A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE TEACHER'S WORD BOOK

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[Signatures]

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INTRODUCTION
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In 1921, Edward L. Thorndike wrote: "Consider these simple questions: How many English words should the ordinary boy or girl know the meanings of at the end of Grade 8? In what grades and in what connections should they be learned? If gifted and experienced teachers, supervisors, and authors of courses of study were to give answers to these questions, the answers would vary enormously. Nobody, in fact, knows the answers with even roughly approximate correctness."

About the time the matter quoted in the preceding paragraph was published in The Teacher's College Record, Mr. Thorndike presented the results of the study he had directed in which he and his assistants had counted four million, five hundred thousand words from forty-one different sources in order to discover which words were most frequently used; the ten thousand words so found were then published with convenient prefatory material in The Teacher's Word Book.

Eight years have passed since The Teacher's Word Book appeared, and since the above questions were asked; yet these very questions remain in a large measure still unanswered. No investigators, so far as the writer knows, have extended the study reported in The Teacher's Word Book. The book seems to

have been accepted without question by many educators and to have been overlooked by others. No precise limits have been set for using the book. No improvements have been suggested by other persons interested in similar problems. Therefore, because the questions presented by Mr. Thorndike are of great importance, this thesis has been attempted.

Starting first with the idea that The Teacher's Word Book could be used to give an index of difficulty to reading material, the writer, in conjunction with other students of the University of Kansas, attempted so to use it. The results were not encouraging, and the reason was sought. Among other things it was noticed that each of the words of the list frequently had several distinct meanings, and that these meanings varied almost as much in the frequency of their usage as would the same number of synonyms for the word.

Inquiry into this problem led to the preparation of a list of the first 1000 words of The Teacher's Word Book with their meanings, clipped from Webster's Secondary School Dictionary. These 1000 words varied in the number of distinctly different meanings from one to forty. Because it appeared that little could be ascertained without detailed study of these various meanings, the writer planned a subsidiary study to ascertained the reliability of The Teacher's Word Book.

In planning this study it was reasoned that if The Teacher's Word Book actually listed ten thousand words in the order of their frequency in literature (a thing which, superficially, it appeared to do) the vocabulary usage of various
writers could be ascertained by analysis of word usage in representative books. Especially did it seem likely that stories appearing in grade-school readers could be given an index of difficulty; and with this idea, a word-by-word classification of the meanings and uses of the words appearing within the first 125 pages of a second reader was undertaken.

As the study progressed it became increasingly evident that no one person could prove, in a year's time, that the different meanings in which words were used varied as much in their frequency of appearance as did the words themselves; for the working out of such proof would be a monumental task. It would require the construction of a colossal work — a combination word book and dictionary; to prepare it one would need the help of a large staff of efficient workers.

Whether The Teacher's Word Book, or any other tabulation, can be made to furnish the answers to the questions raised by Mr. Thorndike is still a matter for speculation. The Teacher's Word Book has been a very important contribution toward the solution of these problems. Nevertheless, it is the limitations of the book, discovered in utilizing it in research, that will be the most important part of the information presented on the following pages.

Hence the first part of the study points out certain outstanding deficiencies of The Teacher's Word Book. These were ascertained by analyzing 125 pages of the Buswell-Wheeler Second Grade Reader. Part II of this thesis will discuss in detail the limitations encountered by the writer in his attempt to assign
word values (index numbers) to the words in the Buswell-Wheeler reader and to use the Thorndike Word Book in research.
PART ONE

SUBSIDIARY STUDY
PART ONE

SUBSIDIARY STUDY

In the subsidiary study the first thing undertaken was the construction of a list of the 1000 most frequently used words with their meanings. The words were taken from The Teacher's Word Book and the meanings were copied from Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

1. The lists given on pages 127 to 134 of The Teacher's Word Book were found to be inaccurate, as a comparison of the index numbers showed. (Index numbers: those appearing with the words on pages 1 to 126, inclusive.) The entire list was checked over. All words having an index number of 49 to 74 in The Teacher's Word Book were included in the second 500 of the first 1000; all having an index number of 75 or more were included in the first 500. There was a total of 1007 such words 501 in the first 500 rank, and 505 in the second 500 rank.

The following inaccuracies were discovered in checking over the first 1000 words, pages 127 to 129 of The Teacher's Word Book:

- *become* (48 2 a) should be omitted, and
- *become* (68 1 a4) should be inserted in the first 500;
- *John* (77 1 a5) should be inserted in the first 500;
- *lie* (74 1 b) should be omitted from the first 500 as it already appears in the second 500.
- *tock* (79 1 a5) should be inserted in list of the first 500 and omitted from the list of the second 500.
- Other words such as *add* (75 a1), *beautiful* (75 a1), and *drop* (75 a1) are nearer the border line between the first and second five hundreds, at least according to their index numbers;
- *chain* (49 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500;
- *enjoy* (6) should be omitted from the second 500;
- *exercise* (51 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500;
- *fool* (49 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500;
- *merry* (49 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500;
- *mighty* (49 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500;
- *ought* (49 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500;
- *past* (75 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500;
- *return* (68 1 b) should be inserted in the second 500.
The list of 1000 words follows:

