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A STUDY OF THE OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS OF BEGINNING  
LATIN-AMERICAN CHILDREN IN THE FALFURRIAS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TEXAS, 1939-1940

THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

In the extreme southern portion of the State of Texas lies Brooks County, in which is located the town of Falfurrias, with a population of about 2,800 inhabitants. The Falfurrias school district has an area of 360 square miles, is approximately thirty miles long and twelve miles wide.<sup>1</sup> Falfurrias School, during the 1939-1940 school year, had a scholastic census of 1,565, but of that number only 1,255 children attended school. The system is comprised of a high school with an enrollment of 167, and three elementary schools with a total enrollment of 1,088. Out of this enrollment, the elementary school is confronted with the education of 152 beginning Latin-American children who have not been in school before and are unable, in the main, to understand or to speak English.<sup>2</sup> It is this situation which has prompted this study.

The hope of finding some worthwhile information regarding the main problems with which the beginning Latin-American

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<sup>1</sup>Texas Statewide School Adequacy Survey, 1935-1936, pp. 293-302.

<sup>2</sup>Falfurrias School Records.

children are confronted and a worthwhile solution of those problems in order that the average child may obtain the most benefit possible during his first year in school, which in turn will reap dividends in future years by his continuance of the education that was started during that first year, has prompted this investigation.

### The Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to discover, through a survey of beginning Latin-American children, their status and their outstanding problems during the school year of 1939-1940 with the hope of bettering their conditions in future years.

The Spanish-speaking child is becoming a serious problem, not only in the Falfurrias School, but also throughout the Southwest.<sup>3</sup> Manuel of the University of Texas says that "the problem presented by the Spanish-speaking child, as of all other children of the Southwest, is the vastness of the area, its sparseness of population, and its extreme range of conditions, from the tenement district to the isolated ranch home."<sup>4</sup> That statement is true in Falfurrias, as is brought out by the size of the school district itself.

The Spanish-speaking child is confronted with language

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<sup>3</sup>Herschel T. Manuel, "The Educational Problem Presented by the Spanish-Speaking Child of the Southwest," School and Society, XL (November 24, 1934), 692-695.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 692.

difficulties, a low social-economic level, racial element, different customs, prejudices, indifferences, and other factors that help mold him into a future citizen.

Through this study of the problems and difficulties with which the Latin-American child is confronted, the school will be able to understand many of the problems and be able to render worthwhile guidance and teaching, which, it is hoped, will, in turn, eliminate many of the pupil failures and at the same time prevent the dropping out of a large percentage from school before graduation. Time alone will determine whether or not this investigation is to reap the hoped-for dividends.

#### Analysis of the Problem

To carry out this purpose, it is necessary to seek answers to certain questions involving different aspects of the problem, as follows:

1. What is the first need of the non-English-speaking child?
2. What effect does his home life and environment have on his school life?
3. What effect does the social life of the Spanish-cultured child have on his outlook on life in general?
4. Why do beginning Latin-American children fail?
5. What are the causes of failure as listed by the teachers from observation of the failing child?

6. What aims are expected to be accomplished?
7. What techniques are involved in teaching the beginning child?
8. What is the procedure used in teaching the beginning child?
9. What are the standards of attainment for the Spanish-speaking child for his first year's work?
10. Should, or should not, every beginning child be promoted to the first grade after spending one year in the beginning grade, regardless of whether he has attained the standards set up for the first year's work or not?

Along this same line of problems of administration, supervision, curriculum, and method, Manuel raises a number of questions which fit into this analysis very well. They are as follows:

How can an adequate educational program be provided in communities that are now indifferent or antagonistic to the education of these children? What opportunities can be offered to the children of migratory families? How can effective supervision be applied in sparsely settled areas? How may the abilities of these children be adequately appraised? How should they be taught so that their transition to English may be accomplished with the least possible loss? How can their opportunities for mastery of English be increased? What modifications of the curriculum are necessary to adjust to their peculiar background of experience and to meet their social needs? How may the school become an active force for the improvement of the home of the underprivileged child? What elements of Spanish and Mexican culture should be saved to enrich our common store? These and many others constitute the educational problems presented by the Spanish-speaking child of the Southwest.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 694-695.



### Importance of the Problem to Society

Problems of the Latin-American beginner are important to society because his solution of these early problems greatly determines his outlook on life and the kind of citizen he will be in years to come.

The language situation, not only at Falfurrias, but also in other South Texas towns, has proved to be quite a problem for society, and it is one toward which society has done very little. Spanish is spoken almost altogether by the Spanish population, which fact results in the children's starting to school unable to speak English. The children learn a few words of English from day to day in school, but revert again to their native tongue upon leaving the school building. An investigation conducted by Dr. Manuel verifies this existing problem by the following statement which he makes about the States of Texas and New Mexico:

Each year in these border states the Spanish-speaking children who become of school age -- 35,000 of them -- enter the school, if they go at all (and many of them do not), with little or no knowledge of English. They are taught from the beginning in a language which is foreign to them and, in most of the public schools at least, have little or no contact with written forms of their native language until they enter the high school. At the same time, outside of school most of them have little contact with English. No one knows the full extent of this handicap both in the work of the school and in later social adjustment.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of this situation, Latin-American society is retarded by speaking Spanish instead of English in the home,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 693.

which, after all, is probably due to custom and habit. "Differences in custom, also, sometimes rather trivial, often serve as a barrier between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking groups; and in some cases lack of home training in the ways of this country place an added duty on the schools."<sup>7</sup> If English instead of Spanish were spoken in the homes of Fal-furrias, several thousand dollars would be saved yearly. Instead of having four beginning teachers, whose main duty the first year is to acquaint the Latin-American child with the English language, these teachers could be eliminated, and the children would be able to start in the first grade, the same as the Anglo-American children. This alone would be a saving of \$3,600.00 yearly in teachers' salaries along with the equipment and upkeep of four schoolrooms in addition to eliminating one year of school for the Latin-American.

Another factor is their low socio-economic level. While some are from well-to-do homes and homes of high culture, the average, for the area as a whole, is far below that of the English-speaking population. Often there is extreme poverty and a low cultural level. Some who are now desperately poor are from homes which have seen better days; many, however, are from families which for generations have known only extreme under-privilege.<sup>8</sup>

Since beginning children from Spanish-cultured homes are taking up a foreign language and are confronted with new situations and surroundings, many are retarded, especially in the lower grades. This fact was brought out by a survey of

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 694.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 693-694.

Texas schools a few years ago, when it was found that out of all the Spanish-speaking children in school in the State there were only three or four per cent in high school, that nearly three-fourths were enrolled in the first three grades, and that nearly half of the children were enrolled in the first grade. The survey further brought out that, on an average, the Spanish-speaking child was about three years older than the English-speaking child in the third grade.<sup>9</sup> The New Mexico State Department of Public Instruction in 1932-1933 brought out the fact that in the first grade the enrollment of Spanish children was thirty-four per cent as compared with sixteen per cent for other children. They also found that third-grade Spanish children had a median age of 10.1 years as compared with 8.8 years for other children.<sup>10</sup>

The educational problem of Americanization of these Spanish-speaking children is proving costly to the individual and to society through retardation and failure. It is costly to provide the same course time after time for the same pupil, and it is very doubtful that anyone benefits through the process of repetition. The pupil sometimes goes unwillingly and resentfully over subject matter he has already found to be uninteresting and may, therefore, become a problem in discipline in a class group. Often he adds to the load of a teacher already burdened with more than the normal class enrollment.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 693.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

Out of the almost certain dissatisfaction arising from retardation and failure in school work, social maladjustments may grow if the pupil harbors a feeling of resentment and sullen dislike for the existing social order, such as the school represents to him in his most impressionable years. There may be definite danger that he will develop into a poor citizen and worker who is unable to get along with his fellow-man. The existing American social order encourages each boy and girl to seek training; therefore, it seems logical and right that each one should have training suited to his need so that he may have the benefit of a measure of success.

There are many individual losses in the process of failure, because many times failure and repetition result in listlessness, indifference, idleness, carelessness, and unwholesome attitudes. Self-reliance and self-confidence cannot be developed without the occasional feeling that a measure of success, alone, can bring. Success is a strong stimulant, as well as one of the essentials to emotional well-being. People who are continually unsuccessful develop conflicts, complexes, neuroses, and even psychoses.<sup>11</sup>

From the Ninth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence comes the following statement:

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<sup>11</sup>Department of Secondary School Principals of the National Education Association, Issues of Secondary Education, Bulletin, XX (January, 1936), 32.

If all teachers, supervisors, and administrators at any particular level and at different levels in a school system can cooperatively arrive at reasonable agreement as to fundamental principles and administrative practices which should govern promotion, . . . i.e., the advancement of a pupil from one grade to another and from one school to another, . . . perhaps the principal factor contributing to inarticulation in public education would be removed.<sup>12</sup>

G. David Houston gives an interesting definition for failure in an article in Education by making the statement, "What is pedagogically known as retardation is the educational delay of the pupil, causing him to become over-aged for his classification."<sup>13</sup>

Thus retardation and failure have brought to society a financial loss, an educational loss, a social loss, and an individual loss through maladjustments. Society, therefore, should turn its attention to providing educational opportunities for the Spanish-speaking children by providing a program for their participation which will be suited to their individual and social needs.

#### Definition of Beginning Pupils

The Falfurrias School System is composed of eleven grades. The seventh grade is housed in the same building with the high school, whereas the first six grades are housed in three separate buildings. Since there is a difference in the rate

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<sup>12</sup>Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association, Ninth Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence, 1931, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup>G. David Houston, "A Remedy for Retardation in the High School," Education, XLVII (December, 1926), 211-219.

of progress between the average Anglo-American and the average Latin-American child during the early years in school, the Falfurrias Elementary School has the Anglo-American and the Latin-American child segregated through the first six grades. Out of the 1,088 enrolled in the elementary school, 940 are Latin-American children, and the remaining 148 are Anglo-Americans.

Due to the Latin-American's inability to speak English upon entering school, which fact automatically retards his rate of achievement, generally speaking, it takes eight years of schooling for him, provided he does not experience any failures, in comparison to seven years for the Anglo-American before reaching high school.

An example to illustrate the difference in the rate of achievement is that of a study of reading and arithmetic that was carried on in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The results are summarized in the following statement:

On the basis of the results for ages 8 to 12 in grades 2 to 8 these are the findings: In arithmetic the Spanish-speaking children have a score slightly in excess of chronological age at eight years, but at successive age levels the score falls farther and farther behind. Their reading age at the eight-year level is below their chronological age and the gap widens with advance in age. On the average the Spanish-speaking children are about a year and a half below the English-speaking children of the same age in arithmetic, and in reading a little over two years below. On the whole the Spanish-speaking curves rise very slowly. With some variation in details, this illustration is probably more or less typical of conditions in general.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Manuel, p. 693.

All Mexican children who have not been in school prior to the time of their original entrance or who have not attained sufficient knowledge of the English language to understand and do first-grade work are classified as beginning pupils. All further reference throughout this study regarding beginning pupils will mean those of this classification.

#### Sources of Data and Method of Procedure

The scope of the problem is confined to the study of the scholarship and personal records of beginning children which are kept in the Falfurrias Elementary School office; in addition to this, each teacher has a daily record kept in her room of each beginning child; also, a questionnaire was sent to those homes in which the school was unable to collect the desired information by personally contacting either the parent or an older brother or sister in school. A copy of the Spanish version of the questionnaire that was sent to the home will be found in the Appendix, along with the English version that was used by personal contact with the person questioned.

Much useful information was gathered from studies along some specific phases of beginning problems from work done by students of the University of Texas and the Texas College of Arts and Industries, the latter being located at Kingsville, Texas. A portion of the information found in the course of study for beginning children that was compiled in 1940, a copy of which will be found in Chapter IV of this study, was made possible by data gathered by beginning teachers in an

education course for teachers of Spanish-speaking children which is offered by the Texas College of Arts and Industries and is labeled as "Education 325"; the remaining information was collected by personal contact, observation, and experience.

#### Organization of the Thesis

The statement and analysis of the problem and its justification have been presented in this chapter.

Related studies by other investigators are reviewed in Chapter II for the purpose of determining techniques which have been used in studying the problems of retardation and failure of beginning children.

In Chapter III are presented the results of the investigation into the home life and environment of the children involved.

In Chapter IV are presented the types of instruction that are being carried on in the classroom, and the objectives and techniques used in teaching beginners, which, in this case, have proved to be very successful.

In Chapter V are presented the findings and recommendations of the study.



## CHAPTER II

### RELATED STUDIES

#### Purpose and Organization of This Chapter

Related studies by other investigators are surveyed for the purpose of determining techniques used in studying the outstanding problems of foreign-speaking children.

A survey of these studies reveals findings on differences in promotion policies, teaching beginning Latin-American children, and the means of teaching a foreign language. In the summary are listed those problems mentioned most frequently by investigators of studies of Spanish-speaking children.

