for the other room, carrying the clothes with him.

Betsy had waited as long as she could. "What am I going to wear?" she asked. Grandmother shook out a long dress with a very full skirt.

"Oh!" Betsy cried in surprise,"How beautiful!"

Then Grandma picked up a very pretty fan and, opening it, showed Betsy just how to hold it.

All afternoon the children played they were George and Martha Washington. As it drew near supper time, Grandma called to them. "It's time to put the costumes away now. Will you carry them back to the attic for me? They belong in the big brown trunk."

Quickly the children climbed up the stairs. It was always fun to go up in the farm attic.

Just as Bob bent over to put his costume in the trunk, his arm hit a nearby box. As it fell over, the cover flew off. Old letters flew everywhere.

"Oh, Bob!" cried Betsy. "What will Grandma say?"

"Don't talk, but help me pick these up," he said.

For a few minutes they worked hard. Then Bob said, "Say, Betsy, these stamps don't look like any I ever saw on a letter. Here is one with Washington wearing a hat just like the one I had on today."

Betsy looked for a moment. Then she held up her hand and said, "Look at this stamp. It's the Pilgrims. I wonder why these stamps are not like the ones we use."

They were still hunting for different stamps when Grandma's voice said, "I wondered why you did not come down. What is so interesting?"

Bob and Betsy began to talk at once, holding up letters as they talked.

"One at a time, please," Grandma laughed.

Betsy said, "Look at all the stamps. They are pictures about things we learned in history. I have found six different ones."

"Oh, well, I have more than that. I have found nine different ones," boasted Bob.

Betsy turned and began to hunt again but Brandma said, "Supper is waiting and getting cold. You must come down now. You may bring the letters you have found, but you will have to leave the rest until tomorrow."

All during the evening the children talked of the stamps they had found. They hunted in books for stories about them. As they started for bed, Bob turned and said, "May we really look for more stamps tomorrow?" Grandma nodded.

SORTING TREASURES

Early the next morning the children were ready to start up the attic stairs. Grandma said, "I guess I had better come too. Maybe I can help you." She knew just where the boxes with old letters in them were kept.

One box of letters was written by great-grandfather during the Civil War. Bob became so interested in looking at the envelopes with pictures on them that he forgot to keep hunting for stamps. Suddenly he heard Betsy say, "I like this picture of Virginia Dare. I remember reading about her at school. "He jumped up and picking up the different stamps he had found on envelopes went over to see hers. Betsy had more than Bob because she had kept hunting.

"Oh dear," sighed Bob, "You are way ahead of me."

Betsy winked at Grandma, who said with a smile, "I guess you have a pretty good sister, Bob. She has been saving two of a kind when she could find them."

Bob grinned and helped put the boxes away.

Downstairs mother had set up the card table and had chairs ready for them. Slowly they sorted out the envelopes. "I wish we had a scrap book to put them in," said Betsy. "I would like to keep them."

Bob shook his head, "I think you are supposed to take off the stamps, and that is all you keep."

Grandmother suggested, "Maybe if you sort them out in piles, I can find out what you are to do with them." She went to the telephone and called Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Hill said that she had watched Billy working with his stamps and she would ask him.

"Billy Hill goes to high school, and he has a stamp collection. He has offered to come over and help you get started," she said.

It was not long before the doorbell rang and Grandma brought Billy in.

"Hello there! So you have been raiding your grandmother's attic. I'll bet you have had lots of fun. I remember the first time my mother let me go hunting for stamps. What did you find?"

Betsy held up her blue Virginia Dare. "This is my favorite one," she said.

"Say, that's a good copy," said Billy. "Mind if I look at these others?"

Time slipped by fast as three heads bent over the envelopes. They sorted them out by dates on the envelopes as that was the order they would have in a real stamp book.

"How do we get these stamps off?" asked Bob.

Billy looked at the envelopes for a minute, and then he said, "I wouldn't take all of them off. Some of the old ones, especially those with the picture on the envelope,

are worth more as they are. The others, just soak the corner of the envelope in a little cold water and the stamp will slide right off. Never try to pull a dry one off."

Bob chuckled, "I know. I tried that and tore one in two."

Billy helped them remove some stamps. They sorted them carefully to make piles where the best stamps were, the next best, and the poorest stamps.

" The best must have no tears, the white frame must be even all the way around, and the black cancels must be very light," said Bill. "The stamps with only a little of any of these things wrong with it will go in pile two. The others we will throw out or use to fill in with only until we can find a better one."

Just then the telephone rang and grandma called, "Billy your mother wants you to come home for supper."