a
able
about
above
account
across
act
add
afraid
after
afternoon
again
against
age
ago
air
all
allow
almost
alone
along
already
also
although
always
am
American
among
amount
an
and
animal
another
answer
any
anything
appear
apple
are
arm
army
around
arrive
art
article
as
ask
at
attend
away
baby
back
bad
bag
ball
band
bank
basket
battle
bay
be
bear
beast
beautiful
beat
beauty
because
become
bed
bee
been
before
began
begun
behind
being
believe
bell
belong
beside
best
better
between
big
bill
bird
bit
black
bless
blind
blood
blow
blue
board
boat
body
bone
book
born
both
bottom
bow
box
boy
branch
brave
bread
break
breakfast
bridge
bright
bring
broad
broken
brook
brother
brought
brown
build
building
built
burn
business
busy
but
butter
buy
by
cake
call
came
can
cannot
cap
captain
car
care
careful
carry
case
catch
cause
cent
center
certain
chain
chair
chance
change
charge

chief
cild
children
choose
Christmas
church
circle
city
class
clean
clear
clock
close
cloth
clothes
clothes
cloud
cost
cold
corner
corner
cook
cool
corn
cost
could
count
country
course
court
cover
cow
cried
cross
crowd
crown
cry
cup
cut
dance
dare
dark
date
daughter
day
dead
deal
dear
dear
death
decide
decide
deep
delight
demand
desire
destroy
did
die
difference
different
dinner
direct
direct
discover
distance
divide
do
doctor
does
dog
done
don't
door
double
doubt
down
draw
dream
dress
drink
drive
drop
dry
during
dust
duty
each
ear
early
ear
earth
east
| easy    | field    | general heart | its           |
| set     | fight    | gentle heaven | John          |
| edge    | figure   | gentleman heavy | join          |
| egg     | fill     | get height | journey       |
| eight   | find     | gift held | joy           |
| either  | fine     | girl help | judge         |
| else    | finger   | give her | jump          |
| end     | finish   | given just | just          |
| enemy   | fire     | glad keep | keep          |
| England | firm     | glass kept | kept          |
| English | first    | go kill | kill          |
| enough  | fish     | god kind | kind          |
| enter   | fit      | going king | king          |
| entire  | five     | got kiss | kiss          |
| equal   | fix      | himself knee | knee         |
| escape  | floor    | hide know | know          |
| even    | flow     | high know | known         |
| evening | flower   | hill labor | labor         |
| ever    | fly      | him lady | lady          |
| every   | follow   | hole laid | laid          |
| everything | following | home lake | lake          |
| except  | food     | hour land | land          |
| exercise | fool     | hot large | large         |
| expect  | foot     | house last | last          |
| express | for      | how late | late          |
| extend  | force    | hour laugh | laugh         |
| eye     | forest   | how lay | lay           |
| face    | forget   | how lead | lead          |
| fact    | form     | I learn | learn         |
| fair    | former   | I least | least         |
| fall    | forth    | I leave | leave         |
| family  | forward  | I led | led           |
| famous  | found    | I left | left          |
| fancy   | four     | I leg | leg           |
| far     | fourth   | I length | length        |
| farm    | France   | I less | less          |
| farmer  | free     | I lesson | lesson        |
| fast    | French   | I let | let           |
| fat     | fresh    | I letter | letter        |
| father  | friend   | I lie | lie           |
| favor   | from     | I life | life          |
| fear    | front    | I lift | lift          |
| feed    | fruit    | I light | light         |
| feel    | full     | I like | like          |
| feet    | gain     | I line | line          |
| fell    | game     | I lion | lion          |
| fellow  | garden   | I lip | lip           |
| felt    | gate     | I list | list          |
| fence   | gather   | I               |
| few  | gave     |                |               |
| shall | shape | she | sheep | shine | ship | shoe | shop | shore | short | should | shoulder | shout | show | shit | sick | side | sight | sign | silk | silver | simple | since | sing | single | air | sister | sit | six | size | skin | sky | sleep | slow | small | smile | smoke | snow | so | soft | soil | sold | soldier | some | something | sometime | son | song | soon | sort | soul | sound | south | space | speak | spend | spirit | spoke | spot | spread | spring | square | stand | star | start | state | station | stay | step | stick | still | stock | stone | stood | stop | store | storm | story | straight | strange | stream | street | strength | strike | strong | study | subject | such | sudden | suffer | sugar | suit | summer | sun | supply | suppose | sure | surprise | sweet | top | touch | toward | town | talk | tall | taste | teach | teacher | tear | tell | ten | than | thank | that | the | thee | their | them | themselves | then | there | therefore | these | they | thick | thin | thing | think | third | this | these | thou | thought | thousand | three | through | throw | thus | tie | till | time | tire | to | today | told | tomorrow | tongue | too | took | top | touch | toward | town | trade | train | travel | tree | trip | trouble | true | trust | truth | try | turn | twelve | twenty | two | uncle | under | understand | unite | until | up | upon | us | use | use | usual | valley | value | very | view | village | visit | voice | wait | walk | wall | want | war | warm | was | wash | waste | watch | water | wave | way | we | weak | wear | weather | week | weight | well | went | were | what | west | wheat | wheel | when | where | whether | which | while | white | who | whole | whom | whose | why | wide | wife | wild | will | win | wind | window | wing | winter | wise | wish | with | within | without | woman | wonder | wonderful | wood | word | work | world | worth | would | write | wrong | yard | year | yellow | yes | yesterday | yet | you | young | your |
The several meanings of each of the 1000 words were copied from Webster's Collegiate Dictionary; space was left up-on a tabulation sheet for counting of the frequency of the appearance of each meaning for each word in the Buswell-Wheeler Reader. A system of tallying similar to that used in Kansas for the counting of ballots was followed. If a given meaning occurred but once, that meaning would be followed by a single tally, "/"; if a meaning occurred six times in the context of a given bit of printed matter, that meaning would have accumulated six tallies, indicated by "\[4/]".