#### Differences in Promotion Policies

Although the Mexican population of Texas is greatest along the southern border, it is found to some extent in almost all counties of the state. A study by Manuel reveals that about twenty-three per cent of the Mexican scholastics live in the five largest cities of Texas, and a third of the Mexican scholastics live in common school districts.<sup>1</sup> "In 1928 there were approximately 187,000 Mexican and Spanish-

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<sup>1</sup>Herschel T. Manuel, The Education of Mexican and Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas, p. 152.

speaking scholastics (children 7 to 17, inclusive), in Texas. This is about 13 per cent of all scholastics and about 16 per cent of the white scholastics. Of all the children of school age about one in eight is a Mexican."<sup>2</sup> Assuming that today the percentage is similar, the Mexican child is confronted with different policies of promotion, depending largely upon his place of residence. Let us see what these promotion policies are that involve the school life of Mexican children who are scattered over the various counties of the state.

Doubtless each individual who has anything to do with the promotion of pupils from one grade to another or from one subject to another has some general principles or policies in terms of which he makes his decisions. Whether a student is advanced to the next higher grade or is retarded in his progress by being retained in his present grade is usually determined by interpreting such information about the student as is available. The interpretation, however, and the conclusions reached are influenced by one's theories about promotion. Promotion policies, then, might be defined as the theories which influence or govern one's decisions regarding the advancement of pupils from grade to grade or from subject to subject.

According to Otto, who made an extensive study of promotion policies and practices in the elementary schools,

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

. . . there is no single concept or group of united threads which can be said to constitute the promotion policy of the school systems studied. There is much confusion of thought on the part of all groups of educational workers regarding what is a desirable and justifiable plan for the promotion of pupils.<sup>3</sup>

Borgeson found that approximately seventy-five per cent of all the causes of failure given by pupils are those submitted on the assumption that the pupils themselves are primarily responsible.<sup>4</sup>

Mort has stated that among the many reasons given for non-promotion there are but two that can be justified; namely, the inability of a pupil to master the fundamentals of the succeeding grade and the losing of something highly valuable which cannot be secured in the higher grade.<sup>5</sup> Mort further points out that careful analysis will indicate that non-promotion for either of these reasons should rarely occur. One might add that there is nothing particularly sacred about the allocation of a given unit of content to a specific grade and that the grade in which a certain unit of work is taught is not particularly significant. The mental development of the pupil is a more important consideration. If one really takes seriously the principle of adapting instruction to individual differences -- a doctrine which professional educators have preached for more than two decades -- the argument

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<sup>3</sup>Henry J. Otto, Promotion Policies and Practices in Elementary Schools, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>F. C. Borgeson, "Causes of Failure and Poor School Work Given by Pupils," Educational Administration and Supervision, XVI (October, 1930), 542-548.

<sup>5</sup>Paul R. Mort, The Individual Pupil in the Management of Class and School, pp. 164-165.

that "the work of the grade is too difficult for the child" appears ridiculous. If in all grades and subjects the pupils are carefully studied, if adequate diagnoses are made, and if methods and materials are properly adapted to the abilities of pupils, it may be assumed that practically all children will achieve according to their ability. No one can legitimately expect greater achievement. The continuous use of diagnostic measures will enable the teacher to keep the pupil informed and encouraged about the progress he is making in various phases of school work. Researches by Ross, Book and Norvell, and others cited by Garrison and Garrison, have shown that knowledge of progress is a valuable motivating factor in the life of a student.<sup>6</sup>

#### Teaching Beginning Latin-American Children

Every teacher whom the investigator has been able to contact agrees that there is a vast difference in teaching Latin-American children who are entering school for their first time and Anglo-American children who are entering school for their first time. Of course, a teacher must have had some experience in teaching both groups before being able to arrive at any kind of conclusion.

Manuel brings out in his research on "Problems in Teaching English to Spanish-Speaking Children" that, in general, of the Mexican children who are entering school for their first

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<sup>6</sup>S. C. Garrison and K. C. Garrison, The Psychology of Elementary School Subjects, pp. 170-180.

time, ninety per cent are unable to speak or understand English.<sup>7</sup> "In a study of 523 Mexican children of Grades 2 and 5 of El Paso in only two cases was English recorded as the language spoken at home and in only four cases both English and Spanish."<sup>8</sup> Manuel also brings out, in the following statement, additional difficulties confronted as found by him:

It is clear, then, that as a group the Mexican pupils have to be taught by methods appropriate to non-English-speaking children when they enter the public schools. The fact, however, that some of the children already know English when they enter the schools makes it necessary to consider each case individually. The problem is rendered more complex by the fact that some children have been enrolled in schools in which Spanish is the medium of instruction. If they have acquired a great deal of facility in reading Spanish and are older than other beginners, obviously they deserve a different treatment. Some schools organize what may be called an opportunity room or class for these pupils.<sup>9</sup>

Sarah T. Barrows relates her findings pertaining to children who cannot speak English when they enter school, in an article written in The Classroom Teacher, titled, "Teaching English to Foreign Children." She found that

. . . the first need of the non-English-speaking child is to learn to understand and speak the language used in the schoolroom. Not only his first need, but for some time his chief need, is for lessons in English. The task that confronts the teacher is to present these English lessons to the child in the most effective way possible, so that the child may with the least outlay of energy, in a very short time, overcome the language handicap sufficiently to begin the regular work of the school.

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<sup>7</sup>Manuel, The Education of Mexican and Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas, p. 120.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

It is not always realized by the teacher that the problem of the foreign-speaking child who is trying to learn English is exactly the same as that of the American child who is trying to learn French or any other foreign language. The teacher of English to foreign-speaking children is teaching a foreign language. She cannot use effectively the methods which she has been employing in her language lessons with the children who learned to speak English at home.

She must take into consideration the fact that so far as the ability to speak English is concerned the pupil is in the position of the child who has not yet learned to speak. Yet there is this difference -- the foreign-speaking child has become accustomed to the use of language as a medium of communication; he feels more confused and helpless in this situation because of his non-mastery of the language than a child would who had never talked at all, for such a child is in the habit of communicating by the use of signs and does not feel so sharply the lack of speech.

In so far as possible the child should be given the opportunity to learn the new language by the gradual process which he used in learning his mother tongue. So the teacher will take advantage of every opportunity which occurs to repeat a word or phrase to the foreign child in connection with its meaning, and to have the pupil use the word himself. When a natural situation does not offer such an opportunity, the teacher will make an effort to create one.

In brief, the words selected for the first lessons should be those which will be of most practical value to the child; all words should be taught in association with their meaning; they should be heard repeatedly; they should be presented in connection with an interesting experience; there should be some reason why the child would want to use them.<sup>10</sup>

The Beaumont Elementary School has a Suggested Course of Study for Foreign Children of the Pre-Primer Age that was prepared by Gertrude M. Baldwin, especially for Mexican children. It is brought out in this course of study that the first lesson given the Mexican child should be composed of short

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<sup>10</sup> Sarah T. Barrows, "Teaching English to Foreign Children," The Classroom Teacher, II, 438-439.

sentences from the child's known vocabulary, thus using words already learned by the child. It is further brought out that reading lessons should not be attempted until the child has attained some mastery of spoken English.<sup>11</sup> In a bulletin from the State Department of Education, titled A Course in English for Non-English-Speaking Pupils, pertaining to teaching the foreign child, is brought out the fact that the reaction of the foreign child in the classroom depends largely on the attitude of the teacher and not solely on the mental, spiritual, and physical atmosphere of the schoolroom.<sup>12</sup>

After several years of study and experimentation, the El Paso schools, under the direction of Lucy Claire Hoard, supervisor of kindergarten and primary grades, have published a bulletin titled Teaching English to the Spanish-Speaking Child in the Primary Grades. This bulletin brings out the method of teaching English to Mexican children, which is based on the principle that any new language is acquired only through practice which grows out of a felt need; and its aim is to make the speaking of English a vital part of the daily living of these children.<sup>13</sup>

Miss Hoard further brings out the fact that those who understand and know little children can understand the feeling

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<sup>11</sup>Gertrude M. Baldwin, Suggested Course of Study for Foreign Children of Pre-Primer Age, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>State Department of Education, A Course in English for Non-English-Speaking Pupils, Bulletin, VIII (March, 1932), 12.

<sup>13</sup>Lucy Claire Hoard, Teaching English to the Spanish-Speaking Child in the Primary Grades, p. 3.

of confusion and bewilderment which the Mexican child experiences on entering his first school. He finds himself in a strange world where a strange language is spoken, one in which he frequently cannot make his wants known and understood. Often this results in his withdrawal into silence and his refusal to speak or take part in group activities for days or weeks. The teacher, then, must take into consideration that English to the six-year-old Mexican child is a foreign language in which he is not accustomed to expressing himself. Furthermore, "Understanding and speaking this new language must come first, followed by reading and writing only after the pupil has acquired the ability to speak it fluently for his needs at that level of growth."<sup>14</sup>

As to the teacher and her background necessary for teaching Mexican children, comes the following statement taken from the El Paso bulletin:

The teacher of the Mexican child should have genuine interest in him. She should know something of the race, history, and culture of the Mexican people; she should know a great deal about the conditions under which they live in our country, and the problems they must meet, social, emotional and economic, in adjusting to our industrial civilization. The Mexican child has a native deference and courtesy toward others which should be preserved. Where he is lacking in initiative he should be given many opportunities to initiate activities and to plan, carry through, and judge these activities. He should be encouraged to take responsibility and to develop leadership. It is necessary

That the teacher be acquainted with the whole field of elementary education.

That she be well grounded in the psychology of child growth and development.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 5.



- That she be resourceful.
- That she possess sympathy and patience.
- That she be willing to study the individual child and to learn as much as possible about his home and family life.
- That she be convinced of the importance of the acquisition of oral language before attempting reading in a new language.
- That she be willing to follow faithfully the method of teaching English through activities.
- That she understand the value of experience in learning.
- That she have a wholesome respect for the non-English-speaking people in our midst.
- That she have faith in the child and in his ability to learn.
- That she make school a happy place where real living goes on.<sup>15</sup>

Also from El Paso comes the following statement in regard to teaching English to the Spanish-speaking child:

In schools which follow a more or less formal type of procedure Mexican children sometimes spend four years or more below the second grade without mastering enough English and reading to attempt a more advanced type of work. Eventually these children become discouraged and bored with endless repetition of incomprehensible stories and meaningless routine. Apathy and indifference follow, if not behavior problems, until teachers consider them slow or mentally incapable of progress. As a rule these children can do acceptably, for their ages and grade, the purely mechanical process required. They master number combinations, written spelling, and copy work. Nearly all write clearly and legibly, and draw well at the end of two years, which should bring them to the second grade level. Intelligence tests administered in Spanish show that the majority of them are of normal mentality. Clearly, then, if the majority of them are of normal mentality, if the foregoing indications are of any value, we must conclude that we have made the mistake of introducing the reading process before pupils had sufficient command of English, and adequate background in the experiences that are a necessary prerequisite to reading.

It seems that an informal situation with a program of activities growing out of these children's interests

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 6, 9.

and based upon their experiences offers the greatest opportunity for abundant need and opportunity to use language to be found. Enriched experience and a larger vocabulary will increase comprehension. The program for the first year is conceived as being almost entirely a non-reading program. It should be rich and varied in content, and should afford many opportunities for doing, creating, sharing, and enjoying. It should help each child to a realization of himself as a worthwhile and responsible member of his group.

The building of the vocabulary as a prerequisite to reading cannot be left to chance. Although it is expected that much natural and unplanned conversation will take place in the classroom, definite planning and organization of content is necessary if an adequate basal vocabulary is to be acquired by Mexican children. For this reason the work has been carefully planned and assigned certain time limits for the teaching of each unit.<sup>16</sup>

#### Means of Teaching a Foreign Language

In a bulletin issued by the Department of the Interior is contained a report of an investigation conducted by J. L. Meriam, Professor of Education, University of California at Los Angeles, titled Learning English Incidentally: A Study of Bilingual Children. Meriam brings out in the report of his investigation that "there are three points of view from which a language may be studied: As a tool, the symbolism of which is to be mastered; as an art, with its own history, terminology, and psychology; and, in its recorded form, as a treasury of human thought and experience."<sup>17</sup>

In investigating the means used in teaching a foreign language by the various schools, the investigator has not found any two schools using the same means; however, several

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>J. L. Meriam, Learning English Incidentally: A Study of Bilingual Children, p. 10.

have similar teaching methods. The State Department of Education, in the bulletin, A Course in English for Non-English-Speaking Pupils, is of the opinion that the best means of teaching beginning foreign children throughout the first year is by pictures, actions, objects, and pantomimes that are accompanied by the oral use of the names of these objects. The teacher should be careful that she does not introduce too many words of the same type at one time and be sure that the children have a mastery of old forms before giving them the new. Drill is the best essential means of teaching new words, doing today what was done the day before and so on for many days until mastery of the words and forms is firmly fixed in the pupils' vocabulary. The teacher must always speak to the children in simple, clearly enunciated English sentences about everything that is done in the schoolroom. The teacher will be able to teach English incidentally by using over and over again expressions which are connected with certain actions or objects or situations, thus familiarizing the children with them without the children's being conscious of the fact. By having the child perform an action in response to a request, always telling him what he is doing as he does it, provision is made for the repetition and the drill on the forms, which give the child an early essential mastery of them.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>State Department of Education, A Course in English for Non-English-Speaking Pupils, Bulletin, VIII (March, 1932), 13.