He jumped up and looked with surprise out of the window at a sky fast growing dark. "I am sorry Mrs. Smith. I didn't know I had stayed so long," he said.

Grandma laughed and said," Do come over again, and Billy could you----------?" But the children heard no more for the door closed behind them as they went out into the hall.

THE NEW STAMP BOOKS

The morning passed quickly as Bob and Betsy sorted stamps and took them from envelopes. At last Bob pushed his chair back and called, "Grandma, where is the glue?"

Grandma hurried in, saying, "What do you want glue for?" She stopped when she saw a large sheet of paper.

"I think I will stick my stamps on paper so as not to lose them," said Bob.

"It is so near dinner time, why don't you wait until this afternoon? Both of you put on coats and run out to the mailbox to get the mail."

Betsy had been thinking as she ate dinner, and now she asked, "Grandma, do you have any Scotch tape? I think I will put my stamps in with tape. Then I can pull them out if I find better ones."

"Billy is coming back to help you this afternoon. Why don't you wait and see what he says?" Grandma got no farther. Both children were out of their chairs dancing up and down. "Come," she said, "Dinner comes first, so finish what you have on your plates."

Bob and Betsy watched at the window that afternoon until they saw Billy coming. "Race you to the door!" called Bob, and both children ran through the house. Billy had a package under one arm.

Grandma said, "I see you were able to do some shopping. Did you get everything?"

"All we need for now," answered Billy, "and here is your change."

"What did you get for us, Grandma?" asked Bob.

"Billy will show you," she said, as she went back to the kitchen.

Soon the package was open. There were two books, each with the words "American Stamp Album" on the front. Billy passed a book to each one, saying, "Before you touch your book look at your hands. Be sure there is not a bit of dirt on them. Always remember that rule and you will keep a nice-looking book."

Bob found a brown spot of chocolate which he hurried to wash off his hand. When he came back he saw a small envelope on his book. "What is that for?" he asked.

Betsy said, "I know. Billy told me they are stamp hinges. That's why Grandma didn't want us to glue our stamps on paper."

Billy picked up one of the stamp hinges and said, "When you stick this on a stamp it does not hurt it at all. If you want to take a stamp out, just pull it easily and out it comes. If you glued it in you could not get it out without tearing the stamp. Let's look in your books and see what we find."

Each opened his book carefully and looked at the first page. "Here are pictures of Washington and of Franklin on stamps," said Betsy. "There are a lot of blank places, too."

"What are the blank places for?" asked Bob.

"Each square is the place for a stamp. If you find one just like the picture then you put it right over the picture," explained Billy.

He got no farther, for Bob laughed and said,"And if I find a stamp with nothing on it I put it in a blank place."

Everyone laughed, and Betsy said, "Mother wouldn't like that Bob."

Bob looked ashamed and said, "I know. I'm sorry, Billy. I really want to know."

Billy playfully pulled his hair and said, "Well, let's see what they are for." Looking through Bob's stamps he chose one that was just like a picture except that the number in the corner was different. He held it up beside the picture in the book and asked, "Can you see how this stamp is different from the picture?"

Bob and Betsy looked carefully. Then Bob cried, "I have found it. The picture is a two-cent stamp and the stamp is a three-cent one."

"So we will put it right in this next blank place," said Billy. "When the pictures are alike but the numbers

are different, put the stamp in the next blank place."

"Watch as I fold this hinge. I am going to put the shiny side with the glue out, and fold the top down. I am going to wet the small side and put it on the back of the stamp. Try it on one of your poor stamps."

Bob did it very quickly. He watched Betsy as she slowly put hers in place. "Come on," he said. "Let's lay them on the page to see how they would fit if we really wanted to put them in."

Betsy put hers on carefully. It had a nice even white place around it. Bob looked at his and then at Betsy's. Somehow his did not fit. It tipped over to one side.

"Guess you got your hinge on a little crooked in your hurry," said Bill.

Bob quickly picked up the stamp and started to pull the hinge off.

"Wait a minute," said Billy. "You have learned lesson number one in mounting stamps. Go slowly and get the stamp where you want it. Lesson number two is, if you make a mistake, never pull off a wet hinge. Let it dry first. Then you can pull it off without hurting the stamp any."

The minutes flew as they mounted stamps, always checking to be sure they had the right place, and always mounting each one evenly. When Billy had to leave he said, "Tomorrow I will show you more ways to tell stamps apart."

USING THE STAMP CATALOGUE

When Billy arrived the next day, he brought with him the Stamp Catalogue from the library. Putting it on the table he said, "This will help tell us what to look for on the stamps. All of the stamps are pictured here. It also tells all of the ways in which the stamps are different."

