



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1978 Volume I: Language and Writing

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## A Course in Basic Skills

Curriculum Unit 78.01.05  
by John Colle

Next year at Hillhouse High School I will be teaching a course entitled "A Course in Basic Skills." Offered to sophomores who have not completely mastered the freshman minimum standards this school year, the course purports to teach a mastery of these standards. Ranging from the knowledge of the alphabet to the ability to write complete sentences in an expository paragraph, the standards cover much territory. Students enrolled in the class will be taking the course in addition to the English class all sophomores will be taking. And while many of these students have been recommended by their freshman teacher because of a skills deficiency, some others, I understand, have voluntarily enrolled in the course.

Each September, no matter what kind of class I am about to teach, I find that I must set the ground rules concerning classroom behavior and responsibility. Not unlike Annie Sullivan in her initial confrontation with Helen Keller, I find that students must know how I expect them to behave. Nothing can be learned, I tell them, by either them or me if no one is listening. At times they may work with others, and then, of course, talking will be encouraged; but they must realize the difference between discussion and mere chatter. I demand orderly behavior and consideration for others at all times. I have found that a good "pep talk" at the beginning of the year usually suffices, and only occasionally will I be required to remind the students of their classroom behavior.

In addition, to reinforce the idea of personal responsibility I often tell students that I require them to bring daily to class an English notebook, pen or pencil, and the book currently being studied in class. If students become a little careless in this area, I have found that temporarily instituting a point system often works well. For example, points would be given the student if certain requirements are met; points would be taken away if they are not. Hillhouse teachers Mr. Gadsden and Mrs. Baljevic have both successfully used the point system in their classes as an alternative grading system; and after a year or so of teaching the basic skills course, perhaps I will feel confident enough to employ it also. This system requires, first of all, an almost uncanny sense of estimating the possible number of points students can expect to make in any one marking period for an "A," "B," etc.

Another feature that I strongly advise is the use of writing folders, which will be kept on file in the classroom. All corrected papers will be filed in them when returned. I have found that when the outside of the manila folder is decorated by the students, it becomes their "own"; on the inside cover a list of commonly used transitional words and phrases or a graph or two showing student progress could be written. The folder would be a useful tool for the student. Moreover, I find that papers are very rarely lost if student files are kept in the

room. If a question arises as to whether or not the student has taken a certain test, the folder could be produced at a moment's notice for verification.

One point that the realist haunts me with is the low caliber of student I will undoubtedly have in my classes. Several weeks ago one of the reading aides showed me student evaluations of the reading course they had just completed. Many of these students will be in my class next year, and I was interested in knowing how they viewed their course. All felt that the course helped them in some way and were happy with what it offered them. Many felt that it bettered their reading speed, comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling. What astounded me, however, was that many of the answers on the evaluation sheet were either illegible or incomprehensible. My work next year, to be sure, is clear. The students, the romantic in me says, are going to be able to write clear, concise, and correct paragraphs by the time they complete my course. The realist in me says, however, that they may feel better about writing or about themselves when they finish—perhaps not even that.

I do know that students are influenced by their peers, and I hope to capitalize on that fact. When my students write, I plan for them to prewrite, whether they do it by the Limone approach—where the form is given the students and they fill in the blanks—or a more heuristic approach—where questions like who, when, where, and why govern the writing. Prewriting, I believe, is essential to the actual composition, for it is here that students come to grips with what they know. I agree with the “Steps Approach” in this respect.

Moreover, since editing groups are a critical feature of the “Steps Approach,” I also plan to implement such groups in my classes. After the students prewrite, they will be randomly grouped so that three students edit their papers. Each student will co-jointly edit his own paper and two others. (See analysis sheet below.) I hope students will sharpen each other's perceptions and writing skills and that everyone will agree to volunteer editing, for I would prefer not to grade their efforts; but I may have to rethink this point later on. The Limone method, of course, will all but eliminate the need for any real editing by the students, and grading should hardly be a problem.

After each student has edited his paper, he will then improve it in as many ways as he can. This time he must proofread on his own before reading it aloud to the class. This idea is taken from the 1970 Weehawken project, and I plan to institute some of the suggestions in my classroom. The two that I especially like are forms much like those Paul Limone gave us. One is the creative writing form, which follows:

A very funny animal, the \_\_\_\_\_, who lives in \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, has fun \_\_\_\_\_. When he \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ and everyone \_\_\_\_\_. Then, after \_\_\_\_\_, is friends \_\_\_\_\_ ly because \_\_\_\_\_.