Roberts, in his English for Coming Americans, Teachers' Manual, says: "The equipment nature freely gives each child to learn a language has not been lost by man, and the laws by which language is built up in the mind are still active everywhere. . . . Our first duty then is to find out how language is attained by nature's gifts." According to Mr. Roberts, there are three guiding principles. First of all, before one learns to read or write, one is able to speak fluently. This is due to the ear and common usage. Do not let the pupil see a word before he hears it. "Train the ear to hear and the tongue to talk before the eye and the hand are enlisted in the work of learning a language. Follow this rule religiously and you will find your reward." Second, Mr. Roberts says that pupils will get the correct pronunciation and practical use of English through practice. He brings out the fact that the conversational forms of language can be learned only by conversation. Third, lessons must obey the natural law to prevent discouragement. "Give all possible aids to the memory and when the strain upon it is reduced to a minimum, the student will be better able to concentrate his mind upon getting the correct sound of the new language and in reproducing what he has heard." In teaching a new verb, objects, or pictures, Roberts emphasizes dramatization or action. He would have every teacher remember and follow these four principles:

1. Cause and Effect: as rain, wet; frost, cold.
2. Means to an End: as razor, shave; pen, write.
3. Coexistence: as rain, umbrella; cold, overcoat.
4. Contrast: as white, black; high, low.<sup>19</sup>

Gertrude M. Baldwin, Beaumont primary supervisor, suggests that the teacher begin with pronunciation, giving systematic and constant phonic drills, teaching sounds slowly, repeating untiringly. She suggests board exercises after pupils have built up a daily schoolroom vocabulary. Give extensive practice in accent and teaching of simple oral sentences. Use pictures, laugh with the children over mistakes, but always correct them. Cultivate their confidence. Instill in them the desire to talk. Group them according to individual differences.<sup>20</sup>

Annie Reynolds of the Office of Education, Department of the Interior, makes the following comment:

Lack of suitable material adapted to enlarge children's experiences and to promote reading readiness, of carefully selected texts adapted to much and to easy reading, and the like, are of even more than the usual importance among non-English-speaking children or children of non-English-speaking parents. The laws of learning demand that such equipment as objects or pictures be at hand when their names are taught and that teachers and children participate in activities of many kinds and talk about their performances, if young learners are to acquire the ability to use a language, whether their mother tongue or, as in the case of these children, a second language.<sup>21</sup>

The El Paso Public Schools, under the supervision of Lucy Claire Hoard, bring out the fact that the foreign child

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>20</sup> Baldwin, pp. 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Annie Reynolds, The Education of Spanish-Speaking Children in Five Southwestern States, Bulletin, U. S. Office of Education, 1933, p. 13.

must be given every available opportunity to use English in conversation with his companions as well as with his teacher. Also, the teacher will have to use all of her initiative and resourcefulness in finding ways of getting repetition and practice in the use of the material presented. Every time the foreign child uses correct English, he should be commended and should not be blamed and criticized if he lapses into his native tongue.

Miss Hoard says that the points that should always be remembered in teaching the foreign child are:

1. The ear of the non-English-speaking child must become attuned to the English language. He should hear only the best English with clear enunciation and correct pronunciation.
2. As many associations as possible must be formed with every word or phrase. That is, it must be used in as many situations as possible.
3. The content should be drawn from actual experience and only motivated or stimulated by the use of objects and pictures.
4. The teacher should utilize every situation and occasion for teaching English.
5. The instruction must be organized.<sup>22</sup>

According to the general trend of opinion, most of the beginners are taught by an all-English method, but there are still a few teachers who believe in using Spanish to assist in teaching. Mrs. Florence McMains, principal of the East Del Rio Schools, in Val Verde County, uses Spanish in teaching beginners. She says that "the first natural step in a child's mental growth is to want something; hence the first step in teaching English to Mexican-speaking children is to

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<sup>22</sup>Hoard, p. 14.

use the 'want group' of sentences." The next step, according to Mrs. McMains, is the "like group" of sentences resulting from the child's liking for a thing. Then, the last step is the child's discovering that he can do something which brings out the "can group." The same set of sentence forms is used in all the groups with such verbs as "sing," "write," "run," "read," "talk," "jump," and "play" being substituted for "talk." "At first when the beginning child is started on this method, sentences are given in Spanish, then in English. An explanation is made also by action or by picture."<sup>23</sup>

#### Summary

It seems that no two schools or even teachers within the same system use the same policies in regard to advancement of pupils from one grade to another. Some of our leading educators believe in having no failures, and others let the failing percentage run very high. The most important reasons for failure are also hard to decide upon because no two people who have studied this problem give identical lists of reasons. Teachers and pupils do not agree upon this issue.

On the average, Mexican children are not so prompt in starting to school in the fall as are the Anglo-Americans. This non-attendance and irregularity of attendance is due

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<sup>23</sup>Manuel, The Education of Mexican and Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas, p. 124.

mainly to economic conditions, irresponsibility, continual moving, and failure to enforce the compulsory attendance law. This brings about failure to progress normally, which brings about retardation until by the time the average Mexican child is in the third grade he is twelve years old. The average Anglo-American child at this same age is in the sixth grade.

It has been found that probably more than ninety per cent of beginning Latin-American children cannot understand and speak English, which fact is the basis of one of the major problems, that of teaching English. Although some teachers still resort to translation and the use of Spanish, the prevailing method used in teaching beginners is an all-English method.

It seems that most investigators and schools that are confronted with teaching beginning Latin-American children agree that there are several outstanding problems facing the school as well as the beginner, although they are unable to agree as to the best means of facing these problems. The principal problems are as follows:

1. Teaching English.
2. Retardation.
3. Maladjustment.
4. Individual differences.
5. Social attitudes.
6. Racial differences.

After examining these problems, one can readily see why



the average Latin-American child has such a difficult time in adjusting himself to the average American school system today.

## CHAPTER III

### HOME LIFE AND ENVIRONMENT

#### Purpose of This Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to present the home life and environment of the average beginning Latin-American school child in the Falfurrias Independent School District as found to be existing by the investigator, bringing out the kind of struggle that the average child has at home, which only adds to the difficulty of teaching that child a foreign language upon his entering school.

The language spoken, religious preference, financial status, average number of children in the family, average number of children in school, and the social life of the children will be reviewed in this chapter in order to show the influence of the Latin-American home on its beginning children.

#### Language Spoken

In April, 1940, data were collected on the nativity, religion, financial status, and social life of the home of the beginning Latin-American child. The nativity of the beginning child is revealed in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that Spanish is the principal language spoken in average conversation in the 106 homes of the beginning Latin-American children investigated. It is also revealed that some English was spoken occasionally in thirty-six per cent of the homes, but in the remaining sixty-four per cent of the homes Spanish was spoken altogether. Mrs. Florence J. Scott, county superintendent of Starr County Schools, in characterizing the Mexican population of Starr County, says: "While 95 per cent of the pupils are American-born, all come from homes where Spanish is the spoken language."<sup>1</sup> Earl M. Connell makes this statement in his study of "The Mexican Population of Austin, Texas": "No doubt the Spanish language is used exclusively in the Mexican homes."<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 1

PRINCIPAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN BY PARENTS TO BEGINNING CHILDREN, FALFURRIAS, TEXAS, APRIL, 1940

Principal Language Spoken	Number of Cases Involved	Percentage
Spanish.....	106	100
English.....	0	0
English occasionally.	38	36
Spanish altogether...	68	64

The average beginning child entering school who comes

<sup>1</sup>Manuel, The Education of Mexican and Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

from a home in which some English is spoken has the advantage over the child who is entering school from a home in which Spanish is spoken altogether, since he will have added a few English words to his vocabulary with which the other child has not had an opportunity to come in contact. The result will naturally be that the child with a small English vocabulary will progress more rapidly than the child with no English vocabulary whatsoever.

The language situation, alone, has caused the Falfurrias beginning Latin-American child to be segregated from the Anglo-American first-grade child in order to teach him to speak English and to acquire a vocabulary of English. This segregation continues throughout the first six grades. This language situation costs the Falfurrias Independent School District hundreds of additional dollars annually that are spent in teaching English to the Latin-American beginner. This would not be necessary if English were spoken instead of Spanish in the Latin-American home.

#### Religious Preference

Table 2 reveals that, of the 106 beginners investigated, 77.3 per cent preferred Catholicism as their religious faith, while 20.8 per cent had no preference whatsoever, with the remaining 1.9 per cent worshipping as Presbyterians.

The investigator has attended several of the Catholic services and has observed that all services are conducted

TABLE 2

## RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE OF FALFURRIAS BEGINNING LATIN-AMERICAN SCHOOL CHILDREN, APRIL, 1940

Religious Affiliation	Number	Percentage
Catholic.....	82	77.3
Presbyterian.....	2	1.9
No preference.....	22	20.8
Total.....	106	100.0

by the priest in Spanish except one Sunday Mass service, which is held in English. The fact that the religious services for the 77.3 per cent of the Catholic children are held in Spanish encourages the use of Spanish altogether in the home in preference to English. It is concluded that as long as the Catholic Church continues to conduct its services of worship in Spanish, Spanish will continue to be the main language spoken in the homes of the Latin-Americans.

## Financial Status

For the purpose of showing the results of a survey conducted by the investigator on the economic status of 106 homes of beginning Latin-American pupils, Tables 3, 4, and 5 reveal the family income, the size of each family, the number of children from each family who were attending school, the number of families that owned their homes, and the number of rooms in each house.

Table 3 shows that 55.6 per cent of the 106 families investigated had only one member working at an average salary ranging from thirty to thirty-nine dollars per month; that 32.1 per cent of the families had two members working with the average income for each family ranging from forty to forty-nine dollars each month; that 10.4 per cent of the families involved had as many as three members working, averaging fifty to fifty-nine dollars each month per family,

TABLE 3  
AVERAGE MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME

Amount of In- come Per Family	No. Working in Each Family				Total	Per- centage
	1	2	3	4		
10-19 dollars..	3				3	2.8
20-29 dollars..	17	4	1		22	20.7
30-39 dollars..	20	9			29	27.4
40-49 dollars..	11	7	2		20	18.9
50-59 dollars..	2	5	3		10	9.4
60-69 dollars..	5	2	2	1	10	9.4
70-79 dollars..	3	1			4	3.8
80-89 dollars..		1	2	1	4	3.8
Over 90 dollars	1	3			4	3.8
Total.....	59	34	11	2	106	
Total per- centage..	55.6	32.1	10.4	1.9	...	100.0

which fact makes their income for each individual much smaller than that earned by those individuals whose whole responsibility was to make a living for the family; however,

there were two families that had as many as four members working, one family averaging approximately sixty-five dollars each month, while the other family averaged approximately eighty-five dollars per month. Table 3 further shows that the average family income, of those investigated, is low. Only four families earned more than ninety dollars monthly, whereas there were three families that earned less than twenty dollars monthly. The average Latin-American family investigated, regardless of size, depended on approximately thirty-five dollars for its monthly income.

In regard to the size of the family of the beginning Latin-American pupil, the number of children in each family, and the number of children in school from each of the 106 families investigated, the investigator found the following facts to exist, as shown in Table 4:

1. The average size of the family was 7.6 persons as compared with 5.9 persons in a study made by Knox of 1,397 Mexican homes in San Antonio, Texas.<sup>3</sup> Twenty families of those investigated had less than five persons in each family as compared to twenty-two families that had a membership of over ten persons.

2. The average family had 5.6 children in it as compared with three and one-ninth children found in the Mexican homes at Austin, Texas, revealed in a study made by Connell for a thesis at the University of Texas.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF THE 106 FAMILIES ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF PERSONS IN EACH FAMILY, ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN EACH FAMILY, AND ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOL FROM EACH FAMILY

Families	Number of Persons in Each Family, Number of Children in Each Family, and Number of Children in School from Each Family												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Number of families with each number of persons in them <sup>a</sup> .....			2	6	12	10	20	22	12	13	6	2	1
Number of families with each number of children in them <sup>b</sup> .....		6	13	13	18	21	13	14	5	2	1		
Number of families having each number of children in school <sup>c</sup> .....	10	17	22	26	18	12	1						

<sup>a</sup>Key to reading: two families have three persons each, six families have four persons each, etc.

<sup>b</sup>Key to reading: six families have two children each, thirteen families have three children each, etc.

<sup>c</sup>Key to reading: ten families have one child each in school, seventeen families have two children each in school, etc.

3. It was found that there were 598 children in the 106 families investigated, but that only 383 of that number were in attendance at school.

4. The average family had 3.6 children in school, but ten of the families had only one child in school as compared with thirteen families that had over six children in school.

