'SAY THY LESSON, FOOL':
Idleness tries to teach Ignorance to read

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This paper is about a (fictional) failed attempt to teach someone to read; or perhaps, less ambitiously, to spell. It sounds as if it were written out of experience, which is hardly surprising, since the playwright, John Redford, was himself a teacher, though of a rather particular kind. He was a Vicar Choral of St Paul's Cathedral (a 'singing man') in the 1530s and 40s,[1] and 'master of the Almonry there', which means that he was in charge of the cathedral's charity. According to the Statutes as epitomised by Dean Colet, as part of his duties the Almoner was to keep in his official lodgings 'eight talented boys of honest family' whom he was to bring up *in morum disciplina* (as it was put to a later Almoner, in 'all vertue, ciuility and honest manners'), and to instruct *in cantu et literatura* ('in song and letters') to be the cathedral choristers.[2] By Redford's time there were ten of them. So he was choirmaster and housemaster to an insubordinate[3] gang of lads aged anything from about 6 years old to about 16. They were also almost without doubt his actors.

In Redford's play of *Wit and Science*, the first major plot crisis (Wit is killed by the giant Tediousness, and then restored to life by Honest Recreation and her attendants) is followed by an episode which seems at first to be purely there for entertainment. Wit takes a shine to his rescuer, exhausts himself by showing off dancing with her, and drops asleep gratefully into the lap of the harlot Idleness. Honest Recreation, annoyed by his change of allegiance to an unworthy object, takes herself off, while Wit slumbers on. Idleness is not the benevolent if extremely laid-back friend she at first appears: she has a cunning plan to subvert Wit, but for it she needs someone else. She whistles to summon her 'boy', Ignorance.

When he appears, he is dressed as a fool, in 'cote hoode eares ... kokscome and all' (816–7). This costume is designed to show the audience immediately what he is. (For reinforcement, she calls him 'fool', and occasionally 'whoreson', throughout.) It is also due to play a major role in the plot. It is more of a stage uniform than the clothes he might be expected to wear in real life, about which there has been much debate.[4] It immediately becomes apparent, however, that he is not a witty professional

fool, but a genuine innocent or 'natural', someone who has been an idiot (a technical term) from birth. He gives the impression of having been drawn from life; of which more later.

Exactly how he is her 'boy' is not plain: is he her servant?[5] He is not her son, because he has a mother, unnamed, who won't let him come to school. This mention of school comes completely unheralded, but as soon as Ignorance enters, he and Idleness swing into a routine, in which she plays the mistress of a dame school, and he the semi-willing but totally ineducable pupil.

Because of the context (a play about education, performed by schoolboys and written by their teacher) this sudden switch is instantly acceptable, though Redford's first editor (1848), J.O. Halliwell (later Halliwell–Phillips) clearly found it vapid and annoying:

> The 'old-fashioned wit' for which a later writer sneered at Shakespeare is here exhibited in full force, perhaps somewhat difficult to be appreciated by a modern reader, but many portions were no doubt effective at the period at which the drama appeared; and, among these, the scene between Idleness and Ignorance, in which the former attempts an educational episode, although tediously prolonged, may easily be imagined as one which was highly relished by our less critical ancestors ...[6]

an unintentional indictment of armchair theatre. Even as much as a century later, Sidney Race cited this scene as evidence that the play must have been a forgery by J. Payne Collier, adding 'The eight pages are utterly valueless. Collier did not often touch so low a level'.[7] He cites Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature* (1875) on 'an amusing scene, in which *Ignorance* is put through a spelling-lesson by *Idleness*, the word which he is set to spell being *Ingland*'. Ward clearly skim-read the play for his encyclopaedic *History*, but at least he does add that 'The density of *Ignorance*, and his rustic speech, are extremely diverting', which Race leaves out.[8] T.W. Baldwin, however, who knew something about sixteenth-century education, quotes the whole scene in his *William Shakspere's Petty School*, with 'The reader may be amused by an exaggerated illustration of how this teaching was ... likely to be done'.[9]

The word which Idleness is trying to teach Ignorance to spell is not *England* but his own name: a good child-centred exercise. She breaks it down into its component parts, using considerable ingenuity to make each one memorable, and makes him repeat them after her. The intention is

that he will then be able triumphantly to fit them together again. He fails. She tries again. He fails again. She gives up. It is like watching someone trying to start a car on a frosty morning when the battery is flat. As it turns out, this scene is not only narratively important, but thematically so as well.

I want to set it in two contexts: first, the contemporary approach to elementary (in the full sense of the word) education, and second and more tentatively, Tudor and twenty-first-century theories about the nature of Ignorance's learning difficulties, which might explain on a naturalistic level why her attempt fails. Lastly, I will attempt to show how this scene fits into the rest of the play.