One by one each word of the first 125 pages of the Buswell-Wheeler Second Reader was studied and its meanings were tabulated. Where the dictionary furnished no meaning closely approximating that given the word in the reader, a new meaning was written in and an extra count assigned. Such idiomatic usages were tabulated separately.

Immediately following is a sample of the dictionary list of meanings. The numeral indicating the number of times the meaning appeared was originally represented by tallies. Only the first thirteen words of the one thousand are included here. This presentation exemplifies clearly the method followed in tallying the meanings of each of the words in the first 125 pages of the reader.

a (a) 1. The first letter of the English alphabet. (Not named as such. Tallies 0). 2. As a symbol, used to denote or indicate: a, First in order or class (Tallies 0); b, Music The sixth tone in the model major scale (that of C), or the first
relative minor scale. Also, a key giving this tone, or a symbol for it. (Tallies 0).

A or a, n.; pl. A's, a's, or as (ās). The letter A, a, or its sound. (Tallies 0).

a, (ā) v.t. Corruption of have. Obs. or Dial. (Tallies 0).

a (unstressed, ā; emphatic ā) adj., or (as usually called) the indefinite article. 1. The shortened form of an, signifying, but less emphatic than, one or any, and commonly used before words beginning with a consonant sound. (Tallies 241). 2. In each; to or for each; as "a dollar a yard." (Tallies 0).

a (ā), prep. (AS of off, from) of. Obs. (Tallies 0).

a (ā), prep., a-, a− (ā) prefix. (AS. an, on.) On; in; at; as in afloat, afield, afire, asleep, "a Monday," "thrice a year," "a-hunting." (Tallies 2).

a−, (Gr. αν, ἄ, not, ά being before consonants) A prefix, appearing as am− before vowels or the letter h, denoting not, without, un−, as in abyss, asexual, anhydrous. (Tallies 0).

a−, A prefix equiv. to 1st A, prep., denoting off, from, of; as in adown, athirst, afresh, etc. (Tallies 0).

a−, A form of Ab., (Tallies 0).

-able (ā-b'l), -īble (ī-b'l), or ble. (F., fr. L. -abilis, -ibilis, -bilis,) A suffix used to form adjectives, and meaning: 1. capable of being, fit to be, worthy to be (acted upon in a certain way); ... lovable ...etc. (Tallies 0). 2. Able to, capable of causing, productive of, characterized by; also, inclining to, liable to, subject to. (Tallies 0).
able (ä'bl'), a.; ablere (ä'blēr); ablest (ä'blēst). (OF., fr. L. habilis, easily held or managed, apt, fr. habère to have, hold) 1. Having sufficient power, force, skill, etc.; competent; capable. (Tallies 1). 2. Having intellectual qualifications, or strong mental powers; talented, clever. (Tallies 0).

about' (ä'-bout'), adv. (AS. abūtan, onbūtan; on + būtan, fr. be by + útan, outward, út, out.) 1. On all sides; here and there; around; as, to look about; wandering about. (Tallies 3). 2. In circuit; around the outside; as, at the waist he is one yard about. (Tallies 0). 3. Nearly; approximately; as, about 400. Tallies 0). 4. To a reversed position; half around; as, to face about. (Tallies 0). 5. In rotation; as, turn about is fair play. (Tallies 0).

--prep. 1. Around; on every side of; as, the air is about us. (Tallies 0). 2. In the immediate neighborhood of; near; by or on (one's person); as, he stayed about the house for our protection; have you a knife about you? (Tallies 1). 3. Over or upon different parts of; here and there; in; as, to travel about the country; stones scattered about a field. (Tallies 0). 4. Near; not far from; as, about this time yesterday. (Tallies 0). 5. In concern with; engaged in; as, he went about his business. (Tallies 4). 6. Before a verbal noun or an infinitive: On the point or verge of; in the act of; as, he was about to leap. (Tallies 0). 7. Concerning; with regard to; in connection with; touching; as, to talk about politics. (Tallies 13).
above' (a-buv'), adv. (AS. on, on + be, by, ufan, upward.) 1. In a place above something; overhead. (Tallies 2). 2. Earlier in order; as, that was said above. (Tallies 0). 3. Higher in rank or power. (Tallies 0).