Table 5 reveals that eighty-five out of the 106 homes investigated, or 80.2 per cent of them, were home-owned. A



majority, 59.4 per cent, of the homes had only three rooms or less; the average home had only three rooms. In a survey made by Rogers of the 1,543 Mexican homes in seven districts of San Antonio, he found the model house in every district except one had two rooms, and that "the housing situation of the Mexicans in San Antonio is, indeed, very poor."<sup>5</sup>

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF THE SIZE OF THE HOMES OWNED BY PARENTS OF THE BEGINNING LATIN-AMERICAN CHILDREN WITH THAT OF THOSE RENTED, AND THE NUMBER IN EACH INSTANCE, APRIL, 1940

Homes	Home Owner		Home Renter		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
One room...	2	1.9			2	1.9
Two rooms..	21	19.8	6	5.6	27	25.4
Three rooms	25	23.6	9	8.5	34	32.1
Four rooms.	13	12.3	2	1.9	15	14.2
Larger.....	24	22.6	4	3.8	28	26.4
Total...	85	80.2	21	19.8	106	100.0

It was found that the average Latin-American home, of the beginning children investigated, spent from twenty to twenty-four dollars each month for food, as revealed by Table 6. Although nine of the homes investigated spent more than forty dollars monthly for food, there were ten homes that spent less than fifteen dollars monthly for food. However,

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

a vast majority of the families, 75.5 per cent of them, ranged from fifteen to twenty-nine dollars monthly, which, after all, is not very much to spend for food when one considers the size of the average family.

TABLE 6  
MONTHLY FOOD EXPENSE OF FAMILIES OF BEGINNING LATIN-AMERICAN CHILDREN, APRIL, 1940

Amount Spent Per Family	Number of Families Involved	Percentage
0-4 dollars.....		
5-9 dollars.....		
10-14 dollars....	10	9.4
15-19 dollars....	26	24.5
20-24 dollars....	27	25.5
25-29 dollars....	27	25.5
30-34 dollars....	7	6.6
35-39 dollars....		
40-44 dollars....	5	4.8
45-49 dollars....	1	0.9
50-54 dollars....	3	2.8
Total.....	106	100.0

Table 7 reveals that the average Latin-American family spent from one hundred to one hundred twenty-four dollars annually for clothing; whereas only 9.3 per cent of the families involved spent over two hundred dollars annually for clothing, 7.5 per cent of the homes in the lower bracket were spending less than fifty dollars yearly for clothing. However, it is further revealed that 53.1 per cent of the families

ranged from one hundred to one hundred seventy-four dollars annually for clothing.

TABLE 7  
ANNUAL CLOTHING EXPENDITURES OF FAMILIES OF LATIN-AMERICAN BEGINNING CHILDREN, APRIL, 1940

Amount Spent Per Family	Number of Families Involved	Percentage
0-24 dollars.....	1	0.9
25-49 dollars.....	7	6.6
50-74 dollars.....	12	11.3
75-99 dollars.....	19	17.9
100-124 dollars...	24	22.8
125-149 dollars...	15	14.2
150-174 dollars...	17	16.1
175-199 dollars...	1	0.9
200-224 dollars...	5	4.8
225-249 dollars...	2	1.8
250-274 dollars...	2	1.8
275-299 dollars...		
300-324 dollars...	1	0.9
Total....	106	100.0

#### Social Life

The social background of the average Latin-American family was studied by Manuel, who covered the entire State of Texas, including Falfurrias. From his study comes the following statement:

Less than a hundred years ago Texas was a province of Mexico. Colonists both from the United States and from Mexico had settled there. In the distribution of lands, indeed, preference was given to the Mexican citizen. The colonist from the United States was a foreigner

and admitted as such. When Texas became an independent state in 1836, her Mexican and Spanish-speaking colonists were citizens just as much as were those from the north and east. Indeed, at least three of the signers of the Texas declaration of independence were Mexicans.<sup>6</sup>

Beginning Latin-American children come from homes representing all degrees of economic and social status, from the highest to the lowest. In the main their picture is one of underprivilege, with wages often low and employment unsteady. Many are regarded with respect and consideration, but on the other hand there is a tendency on the part of many Anglo-Americans to treat the Latin-Americans, in general, as socially inferior. The attitude of Latin-Americans toward this treatment as inferiors varies from acquiescence to strong resentment, which results in racial problems continually coming up between the two groups, which fact, in turn, places the school in a very difficult position, indeed.

Kathleen Gonzales, from an intimate acquaintance of Mexican life, in writing her thesis at the University of Texas, made a study of "The Mexican Family in San Antonio." She states that "the failure of the Anglo-Saxon to give the Mexican social recognition results in his teaching his children Mexican ideals."<sup>7</sup>

In Volume XL of School and Society, in an article titled, "The Educational Problems Presented by the Spanish-Speaking Child," is found the following comment, which adequately

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

summarizes the social condition of the Latin-American in general, in Falfurrias:

Various differences between the Spanish-speaking population and the English-speaking population and the exaggeration of actual differences through lack of understanding add to the difficulties of education. Many of the parents, for example, are foreigners, and the native people tend to treat them as groups have always treated those who have not "belonged." Even children who by virtue of birth on American soil are citizens of the United States, are victims of the suspicion and antagonism commonly shown toward the foreigner. As a matter of fact, many Spanish-speaking families are descendants of colonists who came into the Southwest long before those who spoke English. It is important to remember that this region was colonized from the South as well as from the East. But these facts are apparently overlooked by a certain part of the English-speaking population who seem to think that they have some kind of a divine right to the territory.

Another difference is that of race. While some of the Spanish-speaking people are pure white (if one may properly speak of pure races), others are Indian (that is, Mexican Indian), and still a larger number in this country are a mixture of white and Indian. The darker skin color which commonly goes with Indian blood is undoubtedly the cause of some prejudice on the part of groups whose skin color is lighter. And of course where prejudice appears, the problem of the school is rendered more difficult.<sup>8</sup>

Again, comes a quotation from Manuel that describes a situation that is very familiar to one who comes in contact daily with a Mexican community:

Typically, except in the most favorable situations, the Mexican element of a community lives in a section or sections to itself. "Across the tracks" and "Little Mexico" are phrases full of meaning to hundreds of Texas communities. In these sections Mexicans tend to preserve their language and customs. While the housing conditions vary widely, the average is far below that of

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<sup>8</sup>Manuel, "The Educational Problems Presented by the Spanish-Speaking Child," School and Society, XL (November, 1924), 694.

the section of the community occupied by other whites. At the lowest end of the scale are conditions indescribably poor, and with them the usual train of attendant evils -- overcrowding, undernourishment, disease, superstition, filth, and social maladjustment. No description is adequate for the person who has not seen such conditions close at hand.<sup>9</sup>

In general, the conditions that Manuel has found to be existing as a whole over the State of Texas, adequately describe and explain the racial and social aspects that are continually facing and adding to other problems that daily confront the Falfurrias school system.

#### Meanings

The home life and environment of the average Latin-American beginner, as presented in this chapter, is, in general, a hindrance to the solution of the outstanding problem of the beginning child, that of language difficulty.

This means that as long as Spanish continues to be the predominating language spoken in the home, the beginner will continue to come to school unable to speak English, which condition results in segregation of beginning Latin-American children and Anglo-American children. Also, as long as most of the religious services are conducted in Spanish, that language will continue to predominate in the home.

As long as the family income of the average Latin-American home is approximately thirty-five dollars monthly, with 6.7 persons in each family depending on that amount for their

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<sup>9</sup>Manuel, The Education of Mexican and Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas, p. 18.

food, clothing, and shelter, their standard of living will remain very low, with the average home containing two or three rooms, scantily furnished, and with the people in the main having only the bare necessities of life. This results in many of the children's coming to school improperly nourished and clothed, which fact only adds to the difficulty of teaching beginning children from these homes.

Since the average Anglo-American looks upon the average Latin-American as being somewhat socially inferior, a racial problem is brought about with which the school is confronted daily. This condition exists not only during the first year of school, but throughout the school life of every child.

Thus, it is shown that, as a result of the home life and environment of the average beginning Latin-American child, he is confronted with two outstanding problems upon entering school: first, that of learning a foreign language, and, second, that of understanding and satisfactorily solving the very complicated racial problems with which he will be brought in contact throughout life. Since a large part of each beginner's time is spent at home, especially the first few years of his life before entering school, there is a great carry-over of beliefs, principles, and teachings that have been embedded in his being whether he goes to school or not. It is these early beliefs, principles, and teachings that bring about many of the problems that confront each beginning child.

## CHAPTER IV

### INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

#### Purpose of This Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to present the types of instruction that are carried on in the classroom, as well as the objectives and techniques that are used by Falfurrias teachers in teaching Latin-American beginners. These teachers have a good knowledge of Mexican history and are acquainted with the racial and cultural background of the Mexican people; they are acquainted with, and have majored in, the whole field of elementary education. In addition to this, the teachers are resourceful, sympathetic, and patient; they are well-versed in the psychology of child growth and development, which knowledge is so necessary in order to be able to understand the beginning Latin-American child.

Generally, the beginners are brought to school by their mothers or by an older brother or sister. The teacher requires that they bring their birth certificate to school in order to obtain the correct information as to their names and dates of birth.

In order to present the types of instruction that are used by the Falfurrias teachers in meeting the problems with



which they are confronted in teaching Latin-American beginners, the writer proposes to review the objectives, techniques, survey and progress tests, units of work, reading, teaching numbers, demonstration lessons, and promotion requirements that obtain in the school system.

#### General Objectives for Beginning Latin-American Children

The Falfurrias Elementary School has a number of aims that it is hoped will be accomplished by the beginning children by the end of their first year in school. It is toward these goals that the teacher works. These objectives are as follows:

1. To develop habits of good conduct.
2. To build up good health habits.
3. To develop in the child the ideals of citizenship and a sense of patriotism.
4. To train the child to speak English freely and spontaneously.
5. To train the child to do most of his thinking in the English language.
6. To give the child an acquaintance with his environment by means of English instead of only Spanish.
7. To give the child a practical knowledge of everyday English in order that he may better meet life situations.
8. To stress oral English more than reading in order to develop the child's speaking vocabulary more rapidly than his reading vocabulary.

9. To establish habits of conversation in English.
10. To develop a speaking vocabulary through mastery of the vocabulary words in the units of work.
11. To develop speech habits of the child in order that he may speak in a natural, even tone.
12. To endeavor to start out from the beginning with correct pronunciation and enunciation by giving special attention to difficulties.
13. To train the child to speak in complete sentences.
14. To train the child to be courteous and polite at all times.
15. To develop in the child a desire to read and want books.

#### Teaching Techniques

In teaching beginning Latin-American children, the following techniques are used by the Falfurrias teachers and are found in the Falfurrias Elementary School's Course of Study:

1. Teacher should know the children's names as soon as possible.
2. Provide situations that will necessitate learning useful words meaningfully, with emphasis on personal and social needs.
3. In addition to building up a stock of English words, teachers must concern themselves with growth in the power to put these words together in sentences and to use these sentences in spontaneous expression or in conversation.

4. Provide opportunity for a great deal of talking in good sentences and paragraphs expressing ideas gained in units of work.
5. Have a period where there will be a conversation about the things learned and experienced.
6. There should be more talking than reading or writing in the beginning grade.
7. Use every possible means of building up a good oral vocabulary that will function automatically in expressing ideas.
8. With every noun must be taught its plural.
9. Have conversational exercises in which teacher and children talk informally about many things learned and experienced.
10. Teacher should limit her vocabulary when she is talking.
11. Teacher should talk about their experiences with the children.
12. Plan correlation of work which will necessitate much reusing of groups of words interestingly; arithmetic, health, reading.
13. There should be much action and dramatic action in expressing ideas, words, and sentence meanings.
14. Utilize imitation advisedly.
15. Do not tie groups of words together so that the children will have to think of the whole group instead of the single words.

16. Seatwork must correlate with words being taught.
17. Always see that children answer in complete sentences.
18. Children have to hear, talk, think, and understand the words before they can read.
19. Dramatize stories.
20. Give a survey test before teaching any unit.
21. Have a progress test at the end of each week as a check-up on the children's progress.
22. Keep using the present tense for the first two units.
23. Have a phonics lesson every day.
24. Use pictures as much as possible, as they are more valuable than words.<sup>1</sup>

#### Conducting Survey and Progress Tests

Two types of tests are given to beginners; namely, the survey test and the progress test. The survey test is given by the teacher on the first day of school and before starting a new unit. The progress test is given at the end of each week.

The purpose of the survey test the first day of school is to find out the words in English that the children already know. The purpose of the survey test before starting a new unit of work is to find out how many of the words that are

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<sup>1</sup>"Course of Study," Falfurrias Elementary School, p. 2.

taken up in the new unit are already known to the children, so that those words may be used without teaching them. At least ten children should be tested at the same time as a group. While the teacher is testing a group, the other children should be looking at colorful books, cutting and coloring pictures, or both. The teacher tests about sixteen words at a time. She checks the words that each child does not know as well as the ones he does know. She should keep a record of this survey test. The teacher starts the test by asking each child, "What is your name?" If the child knows and understands the words, he or she will answer, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_." The teacher starts testing nouns by pointing to the objects and asking, "What is this?" or by saying, "Show me a \_\_\_\_\_." The teacher starts testing verbs by action or pantomime, the "What do I do?" game, and pictures. The teacher starts testing adjectives by using a color chart, children, children's clothes, and pictures. As an example she might say, "Show me a red dress," or, "Show me a big boy."