The easy and possibly only contemporary answer to the second point is 'because Ignorance is technically an idiot'.[10] The allegorical answer is 'because if he were to learn anything he would cease to be Ignorance'. But he seems to be more than a perfunctory allegorical construct. If we compare him with the Ignorance of, say, Rastell's *Four Elements*, who is a loutish philistine, or even of the anonymous *Marriage of Wit and Science*, where he is a fool but with rather too much savvy, Redford's creation rings true to life, as if he were based on a child or adolescent Redford knew, perhaps in his work as St Paul's Almoner. A parallel figure at the end of the century would be Robert Armin's John in the Hospital, a local celebrity who likewise frequented St Paul's Churchyard, and who also featured in a play.[11] To a certain extent we can see Redford's Ignorance as a piece of reportage anticipating the late-sixteenth-century vogue for Fool literature, as well as an extremely apt allegory. But certain things about the way he responds or fails to respond when quizzed also suggest that nowadays we would pin a particular label on him, which further leads me to consider briefly the possible psychology of certain Tudor professional fools.

Tudor elementary education

Idleness obviously doesn't go through the whole process of teaching Ignorance to spell, starting with the alphabet — the scene is just a series of snapshots of things that can go, hilariously, wrong. To its original audience it was possibly the funniest, certainly one of the funniest scenes in the whole play, because it draws on the shared experience of audience and schoolboy actors. To be able to understand what is going on, and some of the jokes, we clearly need to know more about Idleness's teaching method,

which is in the Tudor fashion based on repetition, hence, as Halliwell suggested, 'prolonged', if riotously rather than tediously.

Early-years teaching[12] took place either at home (if the family could afford a tutor), or in special elementary schools called 'Petties' — beginners were called 'petties' (*petits*) and often 'Abseyes' (ABCs)[13] — or in the first form of the grammar school, though grammar-school teachers considered this a waste of their skills and resources. In schools associated with ecclesiastical foundations,[14] primary teaching was often combined with the teaching of singing,[15] which provided a stock of choirboys: Redford would be probably classed as a Song School master. He would have taught the Paul's choristers to read English, and their first steps in Latin grammar, though his older pupils were sent off to Dean Colet's St Paul's (Grammar) School for a few hours a day for further training in Latin.[16] They would probably have learned to sing before they learned to read. A later organist of St Paul's, Thomas Morley (he was a chorister there in 1574, and became organist in 1588 after a spell as master of the choristers at his native Norwich cathedral) includes an alphabet song, 'Christes crosse be my speede', in his major pedagogical work (1597), *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*.[17] It sounds like a basic training exercise for the choirboys in both mensural notation and their alphabet. They sing the hornbook[18] version of the alphabet, complete with 'and per se, con per se, tittle, title, est, amen', over and over ('When you haue done begin againe begin againe') in an easy *cantus* (treble) line, while underneath the singing men grapple with fiendishly complicated tenor and bass lines — threes against fours, fours against fives — thus presenting both groups with an appropriate technical challenge. Ignorance has to be an absolute beginner for the sake of the allegory: but the schoolboy actors would probably anyway have been more familiar with this end of the teaching process, in English, than with an advanced Latin lesson.

There is, however, a classic difficulty about evidence on the elementary teaching of English in general: it depends on what educationists were writing about at any given time. In early sixteenth-century England, the theorists (like Elyot)[19] are focussed on the social and moral functions of education, which is assumed to be in Latin, and the textbooks (e.g. and latterly exclusively, Lily)[20] are all on the teaching of Latin grammar, after the child has had a grounding in English. Even the hornbooks could be used for either language. Books on early-years teaching, and hence on the teaching of English, only appear late in the second half of the century with, for example, Francis Clements' *The Petie Schole with an English*

Orthographie, published in 1587 but, according to the preface, written at least as early as 1576.[21] We can however assume that English was taught in the same way in Redford's time, partly because of the evidence of the early-sixteenth-century Primers,[22] of which more later. For really detailed books on classroom practice we have to wait till the very end of the sixteenth century, though there are some glimpses of it in the various colloquies, notably by Vives and Erasmus, and in the *Vulgaria*.[23]

In general there tends to be a conspicuous time-lag between the invention of a pedagogic technique and its getting into print. Teachers write out of decades of experience, and sometimes praise the work of their mentors.[24] Often, the 'new' methods they recommend are clearly refinements of well-established ones. Charles Hoole epitomises this in the title to his 1661 treatise, *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching School*.[25] As a result, almost everything I have noted in Redford is backed up by the textbooks, but sometimes as much as a century later.

Classroom practice

First, then, classroom practice. This was based on memorising and then relaying knowledge in a traditional but far from mechanical way. Pictures of classrooms [PLATE 1] show a group of boys sitting on benches (or the floor) hunched over their books, presided over by the master in his chair, his birch, a bunch of vicious-looking twigs, very much in evidence. Usually one of the boys has been extracted from his fellows, and is standing in front of the master being questioned on his lesson. This was known as 'apposing'.[26] It was meant to be constructive: 'for by questions as I haue said, they wil com to vnderstand any thing'.[27] But it also exploited competitive group dynamics: 'If you vse to appose ordinarily ... some one whom you know can repeat a great deale, it will much prouoke the rest, to marke and take paines'.[28] However, it was often naturally directed towards 'the worst and most negligent of each fourme aboue all the rest; though euery one somthing, yet them principally. This wil make them more carefull, & cause all to come on together in some good sort'.[29] For a slow or unprepared student it could be a terrifying ordeal — 'It is euyll with vs whan the mayster apposeth vs'[30] — with the threat of the birch only too present.