Betsy and Bob crowded close and peered into the book. "What are the prices for on this side?" asked Betsy.

"The first row tells you how much a used stamp is worth, and the next row tells you how much a new stamp is worth. Before you get your hopes up too high, remember that a stamp, even though used, must be in fine condition to get that much money. Also look at these cards." Billy spread several cards, covered with little squares of many colors, on the table.

"What are all of those colored squares for, and why are some of them almost alike?"

"I am glad you said almost, Betsy," said Billy, "because that little change in shade of a color may be the difference between a valuable stamp or just a plain one. Look at this one of Washington. See here in the book there are several shades, as rose and lake-----. Look at the card and see how near alike they are. Yet one is worth much more than the others."

"Why does the book have pictures of just corners or edges of some of the stamps?" asked Bob.

Billy pointed to two of these and said, "Look carefully and you will see that in this picture the button on Washington's toga has several lines across it, but in this one it does not. In this one the number is just a little different. Look at the edge of the '2'." Both children looked closely. Billy added, "Probably you will not hunt for these little things yet. If I were you I would just see how many different stamps I could find."

MEASURING STAMPS

Billy handed each of the children a small piece of cardboard with black dots on it. "This is a sort of stamp ruler," he said. "We call it a gauge."

"Why do you measure stamps? Most of them are the same size," said Bob.

"Yourmeasure is to tell you the number of holes or perforations on the side of each stamp. Look at the little numbers above each stamp in the catalogue. This one says 10½ by 11. That means there are 10½ holes on the top and eleven on the side."

Bob looked at one of the stamps and started counting the holes. Half way up the side he lost his place. Slowly he started over again. When he got to the top he said, "I don't know whether there are 10 or 11 holes. Measure it and see."

Billy placed the edge of the stamp up to a row of dots. "Does a dot fit into every hole on the edge of the stamp?" he asked.

Betsy and Bob looked closely. Betsy answered,"Some do and some don't."

Billy pushed the stamp to the next row of dots, and the children looked again. "Just a fit," shouted Bob, "and that is number 10½."

"Shall we measure each stamp?" asked Betsy.

"Oh, no!" Billy said. "Just the ones that have two spaces for them in the book. Then you will only need to measure with your gauge when the spaces have a different size number."

The children began turning the pages of the book to see if any of the stamps they had found needed to be measured.

SECRET MARKS

Billy pulled from his pocket a small box. "I thought you would like to see my water mark detector," he said. "You won't need to use one very often, and not until you have become used to collecting stamps. But it's fun to know about it."

"Some people who were not honest would make stamps of their own to make money. Of course this was against the law. The government put a mark in the paper that the stamp was made on. The mark did not usually show."

"How could you tell the mark?" asked Betsy. "What did it look like?"

"The first water mark was made of four double lined letters. They were P S U S. They stood for United States Postal Service. A part or a whole of one of these letters would show on the paper of the stamp," Billy explained. "It is hard to see these letters unless you pour a certain kind of liquid over them. It is better not to use much of it in a closed room. I will put a stamp in this little dish, pour a little Carbona over it, and watch."

Bob yelled, "I see it! I see it! The letter S is beginning to show."

"Some stamps issued from 1895-1916 had watermarks. See if you can find one to try before I go."

STAMP PICTURES

"I am going up to my Uncle Dick's for a visit. Is there anything else you want to know about stamps?" asked Bill.

Bob thought for a moment and said, "Betsy and I were wondering this morning about the pictures on the stamps. Why are there so many different pictures?"

Betsy added, "Why are there so many of some kinds?"

"Those are good questions," said Billy. "We have a set of Presidents' pictures which are our regular stamps to use. Then we have our commemorative stamps to honor people, or groups of people, places, or things that America is proud of."

"Is our president's picture now on a stamp?"

Billy smiled and said, "You have been doing some real thinking, Bob. The President cannot have his picture on a stamp because no living person has his picture on one.

"I have to go now. If you think of anything else to ask after you go home, write me."

"It has been very nice of you to help us so much," said Betsy.

"You have made our vacation fun," said Bob.

Billy laughed. "I have had a good time, too. And I wasn't really the one to do it. It was the stamps."

STAMPS HAVE STORIES

Saturday Mr. Smith came for the family. Betsy and Bob were so eager to show him their stamp books that they could talk of nothing else. At last he said, "I tell you what we'll do. We have a long drive home, and I want to talk with Grandma awhile before we leave. You pack things in the car now. When we get home this evening we will sit down and look at the books."