The progress test differs from the survey test in that it is given each week-end for the purpose of finding out how many of the new words that were taught that week were learned by the children. The words that were not learned are taken up again the following week along with the new words for that week. The first few weeks of work consist mainly of pantomime and oral directions. Gradually, as the children progress from week to week, and as they learn to read, the teacher

is able to place sentences and directions on the blackboard for them to follow. The child reads a direction and follows it, then finds the sentence that tells what he did and other children find the sentence that tells what he does. Every child does this. Also, the teacher pantomimes. She says, "Find the sentence that tells what I do." The child replies, "Sentence number four. You walk." In this manner the teacher is able to tell exactly the amount of progress that has been made.

### Teaching Reading

On the first day of school the beginner is confronted with a schoolroom filled with strange objects. These objects have queer names on them, in a strange language. The teacher acquaints the child with the labeled objects incidentally by using these names and objects from the very first day. In this manner the child is unconsciously preparing for reading.

The child is ready for reading when he progresses to the point where he has the ability to follow directions, understand, and give directions, to understand questions and answer them, to tell what is done in pantomime and use skillfully his oral vocabulary. By this time the average child is able to match words learned on flash cards with the object, to recognize words of room objects and even relabel the objects in the room. Thus the child goes from recognition of words under objects to blackboard reading and from blackboard reading

to pre-primer reading. Children are usually ready for blackboard reading by the end of the sixth or seventh week of school.

### Teaching Numbers

In teaching numbers one of the first things that the teacher does is to have the children enumerate things from one to five, proceeding slowly in order to build up meaningful concepts. This enables the child to recognize each number as a unit from one to five. At first, the children are taught rote counting from one to ten; later on, they learn to count from one to twenty, watching especially eleven, twelve, and thirteen, as they are hard to pronounce. The children are expected to count by tens to one hundred and by ones to one hundred, and also to count the objects in the room rationally. The children must be able to recognize number things quickly, to recognize number names as one-two-three, etc., and number symbols, as 1, 2, 3, etc. Attractive pictures of groups of things are good for teaching groups of things. The teacher has cards similar to the following in order to be sure that the children understand the difference between the number thing, the number name, and the number symbol. Quite often the teacher distributes these cards among

@ @ @ @ @ @ @
seven
7

the pupils and then calls for certain numbers. The children having the numbers called for stand before the room and tell what they have, and so on until all the cards are called in.

In teaching the one hundred facts of addition and subtraction, the teacher begins with facts of five and uses the facts of one, two, three, and four, incidentally. For example:

$\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ +1 \\ - \\ 5 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ +4 \\ - \\ 5 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ +2 \\ - \\ 5 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +3 \\ - \\ 5 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +0 \\ - \\ 5 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 0 \\ +5 \\ - \\ 5 \end{array}$
$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ -1 \\ - \\ 4 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ -4 \\ - \\ 1 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ -2 \\ - \\ 3 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ -3 \\ - \\ 2 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ -0 \\ - \\ 5 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ -5 \\ - \\ 0 \end{array}$

One of the ways employed in teaching these facts is to have drill cards with the facts on one side and the facts and the answer on the other side, using first the side with the answers and afterwards the side with only the facts with some child telling what the answer or sum is. Also the children are given problems on the blackboard and seatwork problems. Each child is required to repeat the problem and give the answer in a complete sentence.

#### Units of Work

The first year's work for beginners is divided into eight units of work. The first unit is schoolroom environment, since that is the first thing with which the beginning child comes in contact. This unit lasts for a period of eight weeks. The second unit, pets, lasts for a three weeks'



period. By this time eleven weeks have elapsed and Christmas is approaching, so the next unit taken up is on toys, a project which carries the school work up to the Christmas holidays, after about four months of school have passed. After the holidays the children come back to school wanting to tell the teacher what they received for Christmas, so the next unit taken up is on the home, which acquaints the child with the vocabulary appropriate to his home life. This unit lasts about eight weeks. By this time spring is fast approaching, and the last three months of work consist of units on the garden, farm, and safety first, thus rounding out the first year's work for the beginner.

The following units of work, taken from the Falfurrias Elementary School's "Course of Study," are self-explanatory and are especially beneficial to a new teacher who enters the system without having had any experience whatsoever in teaching Latin-American beginners.

### UNIT I

#### SCHOOLROOM ENVIRONMENT

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
First week	my name is what your sit stand	wash hand hands face ear ears neck	Enumerating things from 1 to 5. Pro- ceed slowly to build up meaningful concepts.	Getting ac- quainted. Re- sponding to di- rections. Be- coming familiar with room.

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
	draw (I; you) stove walk seat			
Second week	door window (to; the) blackboard desk chair table (on; see) key words for progress test: go, run, walk	towel dry soap water	Recognizing each number as a unit; 1 to 5	Materials: pupil, teacher, classroom equipment. Following directions. Progress test used as a check-up over the week's work
Third week	red green yellow boy boys girl girls little (am; are) big Key word: color	Have children go through routine of washing and drying of all parts of the body being taught so far.	Have cards with numbers from 1 to 5. Play games of matching numbers to things. Use as many devices as possible.	Color chart; box of colors
Fourth week	pencil paper tablet (take; from) box chalk eraser	fingers finger-nails clean Teach song with parts	Words from 1 to 3	Writing materials. Following directions. Learning parts of board.

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
	(with) bring me give (and) Key word: put	used during past weeks.		
Fifth week	crayola picture play recess how many blue yard purple black white Key word: find	ear ears neck mouth	Words from 1 to 5	Crayolas pictures Colored paper
Sixth week	paste gray scissors sing (this) basket brown pink (it) bell ring Key word: cut	tooth teeth nose eye eyes	Counting from 1 to 10. Rec- ognizing from 1 to 10.	For use especially during drawing
Seventh week	noon have make orange show an come; Key word: count	toothbrush toothpaste brush glass morning night	Games with number things and number words from 1 to 10.	Pantomime; directions

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Eighth week	teacher school book room floor first last Key words: used during all previous weeks	hair head comb arm arms elbow elbows	Reading and writing numbers from 1 to 10	General progress test over unit of work

## UNIT II

## PETS

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Ninth week	puppy rabbit duck kitten feed Key word: pets	leg legs knee knees bend	Words from 1 to 7	pictures
Tenth week	chickens canary parrot fish take cage Key word: care	foot feet toe toes	Words from 1 to 10	pictures; clay modeling

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Eleventh week	dog pony goat live hay bone monkey bird Key word: like	dress shirt pants he she	Numbers from 1 to 15	Have an exhibit of pets

## UNIT III

## TOYS

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Twelfth week	toy toys top marbles drum kite bat ball Key word: play	shoe shoes socks stockings	Counting, reading, and writing numbers from 1 to 20	Pictures; discussion; question-answer quiz
Thirteenth week	doll carriage cradle dishes piano horn balloon bicycle Kiddie car Key word: ride	hat cap coat overalls handkerchief evening wear clothes	Counting by 10's from 0 to 100	Fix place and call it <u>Toyland</u>

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Fourteenth week	toy duck tin soldier rag doll Tommy Tinker Teddy Bear Key word: see	candy nuts apples oranges	Reading and writing from 0 to 100	Have Christmas tree with toys
Fifteenth week	toy elephant toy cat toy dog wagon horn gun jack-in-the-box train car sailboat Key word: put	breakfast milk grapefruit oatmeal cocoa	Teach words: how, many, count, write, line. Make oral problems: many feet do you have? etc.	Draw pictures of toys
Sixteenth week	airplane train truck tools blocks checkers dominoes story books whistle football Key word: bring	toast butter post toasties sugar bacon eggs pineapple pineapple juice	Teach: box, under, around, circle	Paper-cutting of toys. Hektograph pictures of toys and make into a booklet

## UNIT IV

## HOME

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Seven-teenth week	family father mother brother sister baby sews irons washboard sweeps Key word: washes	good drink eat cream of wheat cream	Counting from 0 to 99	Picture of family; con- versation
Eight-eenth week	tub broom floor mop under over dust help love Key word: work	tomato juice peaches peach like grapenuts muffins jam	Writing from 0 to 99	Pictures
Nine-teenth week	frigidaire sink cold ice freeze cabinet stool	wheat cakes strawberries dinner steak tomatoes beans	Continua- tion of writing of numbers and recognizing of all num- bers.	Conversa- tion
Twentieth week	pan pans (cake) pans (pie) pot	potatoes bread pie chicken	Continua- tion	

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
	towel (kitchen) stove (wood) window shade curtains kitchen tea kettle Key word: kitchen	lettuce spinach		
Twenty-first week	knife spoon fork plate cup saucer bowl hot heat match lamp Key word: serve	sweet pota- toes rolls pudding ham celery carrots corn	Addition and subtrac- tion, combi- nations not exceeding 5	Pictures
Twenty-second week	bathroom bath shower mirror laboratory dining room dinner table tablecloth napkin dish pitcher set Key word: set	ice cream cake roast cabbage squash rice gravy jello cookies	Continuation	
Twenty-third week	bedroom sleep night dark	vegetable meat stew turnip	Continuation	Pictures



Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
	dresser closet shelf chest of drawers quilt sheets Key word: make	cucumber desserts biscuits macaroni		
Twenty-fourth week	blanket pillow pillows cases mattress rug radio piano sofa bookcase sofa pillow living room Key word: rooms	mustard greens peppers whole wheat bread soup boil pork cabbage	Simple little problems	Pictures

## UNIT V

## GARDEN

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Twenty-fifth week	garden fence gate wire posts rich poor	cornbread crackers onions fish lemons fried potatoes	Simple measurements	Class discussion and conversation. Need to teach children how to build a garden and

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
	soil fertilizer ground dirt deep Key word: work	peas pears cook raw bake		how to take care of it.
Twenty-sixth week	hoe spade rake hose smooth loosen seeds dig plant sow rain rows Key word: plant	sausage cauliflower okra pumpkins beets white bread	Telling time.	
Twenty-seventh week	shade cover grow sun shine blow warm wind hot cold irrigate bush roots	tea coffee lunch cherries grapes plums apricots blackberries watermelon	Continuation	

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Twenty-eighth week	vine weeds pull pick can preserve pack drain grow gather crops	candy sour pickle Key words: taste sweet sour		

## UNIT VI

## FARM

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Twenty-ninth week	buildings barn workshop chicken-house garage silo fold corral animals milk cow horse pigs sheep goats mule donkey chicken turkey Key word: feed	Make health booklet for the next three weeks		

Time allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Thirtieth week	guinea duck rooster hen pigeon Kinds of food for animals: corn maize hay oats			
Thirty-first week	tools plow mowing machine tractor cultivator planter separator trailer buggy hammer bolt wrench nails saw Key words: plant plow sow			

UNIT VII  
GROCERY STORE

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Thirty-second week	store furniture counter showcase storekeeper weigh scales sack bag clerk	Review foods.	Money	
Thirty-third week	flour spices vinegar soda baking powder lard sells sold buy bought starch bluing		Money	

UNIT VIII  
SAFETY FIRST

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
Thirty-fourth week	safety-first traffic light side walk			Pictures

Time Allotment	Language Reading	Health	Numbers	Situations; Materials
	policeman stop crossing fire drill			
Thirty-fifth week	mosquitoes spiders snakes first-aid kit			Pictures. Have a first-aid kit.

#### Demonstration Lessons

In order to show the type of instruction that is being carried on in beginning rooms, three demonstration lessons are reviewed as observed by the investigator.

#### Demonstration Lesson in Language

Teacher: Miss Estella Guerra

Teacher: "My name is Miss Guerra." "What is your name?"

Pupil: "My name is Jose."

Teacher: Stands and says, "I stand." "Stand, Maria."

Pupil: Stands and says, "I stand."

Teacher: Sits and says, "I sit." "Sit, Maria."

Pupil: Sits and says, "I sit."

Pupil: (Gives directions) "Stand, Juan."

Juan: Stands and says, "I stand."

Pupil: "Sit, Juan."

Juan: Sits and says, "I sit."

Teacher: "Tell me what I do." (Pantomimes.)

Pupil: "You stand."

Teacher: "Tell me what I do." (Pantomimes.)

Pupil: "You sit."

Pupil: "Tell me what I do." (Pantomimes.)

Another pupil: "You stand."

Pupil: "Tell me what I do." (Pantomimes.)

Another pupil: "You sit."

Teacher: Talking to all pupils, says, "Stand." Pupils stand, then she says, "Sit," and pupils sit. The teacher then has the children to repeat the words "stand" and "sit."

#### Demonstration Lesson on Progressive Form of Verbs

Teacher: Miss Olivia Garcia

Teacher: Stands and says, "I am standing." "Stand, Isodoro. What are you doing?"

Pupil: "I am standing."

Teacher: Sits and says, "I am sitting." Sit, Juanita. What are you doing?"

Pupil: "I am sitting."

Teacher: Cutting, asks, "What am I doing?"

Pupil: "You are cutting paper."

Pupil: Drawing, asks, "What am I doing?"

Another pupil: "You are drawing."

Teacher: "Can you count, Maria?"

Pupil: "Yes, I can count."

Teacher: "Count, Maria. What are you doing?"

Pupil: I am counting."