Jan Ziolkowski points out how performative medieval schoolroom practice was.[31] 'Apposing' was cast in the form of a dialogue in which the master asked and the student answered. This one is from John Brinsley's 1615 *The posing of the parts* (of speech):

PLATE 1: Schoolboy being apposed by teacher
This prymer of Salysbury vse is set out a long without ony serchyng
(Paris: Francis Regnault, 1532)
Bodleian Library: Douce BB 228, sig. Aiijv

Q Which is the first part of speech?
A. A Noune.
Q. What is a Noune?
A. A Noune is the name of a thing, that may be seene, felt, heard, or vnderstood.
Q. What meane you by that?
A. It is a word that signifieth the name by which we call any thing whatsoeuer [that] may be seene, felt, heard, or vnderstood.
Q. Giue me examples of it.
A. A hand *manus*, a house *domus*, goodnes *bonitas*.
Q. Is a hand a Noune?
A. A hand it selfe is not a Noune: but the word signifying a hand, is a Noune.

The marginal note says, 'In Grammar we have to consider words, not things'.[32]

In a dialogue like this, which was meant to be learned by heart, both master and pupil were role-playing themselves. Sometimes two scholars were set to appose each other. In this dialogue (from Edmund Coote's *English schoole-master*, 1596), the contestants are clearly quite small boys. Thus they are testing each other on *English* spelling:

Iohn. Who will aduenture his credite with me in opposing for the victorie?
Robert. I will neither refuse you nor any in our forme, in any thing we haue learned: begin what you will.
Iohn. How spell you *lo*?
Robert. l, o.
Iohn. Spell *of*?
Robert. o, f.
Iohn. Spell *from*?
Robert. f, r, o, m.[33]

One plays the inquisitor until the other makes a mistake, when they switch roles. At the end of Coote's dialogue, both John and Robert praise the method enthusiastically. Robert proposes a return match on the following day:

Iohn. Do your worst, I will prouide like wise for you: and neuer give you ouer, vntill I haue gotten the victorie: for I take notso much pleasure in any thing els all day.

> *Robert*. I am of your mind: for I haue heard our maister say, that this apposing doth very much sharpen our wits, helpe our memorie, and many other commodities.[34]

They then turn to their Catechism, the other familiar context for apposing.[35]

The whole teaching-and-learning methodology was interactive, public, intentionally stressful, and intrinsically theatrical. Besides this, schoolboys were often taught Latin vocabulary and idiom through dialogue, from Ælfric Batta's *Colloquy* to Erasmus' *Colloquies*. Coote's textbook shows that it could be used for English as well. No wonder they were adept actors.

In this scene from *Wit and Science*, Ignorance is being apposed by Idleness on something he is clearly meant to have learned: 'Say thy lesson, fool' (450). Fictionally, this is a one-to-one. In performance, it is a one-to-one with an audience, just like the real-life classroom master and boy. Ignorance becomes an object lesson. He also provides an assessment of the teacher's professional skills and success, since apposing was also used to showcase a student's progress, and thus a teacher's efficiency: John Brinsley (1612) speaks feelingly of being let down by his pupils' inability to remember their lessons 'when gentlemen or others come in and examine them, or their friends try them at home'.[36] Idleness invites the audience to view her teaching methods and their outcomes: 'mark what doctryne by Idlenes cum*me*[s]' (449) — a double-sided invitation — and suggests that it may be a test for her as well: 'ye shall see her tryde' (437).[37] Allegorically, of course, this 'trial' provides a further exposition of the natures of both schoolmistress and pupil.

Ignorance appears to enjoy the process and hurls himself into it, though he has to be prompted every inch of the way. He also seems to have a good relationship with his teacher. She, on her part, tries every possible technique to get the right answer out of him, even if it doesn't work.

There is nothing strange about her being a woman.[38] 'Dame schools' are not classified as such until later,[39] but it was accepted that early elementary teaching was likely to be 'a work for poor women, or others, whose necessities compel them to undertake it, as a meer shelter from beggery'.[40] They might add it to other sedentary jobs like spinning. Coote directs his *English Schoole-maister* 'to the vnskilfull, which desire to make vse of it for their owne priuate benefit; and to such men and women of trade, as Taylors, Weauers, Shop keepers, Seamsters, and such other as haue vndertaken the charge of teaching others ... thou maist sit on thy

Shop boord, at thy Loomes, or at thy Needle, & neuer hinder thy worke to heare thy schollers'.[41] It is of course unlikely that he would have approved of a part-time harlot, like Idleness.

Some educationists objected to women teachers on pedagogical grounds, though as only one group among several: 'Children ... almost euerie where are first taught either in priuate by men and women altogether rude, and vtterly ignoraunt of the due composing and iust spelling of wordes: or else in common schooles most commonlie by boyes, verie seeldome or neuer by anie of sufficient skill'.[42] It was not only their professional qualifications that were objected to; the insistence that an infant was likely to acquire the attitudes and behaviour of its first teachers made educationists warn parents to be very careful about the character of a tutor,

> leste by any vncleane example the tender minde of the chylde maye be infected, harde after warde to be recouered. For the natures of chyldren be not so moche or sone aduaunced by thynges well doone or spoken as they be hyndred and corrupted by that, whiche in actis or wordes is wontonly expressed.[43]

Richard Sherry (1555), translating Erasmus, says that 'some men sende their lytle chyldren to a pyuyshe dronken woman to learne to reade and wryte'. Untypically, the main objection is that it 'is agaynste nature that women shulde haue rule vpon menne', besides which, they tend to lose their tempers more readily and lash out at their students for any petty misdemeanour, 'and wyll not cease tyll it be full revenged'[44] — something that the vast literature for and against beating by male teachers puts into proper perspective.