The children wanted to talk, but they knew father expected them to obey. They put their suitcases in the trunk and piled in several boxes. Father and Mother got in. As they got ready to go, Bob called, "Grandma, this was the best vacation I ever had!"

"Me too," called Betsy. The car pulled out of the yard. It rolled over snowy roads all afternoon. City lights were shining when at last they got home.

As soon as they had finished supper and the dishes were washed, Father said, "Now I want to hear all about this wonderful vacation."

Quickly Betsy and Bob opened their books. They took turns showing Father stamps, and telling him all the things they had learned about them.

As Father looked at the stamps he said, "Why, look

here! They even have a stamp to honor Volunteer Firemen. I used to be a Volunteer Fireman when I lived in the country."

"You did?" cried Betsy. "Tell us about it. Why is America so proud of them that they made a stamp for them?"

"Just let me look in a book over here to see when they first organized," said Dad. "Then I'll tell you a story of that stamp."

THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN

Father sat back in his chair and said, "Small towns cannot afford to hire men to stay at the fire station all of the time. Any man in town who is willing to help if he is home at the time of a fire becomes a Volunteer Fireman. When the fire signal sounds, these men go as fast as they can to the fire station to help man the fire engine.

"Did you really go when the signal sounded?" Bob asked.

"Many times," answered Father. "How well I remember the night Jone's barn burned. We had just sat down to a big chicken dinner. I looked out of the window and saw the wind driven snow drifting in the yard. I said, "Nothing will get me out of the house tonight.' Hardly had I stopped talking when the fire signal reached us."

"What did you do, Daddy?" Betsy cried.

"I looked at my mother, and she picked up the hot chicken to put it back on the stove to keep warm. I hurried into my warmest clothes and ran up to the fire station. Men were gathering fast. We hurried out to the Jones' farm. The barn was on fire. We took turns holding the hose to wet down the house and to put water on the barn. The dripping water froze on our faces. It was our good luck to have the wind blowing away from the house. At last

we had the animals out safely, although we could not save the barn. We stayed until every bit of the fire was out.

"It was just midnight when I got home. My clothes were frozen. When I stepped through the door, there was my mother, putting another stick in the fireplace. A few minutes later I had on warm, dry clothes and was starting on my dish of chicken."

"Oh, Father! No wonder they have a stamp for the Volunteer Firemen," said Bob. Was your town the first to have them?"

"No," answered Father. "The first fire department was in New Amsterdam. If you look on your stamp you will see who started the first one."

Bob looked down at the red stamp and read, "Peter Stuyvesant. I know. He was the man with the wooden leg who was the leader of the colony there. He did a wonderful thing when he started the Volunteer Firemen."

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

"Mother, which of these stamps will you tell us about?" said Betsy.

"Well, let me see what stamps you have. Oh, if Father will help me remember some of the things we saw, I will tell you about this lovely green one," Mother said.

"What is it?" asked Father.

Betsy held it up. "The Statue of Liberty," she said. "I think I saw another one, a fifteen cent gray one."

Everyone turned to look for it. At last Mother said, "Here it is."

"America must be awfully proud of the Statue of Liberty to have so many pictures of it," said Bob.

"We are," said Dad. "Let Mother tell you the story and you will see why. We visited the Statue of Liberty once. A big boat carried us out to Bedloe's Island where the statue stands in New York Harbor."

"Where did they get the statue, Mother?"asked Betsy.

"It was a birthday present to America on her 100th birthday from France. It stands for freedom and liberty." Mother went on with the story. "It is the tallest statue in the world, 152 feet high. When our boat got there, we w went into the base of the statue through a door. An elevator carried us up through the base to the foot of the

statue. Here we had to start climbing. How many steps was it to the top?" Mother asked Dad.

"1168, I think," answered Father. "They went round and round."

"Is there any writing on the tablet in her left hand?" asked Bob.

"Yes," said Mother. "It tells the date of America's Independence, July 4,1776. In her other hand is a huge torch shining for the light of liberty to welcome all people coming to America."

Father said, "The arm holding the torch is 40 feet long. It holds the torch high enough to be seen a long way."

"I hope we can go see it sometime," said Bob, as he sat looking at the figure on his stamp.

VIRGINIA DARE

"Today in history class the teacher read us a story about the first white child in America," Betsy told the family as they sat about the supper table. "I am going to tell it for my stamp story tonight."

When everyone was seated around the fireplace, Betsy opened her stamp book and pointed to a large square blue stamp. In the center of the stamp was the picture of a man and a woman with a baby. They were in front of an old house. Betsy read, "In memory of Virginia Dare, Born Roanoke, 1587."