Teacher: Does the same thing with walking, running, singing,  
etc.

Demonstration Lesson Presenting "On," "In," and "By"

Teacher: Miss Elsie Choate

Teacher presents on. "I put the vase on the table."

Teacher: "Take the vase, put the vase on the table, Maria."

Pupil: "I take the vase, I put the vase on the table."

Teacher presents in. "I put the paste in the basket."

Teacher: "Take the paste, put the paste in the basket, Jesus."

Pupil: "I take the paste, I put the paste in the basket."

Teacher: "Stand, walk to the table, take the pencil, put  
the pencil in the basket, Efan."

Pupil: "I stand, I walk to the table, I take the pencil, I  
put the pencil in the basket."

Teacher questions the pupils: "Where is the vase? Where is  
the pencil?" etc. Pupils answer in complete sentences.

Teacher presents by. "I stand by the chair. I stand by the  
desk."

Teacher: "Stand by the chair, Elviro."

Pupil: "I stand by the chair."

Teacher: "Stand by the blackboard, Manuel."



Pupil: "I stand by the blackboard."

Directions are given by the children.

Teacher pantomimes, then pupils, telling what is done.

Phonics are taught at the close of the lesson.

#### Promotion Requirements

By the end of the beginning year in school the child is expected to have a sufficient English-speaking vocabulary that will enable him to express himself about his interests and environment in simple, clear-cut sentences and to have the ability to use that vocabulary freely. He is expected to be able to construct original sentences, and to ask and answer simple questions that are within range of his vocabulary, with correct habits of articulation. He should be able to master the most commonly used prepositions, pronouns, and the progressive and past forms of verbs, and be able to distinguish between many of the singular and plural forms of nouns. He must be able to read orally at a reasonable rate simple sentences suitable for his vocabulary and be able to use and apply his knowledge of phonics to the pronunciation of new words.

The major requirement of promotion for beginners is based mainly on reading achievement. Since reading achievement progresses in proportion to language ability, the major problem of the teacher of Spanish-speaking children is to build up an adequate English vocabulary suitable to the needs of the child.

All beginning children are given progress and survey tests at the end of the first month of school, and those children are then grouped according to their ability. The teacher who has the most progressive group is able to give her group enough work to prepare them for the second grade, while the other two teachers who have the slower groups are preparing their respective groups for first-grade work. At the close of the school year the fastest group is given a standard achievement test over first-grade work, and those children who show ability to do second-grade work are promoted to the second grade; those children who are not able to do second-grade work are promoted from the beginning grade to the first grade; those children who do not have an English-speaking vocabulary sufficient for first-grade work, which is largely due to inattendance, are retained, as they would not be able to do first-grade work if they were unable to understand the English vocabulary that is common to children in the first grade.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of Situation

A summary of the situation reveals the following facts:

1. Falfurrias Independent School District is very large, with a widely scattered population. In bad weather this brings about poor school attendance, and during truck gardening season and other work seasons attendance is poor.

2. Beginning Latin-American children are those children who are entering school for their first time and who are, in the main, unable to speak English or do regular first-grade work. First-grade children are those who have spent one year in the beginning grade and have acquired an English vocabulary familiar to children of first-grade level.

3. Many children live on isolated ranches and are unable to attend school when they reach the sixth-year age level, which fact results in a very irregular age-grade distribution in not only the beginning grade but in the first six grades.

4. Spanish alone is used by a large majority of the Spanish population, which condition results in the children's starting to school unable to speak English and reverting to

Spanish upon leaving the schoolroom. This situation renders the mastery of English doubly difficult.

5. Several thousand dollars is spent annually in teaching Spanish-speaking children the English language.

6. Many children become retarded and their slow progress is due to irregularity in attendance and to non-attendance. This also results in slowness of mastery of the English language.

7. Irregularity of attendance and non-attendance are partly due to failure to enforce the compulsory attendance law.

8. Some children harbor a feeling of resentment and sullen dislike for the social order in general, due to some kind of social maladjustment.

9. Dissatisfaction of the children in their school work brings about retardation and failure. Failure results in listlessness, indifference, idleness, carelessness, and unwholesome attitudes.

10. Children progress at different rates of speed, a fact which results in segregation during the first six years in school; for, in general, Anglo-Americans have many advantages over Latin-Americans.

11. Many children, due to low standards of living, come to school improperly nourished and scantily clothed, a condition which results in a slowing up of the learning processes.

12. Individual differences cause beginners to progress

at different rates of speed, a situation that has resulted in some children's being retained in the beginning grade, whereas others are promoted to the second grade.

#### Recommendations for Other Aids to Learning

After conducting an intensive study of the problems of beginning Latin-American children, the writer makes the following recommendations:

1. The English language, instead of Spanish, should be spoken in the Latin-American homes.
  - a. This might be accomplished through the organization of a Spanish Parent-Teachers Association stressing the value of English spoken in the home.
  - b. Also, closer co-operation should exist between church and school by urging that more of the church services be conducted in English.
  - c. Also, the school should sponsor an effective program of adult education whose primary object would be to teach the English language.
2. The school should do all it can to assist in raising the standard of living in the average Latin-American home in order that the children will be properly nourished and clothed.
3. All children of school age should attend school regularly. This objective might be accomplished in the following ways:

- a. All children, regardless of whether they live on an isolated ranch or in town, should start to school when they become of school age.
  - b. The compulsory school law should be enforced by basing school apportionment on average daily attendance.
  - c. Parents should send their children to school regularly instead of keeping them out of school a part of the time to work.
4. The children should have an understanding of the racial and social situation so that they will not harbor a feeling of resentment and dislike toward their associates. This might be accomplished by teaching Anglo-American and Latin-American children their proper relationship in the early grades.
  5. The teacher should have a good knowledge of Mexican history and should be acquainted with the racial and cultural background of the Mexican people.
  6. The teacher should be an elementary education major and should have special preparation for teaching Spanish-speaking children.
  7. The teacher should make a study of each individual child and keep him working at his capacity.
  8. The children should be grouped according to their

abilities in order that all may progress at their fastest rate of speed.

9. All children who, at the end of their beginning year's work, are capable of doing second-grade work, should be promoted to the second grade.

10. All children who have any English-speaking vocabulary at all should be promoted to the first grade instead of being retained.

11. The course of study should be used merely as a guide, each teacher making it flexible enough to satisfy her individual pupil needs. The teachers should be invited to make suggestions for changes toward improving the course of study.

12. The administration and the teachers should be cooperative, always working together toward the betterment and improvement of the objectives and teaching techniques, keeping in mind the individual needs of the child.

13. The administration should furnish all the teaching aids and devices that are needed in teaching beginning Latin-American children.

#### Conclusions on Evidences of Improvement

A program based on the above summary was tried in the Falfurrias Elementary School in the year 1939-1940. From the study which followed the inauguration of this program, it is concluded that each child is an individual problem, with no two progressing at the same rate of speed, a fact which has

resulted in a grouping of the children according to their abilities during their fourth week of school.

At the close of the 1939-1940 school year, fifty of the most progressive beginning Latin-American children were given the Harlow Achievement Test for First-Grade Children (see Appendix) along with every Anglo-American first-grade child in school. As a result of this achievement test and upon recommendation of the teacher, twenty-seven beginning children were promoted to one of the three second-grade sections, depending upon their ability as indicated by their score made on the achievement test. Every one of these twenty-seven beginning children who was promoted to second grade at the close of the 1939-1940 school year has done good work through the first four months of the 1940-1941 school year, and in all probability will continue to do so throughout the remainder of the school year.

The results that have been found and shown in this study tend to show that many beginning Latin-American children, in spite of their language handicap, are capable of doing second-grade work by the close of their beginning year in school and, when given the opportunity, do as good work during their second year in school as other children in the second grade who have been in school three years. Thus, a precedent has been set which eliminates an extra year of school for many Latin-American boys and girls, and which has proved to be a great financial saving for the Falfurrias Independent School District.



APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Number \_\_\_\_\_

In order to learn more about the life of the beginning child before entering school so that I might prevent as many of them from failing as possible, I am making a study of many children. Please answer these questions as freely and as truthfully as possible. The information you give will be used by number and not by your name.

Please answer the questions below for your beginning child.

1. What language is spoken in your home? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is any English spoken in the home at all? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your religious preference? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the size of your family? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many children do you have who are going to school? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many are working and help support the family? \_\_\_\_\_
8. About how much money do all of you earn each month? \_\_\_\_\_
9. About how much money do all of you earn each year? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are both father and mother living with the children? \_\_\_\_\_
11. If not, which parent helps support the family? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How much money is spent each month for food? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you have a garden or any other means of securing food other than buying it? \_\_\_\_\_
14. If so, how much money do you estimate that you save on food? \_\_\_\_\_
15. About how much money is spent each year for clothing for the entire family? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you own the house that you live in or not? \_\_\_\_\_
17. If you do not own your house, how much rent do you pay each month? \_\_\_\_\_
18. How many rooms does your house have? \_\_\_\_\_
19. About how far do you live from school? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you play in your yard, in the road, on a vacant lot, or not at all, when you are not at school? \_\_\_\_\_
21. What games do you play? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Name any playthings that you have at home and play with. \_\_\_\_\_
23. Do you ever get to go to the picture show? \_\_\_\_\_
24. If so, how often do you go to the picture show? \_\_\_\_\_
25. Do you look at the funny papers? \_\_\_\_\_

Cuestionario

Numero \_\_\_\_\_

Para poder evitar que el niño principiante se quede en primer grado dos o tres años, voy a hacer un estudio de varios principiantes. Para hacer este estudio necesito que usted me de la información necesaria. Conteste las preguntas libremente y verdaderamente, porque toda información será usada por número y no por nombre.

1. Que idioma se habla en su casa? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Se habla algo de inglés en su casa? \_\_\_\_\_
3. A que religión pertenece? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Cuantos hay en la familia? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Cuantos niños hay en la familia? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Cuantos niños vienen a la escuela? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Cuantos miembros de la familia trabajan para ayudar a sostener la familia? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Cuantos dinero ganan entre todos por mes? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Cuantos dinero ganan entre todos por año? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Viven el padre y la madre con los niños? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Si no, cual de los dos ayudan a sostener al niño? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Cuanto se gusta en comida por mes? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Tiene usted jardín o alguna otra casa por la cual puede obtener comida sin tener que comprarla? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Si acaso es así, cuanto se ahorra por mes? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Cuanto se gasta en ropa por toda la familia al año? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Es de usted la casa en donde vive? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Si no es de usted cuanto paga de renta por mes? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Que tantos cuartos tiene su casa? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Que tan lejos vive usted de la escuela? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Donde juegan los niños cuando no están en la escuela? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Que juegos juegan los niños? \_\_\_\_\_
22. Nombre usted los juguetes con que juegan los niños. \_\_\_\_\_
23. Que tan seguida van al teatro los niños? \_\_\_\_\_
24. Cuantas veces por semana? \_\_\_\_\_
25. Ven los niños los periódicos cómicos? \_\_\_\_\_

# The Harlow Achievement Tests for First Grade

Form A

By LEONA DOSS

Drawings by MARY WILLIAMS

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*To Pupils:* Read the top line on each page of this test, and do what it tells you to do.

Name ..... Date .....

Class ..... School .....

City or County .....

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*Record to be filled in after tests are scored.*

TEST	TITLE	POSSIBLE SCORE	PUPIL'S SCORE
One	Reading: Word Recognition	20	
Two	Reading: Sentence Meaning	20	
Three	Nature Study	15	
Four	Spelling	20	
Five	Arithmetic	38	
Total		113	

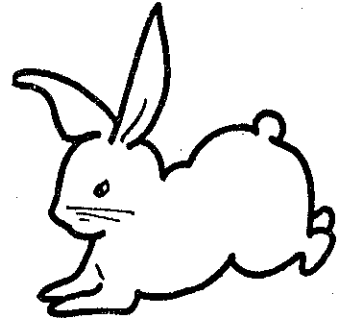
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Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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Draw a line from the picture to the right word.