It is more likely that schoolmasters in the audience would have worried about her accent. The main fear seems to be that elementary teachers might give the child the 'wrong' pronunciation, imitating 'the barbarous speech of your countrie people', such as '*stomp* for *stamp*: *ship* for *sheep*: *hafe* for *halfe*: *sample* for *example*: *parfit* for *perfect*' and so on.[45] Coote's two sample schoolboys, 'apposing' each other, refer to mispronunciation of the five main vowels that they had learned, one from 'good man *Taylor* our Clarke', and the other from 'my Dame', presumably an old-woman teacher rather than his grandmother.[46] Again, here it is a nascent perception of a Standard English rather than a worry about gender.

It is difficult to tell whether Idleness fails to come up to standard in this respect. Her language doesn't seem particularly slipshod, if a bit vulgar: 'I

woold thy mother had kist thy bum!' If she has a London accent proper to a St Paul's Churchyard harlot, it doesn't come out in the spelling of the dialogue.[47] Ignorance is the one with the clownish (rural) accent: 'chwas I bore in ingland, mother sed' (454). Her question, 'Shal I bete thy narse now?', might have been objectionable, but not because of its content: according to Coote, the barbarously spoken country-people also say, '*a nox*, *a nasse*, *my naunt*, *thy nuncle*, for *an oxe*, an *asse*, *mine aunt*, *thine vncle*, &c.'[48] The last two may also be baby talk: remember Lear's Fool. It is also possible that 'Whats tys?' for 'is this' has nursery overtones. Elyot is worried that women who have care of children should

> speke none englishe, but that, whiche is cleane, polite, perfectly, and articulately pronounced, omittynge no letter or syllable, as folyshe women often tymes do of a wantonnes, wherby diuers noble menne, and gentylmens chyldren (as I do at this daye knowe) haue atteyned corrupte and foule pronuntiation.[49]

It seems very unlikely, then, that this scene sets out specifically to satirise female teachers. Idleness is unsuitable because of her character and her profession, but there is nothing superficially wrong with her teaching methods, except, perhaps, that they are a bit ad hoc: which fits with her allegorical character.

Course content

What was the normal content of a beginner's reading course? The actual syllabus goes back to the classical period and beyond.[50] English textbooks are based on the late-Latin grammars by Donatus and Priscian, and some of the delightful methods of attracting little ones to learn their letters (gingerbread shapes, ivory counters) turn out to have been recommended by Quintilian in the first century AD.[51] There was a seamless shift in the textbooks from the teaching of Latin to the teaching of English; all they had to do was change the examples, and add rules about English spelling peculiarities: 'I remember you told me that (e) at the end of a word is not pronounced, beside that it draweth the syllable long, it also changeth the sound of letters, I pray which are they?'[52] The result was a way of analysing English grammar which was only really questioned in the later twentieth century.

The syllabus is based, sensibly and logically, on the building blocks of the spoken (and hence in our alphabetic culture, written) language. It is a cumulative process.[53] The individual letter is a sign representing a sound,

which is the smallest unit of speech: *littera est pars minima uocis articulatae*.[54] Next comes the syllable, made up of anything from one to eight[55] letters, enunciated as a single unit. A word (*dictio*)[56] is made up of one or more syllables. A sentence (*sententia*, a complete thought) is made up of one or more words.

The traditional teaching method was, and still is, to start the child with the smallest unit and then build up to the largest. As William Hornby put it in 1622, looking back on his schooldays:

> And so the *A.B.C.* he first is taught;
> From that to spelling he is after brought;
> And being right instructed for to spell,
> He learn's his *Sillables* and *Vowels*[57] well.
> Then with due teaching he doth well consider
> By's Masters rule how he may put together. [58]

Having learned his ABC, and to distinguish the sounds of individual letters, first the vowels, then the consonants, the child learns how they can be combined into syllables, which he also learns by rote; and thence how to combine — 'put together', as Idleness also calls it (471, 479, 489, etc) — syllables into words.[59] Conversely, when reading, he learns how to analyse words into syllables. There were apparently some sixteenth-century teachers who used whole-word recognition,[60] but they seem to have been in the minority.