--prep. 1. In or to a higher place than; higher than; over; opposed to below or beneath. (Tallies 0). 2. Fig., higher than; superior to; surpassing; beyond; as, above criticism, above revenge. (Tallies 0). 3. Surpassing in number or quantity; more than. (Tallies 0).

--a. Being above; situated, placed, said, written, mentioned, or the like, above. (Tallies 0).

--n. That which is above. (Tallies 0).

account' (a-kount'), v.t. (From OF., fr. a (L. ad) + conter, to count, L. computare.) 1. To credit (to) in an account; assign; --used with to. Rare. 2. To value; estimate; hold; judge; deem.

--v.i. 1. To render, or state the terms of, an account, as of money expended. 2. To answer; --used with for; as, we must account for our opportunities. 3. To give a satisfactory reason; explain; --used with for.

--n. 1. A reckoning; computation. 2. A statement of business dealings subjected to a reckoning or review; hence, a right or claim the items of which make up such a statement. 3. A statement in general of reasons explanatory of some event; hence, reason, ground, motive, or the like; as, on no account. 4. A statement of facts; narrative; report. 5. Estimation; valuation; judgment; as, you stand high in his account. 6. Importance; worth; advantage; profit. (Tallies: This word did not occur within the first 125 pages of "The Silent Reading Hour."
across' (a-krōs'), adv. (a- on, in + cross.) From side to side; crosswise. (Tallies 0).

—prep. From side to side of; athwart; on the other side of (Tallies 1); over. (Tallies 1). (These meanings were not separated except within the list. In tabulations such as those on pages 23 to 29 they would not be distinguished.)

act (äkt), n. (F. acte, L. actus, and actum, fr. agere, to drive, do.) 1. That which is done or doing; exercise of power; effect of exerted power; performance; deed. (Tallies 0). 2. The result of public deliberation; decision of a legislative body, court, etc.; (Tallies 0); a decree, edict, law, judgment, resolve, or award. (Tallies 0). 3. A formal writing stating that something has been done; as, an act of sale. (Tallies 0). 4. A performance of part of a play; one of the principal divisions of a dramatic work. (Tallies 0). 5. A thesis maintained in public, as in some English Universities, as by a candidate for a degree. (Tallies 0). 6. Process of doing; action; as, to be taken in the act. (Tallies 0). 7. pl. (cap.) Short for Acts of the Apostles, the title of the fifth book of the New Testament. (Tallies 0).

—act of God, Law, an inevitable accident. (Tallies 0).

—v.t. 1. To actuate. Obs. (Tallies 0). 2. To perform (a play or the like) as an actor. 3. To assume the office or character of; play; personate; as, to act the hero, Hamlet, etc. (Tallies 0). 4. To feign or counterfeit; simulate. (Tallies 0).

—v.i. 1. To exert or put forth energy or power; perform functions; do something; specif., to carry into effect a determination of
the will; as, I shall act at once if he fails. (Tallies 0).
2. To have effect; exert influence; as, most acids do not act on glass. (Tallies 0). 3. To behave; bear or depart one's self. (Tallies 1). 4. To perform on the stage; play a part; also, to admit of being performed or acted. (Tallies 0).

add (ād), v.t. (L addere; ad + dare, to give, put.) 1. To give (to); bestow (on); as, "The Lord shall add to me another son." 2. To join (one thing to another) or unite (several things) so as to increase in number, augment in quantity, or aggregate into one; Math., to unite in one sum or quantity. Hence; to sum up; put together mentally. 3. To append, as a statement; say further.

-a-fraid' (a-frād'), p.a. (Old p.p. of affray.) Impressed with fear or apprehension. ...Afraid implies a state of fear. ...(Tallies 2); in fear, apprehensive. (One meaning listed.)

aft'er (āf'tēr), adv. and conj. (AS. Aefter.) Subsequently in time or place; behind; afterwards; later than. (Tallies 4).

--prep. 1. Behind in place; --often with the same noun preceding and following to denote repetition; as, day after day. (Tallies 4). 2. Following the course of; in search or pursuit of; hence with a view to; concerning; in respect of; as he went after a book; to ask after a friend. (Tallies 2). 3. Later in time; subsequent to. (Tallies 0). 4. Subsequent to and in view of; as, after what I said, why did you go? (Tallies 0). 5. Below in rank. (Tallies 0). 6. In imitation of; after the manner or appearance of; as, he takes after his father. (Tallies 0).
7. According to; in accordance with; as, he acted after his kind. ...After implies movement.... (Tallies 0).

---a. (AS. aettera.) 1. Next; later in time; subsequent. (Tallies 1). 2. Hinder; nearer the rear. (Tallies 0).

afternoon (noon'), n. The part of the day between noon and evening. (This word did not occur within the first 125 pages of "The Silent Reading Hour.").

again' (á-gén', also, esp. Brit. and rhetorical, á-gän'), adv. (AS. ongegn, ongean, against, again; on gean, against.) 1. In return; back; as, bring us word again. (Tallies 1). 2. Another time; anew; as, we shall live again. (Tallies 6). 3. Once repeated, as in quantity; as, as large again; repeated in another place; as, you will not find his like again. (Tallies 0). 4. On the other hand. (Tallies 0). 5. Moreover; besides; further; as, again, it may be unwise to go.