However, I do not expect to do much creative writing *per se* in my class unless it serves to teach an important basic skill. My point is that if students enroll in the Writing Workshop II class, they will receive more instruction in creative writing as an art form. In fact, I sometimes suspect I may be asking too much of the basic skills students if we tackle anything other than expository writing. Paragraphs of description, narration, and combinations of these might be better left to Mrs. Baljevic's course. I may have to rethink this topic, however, once I know the students' capabilities and desires.

The other Weehawken idea I particularly like is a book report form, which would be used after the class reads a novel or short story. The form is as follows:

The lesson that (name of book or story) teaches about \_\_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_. In this novel/story \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_, is shown \_\_\_\_\_ ing \_\_\_\_\_. On account of \_\_\_\_\_, he/she/it must \_\_\_\_\_.

I approve/disapprove of the ending of “ \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. The only change I might want to make in the story is that \_\_\_\_\_ so that \_\_\_\_\_.

Naturally, the above form could be as difficult as the students would want to make it; but in time they should increase from words to sentences in a relatively short period of time. At first I expect simple words to be filled in; later, when students feel more comfortable in voicing their opinions, I expect longer phrases, clauses, and even self-initiated sentences to be added to the form.

In reference to grading, I find that giving two separate grades has worked best for me. The top grade will reflect content and organization; the bottom grade is reserved for grammar and neatness. However, I may from time to time dispense with the two-grade formula if I want to teach an important concept and have students employ that particular concept in their writing. For example, if I have just taught a lesson on transition, I may want to grade only that aspect of the paper. Of course, the students would be told beforehand of my intentions.

Naturally, I would not expect students to find all their own or others' grammatical errors in a composition, and, as the mechanical errors manifest themselves, I will cover them in classroom assignments. (See Sample Lesson Plan for teaching the alphabet.) For example, if there are many errors in subject-verb agreement, I would perhaps choose to use a book called *English Made Easier*, where rather basic concepts are taught. For more sophisticated exercises I would use our sophomore grammar book, *Usage File of American English*. These books are fine for students whose skills need refreshing, but what about the students who have serious problems with decoding skills?

A series of books I find particularly useful in teaching decoding skills is the Troubleshooter series. In Book One, *Spelling Skills*, students learn such basics as beginning consonants, ending consonants, and consonant combinations. Book Two, *Spelling Action*, covers vowels, spelling rules, and noun plurals. Up to this point several students may still not know the entire alphabet by rote. If this is true, Book Three, *Word Attack*, which covers dictionary skills (with exercises on the alphabet), prefixes, suffixes, and roots, could be used to advantage. (See Sample Lesson Plan below.)

This year I had fair success in having my students in a high freshman cluster go on a library scavenger hunt. (See attached sheet below.) The previous night I had prepared about forty questions like, “What animal is found on p. 52 of *The Animal Husbandry Handbook*?” “Whose picture is hanging on the far northern wall?” and “How many drawers in the card catalog?” I do know students had a good time in the library that day, and our librarian had a great time, too. Next year I may use the same approach, but with easier questions of the same sort or questions dealing only with the card catalog. This way the students could be learning about the library and the alphabet at the same time. Moreover, I could conceivably work out such a scavenger hunt with a set of classroom dictionaries to reinforce their knowledge of the alphabet.

Book Four in the Troubleshooter series, *Word Mastery*, covers homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, and word sets (analogies); this book would be a good follow-up to the dictionary/library exercises. Admittedly, throughout the four books, the students have not yet begun the task of writing correct sentences; they have only been taught decoding and other basic skills. It is not until the fifth book, *Sentence Strength*, that students learn predicates, subjects, and complete sentences. Both the sixth book, *Punctuation Power*, and the seventh, *English Achievement*, could fit into the curriculum.

Beginning in September and lasting throughout the school year, students will be reading high-interest stories

and books from the available works for freshmen or sophomores. It is from these that our compositions will emerge. Writing out of context, I feel, is fine, but I will be striving mainly for reading-related topics. (See Sample Lessons below.) “Which character would you like to be?” and “Why would you not like to be \_\_\_\_?” are several examples that have been brought up in our Yale seminar meetings. Of course, discussion would precede the prewriting.