Betsy put the book down, and Mother said, "Tell us, why should we honor her by having a stamp in her memory?"

"An Englishman named Sir Walter Raleigh started the first white colony in America. He sent some people over on a ship. The ship went to Roanoke Island, near North Carolina.

"The people made homes and started a colony. A little girl, named Virginia Dare, was born. She was the first white child born in America."

Betsy stopped talking for a moment, and Bob asked, "Can you still see her home?"

Betsy shook her head and said, "No, it disappeared."

"Betsy, how could it disappear?" said Bob.

"The ship went back to England for supplies. When it returned to Roanoke Island, nothing was there, no houses or people."

"Where were the people?" asked Bob.

"No one knows, for everything they had, and the people, too, were gone and were never heard of again."

THE CHARTER OAK

Bob was all ready to have his turn telling a stamp story. He had remembered the lesson on Arbor Day about famous trees. His teacher had helped him find the story of the "Charter Oak" when he asked her what book it was in. Now he could hardly wait to begin.

"I am going to tell a story about a colony in Connecticut, and how a tree helped them save their charter from the king's soldiers," he said as he hunted for the stamp. It was a long purple stamp with the picture of a big oak tree on it.

"One day the people in this colony received word that they could not be a free colony any more. The king was going to send some men to take the charter he had given them away.

"Of course the people did not want to lose their freedom. They talked over many plans and decided on one.

"That night when the king's men came, they took them to a big building where they had the charter on a table. Just as the soldiers were about to take the charter, all the candles went out. When the candles were lit again, the charter was gone. The soldiers hunted everywhere but could not find it. At last they went home without it.

"Later one of their men climbed the big oak tree in

front of the building. He pulled their charter from a hole way up high."

"But, Bob," said Betsy, "What made the candles all blow out at once, at the right time?"

Bob laughed as he said, "That was part of the plan. Men walked to stand near the candles when they first went into the building. At a given signal each one pinched out the candle nearest him. Another man ran out the door in the dark anf hid the charter."

"The Charter Oak is a good name for the tree. I think it deserved to be put on a stamp," said Father.

THE LIBERTY BELL

"Oh, Mother!" called Bob, "I was chosen to ring the Liberty Bell in our school play. Several of us read the part and rang the bell."

Betsy came racing up the steps. "Bob, you rang the bell best of all," she said. "I was so proud of you. Mother, the bell looked just like the real Liberty Bell."

"Tomorrow in school we are each going to tell something we have learned about the Liberty Bell," said Bob.

Mother smiled and said, "You can show them your Liberty Bell stamp. Probably no one else will even know it is on a stamp."

Bob bobbed his head excitedly up and down. "Tonight we can have a family stamp story and everyone can hunt for something about the Liberty Bell. Come on, Betsy. I want to go back to school for my history book." Betsy ran after him as he raced down the street.

That evening Betsy held up the red stamp picturing the Liberty Bell and said, "This bell rang for freedom when the people of America decided to be free and signed the Declaration of Independence."

Bob added, "It was made in London, and broke twice before it was used to ring for freedom."

Mother said,"It was cracked while being tolled at the

death of Chief Justice Marshall. It has never been repaired because it wouldn't be just as it was when it rang for freedom."

Dad was last. He thought for a moment before saying, "The bell is still in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. That is where it first rang for freedom. Since then it has been rung by being hit with a soft hammer, rung in honor of other steps toward freedom."

Betsy looked down at the bell on the stamp, and then looked at Bob. "My, I am glad you are going to ring the bell in the play," she said.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

The family stood on the sidewalk in a crowd of people. Everyone was waiting for the parade. At last bit came around the corner. First they heard the band playing "The Star Spangled Banner". Then they saw the flags waving in the breeze. Bob saw his father reaching up to take off his hat as the flag went by, so he quickly took his off and stood at attention. Something about the sound of the music, the waving of the flags, and the sight of the tall, straight soldiers, mad Bob feel a tingling way to his toes.

The parade moved on up the street. Betsy turned to Mother and said, "Who wrote such a beautiful song?"

"Francis Scott Key," she answered.

"Francis Scott Key!" repeated Bob. "I have his picture on a stamp. That shall be my stamp story today. Isn't it funny where you find stamp stories? They seem to be everywhere."

That night Bob was ready to tell his story. "One day during the War of 1812 an American doctor was captured by the British soldiers. He was taken out to an English ship in the harbor. Here he was held as a prisoner. His many friends asked Francis Scott Key to go to the British Admiral. Mr. Key and a friend went out in the harbor in a small boat. They found the Admiral's ship, and Mr. Key went aboard. He

persuaded the Admiral to free the doctor. Since the English were about tc attack Fort McHenry, no Americans could leave until morning.