The apparent familiarity of this process may disguise some differences of practice: though in fact the sixteenth and the twenty-first centuries are closer than we might initially think. The main areas of difference, phonics and memorisation, are more a matter of degree and emphasis rather than content. We tend to associate learning your ABC with learning to recognise the written letters, but forget, unless we are professionals or the parents of reception-class children, that there may have been a stage before that, in which we were taught to recognise the individual sounds. Medieval and Tudor children did learn to recognise their letters, either from a hornbook, or a dedicated alphabet page in a Primer:

> The usual way to begin with a child, when he is first brought to Schoole, is to teach him to know his letters in the Horn-book, where he is made to run over all the letters in the Alphabet or Christ cross-row both forwards & backwards, until he can tel any one of them, which is pointed at, and that in the *English* character.[61]

But some professionals suggested that this should be preceded by a thorough grounding in phonics before the children were introduced to graphemes:

> First the childe is to be taught, how to call euery letter,[62] pronouncing each of them plainely, fully and distinctly; I mean in a distinct and differing sound, each from others, and also naturally, from the very first entrance to learning. More specially to bee carefull, for the right pronouncing the fiue vowels, in the first place, as *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*. Because these are first and most naturall, and doe make a perfect sound, so that they may bee pronounced fully of themselues; and they being rightly vttered, all the rest are more plaine. After these vowels to teach them to pronounce euery other letter: which are therefore called Consonants, because they cannot make a perfect sound of themselues, without a vowell. This may be done, and also the teaching of children to spell any syllable, before the childe do knowe any letter on the booke; and that, some wise and experienced do holde the surest and best course'.[63]

Opinions on this method were divided, though it was very ancient. Quintilian had disapproved of it: 'I am not satisfied with the course (which I note is usually adopted) of teaching small children the names and order of the letters before their shapes. Such a practice makes them slow to recognise the letters, since they do not pay attention to the actual shape, preferring to be guided by what they have already learned by rote'.[64] Wyclif in the fourteenth century talks about *puer primo discens alphabetum, secundo sillabicare, tercia legere, et quarto intelligere* ('a boy first learning the alphabet, second to make syllables, third to read, and fourth to understand'),[65] which suggests that the first two stages were oral.

In the sixteenth century this early use of phonics was linked with the anxiety, which we have already met, that the child should learn 'correct' speech: 'the fyrste teachyng of chyldren is, to speake playnly and wythout faute'.[66] Hoole suggests this as a form of speech therapy for three- and four-year olds:

> though perhaps then he cannot speak so very distinctly, yet the often pronounciation [*sic*] of his letters, will be a means to help his speech, especially if one take notice in what organ or instrument he is most defective, and exercise him chiefly in those letters which belong unto it ... But the sweet and natural pronunciation of them is gotten rather by imitation then precept, and therefore the teacher

> must be careful to give every letter its distinct and clear sound, that the childe may get it from his voice, and be sure to make the child open his mouth well as he uttereth a letter, lest otherwise he drown or hinder the sound of it.[67]

Lily's *Grammar*, the nationally prescribed textbook, names this *orthoepia* (orthoepy): *hoc est emendata recte loquendi ratio* ('that is, the way of speaking purely and rightly'). It includes sounding all phonemes properly, and also ironing out any possible speech defects, including lisping, stammering, and dropping initial H.[68] Scrupulous phonics schoolmasters, however, insisted that the sounds should be imitated, not called by their names, 'For letters were first deuised according to sounds': the consonants were to be pronounced as if 'by the speech of a stutterer or stammerer ... how he laboureth to sound the first letter of a word'.[69] Ignorance seems to be doing this when he gets on to the letter s: 'hys s s s s s s'.

But phonics was primarily the gateway to spelling. Teachers went on to get the children to 'put together' vowels and consonants into syllables, first of two letters, then three, then four, and so on. In current Department of Education directives, this is called *oral blending* ('putting together').[70] This 'blending' goes hand in hand with its opposite, which in current parlance is called *segmenting*. In order to spell a syllable, the pupil learns from his teacher to break it down into its component parts, then reassemble it. Compare John and Robert's interactive spelling test.[71] The Tudor boys may or may not have done their segmenting exercises totally 'without book', but the next step in the exchange is instructive:

> *Iohn.* How write you *people*?[72]
> *Robert.* I cannot write.
> *Iohn.* I meane not so, but when I say *write*, I meane *spell*; for in my meaning they are both one.
> *Robert.* Then I answer you, that *p,e,o,p,l,e*.[73]

We should remember that phonics, reading, and writing are three separate stages in a process, and that, certainly earlier in the period, people did not necessarily have the means or the time to master all three. Ben Jonson seems to suggest that writing is purely an adjunct to speaking: 'Grammar is the art of true and well speaking a language: the writing is but an Accident'.[74]

The only difference between the twenty-first-century method and the sixteenth-century is that the Tudor schoolboy was expected to learn the construction of all of his syllables off by heart, and recite them back at the

teacher or his apposing classmate. The textbooks provided comprehensive lists, combining each of the vowels in the alphabet in turn with each of the consonants, forwards and back.

> Then teach them to put the consonants in order before euery vowell, and to repeat them oft ouer together; as thus: to begin with *b*, and to say ba, be, bi, bo, bu. So *d*. da, de, di, do, du. *f*. fa, fe, fi, fo, fu.[75] Thus teach them to say all the rest, as it were singing them together,[76] la, le, li, lo, lu; the hardest to the last, as ca.ce.ci.co.cu. and ga, ge, gi, go, gu. In which the sound is a little changed in the second and third syllables. When they can do all these, then teach them to spell them in order, thus; What spels b-a? If the child cannot tell, teach him to say thus; b-a, ba: so putting the first *b*. before euery vowell to say b-a ba, b-e be, b-i bi, b-o bo, b-u bu. Then ask him againe what spels b-a, and he will tell you; so all the rest in order. By oft repeating before him he will certainly do it. After this if you aske him, how he spels b-a, he will answer b-a, ba. So in all others.[77]

The explanation is as long as the process, but it gives some sense of how thorough it was meant to be. Coote and others give the full range of possibilities, working up from two-letter syllables to seven.[78] At the time of *Wit and Science*, schoolboys could make use of the initial taster list offered by some Primers, which merely ran through the five vowels and the first five consonants, forwards and backwards (see PLATE. 2).[79] The teacher was clearly meant to supply the rest.