I was delighted to learn from last year’s freshmen’s evaluation forms that they enjoy reading aloud and feel that they should do more of it. A firm believer in oral reading, I find it gratifying that those students feel good enough to read aloud in class without fear of ridicule from their peers. This should make my job much easier. However, I also believe in silent reading, and perhaps once every two weeks students will be required to read silently in class and to complete study questions.

In their reading, students will come across vocabulary words that are unfamiliar to them. Until this year I have taught vocabulary out of context, with an occasional list of words added from books the students were currently reading in class. With the basic skills students, however, I plan to teach only vocabulary encountered in reading. The number of words each week will depend on the difficulty of the selection, of course, but I would like to have vocabulary quizzes on a weekly basis. I have found students like days set aside for vocabulary, and perhaps the basic skills students will be even more insistent upon it.

I expect the basic skills classes to approximate somewhat the other freshmen classes I will be teaching with one exception—the attention span of the students. The reading aide was kind enough to suggest that three different activities be incorporated in a forty-five minute period because of the low attention span. With my regular classes, I almost always plan two activities; but it may have taken me some time to recognize the difference in students’ concentration spans.

One activity that I am seriously considering is the use of the daily journal suggested in one of the Yale-New Haven teacher seminars. If the practice gets students to “settle down” at the beginning of the period, I may incorporate it in my classes. I have found that any kind of written work at the beginning of the class often does have a sobering effect, and then my teaching could begin. The journals will not be corrected, of course, although they will be read and commented upon. If students do not want others to read their journals, their right to privacy will be respected. As one of the members in the seminar mentioned, the students’ entries increased in length as time went on. I know that this is in itself a worthy goal to achieve.

Quite another activity I have often employed and found successful is the mandatory Christmas present. Early in October I tell the students that they must present me with a gift a week before leaving for Christmas vacation. I, in turn, will give each of them one. Their gift may be either an original poem, story, essay, drawing, or any article that they can make cheaply. Most students have responded well to this assignment, and several days are used in rather informal show-and-tell sessions as gifts come pouring in. Having such an assignment accomplishes many goals. It teaches the student that gifts are much more appreciated when they are made personally by the donor and done in the right spirit; gift-giving is an important custom we rarely reinforce in schools. In addition, and this is by no means a small consideration, it forces the student to give an informal speech, to use organization in planning it, and to utilize a visual aid when showing or explaining his gift. Naturally, when I present them with my usual Christmas Italian sonnet, there are moans and groans, but they are appreciative, I believe. Indeed, they wonder why I have not written each individual class member his own personal sonnet:

I would like to incorporate more field trips to the museum, park, or beach in the basic skills classes. Besides being valuable and inexpensive experiences in themselves, they could also provide good writing material.

Moreover, if the two basic writing classes are back-to-back, longer and more meaningful field trips such as these could be undertaken with a minimum of effort, trouble, and lost time for the student. Doing things and going places as a class, then, might prove to be a valuable experience for everyone concerned.

I would also like to rely more heavily upon audio-visual aids in these classes. Using the overhead projector for vocabulary, grammar skills, and outlining might be a good idea, even if I have to supplement the material. A movie or a slide show may be equally rewarding in teaching basic concepts, and our resources at Hillhouse are almost limitless here. Even a tape recorder could be used to good advantage in teaching speech, outlining, or listening skills.

One last point that this year's students expressed in the reading evaluation forms was their need for more syllabification skills. Enter poetry: Even though poetry is a creative form, what better way to teach syllables than by writing haikus, cinquains, and limericks: I entirely agree with members of the seminar when they recommend that students be introduced to poetry and encouraged to write their own. Moreover, I am convinced that students can and do write poetry that can be enjoyed by others. One gimmick is to ask students to cut out backgrounds for their completed poems. They can use discarded wallpaper sample books which can be obtained from any wallpaper/paint store. After the students have written and edited their poems, they would then rewrite the poem on blank white paper, and paste it onto a wallpaper sample. One boy's limerick, I recall, had to do with Mr. Colle's "malodorous feet," and he had cut out a hideous, green floral pattern in the shape of a sneaker for the background.:

My approach in the basic skills classes, then, will be an eclectic one, drawn heavily but not exclusively from the "Steps Approach" and the Limone method. Initiated by high interest reading material, the compositions will then determine where students' weaknesses lie. With the help of well-chosen texts, workbooks, and a few gimmicks or activities, I plan to improve students' basic skills. The approach, I hope, is one that will suit my students' needs.