---again and again, more than once; often; repeatedly. (Tallies 0).
(The meaning of again in the above phrase is counted as a separate dictionary meaning in the tabulations on page 23.).

against' (á-gänest', also, esp. Brit. and rhetorical, á-gänest'), prep. (AS. ongegn. ongeasas.) 1. Abreast of; opposite to; facing; toward. (Tallies 0). 2. From an opposite or different direction and so as to strike or touch; in contact with (Tallies 1); upon; as hail beats against the roof. 3. In opposition to; counter to; hence adverse to; as, against reason; against law. (Tallies 0). 4. By or before the time that; in preparation for; as, storing up food against the winter. Archaic. (Tallies 0).
age (äj), n. (fr. OF., fr. L. aetas, for aevitas, fr. aevum, age.)

1. That part of the duration of a being or a thing between its beginning and any given time; as, his age is now ten years. 2. The whole duration of a being; lifetime; as, the age of the dog is from 10 to 15 years. 3. The time of life at which some particular qualification, power, or capacity arises or vests; as to be of school age. 4. Specif.: Mature age; full age, or majority, which at the common law is fixed at 21 years, or in some States at 18 years for women; -- used with of; as, to come of age; to be of age. 5. One of the stages of life; as the age of infancy; specif., old age. 6. A particular period of time, esp. with reference to civilization or the earth's history, as, the stone age, the bronze age, the golden age, the coal age, etc. 7. The people who live at a particular period; hence a generation. 8. A century. 9. A long time, (indefinitely). Colloq. 10. In poker, the right belonging to the player to the left of the dealer, under certain conditions, to have the last say; the player in this position.

--v.i. and t.; aged (ajd); ag'ing, ageing (aj'ing). To grow or make aged; become or make old; mature.

--age (äj). (F. -age, fr. L. -aticum.) A suffix used to form nouns denoting; a Something in the relationship of appurtenance, function, or the like, and esp. the collection, aggregate, or sum total of things in, or arising from, such relationship; 
.....c State, condition, rank, dignity, or the like; as in baronage, etc.
a-go (á-go'), a. & adv. (Old p.p., deriv. of AS. agan, to pass away; a + gan, to go.) Past; gone by. (Tallies: adv—2; a—0).

air (ár), n. (F. air, L. aéris, fr. Gr. ἀέρ, air, mist.) 1. The invisible, odorless, and tasteless mixture of gases, chiefly nitrogen and oxygen, surrounding the earth; the atmosphere. (Tallies 1). 2. Something unsubstantial, light, or volatile. (Tallies 0). 3. That which surrounds and influences; as, there was an air of distress. (Tallies 0). 4. Air in motion; gentle wind; fig., breath; as, there is too much air here; to feel the air from a door. (Tallies 0). 5. Utterance abroad; publicity; vent; as, to give a thing air. (Tallies 0). 6. Music. A melody; tune; aria. (Tallies 0). 7. Outward appearance; semblance; manner; style; as, this has the air of a secret. (Tallies 0). 8. Bearing, attitude, or action; as, a lofty air; his air showed it. (Tallies 0). 9. An artificial or affected manner; as, to give one's self airs. (Tallies 0).

--v.t. 1. To expose to the air, as for cooling; ventilate. (Tallies 0). 2. To expose for public notice; display. (Tallies 0).

--n. NOT LISTED IN DICTIONARY. "Air" thought of as a measure of space relative to the ground, as, page 62, line 10 of the Buswell-Wheeler second reader: "The pony's head was always high in the air..." or page 80, line 20, "He threw the paper, and it went through the air in a big curve and fell, right on the doorstep." (Tallies 3).

all (ál), a. (AS. eal, pl. calle). 1. The whole quantity (4); extent (6); duration (9); amount (5); quality (1); or degree of (0);
the whole, collectively (21) or distributively (4); any; whatever; every (0). (Tallies for meaning one as a unit: 25). 2. Only; alone; nothing but; as, it was all profit, and no loss. (0).

—adv. Wholly; entirely; quite; very. (Tallies 18).

—n. The whole; totality; hence, everything, or every person. (14).

—all but, almost; nearly. (Tallies 0).

—all in all, every thing; also —(adverbially) wholly; altogether. (0).

—all in the wind. a Naut. With the head to the wind and all the sails flapping or shivering. b In a flurry; confused and uncertain as to what to do. (Tallies 0).

—all the same, nevertheless. (Tallies 0).

—at all, in any way or respect; (Tallies 0); in the least degree or to the least extent (Tallies 4); under any circumstances (Tallies 0) —used chiefly in negative interrogative sentences, for emphasis.