"The night was dark. The only light was the flashes from rockets and the bursting of bombs. The two men hoped the American fort would not surrender. In the flashes of light they watched to see if the American flag was still flying.

"Dawn came, and as the sky grew light, they could see the American flag still flying over the fort. Mr. Key was so happy that he pulled an old envelope from his pocket and wrote the words to 'The Star Spangled Banner!'"

PONY EXPRESS

One afternoon Bob invited Paul Libby over to see his stamps. Paul was a year older than Bob, and went to school in the next grade.

Paul laughed as they went up the steps, and said, "I can't see why anyone would want to save bits of paper."

Bob said, "Just wait." He spread out his stamp-collecting equipment on the table. He opened his book and began to point to some of the stamps. "That's Virginia Dare, first white child born in America. This one is to honor Volunteer Firemen. My Dad was a Volunteer Fireman when he lived in the country."

"Say, there is a Pony Express rider," said Paul. "They were pretty brave fellows. We have been studying about the growing of the West."

"Where did he ride?" asked Bob, with a twinkle in his eye.

"The railroad only went as far as Missouri, so in 1860 Pony Express Riders began to carry mail on to California."

"A pony could not run that far," said Bob.

"Of course not," answered Paul. "They had stations with fresh ponies and riders waiting to carry the mail on to the next place."

"Did they ride alone?" Bob asked.

"Yes, they did. A rider needed to be very brave to do it.

In the two years the Pony Express was used they had 80 riders and 400 ponies."

Bob's eyes were still twinkling when he said, "Thanks for the stamp story." He explained how they told stories of the stamps after supper.

"Maybe I can help you again soon, because I saw another stamp that looks a lot like a picture in my history book. I will read about it tomorrow."

FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

Paul was waiting for Bob the next noon. "I looked up that picture this morning," he said.

"Was it about the same thing?" Bob asked.

"Yes it was," said Paul. "The picture shows a group of men standing around. The last spike is being drimen into the railroad tracks. A train is waiting to be the first to go over the new track. This was the first track all the way to California."

"Did they do something special to celebrate?" asked Bob.

"The meeting of the tracks was at Promontory Point,Utah. Three states, Arizona, Nevada, and California, took part in the celebration. They furnished an iron spike, a silver spike, and a gold one to finish the track."

"It must have been exciting to ride on that first train," said Bob.

"My book said that often they had trouble with Indians, and sometimes they had to drive buffalo off the tracks. You know, Bob, I am going to ask Mother if I may have a stamp book like yours," said Paul as he turned in at his gate.

THE VIKING SHIP

"Mother, I have found a very strange stamp picture in my book. Will you come see it?" called Betsy.

Both Mother andBob came to look at the stamp. "I know that stamp story," said Bob. "We are building a ship like that in our room at school. Of course ours is small and covered with paper," he added. "That is a Viking ship. They built a dragon head on the front. Those round things on the sides are shields to protect the men. If the wind went down, the men had to row.

"It must have been very hard to row a boat full of men," said Betsy.

"Of course it was hard, but more than one rowed. Many men rowed at the same time. It was in a funny boat like this one that Leif Ericson came to America. He came long before Columbus."

"Betsy looked at Bob. "Oh, Bob! You must let me come see the ship you are making when it is done."

Boy Scouts

Betsy say with a puzzled look on her face. "I still don't believe you have found a stamp in honor of you," she said.

Bob laughed and kept saying, "Oh, yes I have. I have a stamp in my honor." At last he held out a stamp showing three boys in uniform. The words said, "On my honor I will do my best." Under the Scout badge it said "Boy Scouts of America."

"I'm a Boy Scout," he said.

"Bob, how did the Boy Scouts get started?"

Bob thought for a minute and then said, "About fifty years ago a British Army officer was sent to Africa to train some men to live outdoors. The men were city men, and could do nothing at first. The officer worked out a plan to help them learn these things. Later when he went back to England he started the Boy Scouts."

Betsy thought it over and asked, "How did it come to America?"

"An American was over in England. It was very foggy. He was having a hard time finding his way around, as he did not know the streets. A boy asked him if he could help, and showed him where to go. When the man wanted to pay him, the boy said,'No thank you, sir. I am a Scout.

Scouts do not take pay for good turns.'"

Betsy clapped her hands and said, "Did the man tell Americans about this Scout?"

"He did. So now we have Scouts all over America who try to do their best."

PLANNING FOR VACATION

"Anybody home?" called Father, as he opened the front door. A moment later the click of feet told him that Bob and Betsy were racing to meet him.