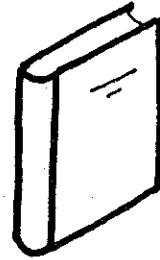
sheep



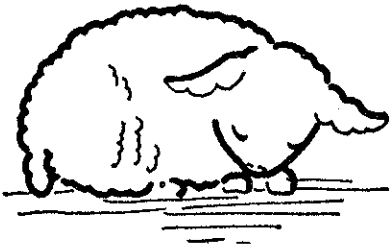
story book



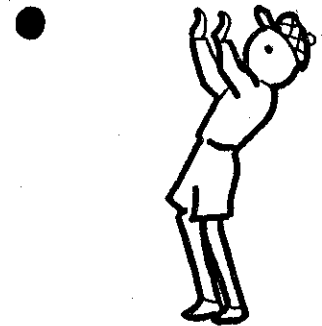
turkey



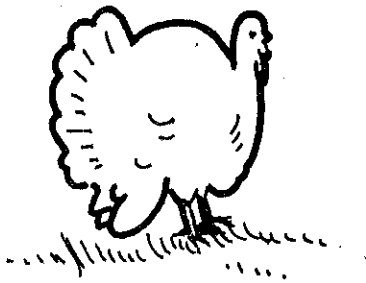
car



toad



eggs

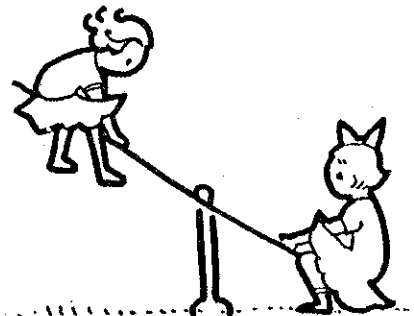


up and down



run

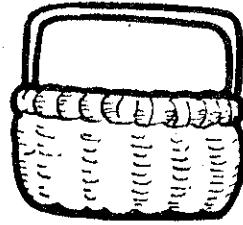
rabbit



Draw a line from the picture to the right word.



star



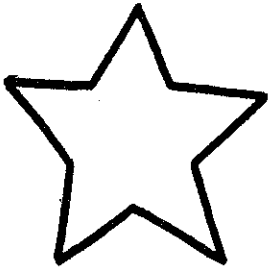
pie



airplane



bowl



pail



doll



nest

basket



horn



flower

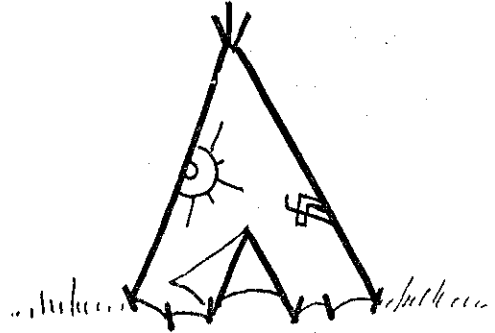


Draw a ring around the sentence that tells about the picture.

I have two feet.  
I have big ears.  
I have a long tail.  
I like cats.  
I have a bill.



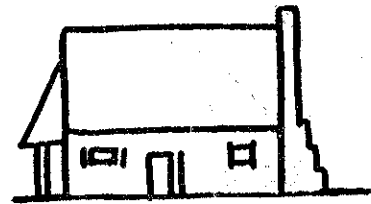
I am called a canoe.  
I am called a sailboat.  
I am called a wigwam.  
I am called a cradle.  
I am called a circus tent.



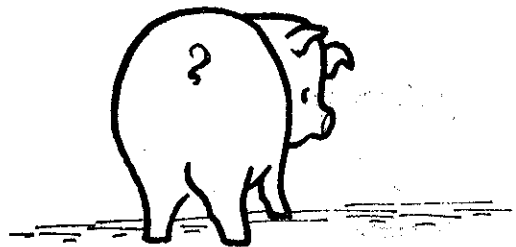
This is a dog.  
This is a toad.  
This is a pony.  
This is a bird.  
This is a butterfly.



I am a barn.  
I am a toad stool.  
I am a tepee.  
I am a haystack.  
I am a house.

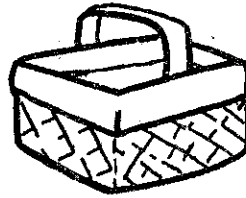


Look at my hat.  
Look at my shoes.  
Look at my coat.  
Look at my tail.  
Look at my house.

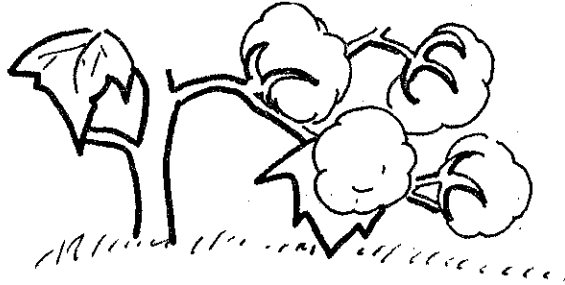


Draw a ring around the sentence that tells about the picture.

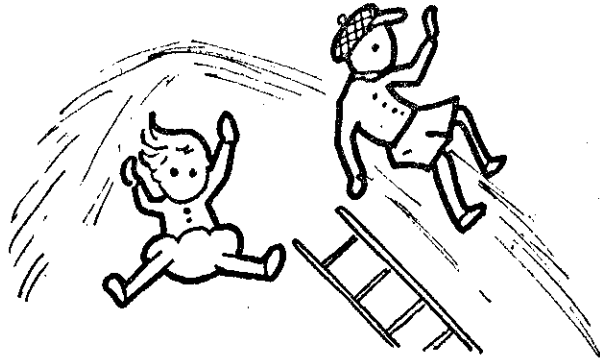
- I have two doors.
- Birds make nests in me.
- I went to a picnic.
- I am almost round.
- I have pictures on me.



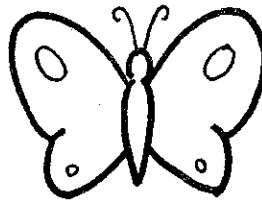
- Sunshine makes me sleep.
- It makes me laugh.
- It makes me blue.
- It makes me dusty.
- It makes me grow.



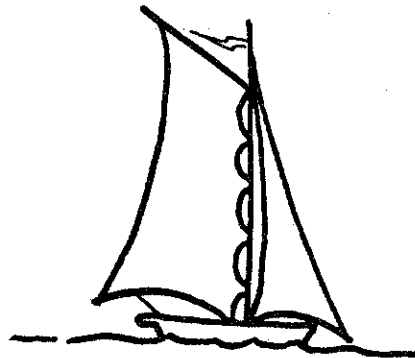
- A train goes fast.
- The circus had a parade.
- We ate on paper plates.
- A haystack is fun.
- A blue bird is pretty.



- A balloon is round.
- A kite can fly.
- A horse eats hay.
- A cow eats grass.
- A butterfly has wings.



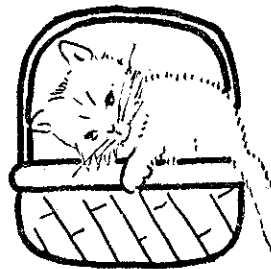
- I can wash dishes.
- I can pull wagons.
- I can blow bubbles.
- I can sail far away.
- I can cook eggs.



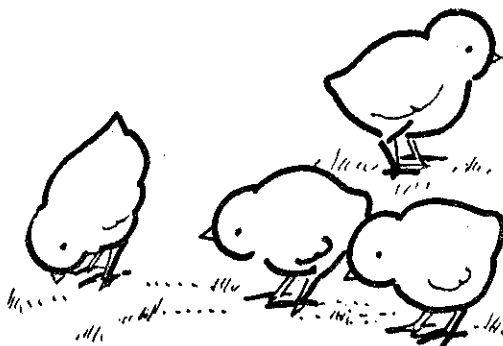


Draw a ring around the sentence that tells about the picture.

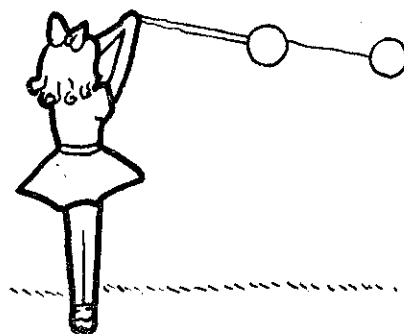
- I am in a big tree.  
 I am in a book.  
 I am in a basket.  
 I am in a barn.  
 I am in a hat.



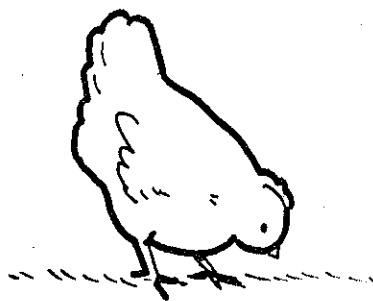
- We are little ducks.  
 We are baby kittens.  
 We are children.  
 We are baby chicks.  
 We are baby mice.



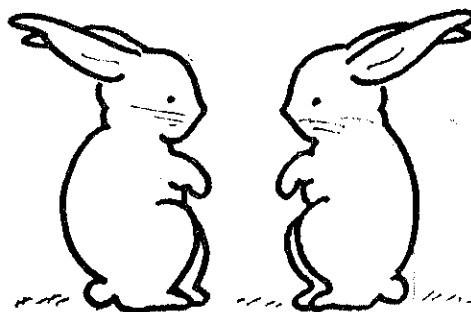
- Children play ball.  
 Boys play games.  
 A dog can sit up.  
 Mother sings to baby.  
 The girl has two balloons.



- I live in trees.  
 I live in the pig pen.  
 I live in the hen house.  
 I live in the woods.  
 I live in a box.



- We eat hay.  
 We can bark.  
 We say "mew-mew."  
 We eat carrots.  
 We can fly.

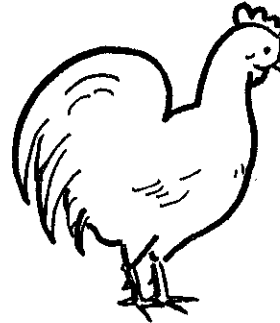


Draw a ring around the sentence that tells about the picture.

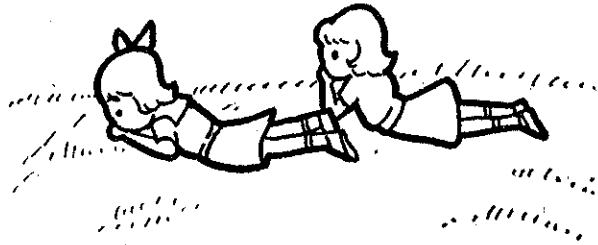
- I am on a stick horse.
- I am on a merry-go-round.
- I am on a scooter.
- I am on a pony.
- I am in a wagon.



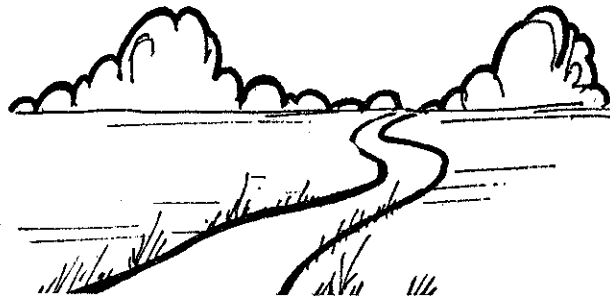
- I say "Gobble gobble."
- I say "Quack quack."
- I say "Cock-a-doodle do."
- I say "Caw, caw, caw."
- I say "Cheer-up, cheer-up."



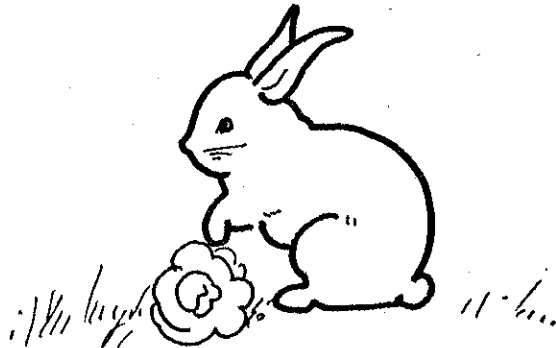
- We are on the bed.
- We are in a boat.
- We are on the grass.
- We are on the barn.
- We are on the street.



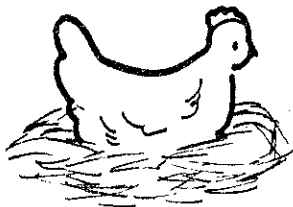
- Here is a gate.
- Here is a fence.
- Here is a yard.
- Here is a road.
- Here is a garden.



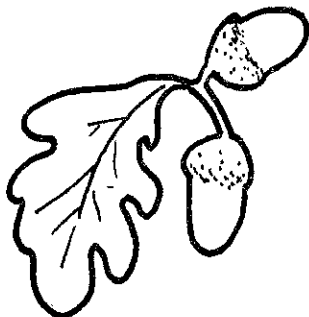
- I eat sand.
- I eat chickens.
- I eat lettuce.
- I eat candy.
- I eat honey.



Draw a ring around the words that make the sentence true.



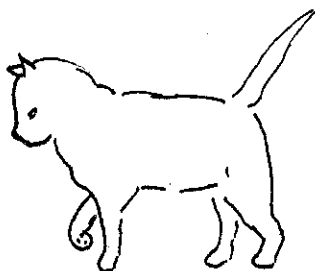
A hen sits on her eggs  
 one week  
 two weeks  
 three weeks



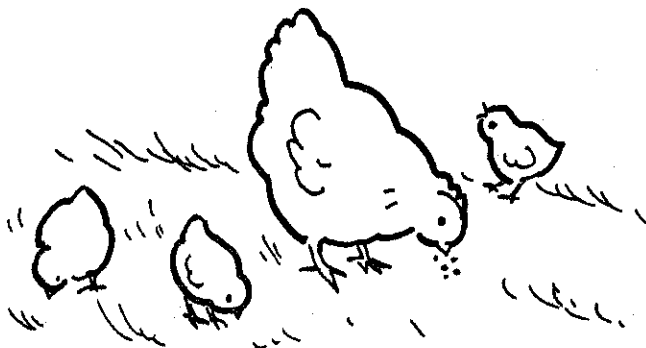
Acorns are seeds of the  
 elm tree  
 cedar tree  
 oak tree



Dandelion seeds travel  
 by water  
 by air  
 on animals

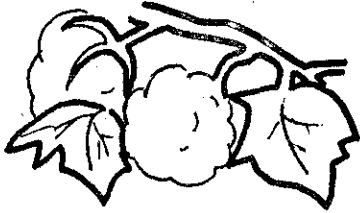


A mother cat carries her  
 babies  
 on her back  
 in her mouth  
 in a box



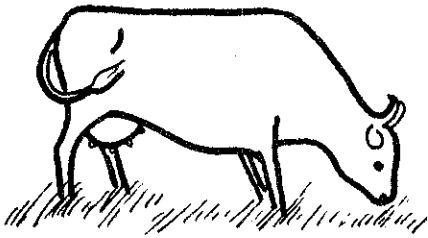
This is the way a mother  
 hen talks to her babies  
 "cut cut"  
 "cluck cluck"  
 "cut-cut-ca-da-cut"

Draw a ring around the words that make the sentence true.