In a way similar to the analysis given above all of the one thousand, most frequently used words (according to The Teacher’s Word Book) were listed with their meanings. In this list, the frequency of each meaning was carefully set down for each word appearing in the first thirteen stories and the poems contained in the Buswell-Wheeler second reader.

Only those meanings which the dictionary distinguished by a letter or numeral in bold faced type were counted, except where the word appeared in a phrase which the dictionary listed as a distinguishable meaning; in such a case that meaning was counted a
separate one.

Careful account was made of parts of speech, of contractions, of plurals, of nouns, of tenses of verbs, of compound words, etc. Because an account of the method may be interesting and valuable to students of research, many of the details are included herein.

Upon a typewritten copy of the 125 pages of the second reader the following method of marking progress during the checking was necessary.
As the writer tabulated the meanings of the words he also checked the frequency value of each word just above it, as illustrated in the following quotation, a copy of page one of the Buswell-Wheeler second reader.

"VALENTINE'S DAY"

2 1 1 b0 1 2 1

"Each day the postman came to

Betty's house with letters, and there

1 4 / 1 2 1 3 were letters for Father and Mother

1 1 4 4 1 1 4 5 and her big brother and her big sister,

1 1 1 1 4 / 1 n0 but there were no letters for Betty.

1 3 3 3 3 1 b0 1

"One morning she saw the postman

on the street with his bag of letters,

1 1 4 1 l Ib 1 4 / and she went to the door to meet him.

1 1 4 1 1 3 1 3 1

"Mr. Postman," she said, "why

Ib b0 l 3 2 2

"Do you ever write any?" asked

Ib 1 2 1 4 /

"No," said Betty, "I don't

1 b0 1

the postman.

1 2 n0 1 Ib

know how to write letters."

Explanation:

Above each word is a numeral or a letter indicating as follows:

1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, appearing above a word signifies that the word is listed in The Teacher's Word Book as in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th hundred of the first thousand words.

"b" indicates that the word is in the second five hundred of the first thousand.

"O" indicates that the word is outside the first thousand.

"n0" indicates a name outside the list.

"b0" indicates a special category.
The purpose of marking the words in the manner described on the previous page was to show progress and to indicate the difficulty of the various stories (based upon a comparison of the word meanings used as well as upon the frequency according to The Teacher's Word Book.) No reliable system for accomplishing this latter aim was worked out. The amount of material checked was insufficient, as previously explained; therefore, only an inchoate effort was made in this direction.

To show the significance of the facts discovered in making the tabulations, the first one hundred words, all of which occurred at least once in the reader, are next listed:

Frequency of use in the reader is placed in the first column to the right of the list of words; dictionary categories, listed, and appearing in the reader, are placed in the next two columns, respectively; odd idioms, not readily tabulated with the dictionary meanings, are in the next column; and, parts of speech, listed in the dictionary, and appearing in the reader, make up the last two columns of numbers, respectively.

In giving the most-frequently-appearing meaning with each of the words, the writer does not infer that such meaning is actually the most important one which the word has. In view of the very limited number of meanings tabulated such an inference would be unjustifiable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words of the 1st 100</th>
<th>Frequency of use in R.</th>
<th>Dictionary Categories Used in R.</th>
<th>Odd Parts of Speech in List- In R.</th>
<th>Most frequent meaning or use briefly given</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Words of the 1st 100 use in R.</td>
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<td>Dictionary Categories Uses Speech</td>
<td>Odd Parts of Speech</td>
<td>Most frequent meaning or use briefly given</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>man</td>
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<td>me</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