### **Sequence of Lessons for "A Course in Basic Skills"**

N.B. The imposition of a sequence upon the course may be misleading to the casual reader. Except for the first writing assignment, the majority of the writing will be based on the students' reading, and students will be writing as often as possible. Reading students' compositions will enable the teacher to diagnose skill deficiencies and to correct them. Finally, the classes themselves will determine how detailed the class exercises need be.

I. The First Writing Assignment

II. Returning the First Set of Themes Emphasizing:

- A. Manuscript and Penmanship Essentials
- B. Spelling Problem Words
- C. Word Mastery
- D. Possessives and Plurals
- E. Capital Letters
- F. End Punctuation
- G. Prewriting as a Means to Combat Composition Errors
- H. Need for Editing Groups

III. Reading Short Stories, Chapters of Novels, to Provide Writing Material (see Sample Lesson)

IV. Class Discussion of Selection

- V. Prewriting for Second Theme Based on Reading
- VI. The Second Writing Assignment
- VII. Editing Groups Work on Themes
- VIII. Returning the Second Set of Themes Emphasizing:
  - A. Manuscript and Penmanship Essentials
  - B. Spelling (Using *Troubleshooter* : Books 1 and 2)
    - 1. Beginning Consonants
    - 2. Ending Consonants
    - 3. Consonant Combinations
    - 4. Vowels
    - 5. Rules of Spelling
  - C. Word Mastery (Using *Troubleshooter* : Book 4)
    - 1. Alphabet
    - 2. Dictionary Usage and Practice—Scavenger Hunt
    - 3. Prefixes
    - 4. Suffixes
    - 5. Roots
    - 6. Homonyms
    - 7. Synonyms
    - 8. Antonyms
    - 9. Analogies
  - D. Possessives (Using *Troubleshooter* : Book 6) and Plurals ( *Troubleshooter* : Book 2)
  - E. Capital Letters (Using *English Made Easier* )
  - F. Punctuation (Using *Troubleshooter* : Book 6)
    - 1. End Punctuation
    - 2. Commas
    - 3. Quotation Marks
    - 4. Apostrophes
  - G. Verbs
    - 1. Action
    - 2. Linking
    - 3. Helping
    - 4. Tense of
  - H. Subjects
    - 1. Noun
    - 2. Pronoun
  - I. Subject-Verb Agreement
  - J. Sentence Identification ( *English Made Easier* )
  - K. Run-on Sentences ( *English Made Easier* )
  - L. Reading and Writing Poetry
    - 1. Haiku
    - 2. Cinquain
    - 3. Limerick
    - 4. Syllabification ( *The New Phonics We Use* , Book D)
      - a. identifying
      - b. dividing two- and three-syllable words

c. finding the accented syllable

5. Mandatory Christmas Gift

IX. The Third Writing Assignment Based on Reading *The Outsiders*

X. The Fourth Writing Assignment Based on Reading *Your Bird Is Here* , *Tom Thompson*

## Analysis Sheet for Editing Groups

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\_\_\_\_\_ Your name

\_\_\_\_\_ Author's name

1. Quote the topic sentence used in the paper you're correcting: (Also, underline the key word in the topic sentence.)
2. Indicate, by quoting an identifying phrase or word, each detail that supports the central idea or key word:
  - (1) (4)
  - (2) (5)
  - (3) (6)
3. Indicate, by quoting an identifying phrase or word, each detail in the paper you're correcting that does NOT support the central idea or key word:
  - (1) (3)
  - (2) (4)
4. If the writer used a clincher or restated his central idea near the end of the paper, quote the words here:
5. Can YOU make the statement of the central idea more exact (or more close to what it was meant to be)? If so, formulate a new topic sentence here:
6. Make a list of the transitional words the author used in the paper:
  - (1) (4) (7)
  - (2) (5) (8)
  - (3) (6) (9)
7. Two grades are to be given your paper: the top grade is for content and organization; the bottom, for mechanics. Put the grade you think the author deserves:
8. On the other side of this paper, make any comments that you wish about the paper.