"There is a twinkle in your eye," laughed Betsy. "What's the surprise?"

Dad's arm held her close. Looking first at Bob, then at Betsy, he said,"Well, we signed up for vacation dates today, and I am wondering how you want to spend ours when it comes."

"How long do we have?" asked Bob.

Dad explained that each vacation depended on how much time a man had left from sick leave. "You see," he said, "We have a week sick leave each year and a two week vacation. As I have never used any of my sick leave in all my years at the office, the boss suggests that I have a two months vacation as a reward. Do you think we could use it ? And what shall we do ?"

By now Mother was standing close by, as excited as the rest."Would you like to go to the seashore?" she asked. "Or to a lake?"

Betsy looked at Bob, and both looked at Mother. Bob said, "Just a minute," and he ran to the other room. When he came back he was carrying his stamp book. It was open

to a page with the National Parks stamps on it. "When Betsy and I were putting in our new stamps this morning, we were wishing we could visit some of the parks. Could we ?"

"I want to see'Old Faithful' shooting up in the air," said Betsy.

"Oh, Dad! Just think of looking down into Grand Canyon! May we go? Oh, may we?"

Mother and Dad looked at each other. Both of them smiled. Dad said, "I never thought of that, but maybe we could. What do you think?" he asked Mother.

Mother moved her head slowly back and forth as she said, " I guess we will have to do a little reading to find out how far it is and how much it would cost."

Two sad faces looked at her, so she hurried to add, "Maybe we could send for booklets tonight that will help us answer these questions."

As the days went by, mail began to come telling about the different parks. It was hard to choose which parks to visit, but at last four were chosen. They were: Yellowstone with its geysers, Yosemite with its firefall and huge cliffs, Grand Canyon with its deep gorge,and Acadia, the only sea-coast park.

At last the great day came, and the family was off on its way to Yellowstone National Park.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The car slowly stopped at the large gate to the park. A tall man in a ranger's uniform came over to the car. "Hello there!" he said. "Going to visit our park for awhile?" He handed Father a small book about the park. After Mr. Smith paid to enter the park, the ranger put a stamp on the car window. "Have a good time!" he said as the car moved on.

The car had not gone far when the children smelled a strange odor. "What do I smell?" asked Bob.

"Oh, look at the steam coming out of the ground," cried Betsy.

Mr. Smith stopped the car. Mother read a nearby sign, "Geyser Basin."

"Let's walk out where the other people are. They are looking in the water," said Bob. They walked out over the ground. There were many cracks from which hot water bubbled. The steam from the water was very strange smelling.

"Here is another sign," called Betsy. "It says, 'Morning Glory Pool'. Let's look."

They walked over to the pool. "Why, Mother! It looks just like your morning glories," said Bob. "See how blue it is. And look at the middle. It grows smaller and smaller at the bottom."

Back in the car once more, they drove toward "Old Faithful." Suddenly Betsy squealed, "Oh, Daddy! There is a bear!" A big black bear walked out into the road and stood still.

"Don't hit him, Daddy!" yelled Bob, as his father slowly stopped the car. The bear moved around to the side of the car and stood up.

Mother said, "Be careful, children. Don't touch him. Throw him one of your apples." Betsy tossed out an apple and the bear followed after it.

"That's fun!" said Bob.

Dad warned, "These bears are not tame, so do not go near them."

The children played a game of animals. Each watched a side of the road to see the most animals. Betsy saw a big moose and some elk first. Then Bob said, "I win! I win!" He pointed off across the field. There on a hillside was a small herd of buffalo.

"That's the only wild herd of buffalo left in our country," said Daddy.

They stopped quite often to watch geysers shooting hot water into the sky, until at last they saw a big hotel just ahead. Mother looked at the map and said, "The next stop will be 'Old Faithful'." Bob nearly fell off the seat trying to be the first to see it. They saw only a

group of people standing looking toward a geyser cone.

Dad stopped the car and they walked over to a ranger. "When does 'Old Faithful' erupt again?" Father asked.

The ranger looked at his watch and said, "In about five minutes."

Betsy pulled Daddy's sleeve. "What is it going to do in five minutes?" she asked.

He smiled and said, "Erupt means it's going to boil over. We are going to see the water shoot high in the air."

Bob looked at the ranger and asked, "How did you know when the geyser was going to shoot off?"

The ranger explained,"'Old Faithful got its name for being on time, and shooting off just about every hour. Better watch, for it is just about to go right now."