* The two meanings appeared an equal number of times.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words of the 1st 100 use in R.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Dictionary Listed in R.</th>
<th>Odd Uses</th>
<th>Most frequent meaning or use briefly given</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>more</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6 5</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>(adv.) Further, moreover, besides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7 3</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>(a.) Great in quantity, extent, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>(Attr. pron.) To denote possession, ownership, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14 4</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>(a.) Other than the former or old; fresh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8 3</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>(adv.) Not any; not at all, as &quot;he is no worse.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>(adv.) Expressing negation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>now</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9 5 1</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>(adv.) At the present time, at this moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>11 6 2</td>
<td>1 1</td>
<td>(prep.) Indicating, composition, description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>old</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37 4</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>(a.) Not young, advanced far in years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>19 10 5</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>(prep.) Over and in contact with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13 10 1</td>
<td>4 3</td>
<td>(a.) Being a single unit, thing, or being.</td>
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<tr>
<td>only</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>(adv.) Solely, merely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>6 1</td>
<td>(conj.) Used to mark an alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9 4</td>
<td>4 2</td>
<td>(a.) The remaining; that which remains of two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3 2</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>(poss. Adj.) Belonging to us, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26 7 3</td>
<td>7 4</td>
<td>(adv.) Outside of or away from within a space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words of the 1st 100</td>
<td>Frequency of use in R.</td>
<td>Dictionary List-Ed R.</td>
<td>Odd Uses R.</td>
<td>Parts of Speech in List-Ed R.</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>so</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>such</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>they</td>
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<td>18</td>
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* --Take: two meanings have same number of occurrences.
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<td>26</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 2 (Adjectival use.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 1 (n.) A particular point, period, or part of duration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 1 (Used as the sign of the infinitive mood.)</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 2 (a.) A cardinal number.</td>
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<tr>
<td>up</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 2 (adv.) In or toward a higher position; above.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 1 (v.) Copula with pred. n. and pred. a.</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 (n.) Manner, method, style.</td>
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<td>we</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4 3 (interj.) In that case.</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 1 (v.) To exist relative to a certain place, etc.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2 1 (a.) An interrogative as to the nat. and iden. of object.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 1 (adv.) At, during, or after the time that.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 1 (adv.) At or in what place; in what condition.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2 2 (a. pron.) Used as a relative pronoun.</td>
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<td>Words Frequency Dictionary odd Parts of Speech</td>
<td>Most frequent Meaning or use briefly given</td>
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<td>who</td>
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<td>3 2 1 1</td>
<td>(pron.) As a simple relative.</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>19 1 1 2</td>
<td>(v. auxiliary) Expressing willingness, assent, etc.</td>
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<td>with</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>14 7 2 1</td>
<td>(prep.) In accompaniment, or in the company of.</td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35 5 2 2</td>
<td>(n.) Toil, labor; &amp; the task at which one labors. *</td>
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<td>would</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3 3 4 1</td>
<td>(v. aux.) Conditional mood rejected condition.</td>
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<td>year</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 2 1 1</td>
<td>(n.) As a unit of time corresponding to earth's circuit of the sun.</td>
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<td>you</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1 1 2 1</td>
<td>(Pron.) Indicating the person addressed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
<td>(poss. pron. used as an adj.) Of or belonging to you.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pp. 16</td>
<td>6183</td>
<td>1110 385 166 227 159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If each of the above column totals be divided by 103 (the number of words actually in the first hundred as listed in The Teacher's Word Book) averages obtained for the items are:

160.8 10.7 3.76 1.6 2.2 1.5

The above indicate that:

On the average, each of the words of the first hundred appears nearly 61 times in the first 125 pages of the Buswell-Wheeler second reader.

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary lists an average of 10.7 meanings for each of these words.

* Work: The two meanings separated by & appeared an equal number of times in the second reader.
Of these meanings listed in the dictionary, an average of 3.76 for each word of the first 100 was found to appear in the portion of the reader used.

The average number of parts of speech enumerated in the dictionary for each of the first hundred words was 2.2.

Each word in the first one hundred and twenty-five pages in the second reader occurs as different parts of speech an average of one and one-half times.

The foregoing study served as the means for a close examination of The Teacher's Word Book. Beginning on page 31, a criticism is given of that book.
PART TWO

THE TEACHER'S WORD BOOK, A CRITICISM
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THE TEACHER'S WORD BOOK, A CRITICISM.

The Teacher's Word Book may be criticized from several approaches. First, it is possible to take up the problem of selecting the root forms of the words. It seems likely that Mr. Thorndike's effort to simplify the word list resulted in confusion. This matter can be explained to best advantage by including a quotation from the introduction of The Teacher's Word Book, page v.

"It should be noted that, except for special reasons, separate entries are not made of plurals in s; plurals where y is replaced by ies; adverbs formed by adding ly; comparatives and superlatives formed by adding or and est (including changes of y to ies and iest), or r and st; verb forms in s, d, ed (including changes of y to ies and ied), and ing; past participles formed by adding n, and adjectives formed by adding n to proper nouns.

For example:

- boys, girls, berries are counted in with boy, girl, berry
- badly, sadly are counted in with bad, sad
- longer, bravest are counted in with long, brave
- plays, playing, played are counted in with play
- thrown, outgrown are counted in with throw, out-
Austrian, Bavarian are counted in with Austria, Bavaria.

By entering such derivatives under their primary forms, the list is made shorter and easier to use.

"Where separate entries do occur, it is because the derived word is likely to offer some difficulty to pupils, and not be known easily from knowledge of the primary word. Thus likely would not be known from like; being and building should probably often be learned independently of be and build; and coming may appear in the work of Grade I before there has been enough experience of ing to enable the pupil to derive it by himself."

Under the arrangement planned and worked out, there appear these shortcomings:

With regard to the formation of plurals an important function of a word book might well be to show the relative frequency of use of s; es, and ies in the formation of the plural. Not only should the plurals of the types found in boys, girls, berries, be noticed, but also the type found in potatoes and similar words should be noted.

Adverbs ending in ly (formed in analogous meanings to their root adjectives) need to be kept separate from the adjectives. Nearly was not listed separately from near. Neither were ly adjectives kept separate from ly adverbs, when they were identical in form. Likely (an adverb, meaning probably) was not kept separate (so far as may be told from the account of the procedure) from
likely (an adjective).

It seems that by including the comparative *er* and the superlative *est* with the word to which they attach, nothing is shown regarding the importance of learning these forms (comparative and superlative); nor is anything revealed as to which form is the better literary usage for a particular word.