## Sample Lesson Plan for Teaching the Alphabet

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I. Write the letters in the order of the alphabet. <sup>1</sup>

a b \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

II. Write the words in the order of the alphabet. <sup>1</sup>

egg pig hid ask it men sit get quit

van use rat fun X-ray dog old leg key

boy was nap cap yet top zero jam

1. \_\_\_ 14. \_\_\_

2. \_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_

3. \_\_\_ 16. \_\_\_

4. \_\_\_ 17. \_\_\_

5. \_\_\_ 18. \_\_\_

6. \_\_\_ 19. \_\_\_

7. \_\_\_ 20. \_\_\_

8. \_\_\_ 21. \_\_\_

9. \_\_\_ 22. \_\_\_

10. \_\_\_ 23. \_\_\_

11. \_\_\_ 24. \_\_\_

12. \_\_\_ 25. \_\_\_

13. \_\_\_ 26. \_\_\_

III. As quickly and accurately as you can, write the letters that come BEFORE and AFTER the letters given. <sup>2</sup>

1.    O    8.    D    15.    I   

2.    Q    9.    C    16.    M   

3.    K    10.    Y    17.    X   

4.    E    11.    H    18.    V   

5.    J    12.    T    19.    L   

6.    U    13.    W    20.    P   

7.    F    14.    S   

IV. Put the following words in alphabetical order. Remember, if the first letters are the same, alphabetize by the second. If the second letters are still the same, alphabetize by the third, and so forth. <sup>3</sup>

Words: absent, allow, appoint, another, accident

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Words: believe, business, behave, beginning, break

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Words: perfume, public, peasant, power, phosphate

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Library Scavenger Hunt

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Hunter \_\_\_\_\_

Directions. Complete the answers directly on this sheet. See me when finished.

1. What is the librarian's name?
2. What color/colors is she wearing?
3. What is the library assistant's name?
4. What is the room number of the library? Check the outside of the door.
5. As you come into the library, where is the check-out desk located?
6. From whom am I supposed to get a library pass when I need one?
7. Name 3 kinds of periodicals or audio-visual material found in the Stack Room.
8. Are you permitted in the Stack Room?
9. Name one of the book titles presently found in the library showcase.
10. How many drawers in the card catalog have letters on the front?
11. Name 2 titles and authors found in the paperback displays.
12. Which animal is on the book suggestion box?
13. How many pencil sharpeners are there here, and where are they located?
14. What is the division name of the books found in the 800 section?
15. Find a *Webster's Third International Dictionary* . What is the last numbered page?
16. How many pages in a book entitled *The New Meaning of Treason* by Rebecca West?
17. Where is the box of free bulletin board pictures located?
18. There is a picture of James Hillhouse in the library. When was he born? When did he die?
19. What is printed on the big blue and white banner on the wall?
20. Where are the atlases found?
21. Where is the career, college, military section of the library?
22. How many large sections of fiction are in the library?  
Reference Section
23. What color is *Granger's Index to Poetry* ?
24. What color is the *Short Story Index* ?
25. What color is *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* ?
26. What color is the *Book Review Digest* ?
27. What color is the *Essay & General Literature Index* ?
28. What color is the *Education Index* ?
29. What does *strega* mean in Italian?
30. In *Gray's Anatomy*, p. 1121, if I have something in my *bulbus oculi*, what is going to be hurting me?
31. In *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (blue and red edition), who said: "Seamen have a custom, when they meet a whale, to fling him out an empty tub by way of amusement, to divert him from laying violent hands upon the ship"?
32. In the *International Encyclopedia of Music & Musicians* , on what page is a biographical sketch about Otto H. Kahn?
33. In *The World Book Encyclopedia* , Vol. 13, you can find the state flag and state bird of Maryland. What are they, and on which page are they found?

34. In Vol. 7 of *Chamber's Encyclopedia* , what is the picture of on p. 230?
35. In Vol. 13 of *Britannica Junior Encyclopedia* , p. 471, what are the boys doing?
36. In Vol. 12 of *Students Encyclopedia* , p. 100, what's the name of the song the man is singing?
37. In Vol. X of *Encyclopedia of World Art* , plate #501 depicts art from which country?
38. How many different sets of encyclopedia are there? (A set means more than one copy.)
39. May any reference books be taken from the library? Where are they located?