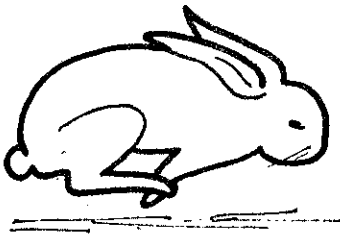
We plant cotton seed  
in the fall  
in the spring  
in the summer

---



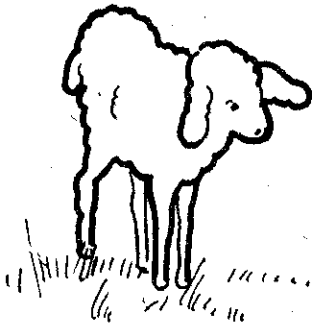
A mother cow has  
two babies  
many babies  
one baby

---



I am  
a cotton tail rabbit  
a jack rabbit  
a black and white rabbit

---



A baby sheep is called  
a "bow wow"  
a lamb  
a colt

---



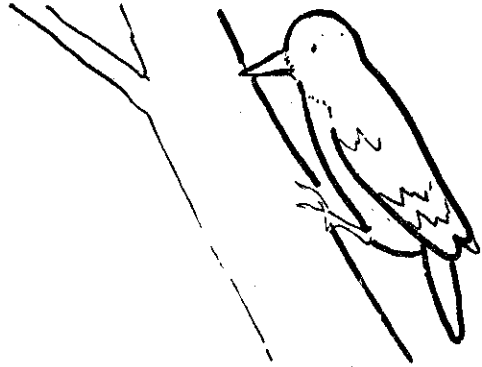
I sleep all winter  
in a tree  
in a house  
in the ground

---

Draw a ring around the words that make the sentence true.

I am

- a robin
- a wren
- a woodpecker



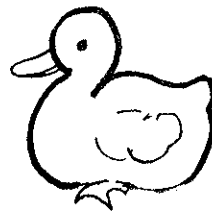
Cotton comes from

- boxes
- balls
- rolls



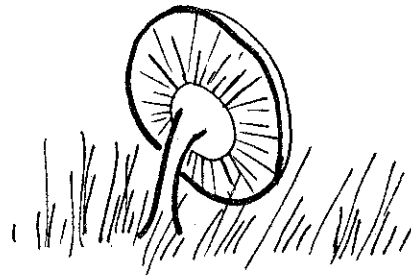
A baby duck is called

- a gosling
- a duckling
- a robin



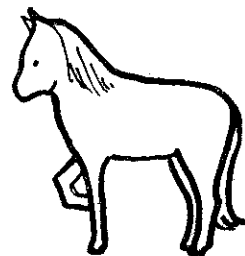
Here is

- a hay stack
- a toad stool
- a fish pond



A baby pony is called

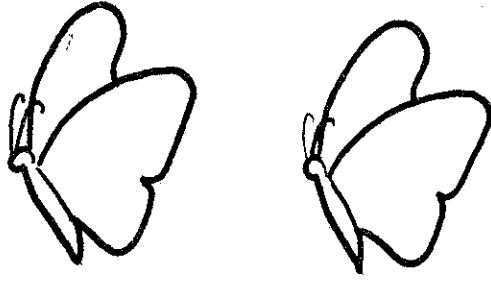
- a horse
- a donkey
- a colt



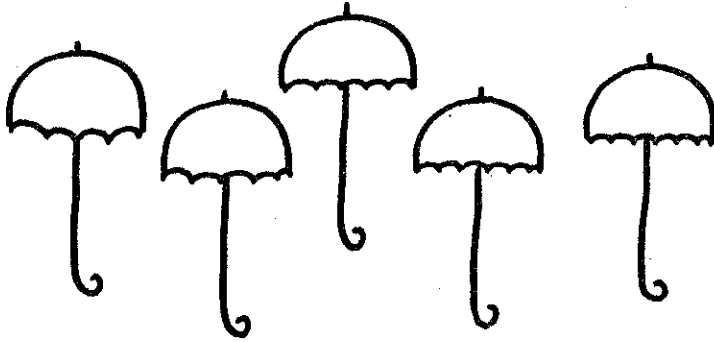
Fill in the blank with the word you are told to use.

1. A pony can go .....
  2. Humpty Dumpty had a great .....
  3. I have ..... hands.
  4. I must ..... a bath every day.
  5. A cow gives .....
  6. Ice is .....
  7. Can you ..... a book?
  8. A ..... likes dolls.
  9. Bob is a .....
  10. When school is out we go .....
  11. We will play a game of .....
  12. Three and three are .....
  13. A ..... sheep says "baa, baa."
  14. At night I sleep in a .....
  15. The ball rolled far .....
  16. Jack and Jill went up a .....
  17. A ..... says "cluck, cluck."
  18. A little bird can .....
  19. We go to ..... when we are six years old.
  20. We go ..... and down on a see-saw.
-

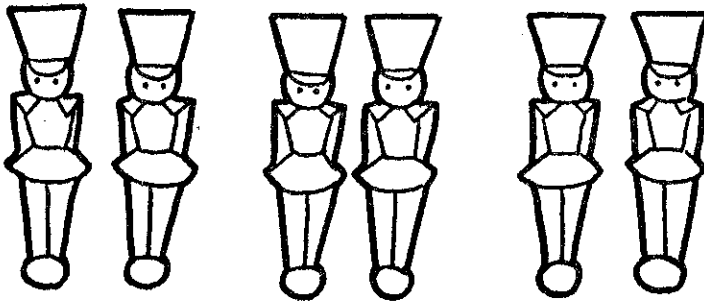
Draw a ring around the word that tells how many in each picture.



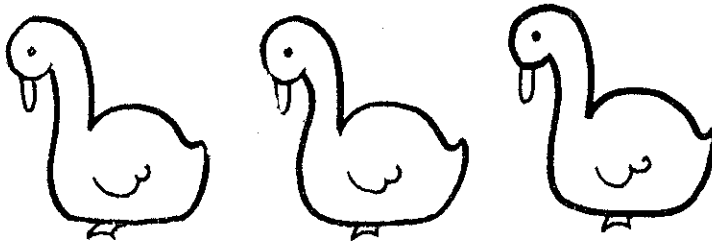
four two  
eight nine  
ten



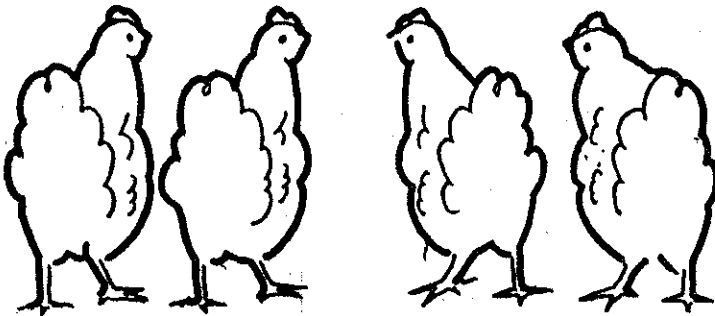
seven five  
nine six  
eight



eight two  
one six  
seven ten

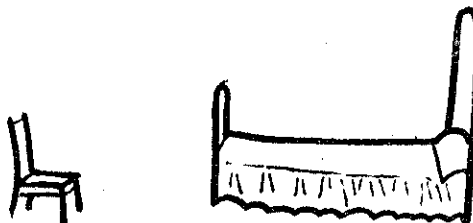


ten seven  
one two  
three

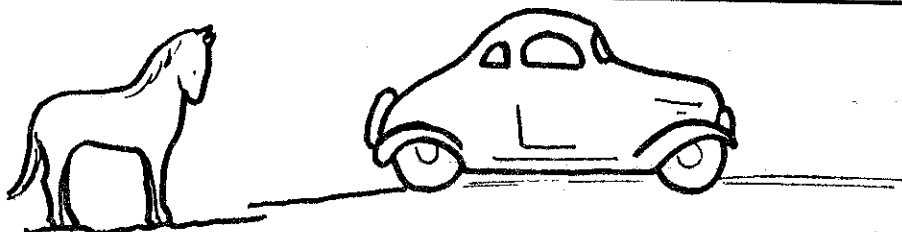


two six  
one ten  
four

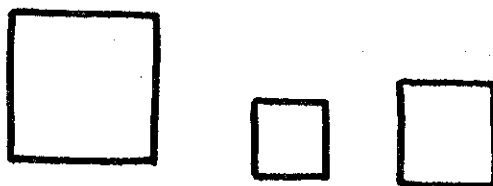
Draw a ring around the word that makes the sentence true.



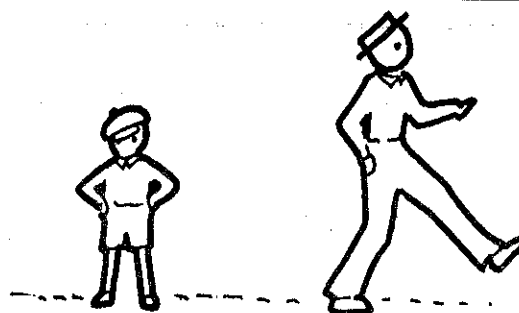
The bed is higher lower than the chair.



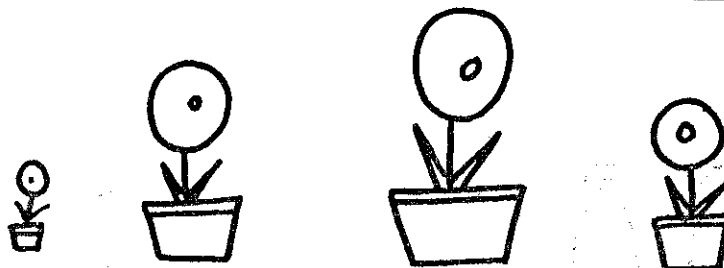
A car can go faster slower than a horse.



Put x under the largest block.



The boy is taller shorter than the man.



Put x under the smallest flower.



Draw a ring around the word that makes the sentence true.



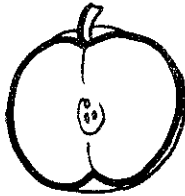
I am sold in

quarts

pounds

feet

yards



I am

one-half of an apple

one-third of an apple

one-fourth of an apple



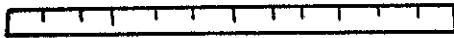
A dozen is

12

20

6

13



A foot rule is

15 inches

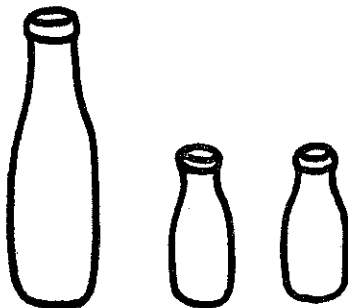
24 inches

12 inches

22 inches



Which one is worth 10c? Mark it with an x.



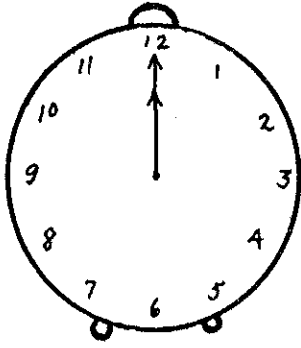
2 pints make

a pound

a dozen

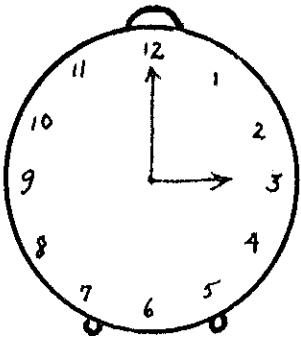
a quart

Draw a ring around the number that tells the time on each clock.



This clock says

- 7 o'clock
- 6 o'clock
- 10 o'clock
- 12 o'clock



This clock says

- 4 o'clock
- 3 o'clock
- 8 o'clock
- 11 o'clock

Your teacher will read you some numbers. Place one of them in each square.

--	--	--	--	--

Fill the blanks with the right numbers, counting by two's.

6		10		14		18		22		26
---	--	----	--	----	--	----	--	----	--	----

Draw a line from a number word to the right number.

---

eight
one
four
nine
seven
five
three
six
two
ten

5
2
3
8
1
10
4
9
7
6

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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