At what stage this was combined with visual work, learning to read the letters/graphemes, would depend on the individual teacher. Brinsley suggests it should be after they had learned all their syllables, even the longest ones.[80] This may well explain why Idleness appears to be teaching Ignorance without any recourse to a hornbook, a primer, or any other visual teaching aid.

Having learned all his syllables, the schoolboy could then in theory draw on this store to construct, and spell, any word that was thrown at him. Some textbooks make reading easier for the beginner by splitting up words into syllables. Back in the 1520s and 30s, when the actors in *Wit and Science* were learning to read, the Primers printed by Francis Regnault in Paris for the Engiish market provided a mnemonic verse for the chief red-letter days of each month beneath the image in the calendar. Each

PLATE 2: Primer 'hornbook' alphabet with syllables
The Primer in English moste necessary for the educacyon of chyldren
(London: Ihon Maylart for Ihon Waylande, 1540) sig. A viijr

verse is syllabised, which suggests that the Primer was fulfilling its long-held function as a child's primary reading book.81 This is the one for March:[82]

Da.uyd. of vvales. lo. ueth. vvell. lekes.	1 March
That vvyl. make. gre. go. ry lene chekes.	12 March
yf. ed. warde.[83] do. eate. Same [*together*]. vvith. them.	18 March
Mary. sende. hym. to. bed. lem.[84]	25 March

At the end of the century, Coote championed this method in his *English Schoole-maister*, devoting several pages to a practical demonstration hand in hand with the theoretical rules on syllable division:

> *Mai-ster.* Doe you think your selfe so suf-fi-ci-ent-ly in-struc-ted, to spell & read di-stinct-la [*sic*] any word of one syl-lable, that now we may pro-céed, to teach rules for the true and ea-sy di-ui-si-on of a-ny word of ma-ny syl-labls?
>
> *Scho-ler.* Sir: I do not well vn-der-stand, what you meane by a sy-lable. [85]

William Kempe (1588) is determined that the spelling of polysyllables should not be allowed to disintegrate into a mere list of letters:

> Wherein let him not learne by rote, spelling one sillable of a worde, and shufling vp the rest without distinct spelling. As if he had to learne this word *mercifulnes*, suffer him not, as some would, to go on thus: *m-e-r*, *mer*, *c-i-f-u-l-n-e-s*, *mercifulnes.* But according to the letters and syllables, which are as precepts in this behalfe, let him learne it by reason thus: *m-e-r*, *mer: c-i*, *ci*, *merci: f-u-l*, *ful*, *merciful: n-e-s*, *nes*, *mercifulnes.* For if he repeate the former syllables with euery other added vnto them, he shall haue all in perfect memorie when he commeth to the ende: whereas otherwise he may erre or forget.[86]

Here we catch up with Ignorance again. His lesson was to learn to spell his own name. Presumably he knows what it is? Or perhaps he doesn't. (Apart from the fact that he is Ignorance, fools and the Vice occasionally fail to remember, or pretend not to remember, their own names.)[87] If he does know it, he will have been expected to break it down (aurally) and then build it up syllable by syllable. In the second case, Idleness will have had to do it for him, and make him memorise the result. In order to do this, he or she needs to know how to identify a syllable. The rule of thumb is to count the number of vowels (or diphthongs) in the word, and then divide it up accordingly. Coote explains:

> Brief-lie it is this: Marke how ma-ny vo-wels you haue in a word, and in-to so ma-ny syl-labls must you di-uide that word, as in *strength*, *ti-ed*, *e-spi-ed*, *sub-mis-si-on*, *sa-lu-ta-ti-on*, *re-ge-ne-ra-ti-on*, *ex-tra-or-di-na-ri-ly*, in which sea-uen words, you haue as ma-nie syl-abls as vo-wels, and a-boue sea-uen syl-labls, I re-mem-ber no word.[88]

What a pity he lived too early for *antidisestablishmentarianism*. The rules for doing this seem obvious (a mixture of usage and etymology) but were explained at too much length to reproduce here.[89]

Ignorance should then start at the beginning and proceed according to Kempe's instructions, identifying the first syllable, then adding the second and repeating the two together; then adding the third and repeating the three, and so on. And at the end, he should 'haue all in perfect memorie'.

It doesn't happen. Is there perhaps some problem about the methods Idleness uses? Yet each of them seems to be grounded in fact or accepted procedure: the audience and actors would have recognised where she was coming from. It seems sensible to go through each stage and try to tease out what is going on.