## Sample Lesson Plan for Teaching Capitalization

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- I. Answer the following in words or complete sentences. <sup>4</sup>
- A. What is the name of your school?
  - B. What is the name of a store you know in this town?
  - C. What is the name of a bank you know in this town?
  - D. What is your favorite flower?
  - E. What is your favorite game?
  - F. On what railroad or airline have you traveled?
  - G. What is one river flowing through your state?
  - H. What is the name of one of your best friends in school?
  - I. What is the full name of your uncle or grandfather?
  - J. What is the title of your favorite novel?
  - K. In what school subject do you do your best work?
  - L. What three fruits do you like best?
- II. On your paper write the words that should be capitalized. <sup>5</sup>
- 1. i enjoyed the *tale of two cities* .
  - 2. robert was born in august and larry in december.
  - 3. when we went to the white house, we saw the president.
  - 4. my english teacher is miss miller.
  - 5. renee shouted, "your brother is looking for you."
  - 6. we are going to uncle peter's farm in pennsylvania next sunday.
  - 7. Last august joe went south while i went west.
  - 8. i met mother on state street.
  - 9. the catskill mountains in new york are very beautiful.
  - 10. we met captain harris at the corner of pine and vine.
  - 11. in what state is lake okeechobee?
  - 12. i went to the capital theater on sunday with ed and mel.
  - 13. we visited the yellowstone national park in montana.
  - 14. i expect to study spanish, french, and latin.
  - 15. we are going to princeton, new jersey, to see my brother who is a student at princeton university.
  - 16. i heard the army-navy game over station wor.
  - 17. i received a bible from aunt ann.
  - 18. "are you going to the football game this new year's day, dr. Laws?"
  - 19. she asked, "how many south american countries can you name?"
  - 20. the rose bowl football game is played at pasadena, california.

## Sample Lesson Plan for “Sidney Poitier,” in They Had a Dream

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### 1. New Vocabulary:

1. auditioned
2. debacle
3. diction
4. superstars
5. milestones
6. defiant
7. portrayal
8. itinerant
9. Gallup Poll
10. accorded
11. Grauman’s Chinese Theater
12. scanty
13. physiotherapist
14. critical
15. acclaim
16. West Indian accent

After reading aloud the short biographical sketch about Sidney Poitier, students copy the vocabulary list in their notebooks. Then, with their books open, they locate the word in context and come to a mutually accepted definition. If there are any questions, students will use their dictionaries to find the definition as it is used in the sketch. They will enter the definition in their notebooks and be quizzed in a week’s time.

When the vocabulary is entered in the notebooks, class discussion of the article will be held. Questions I might raise are as follows:

1. How old is Sidney Poitier now? (This question forces students to use simple arithmetic because his age is not given in the article.)
2. Does Poitier have an accent now?
3. In which movies have you seen him act?
4. Was Poitier ever nominated for an Oscar? For which movie? Did he win?
5. Who were the two biggest money-making stars of 1967?

At this point discussion could become rather generalized. Students might respond enthusiastically to such questions as:

1. Why would anyone want to be a movie star?
2. If you were a star, what kind of movie would you choose to do?
3. Would there be roles you would never play? Why?

4. Who is the most popular teen actor/actress?
5. Who is the most popular adult actor/actress?
6. Does being of a certain race ever limit or increase chances of being in a particular movie? Give an example where this may occur.

In addition, the class would benefit from an interview with someone with an accent. Or, if a class member has an accent, perhaps a small unit about accents could be developed. Since many of our students still have relatives in the South or have migrated here themselves, it may be interesting to learn about the differences in language as they have experienced it.

#### Sample Lesson Plan for *Your Bird is Here* , Tom Thompson

After the vocabulary is covered, students are asked to hand in written answers to the following questions based on Chapter One:

1. What is the date in the first chapter?
2. Why is Tom asked to leave school?
3. What is the name of the new school he will attend?
4. What are the school colors of the school?
5. What is his nickname?
6. Why does he say his life is like jello?
7. What are Tom's feelings about attending the new school?

When the papers have been turned in and duly discussed, the regular class discussion questions would be as follows:

1. What are your feelings about going to school the first day?
2. Would you like to be Tom at this point? Why or why not?
3. What advice would you have for Tom?
4. How would you describe your life so far?