They looked at the cone and saw a small stream of steam floating up. It grew larger and larger, then with a swish hot water shot straight up in the air. Another stream followed. Mother said, "How beautiful!" Bob's eyes were big as he watched each spout of water going a little higher than the one before. Clouds of steam floated out from the water. Slowly the spouts became shorter until at last only a curly thread of steam could be seen.

Betsy sighed. "How can it be so wonderful? No wonder they put a picture of it on a stamp."

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

The car moved slowly along between two high walls of rock. "May we stop a minute?" Bob asked. He was hunting for his stamp folder. At last he held up a stamp. "I thought so," he said. "Those cliffs ahead are in the picture on this stamp."

"Dad, what made this big crack between the mountains?" asked Bob.

"Many years ago the glacier, packed with ice and snow, came down here. As it moved along it pulled out soft rocks and dirt and carried them along with it. It cracked open the ground. When it melted, the water formed rivers and carried away even more land," said Father.

"Look," said Betsy. "We are going into a hole in the ground." Sure enough they drove into a long tunnel under the mountain.

"Oh! There are windows in the mountain!" exclaimed Bob. There ahead of them were large holes cut out through the side of the mountain, from which they could see the far away cliffs.

"See the light ahead. I think it is the end of the tunnel," said Mother. As they got near the opening, she added, "Why, it is like a big picture frame. Look at the beautiful picture across the valley."

Bob and Betsy exclaimed, "Oh!" at the same time.

"One of the highest waterfalls in the world," said Father. A silver stream of water dropped in two long steps down the steep wall of the cliff.

After supper they gathered with many other campers to see the "Firefall". It was pushed from a cliff high above the valley. Father explained, "A ranger is going to push some live coals of fire off the cliff. As they fall down it will look like a waterfall, only it will be fire."

"But, Daddy," said Bob, "won't it set the valley on fire?"

"No," answered Father, "for it is so far down the live coals will go out before they touch anything."

A few minutes later the valley lights went out. From high up in the darkness first a tiny glow and then a long red stream of fire fell down the cliff. It was very quiet. When the last coals went out and the lights came on Betsy said, "Oh, Mother, it was so beautiful I could hardly breathe."

GRAND CANYON

The weather was much warmer. Betsy said, "I am so hot I think I shall melt."

The car pulled up to a heavy guard rail and everyone got out.

A deep, deep canyon lay before them. Betsy grabbed for her father's hand. "I'm afraid. Don't let me fall," she cried.

"You're all right if you stay back of the rail where you belong," said Dad, but he held her hand.

Bob looked down, then up the canyon. "Look at the colors," he said. "There are rocks of just about every color, and lots of red, yellow, and blue."

Mother read from the guide book. "The canyon is about a mile deep. I don't blame you for being afraid, Betsy."

"Did that tiny river make this big canyon?" asked Bob, pointing down to a thread-like line in the bottom of the canyon.

Dad answered, "That tiny blue is a mile away. If we were near it, it would be the mighty Colorado river. It would not look so small then."

They drove down to the Hopi House to see the Indians.

"I hear drums," said Bob. As they walked around the corner of the house they saw a group of people watching

some Indians dancing. Bob was so excited he ran ahead, saying, "Oh, Boy! Real Indians!"

Bob watched the men beating on the Indian drums and tom-toms. He looked up at his mother and said, "I am sure glad our stamps told us to visit Grand Canyon."

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

Slowly the car traveled up the pine lined road leading to the top of Mt. Cadillac.

"I wonder what we shall see up here," said Betsy.

Bob held up his stamp folder and showed her a beautiful blue stamp. "This picture is of the ocean," he said. "Maybe we can see it from up here."

Mother looked in her guide book, and then told them, "This is the only National Park by the sea. Mt. Cadillac is the highest point on the whole east coast."

When the car stopped, the children ran to the guard rail and stood looking down over Frenchman's Bay.

Betsy said,"I know why they chose blue for the Acadia stamp. See how blue the water is until it hits the rocks and turns to white foam."

Bob was looking up the harbor. He turned and said, "Say, Dad, see our Navy up there." Everyone looked and saw a group of Navy ships.

They ate a picnic lunch, seated on some rocks overlooking the ocean. Then Betsy said, "Let's drive down near the ocean."

They stopped the car near a sign saying "Thunder Hole."

"Be careful," said Father as they got out of the car.

"I don't want anyone to slip on the wet rocks and fall into the ocean."

They saw other people standing on the rocks, watching the waves rush into a large hole between the rocks. As they got near Bob said, "I hear the thunder of the water now."

They watched the water splash over the rocks. Betsy said, "There is a stamp for a park with a famous river, one for a famous geyser of hot water. I am glad there is one for ocean water."

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