Idleness' segmenting system

Syllable One: Ing *for* Ingnorancy — *and* Ingland

One should point out that *Ingnorancy* is actually not an eccentric form of his name. In fact it is rather learned. The earlier, Middle English, version is *ignorance*, but only because this is derived from the French reflex of the Latin *ignorantia*.[90] Semi-Latinate forms in *-ancy* became more popular from the beginning of the sixteenth century, often replacing earlier ones in *-ance*. *Ignorancy* (which does exist) would be the equivalent of *constancy* from *constantia*, or *infancy* from *infantia*.[91]

However, it is even more learned than that. The etymology of Latin *ignorantia* is from *in* ('not') and *[g]norantia*, from the verb *[g]nosco*, meaning, and actually cognate with, English *know*. *Yngnorancy* is thus etymologically much more accurate.[92] It is used for the name of the allegorical character in Rastell's *Four Elements* (1520), besides other authors not so immediately connected with Redford.[93] *Ingnorancy* may thus be an extremely scholarly name for the ultimately unscholarly person.

Idleness starts her apposing by trying to make him use a well-honed mnemonic technique:

Idlenes	say thy lesson foole
Ingnorance	vpon my thummes

Idellnes	ye upon thy thummes ys not there thy name	
Ingnorance	Yeas[94]	
Idellnes	go to than spell me that same	
	wher was thou borne	
Ingnorance	chwas I bore in ingland mother sed	
Idlenes	in ingland	
Ingnorance	yea	
Idlenes	& whats half inglande	
	heers ing & heers land whats tys	
Ingnorance	whats tys	
Idellnes	whats tys horeson whats tys	
	heers ing & heers land whats tys	
Ingnorance	tys my thum	
Idellnes	thy thum / yng horeson ing / ing /	
Ingnorance	yng / yng / yng / yng /	464

T.W. Baldwin[95] suggests that Idleness puts *Ing* on one of Ignorance's thumbs and *land* on the other. It is possible of course that she puts *Ing* on his thumb and *land* on hers, then moves hers away; or *Ing* on his thumb and *land* on his forefinger. But why use his thumb in the first place?

The hand is an incredibly useful and portable mnemonic device and teaching aid. (Notice that the pictures usually show the left hand, because you use your right hand as a pointer.) We are all familiar with the hand-gestures of rhetoric, as demonstrated by Bulwer in his *Chirologia*.[96] Then there are the hands as abacus (why do we operate on base ten?), mentioned by Quintilian, Pliny, Juvenal, Macrobius, and many others, and popularised in England by Bede.[97] Nowadays the most familiar use of the hand for communication, on our televisions every day, is in signing. The earliest dedicated deaf and dumb alphabet was published by a Spaniard in 1620,[98] but there are earlier alphabetic hands, which were also used for ciphering.[99]

This is only the beginning. The hand was used as an aide-memoire for all kinds of lists. Many were pious in intent. A 1466 Netherlandish woodcut takes you through the five points of the sacrament of Penance. The thumb, always the starting point, reminds you of the will of God. At the forefinger you realise your faults. The middle finger is contrition. The ring finger is confession. The little finger is satisfaction.[100] Or you can summarise the Apostles' Creed on your finger joints.[101]

It is not surprising that it was also used to help children learn Latin grammar. In the early 1500s, the schoolmaster John Holt used the hand to

PLATE 3: Grammatical hand, the six cases of nouns on rings
John Holt *Lac puerorum* (London: Richard Pynson, 1510) sig. [Aiv]r

remind the student of the six cases of the noun, adjective, and pronoun (PLATE 3).[102] They are laid out in a, to us, unexpected order: nominative (thumb), genitive (index finger), dative (middle finger), accusative (ring finger), vocative (little finger), ablative, but this was common in medieval and early Tudor grammars. He gets round the problem of there being six cases by placing the ablative on the palm at the base of the thumb. (Other more lengthy lists can be distributed on the various joints of the fingers.) A charming German fifteenth-century manuscript of a Latin grammar-book for children, the 'Seligenstädter Lateinpädagogik' in Uppsala, uses the hands for a whole range of cases.[103] (The Germans were peculiarly inventive in illustrated children's textbooks.)[104] I am guessing that schoolmasters may well have used it to remind their students of the eight parts of speech[105] as well, though so far I have not found any recorded examples. If they did, then the obvious place for the Noun is the thumb. In the standard grammars based on Donatus, the first part of speech is the Noun, and the examples start off with, 'As y^{e} name of my hand in latyn is, *manus*'.[106] Since the nominative case is on the thumb, it seems likely that the noun would be on the thumb likewise. What is the Latin for noun? *Nomen*. 'A nown is the name of a thyng that is, and may be seen felte / herd or vnderstande.' 'Is not there thy name?'

This all seems even more likely because the choirboys, Redford's actors, were probably taught their chant 'on their thumbs', using the Guidonian hand. Guido d'Arezzo (991/992—after 1033) was the Benedictine monk who invented modern musical notation, the five-line stave, and solfège: *do re mi fa so* — or more precisely *ut re mi fa sol*. The notes of each scale were distributed on the joints of the hand in what to a non-musician seems an extremely complex fashion. The choirmaster could then lead the choir through a piece by pointing to the relevant places.[107] The famous frontispiece to Sternhold's 1563 *Psalmes in foure partes* shows the Protestant paterfamilias leading his family in Psalm-singing with his Guidonian hand.[108]

This also explains why Idleness splits up *Ingnorancy* into five, not four, syllables, as *Ing-no-ran-s-y*: she wants one for each digit.

