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Number Three

“The Evolution  
of Common Things”

UNIT 2—COMMUNICATION

by

Myrna Ingram Schuck

Teacher-Rapid Learner Class

P. S. 500 (Speyer School)

1938

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This volume is part of a series of units on the theme “The Evolution of Common Things,” which was prepared for the Speyer School, New York City’s experimental school for exceptional learners led by Leta Hollingworth in the 1930s. Our re-publication of the units is directly tied to Dr. Willard L. White’s *America’s First Gifted Program*, published by Royal Fireworks in 2014. Dr. White is the source of the original copy of this text.

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Public School 500 (Speyer School)

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The Evolution of Common Things  
UNIT 2: COMMUNICATION

MYRNA INGRAM SCHUCK  
Teacher-Rapid Learner Class

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<sup>2</sup>Deceased, Feb. 1, 1938

# THE EVOLUTION OF COMMON THINGS

A Series of Units Developed  
for Rapid Learners  
At Public School 500, Manhattan,  
Speyer School

## UNIT 2: COMMUNICATION

by Myrna Ingram Schuck



## Foreword

The general plan of the series on "*The Evolution of Common Things*", of which this is Unit 2, was set forth at length in Curriculum Bulletin Number One, issued by the Division of Elementary Schools in 1937. The reader is referred to the foreword there formulated by the Superintendents and the Educational Advisers. It is necessary that the philosophy of P.S. 500 (Speyer School) and the instructional procedures growing out of the conception of education in this experimental school be clearly understood before this second unit for the rapid learners is given consideration.

With each unit of our series must go the special reminder that this material has been developed with and for *very rapid learners only*. It will, therefore, be unsuitable for the generality of classrooms in both public and private elementary schools. Children must be tested for determination of mental ability before being launched upon a project like this one. Such fitting of the school to the child is the beginning of a science of education. It is the ideal of democracy that every child should be educated in accordance with his capacity to receive and serve. But this ideal cannot be realized without mental measurement. We must "take the measure" of a child before we can know his capacity for receiving. The value of this series of units arises from the fact that the work has been experimentally based on mental measurement.

Furthermore, it must be borne firmly in mind that this handbook is not a syllabus to be followed word by word. It is a suggestive guide, rather than a prescribed "course". It is an outcome of the learning of one particular group of twenty-five intellectually gifted elementary school children; not a solidified body of facts and ideas to be offered to other such pupils, without variation. Any other group of young children, similarly endowed by nature, might well work out the area of Communication rather differently, placing emphasis on different features, and accenting the field in different ways. For instance, under Libraries, our pupils did not take Andrew Carnegie and his great influence under consideration. Another group might wish to take this matter up in full.

With highly intelligent pupils, the ideal is to allow for variation and individuality of interest. This bulletin is a guide, not a syllabus. Perfection of experts is not claimed. Stimulating endeavor by pupils of the elementary school, striving to understand their world, is claimed. The trend and scope of their intellectual interest and penetration are made clear, for the guidance of those who are charged with the education of such children, everywhere, whether as individuals or in groups.

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Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

LETA S. HOLLINGWORTH,  
Educational Adviser to Public School 500  
(Speyer School).



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# COMMUNICATION

## A UNIT DEVELOPED WITH A CLASS OF RAPID LEARNERS

### Introduction

The Transportation Cycle had been completed and the pupils were considering the continual strides toward improvement that the world had made, when it was finally decided that we had just scratched the surface of the world's greatness and that there was much more to be said before we could consider ourselves well versed in the matter. The eve of transportation, we learned, not only served us as a means of travel, but also brought us our products and ideas into contact with others. These, therefore, were also means of *communication*.

If we communicate, we improve our span of knowledge. Our thoughts, manners and customs become common to others and theirs to us. So the world at large is benefited. Therefore, to better our knowledge of the continued improvement of the world as a whole we decided that it was necessary for us to make a careful study of communication. Since in our study of transportation we had also studied communication indirectly, we now decided to study it directly, as such.

## Mental Caliber of the Pupils

The study unit was developed by the same group that developed the study on Transportation by Land during the first ten weeks of the semester. The Chronological Age, Intelligence Quotient and sex of each member of the group are furnished to indicate to those who may care to undertake a similar study, the mental caliber required of a group to complete the study with a feeling of satisfaction and success for all of its participants. It must be emphasized that pupils of lesser degrees of intelligence than those here listed will be found unsuited to this work, as here presented.

Child	C. A.	I. Q. (S-B)	Sex
1	9-10	194+	M
2	7-8	180	F
3	9-7	158	M
4	9-7	156	F
5	8-6	155	M
6	9-8	152	F
7	8-9	150	M
8	10-11	148	M
9	9-4	144	M
10	8-3	143	F
11	8-6	142	M
12	10-7	141	F
13	8-1	140	M
14	10-2	139	M
15	9-4	138	F
16	8-11	137	M
17	9-8	137	F
18	9-3	136	M
19	9-9	135	F
20	9-2	132	F
21	10-4	131	F
22	8-5	130	F
23	9-7	124*	F
24	10-5	120*	F
25	8-8	120†	M

\* Specialized ability in art and manual construction.

† Highly specialized ability in schematic design. (Pintner-Patterson I.Q. 155.)

Pupils admitted to the class who have I. Q.s (S-B) under 130, have higher I. Q.s on other tests.



FIGURE 1. MAKING A SCROLL (SEE FIGURE 7). GIRL TEN YEARS OLD.  
CELLOPHANE SLIDES, MADE BY CLASS, IN THE BACKGROUND (SEE FIGURE 8).

## Method of Development

The class discussed communication, what it is and how best the study might be handled; deciding finally on three main topics. Speech, Records and Mechanical Transmissions. They divided themselves into three groups and spent the periods given over to the subject during the entire first week in collecting materials, preparing the same for use and deciding what to consider first.

It was agreed that we should first develop Language, both oral and written. Since we had all of our materials for research at hand, we thought it best to list a few of the facts which we were to search out. Our crude outline follows:

- 1—What is language?
- 2—How important is it?
- 3—History of Our Language Ancestors.
- 4—How does language serve man?
- 5—Valuable beginnings in language.
- 6—What is meant by evolution of language?
- 7—What is sound; how produced?
- 8—What is an alphabet; how was it begun?
- 9—Difference between oral and written language.
- 10—Man's struggle to become civilized and the making of the alphabet.
- 11—Accomplishments aiding people of the world to understand one another.
- 12—What are language families and how can one tell to which family a language belongs?
- 13—Development of habits, as an aid to language.
- 14—How can we improve our language?

The children then set out on individual research and reported to the group weekly the result of their findings, which were discussed from every possible angle by the group as a whole. The study of oral and written language was developed simultaneously, wherever possible.

At the time written language entered into our study, we visited the Museum of Natural History for a lecture on Early Writing. This lecture gave the children certain suggestions for research in this field. A careful