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Good English

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Good English Week at the State Normal School

WHY WE DID IT.

Since the realization of the fact that the English language is now recognized as the universal language, the shortcomings of our speech are growing more apparent. For this reason, since the outbreak of the World War, steps have been taken in all English speaking countries to improve speech, with particular emphasis on fitting the exact word to the idea. In this way a greater international understanding it is hoped will be secured.

In the United States, a speech committee was organized in 1915 by the National Council of Teachers of English; soon afterward, a similar organization was perfected in the Chicago Women's Club. Through the agency of this club, the indorsement of the American speech movement was made by the National Federation of Women's Clubs. In New York State, a requirement was made several years ago of all High School teachers of English that they should have a definite amount of training in public speaking. Our reputable magazines and newspapers have been busy creating a public sentiment for the "conservation of our English language in its beauty and purity"; and American students at large have become more painstaking in the use of clear, correct speech in everyday life.

To make the movement toward better English more definite, and in order to bring it to the individual homes, "American Speech Week" was recommended by the National Council of Teachers of English. All schools throughout the nation, and other organizations interested, have been invited to join once a year, preferably in November or at a later time, if more convenient, in an observance of this week.

In September, 1919, the schools of Brooklyn inaugurated this movement. New Haven, Connecticut, followed in March, 1916. Shortly after this, the Alabama Girls' Technical Institute observed Good English week; and during the past five years almost every state in the Union has had somewhere within its border a time set aside for the earnest consideration of English forms and for a better usage of the daily, common language. In Arkansas, several schools have adopted with marked success the movement, and it is hoped that as the work grows, all agencies, including the homes, the parents, and the professional men and women will assist the schools when possible.

The State Normal School completed early in December a splendid week's drive. Students and Faculty members entered actively, not passively, into the movement, and in the light of the good results which are continuously evident, the school realizes

that the time spent was indeed worth while. For this reason it may not be amiss to print briefly, a summary of the plans and methods used, some of which have followed the suggestions of the National Council of English Teachers which appeared in the English Journal for May, 1919.

HOW WE DID IT.

In preparation for good English week at the Arkansas State Normal School we received many helpful suggestions from the Guide to American Speech Week, as prepared by the National Council of Teachers of English and from an article by Miss Claudia Crumpton in the English Journal for May, 1919. The first may be secured for twenty-five cents from 506 West 69th Street, Chicago, Ill.

PLANS FOR CONDUCTING A GOOD ENGLISH WEEK.

Organization:

- Executive Committee—English department or English teacher and one student from each class.
- Art Committee—Art teacher and two students (one to collect and post slogans and one, posters).
- Four Minute Speakers Committee—One teacher and two pupils.
- Tag Committee—Three students.
- Publicity Agent—One student.
- Song Committee—Three students.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM GENERAL EXERCISES FOR WEEK.

Monday:

1. Explanation of work.
2. Dramatizations by younger pupils:
 - a Parody of witch scene from Macbeth. Older pupil—Hecate. Younger pupils—Bad English elves and witches, who "in the caldron broil and bake" all the prevalent bad English expressions. Easily written and prepared.
 - b The Lost "G," by upper grade boys and girls. Five or more pupils recite parts of "The Cararact of Ladore," swallowing their G's as they talk. Good English pupils hear them, and make fun of them, and extract from their pockets, sleeves and even shoes, strings of G's. Then all recite poem very forcefully supplying G's.
3. Singing of a Good English Song.

Tuesday:

1. Reading of Creed by a student.
2. Talk by well known business or professional man of the community on "Good English, a business and professional asset".

Wednesday:

Mock trial of Four Verb Brothers, Go, Be, See, Do, for assault and battery on Miss Mother Tongue with intent to kill. See Bulletin of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, published by University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.

Thursday:

Talks by influential men and women to the boys and girls in separate sections on "Clean Speech."

Friday:

1. Songs.
2. Reading of Creed by all in concert.
3. Debate on Slang.
4. Talk by Head of English Department on how to follow up Good English Week, and make its effects lasting.

POINTS TO BE STRESSED IN ALL CLASSES, BUT TO BE TAKEN UP ESPECIALLY IN ENGLISH CLASSES.

Monday—Verbs and their misuse.

Tuesday—Pronouns and their misuse.

Wednesday—Voice control and reading.

Thursday—Faulty diction (other than slang).

Friday—Slang.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 4 MINUTE SPEECHES.

Good Speech, a good investment.

Speech, a matter of habit.

Reading and its influence on speech habits.

Devices to improve speech (such as fining oneself for certain slang, etc.)

Bad English, a case of carelessness rather than ignorance.

Articulation, an element of Good Speech.

Voice Control, an element of Good Speech.

Speech and Training for leadership.

(The four minute speakers may be chosen from the English classes, by class election or choice of teacher. All should speak at the same time in different rooms, enough speakers being chosen to speak in every room, or class in the school.)

POSTERS.

Effective posters of three kinds may be made—cartoons, cut paper posters, and mounted pictures from covers of such magazines as Saturday Evening Post. Have as many as possible.

Suggestions:

Graveyard, showing graves of Bad English expressions and tomb stones suitably engraved. Very effective in cut paper work.

Cartoon showing a contest in season's sport. Contestants are

Good and Bad English. Baseball easy to cartoon. Bases represent grammatical errors conquered, umpire represents teacher, etc.

Boy with a search light (Good English) finding the way to success.

Gardener at work. Cultivate Good English.

Slogan:

You can't have too many slogans. One, such as "Watch Your English," should be adopted for the week and be in evidence everywhere on Monday morning. New ones should appear each day, in every room if possible. Let the pupils contribute them. Try to post slogans each day suitable to the speech traits to be stressed that particular day.