5. Do you have a nickname?
6. Would you be embarrassed or displeased if everyone called you by your nickname?
7. Know the following information about your school:
  - a. name of principal
  - b. names of vice-principals
  - c. rules concerning cuts
  - d. rules concerning tardies
  - e. name of your English teacher this period, and the number of the period
  - f. name of your other English teacher this year, and the number of the period

Students could either be assigned to learn the above information or the information in the next chapter and be quizzed the following day.

## Notes

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1. Arthur W. Heilman, *The New Phonics We Use* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1972), p. 1.
2. Patricia Ann Benner and Virginia L. Law, "Word Attack, Book 3," *Troubleshooter : A Program in Basic English Skills* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 3.
3. *Word Attack* , Book 3, p. 4.
4. Don M. Wolfe, *Creative Ways to Teach English Grades 7 to 12* (New York: The Odyssey Press Inc., 1958), p. 154.
5. Joseph Bellafiore, *Review Text in English Language Arts* (New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1958), p. 284.

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Baker, William D. and T. Benson Strandness. *The Experience of Writing* . New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958.

Bellafiore, Joseph. *Review Text in English Language Arts* . New York; Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1958. Excellent grammar book for slower students; contains many useful exercises.

Brown, T. G. "On Emphasizing Syntax." *The Modern Language Journal* , 55 (May 1971), pp. 271-6.

Colton, Robert G., et al. *Living Your English , Grade 10* . Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1964.

Di Pippo, Albert E. *From Sentence to Paragraph* . New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.

Dixson, Robert J. *Graded Exercises in English* . New York: Regents Publishing Co., Inc., 1959. Intended as a grammar for students of English as a foreign language, this book nevertheless has some excellent exercises for students in a course on basic skills.

Dulay, H. C., and M. K. Burt. "Should We Teach Children Syntax?" *Language Learning* , 23(December 1973), pp. 245-58.

Elliott, Fred T. *Language Is You , A Basic Skills Program , Book I* , Addison-Wesley, 1977. This workbook would be a good supplementary grammar text for more advanced exercises.

Furbush, Polly and Elizabeth Ross. "Thirty Lessons to Develop Skill in Outlining." Boston University, 1961. A good series of outlining exercises.

Gordon, Edward J., et al. *A Programmed Approach to Writing , Book Two* . Massachusetts: Ginn and Company, 1973.

Guth, Hans P., and Brian K. McLaughlin. *Today , A Text-Workbook for English Language and Composition* . McGraw-Hill, Levels 9-12, 1971. This workbook covers such areas as prefixes, suffixes, connotation, figurative language, sentence patterns, clauses, and verbals.

Howard, Margaret, ed. "Getting Together: Problems You Face." Scholastic Magazines, Inc., 1971. This is a complete kit for poor readers on a secondary level.

Johns, J. L. "Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary; A Replication and Validation Study." *The Elementary School Journal* , 78 (September 1977), pp. 31-7.

Karls, John B. and Ronald Szymanski. *The Writer's Handbook* . New York: Laidlaw Brothers, 1975.

Kevorkian, J. C. "Stick Reading for Spelling Patterns." *The Reading Teacher* , 31 (November 1977), pp. 154-9.

Lance, D. M. "What Is Grammar?" *English Education* , 9 (Fall 1977), pp. 43-9.

Leahy, William, ed. *Fundamentals of Grammar* . Chicago: Kenneth Publishing Co., 1971. Good basic rule book but has no class exercises. Might be ordered as required text; about 35c a copy,

Levin, Beatrice Jackson. *Real Life Reading Skills , A Scholastic Program in Functional Literacy* . Scholastic Book Services, 1977. This is a workbook consisting of such skills as Following Directions, Completing Job Applications, Interpreting Timetables and Graphs, Answering Ads, Reading Newspapers, Ordering Merchandise by Mail, etc. There are overlays and dittoes available.

Mason, J. M. "Refining Phonics for Teaching Beginners Reading." *The Reading Teacher* , 31 (November 1977), pp. 179-84.

Morgan, Fred. *Here and Now , An Approach to Writing through Perception* . New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968.