When the tense forms from regular verbs are counted without distinction under the root verb, in some cases, and in other cases not counted; and when most irregular verbs have their various tense forms given separately, it seems likely that tabulations as to the frequency of usage of the words, no matter how carefully made, will be highly inaccurate. *Go, went, gone, goes, going,* are tabulated separately; so too are *cry, cries, cried,* but *plays, playing, played* are counted in with *play.*

In such a word book where several of the meanings and forms of a word are counted together in making tabulations, unreliability is sure to result. When *plays, playing, played* are counted in with *play,* no distinction is kept between any of the structural forms of the word *play,* nor between the various meanings of the word itself.

The criticism is thus led one step further. The word *play* as an intransitive verb has seven meanings listed by Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary;* thirteen meanings as a transitive verb; and thirteen meanings as a noun, according to the same dictionary. When *plays, playing, played* are counted in with *play* many diverse elements
are therefore thrown together. A **play** meaning a **drama**, and **plays**, the plans of a football strategist, are in no wise distinguished in their importance from **play**, the verb meaning to busy one's self for diversion. If each form or meaning of the word **play** was listed separately, each word might have conceivably a much lower ranking than that given the word **play** by Thorndike, since all meanings of the word were counted in the placement.

It is unlikely that all the uses of the perfect participle are learned at the same time the infinitive form of the verb is learned. In the procedure of ranking **thrown**, **outgrown**, **shown** with **throw**, **outgrow**, **show**, attention is not directed to this inconsistency. Not to distinguish between **thrown** in "The **thrown** wrestler received the cheers," "His kingdom was over-**thrown**," "The man was **thrown** from the building by the explosion," and **throw** in "You **throw** that ball, now!" is unjustifiable.

Another inconsistency is the failure to keep adjectives formed from proper nouns separate from their roots. **Austrian** and **Bavarian** are counted with **Austria** and **Bavaria**; whereas **America** and **American**, **France** and **French** are separated. The reason for such a practice is difficult to discern; obviously results from it cannot be valid.

In *The Teacher's Word Book* where the derived form is counted separately from the root—as in **like**, **likely**; **build**, **building**; **be**, **being**; **come**, **coming**;—nothing is given to show the significance of the several forms. Either as a participial adjective or as a verb, **coming** is not distinguishable.
Again, there are words listed in The Teacher's Word Book, such as with, for, and gorse, which have diametrically opposite meanings in different contexts. Notice the following:

"The American soldiers marched with the English against the Germans," Compare the foregoing with: "The Revolutionary soldiers fought with the British at Valley Forge."

Compare the meanings of for in: "We are pinched for room for our books."

Notice the antithetical meanings of gorse in these sentences: "That beautiful gorse was made by a glacier years ago." "The river was being obstructed by a veritable gorse of ice and logs."

The Teacher's Word Book does not reveal which meaning of a word should be learned first. How may the teacher or the pupil find out which meaning of the word is most important?

It is absurd to suggest that the time to teach all meanings of a word is when the word is first brought to the pupil's attention. Should the student learn piano, meaning soft, at the same time that he becomes familiar with the word as the name of a musical instrument? This of course is ridiculous. Use should govern teaching.

Other questions arise, almost without number. For example, should not the elements of certain compound words be learned as word units, and counted as such in a word book? Some of the prefixes and suffixes occur in many combinations with a frequency that rivals that of many common words. In The Teacher's Word Book prefixes and suffixes were not ranked. This obviously is a minor criticism.
Again, words occurring and appearing as units, though not joined together, were not given separate recognition as a unit. As an example of what is meant, notice out of, in "He gave it out of pity." Such combinations do have the unity of meaning of a single word, even though two words make them up. Should not these units be given a ranking as to their importance for the student by a word book adequate for its purpose?

Another element which should enter into a proper plan for constructing a valid word book is the one recognized by Thorndike when he weighted the words appearing in certain pieces of literature more heavily than words appearing in others. Perhaps this was done according to the estimated frequency with which those pieces of literature were read. No explanation of this weighting system has appeared in print. (The foregoing statement is true so far as the writer has been able to discover up to September, 1929.) In The Teacher's College Record for September, 1921, however, the weighting of the words in the index number system adopted by Thorndike is presented at length. Without having the data available for study, the writer can offer little criticism of this phase of the procedure used in constructing the book.

SUMMARY

When The Teacher's Word Book was published it was greeted by most educators with great enthusiasm. The large scope of the undertaking, the vision, the plan of the research upon which it was

based, caused it to receive favorable criticism. Its uses appeared to be numerous.

It appeared that significant facts concerning the elements differentiating good literature from that not so good could be ascertained by finding out what percentage of words of a given frequency value were used by various authors. The effort so to use The Teacher's Word Book made it apparent to certain students that the book itself had serious defects.

It is obvious that words have exact significance only in context, either for reader or writer. It is the necessity, therefore, to distinguish word meanings and to separate them in preparing tabulations of the frequency of appearance.

The Teacher's Word Book does not indicate which meanings, forms, usages are primary in importance; nor does it utilize a consistent technique in the word forms that it keeps separate. For the construction of a valid word book it appears necessary for parts of speech to be separated, and for suffixes, prefixes, and phrases possessing the significance of single words to be included in the list.