Suggestions:

By their speech ye shall know them.

Get the Good English habit.

A correct pronoun in the mouth is worth two in the grammar.

A small leak will sink a great ship.

There is much to be done.

Put a smile in your voice.

Songs:

Clever parodies on popular and folk songs may be written by the pupils.

Example—(To be sung to the tune of "Smiles".)

This is English week,

So be careful how you speak,

They won't nag you,

But they'll tag you

'Ere you know what they're about,

Right now is the time

To make your rusty English shine;

For your errors are your terrors,

And you must watch out.

Chorus:

There are folks that say "I taken",

There are folks that say "I've got",

There are folks that have an inclination

To say things that they ought not.

There are folks who really know what is right

Who don't care and will not join the fight;

But the folks who try to make improvements

Are the ones who will reach the height.

TAG DAY.

The last day of the week is best for tag day. This will be a success if all students and teachers join in the right spirit. The

committee must prepare beforehand many small tags of cardboard, each on a string. Three colors may be used, white to represent grammatical errors; blue, faulty diction; and red, errors in pronunciation. A supply of tags should be in each room and as any one, teacher or pupil, makes any of the errors on a list previously posted on the board he is to be tagged and must wear his tag all day.

Suggested List of Errors:

1. Grammatical errors.
 - a Verb:
 1. Tense.
 2. Agreement.
 - b Pronoun:
 1. Agreement (each—his, etc)
 2. Case.
 3. For adjective (them books).
 - c Miscellaneous:
 1. Double negative.
 2. Any local atrocities.
2. Faulty Diction:
 - a Slang.
 - b Localisms as "right smart".
 - c Incorrect word as "laid" for "lay," etc.
3. Mispronunciation:
 - a Dropping final "g".
 - b Wrong vowel as "miny" for "many".
 - c Slurring "donchew" for "don't you".
 - d Local atrocities.

We will be glad to give any assistance in putting on "A Good English Week."

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM IT.

"You have done a big business this week," said the manager to the owner of a great store, after a special bargain week. "We shall see," replied the owner. "If we have impressed our customers with the advantage of trading with us, we, indeed, have done a big business—much bigger than the mere sales of this week may indicate, however great they may be.

"The English department has done a good piece of work by bringing the Normal School to observe Good English Week," said a teacher of another department to the writer, who replied, "It remains to be seen just what the effort is worth." However, we believe that the surveys and drills preceding, and the means employed during "Good English Week" have proved that the effort was worth

while. It has served the same purpose for the Normal School that "taking stock" serves the merchant. And indeed, we may expect greater results to grow out of it, if we have made unpopular incorrect form and usage and have substituted something more attractive for them. If the impressions are deep and abiding there will continue to be evidences of them in the class room and upon the campus, and the full fruitage of it will ripen in the villages, hamlets and country throughout our state in the years to come.

The one outstanding result of the week's effort is a new consciousness among the students of the Normal School of the value of correct form and the ability to use accurate and forceful spoken English. This is indeed a hopeful sign. And in addition, they know that they have not reached their goal. They have not even begun to run, but rather are "laying aside the weights". There must be courage, and strength and purpose put into the race to win.

Some one said recently "Self mastery and the use of well-chosen words are the highest marks of culture". Emerson taught us the former, but no great teacher and philosopher has arisen to drive home the latter. In the absence of such a teacher, we have been slow to learn this all but axiomatic fact. But a new day is at hand when all business and professions are calling for men and women whose spoken English is of a high order.

An engineer of renown says, "To think through a proposition or a plan and to be able to make that plan intelligible to others is worth more than the technical knowledge necessary to plan and construct a million dollar piece of work."

The business man recognizes the ability to use good spoken English as a great asset. Big business is on the lookout for men of skill in the use of their mother tongue at many thousands a year. The man of science needs clear and forceful English to aid him in making known his thought in this highly complex field of thought. In like manner the lawyer and the minister must be masters of spoken English. But above all the teacher, whose chief business it is to eliminate error, to correct wrong habit and to implant correct ones, must not only know the grammar and the idiom of the language, but must reduce that knowledge to practice before entering upon the work of the noblest of professions.

Now that "Good English Week" has come and gone, it is our purpose to make each week a repetition of the former, in that we shall strive to keep before the prospective teachers of the state here in the Normal School, this high ideal they have voluntarily set for themselves, to the end that every boy and girl throughout our state whom they may instruct in the future, shall share in this great movement for better spoken English.

SPRING TERM

Begins March 15, Closes June 4

Common School Branches.

Special emphasis will be placed during this term on the subject matter and methods of teaching the common school branches. Reviews in all of them will be offered.

High School and College Subjects.

Courses will be offered in agriculture, Bible, expression, education, English, home economics, history, Latin, manual training, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, public school music, piano and voice.

Observation and Practice Teaching.

Opportunity for observation and practice teaching will be offered in the Practice School through nine grades.

Boarding.

The Normal School Dormitory being full, no more applications can be accepted for the spring term. There are ample accommodations within a few blocks of the campus for both men and women at private boarding houses and the Caddo Club, a private dormitory for women under the management of a member of the faculty, at twenty-four or twenty-five dollars a month. The Registrar of the school will engage board for prospective students on request.

Necessary Expenses for the Term.

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|-----------------------------|---------|
| Matriculation fee | \$ 8.00 |
| Text books, about | 4.00 |
| Laboratory fees, about..... | 1.00 |
| Board, three months | 75 00 |
| Total | \$88.00 |

For further information write to

B. W. TORREYSON, President.
GUY E. SMITH, Registrar.