

How to use the McGuffey Progressive Spelling Book

"I have recently discovered how powerful the McGuffey Speller is in teaching spelling. It is different from other methods in that the book is more of a recitation book than a book of words to spell on a spelling test. The words are organized into families that use the same phonetic rules and the children recite them over and over. Last summer my daughter participated in a very expensive therapy program for a central processing disorder. This technique was used frequently in the therapy. Not only does this practice help central processing disorder, it is also helpful for auditory processing, ADD and ADHD, and reading comprehension. I have gained a new respect for the McGuffey Speller."
-Tammy Hulse

The McGuffey Progressive Speller is a great resource for teaching spelling to beginning readers. It is also a wonderful reference to keep on hand to review spelling rules, consonant and vowel sounds, pronunciation, syllables, punctuation, abbreviations, figures and numbers, etc. The course road maps on the Hearthstone Education Plan site use the McGuffey Speller for Reading Levels 1 -3 (McGuffey Primers, First and Second Readers). When children advance to the McGuffey Third Reader, other resources for spelling and vocabulary will be used and the McGuffey Speller will be used as a reference.

Contents of the Speller:

1. Analysis of the English Alphabet. This section explains a description of the English alphabet with vowels and consonants and their different sounds, and also diphthongs, triphthongs, double consonants, and final syllables.
2. Word Families: Sections I – XXXII. Words are arranged in families according to phonics principles.
3. Short readings and sentences for dictation: Beginning in section XI, short readings are provided.
4. Anomalies in pronunciation. See Section XXXIII.
5. Geographical Proper Names. See Section XXXIV.
6. Proper names of persons. See Section XXXV.
7. Quotations from other languages, which are frequently used in English. See Section XXXVI.
8. Homonyms: Words of which there are two or more of the same pronunciation, but of different orthography and signification. See Section XXXVII
9. Figures and numbers: (Arabic, Roman, Names, Numeral Adjectives). See Section XXXVIII
10. Abbreviations used in writing and printing. See Section XXXIX.
11. Punctuation. See Section XL.

12. Appendix: Articulation and why it is important to teach correct enunciation early.
 - a. Table of the Vowel Elements
 - b. Consonant Elements and their combinations

Directions for Use:

1. **Reading 1 (McGuffey Primer and Pictorial Primer)**: Use Lessons I to V for most children. You will find lists of syllables and words that are to be read, rather than written from dictation. The words are arranged in families according to phonics principles.
 - a. Teach the number key at the top of the page; the numbers indicate the sound of the vowel for the word list.
 - b. Classes may read the lists in unison
 - c. By repeated reading of these families, children see how phonics controls the spelling of the words. *(Read each list several times with the class. To add variety, you can read the list in a high voice, a low voice, ask boys to read, ask girls to read, etc.)*
2. **Reading 2 (McGuffey First Reader)**: Use Lessons VI to XV for most children. Follow same procedure as above.
 - a. After some phonics principles have been learned this way, you may give a spelling test with words which use those principles.
3. **Reading 3 (McGuffey Second Reader)**: Use Lessons XVI to XXXIII for most children. Follow same procedure as above.
 - a. As children recite the words, give particular attention to sounding out the syllables based on the number reference at the bottom of the page. Some of the words may be spoken differently in various regions of the country, but practicing the pronunciation as listed in the guide will help students create an audio image in their minds that will help them spell the word accurately in the future.
 - b. Sentences and short paragraphs are provided at the bottom of the page. These may be used for oral reading practice or for writing from dictation. Most of the words are one syllable with basic rules of punctuation.
 - c. Students are beginning to learn cursive writing. Spelling words and sentences may also be used for penmanship
 - d. There are two longer reading segments in this section. These may be used for oral reading practice. Readers should give their attention to proper articulation, pauses, and inflection while reading.