Nunan, Desmond J. and Philip McFarland. *Composition : Models and Exercises , Grade 8* . Ed. John E. Warriner. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971.

Richards, I. A. "Why Generative Grammar Does Not Help." *English Language Teaching Journal* , 22 (October 1967-January 1968), pp. 3-9.

Smith, Ellen and Leona McAnulty. *Essentials in English , Second Book , Laboratory Method* . Wichita, Kansas: The McCormick-Mathers Publishing Co., 1958.

Twaddell, F. "Some Grammatical Ghosts." *The Modern Language Journal* , 56 (February 1972), pp. 69-73.

Waddell, Marie L., et al. *The Art of Styling Sentences* . New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1972.

Weingartner, C. "Getting to Some Basics That the Back-to-Basics Movement Doesn't Get To." *English Journal* , 66 (October 1977), pp. 39-44.

Wolfe, Don M. *Creative Ways to Teach English Grades 7 to 12* . New York.: The Odyssey Press Inc., 1958. An excellent book for teachers of both grammar and literature.

## **Student Reading List and Annotated List of Materials for Classroom Use**

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Bellafiore, Joseph. *English Made Easier* . New York: Amsco School Publications, Inc., 1974. Excellent grammar for skills but exercises may need supplementing.

Benner, Patricia Ann. *Troubleshooter : A Program in Basic English Skills* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969. A good series of seven workbooks covering many grammar skills; could be supplemented by other exercises as needed.

Boning, Richard A. and Barnell Loft. *Specific Skill Series , Secondary Overview* . Baldwin, New York: 1977. Recommended by Title VII personnel at Hillhouse, the Specific Skill Series is a reading program designed to develop eight crucial reading skills. They are Getting the Main Idea, Using the Context, Drawing Conclusions, Locating the Answer, Getting the Facts, Following Directions, Working with Sounds, and Detecting the Sequence.

Heilman, Arthur W., et al. *The New Phonics We Use* . Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1972. A good workbook for such basics as the alphabet, consonants, blends, etc.

Hinton, S. E. *The Outsiders* . New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1967. Good high-interest story of teen gang wars.

Moore, Dennis and Michael C. Flanigan, eds. *Sight Lines* . New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969. High-interest stories and poems. Record also available.

Reasons, George and Sam Patrick, eds. *They Had a Dream* . New York: Signet Non-Fiction, 1969. Short biographies of 53 outstanding black Americans.

Robinson, Katherine, ed. *Scholastic Scope Magazine*. New Jersey: Scholastic Magazines, Inc., 1973. Published weekly during the school year except during school holidays and at mid-term, this magazine is a good supplement for high-interest selections, low-ability students.

Thompson, Edward T., et al, eds. *Reader's Digest* . Pleasantville, N. Y. 10570. Published monthly by The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., this periodical is useful in teaching short non-fiction and current events. Available at school discount.

*Twelve Angry Men and Other Plays* , ed. *Scholastic Scope Magazine*. New Jersey: Scholastic Magazines, inc., 1971. Includes Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men* , Paddy Chayefsky's *The Big Deal* , Carroll Howe's *The Long Fall* , and Budd Schulberg's *On the Waterfront* . Simplified versions of fairly good plays.

*Usage File of American English* . Ed. Editorial Staff. Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972. Good resource for grammar rules, but exercises need to be added by the teacher. For the more advanced student.

Vidal, Gore, ed. *Best Television Plays* . New York: Ballantine Books, 1956. Eight teachable plays, including Paddy Chayefsky's *The Mother* ,

Reginald Rose's *Thunder on Sycamore Street* , Tad Mosel's *My Lost Saints* , Robert Alan Aurthur's *Man on the Mountaintop* , Horton Foote's

*A Young Lady of Property* , Rod Serling's *The Strike* , J. P. Miller's *The Rabbit Trap* , and Gore Vidal's *Visit to a Small Planet* .

Weinberg, Joel. *Troubleshooter II* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975. A rather advanced series covering Word Recognition, Vocabulary, Spelling and Parts of Speech, Reading Rate and Comprehension, Reading in Specific Subjects, Reading and Study Skills. Perhaps a bit too challenging for slower students.

Wood, Phyllis Anderson. *Your Bird Is Here* , *Tom Thompson* . New York: Signet, 1972. Excellent selection for poor readers, this novel is written by a reading teacher.

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