However, this is beyond Ignorance's ken. His sole response to 'Whats tys?' is 'Tys my thum'. And so, as Baldwin comments, 'one of the many fool-proof contemporary systems of memorization met its Waterloo'.[109]

His English birth is purely a self-deprecatory and possibly traditional dig at the audience. Yngnoraunce from Rastell's *Four Elements* (c.1520) maintains that he has 'Above fyve hundred thowsand' servants in his

retinue 'Here within Ynglande'.[110] It is fortuitous but fun that *Ingnorance* and *Ingland* begin both with the same syllable.

Syllable 2: no!

Idellnes foorth shal I bete thy narse now
Ignorance vmmm
Idellnes shall I not bete thy narse now
Ingnorance: vmmm
Idellnes say no foole say no
Ingnorance noo / noo / noo / noo / noo

This is not the place to go into the great 'corporal punishment versus kindly encouragement' debate of the sixteenth century, with all its horror stories of resultant brain damage or even death.[111] We would call it common assault and child abuse, they would call it correction. Here, Idleness may be inflicting what we might think of as psychological damage on Ignorance, but her laudable intention is to elicit the word 'No'. She associates it with a strong emotion, fear, to make it more memorable. Redford was however of his time: if we are to judge by the poem he wrote for his pupils to sing, 'Wee have a cursyd master | I tell yow all for trew',[112] he expected to inflict a modicum of corporal punishment, and later in the play he has Wit soundly beaten.

Syllables three and four: ran – s

Idellnes forth now what sayth the dog
Ingnorans dog barke
Idlenes dog barke / dog ran horeson dog ran
Ingnorance dog ran horson dog ran dog ran
Idellnes put together ing
Ingnorance yng
Idellnes no
Ignorance noo
Idellnes ran
Ingnorance ran
Idlenes foorth now what seyth the goose
Ingnorance lag lag
Idlenes hys horson hys
Ingnorance hys hys s s s s

This is another of those instances where, according to the literature, Idleness suddenly seems to be over a century ahead of her time. PLATE 4 shows an illustrated alphabet, but with a difference. It is a phonic aid to learning. It relates the sounds of the alphabet to familiar creatures, not by the initial letter of their names ('A is for Ape', as in Bodleian MS Ashmole 1504, the 'Tudor Pattern Book'),[113] but by the sound each one makes. Published in 1658, in Latin and German, it comes from the *Orbis sensualium pictus* ('Image of the Visible World') of the Czech Jan Comenius, celebrated as the father of audio-visual education, and the eponym of the current teacher-training exchange programme of the European Community. It was translated into English by Charles Hoole in 1659.[114] Idleness is using the method about 120 years before Comenius published it and Hoole made it available in English. It seems highly possible, however, that she is employing age-old techniques which only got into the published textbooks later.

The *Orbis pictus* is celebrated as the earliest Children's Encyclopaedia. Perhaps 'picture dictionary' would be a better description: it hovers between the two. Presented as a reading book for little ones, it starts off with the alphabet. The [School]master of the opening dialogue tells his pupil:

> Ante omnia, debes discere simplices *Sonos*, ex quibus constat *Sermo* humanus; quos, *Animalia* sciunt formare, & tua *Lingua* scit imitari, & tua *Manus* potest pingere ... *Alphabetum* vivum & vocale habes hîc.
>
> Before all things, thou oughtest to learn the plain sounds, of which mans spéech consisteth; which living Creatures know how to make, and thy tongue knoweth how to imitate, and thy hand can picture out ... Hear thou hast a lively & vocal Alphabet.[115]

For *vocal*, nowadays, substitute *phonic*. In his Introduction, Comenius, as translated by Hoole, comments:

> *it will afford a Devise for learning to read, more easily than hitherto*; especially having *a Symbolical Alphabet* [*alphabeto symbolico*] set before it, to wit, the Characters of the several Letters, with the Image of that creature, whose voyce that letter goeth about to imitate, pictured by it [*cum appicta animalis istius, cuius vocem litera illa imitatum sit, imagine*]. For the young A b c Scholar will easily remember the force of every Character by the very looking upon the

> Creature, till the imagination being strengthened by use can readily afford [*suppeditet*, 'supply'] all things.[116]

This is not the familiar 'A is an Apple, B is a Ball' picture-alphabet pattern. These were clearly around in the sixteenth century and probably before, though it is difficult to find actual extant examples.[117] (Anything handled by small children tends to disintegrate.) The earliest, indeed the only, sixteenth-century example I can find is in John Hart's *A Methode*, where it is used to illustrate his new phonetic spelling system. His method did not catch on, which is probably why this survived.[118] Hoole himself published a *New Primer* (?1658) with an alphabet in roman capitals and, more conventionally,

> joyned therewith the pictures or images of some things whose names begins with that letter, by which a childs memory may be helped to remember how to call his letters, as A, for an Ape, B. for a Bear, &c. This Hieroglyphicall devise doth so affect Children who are generally forward to communicate what they know)[119] that I have observed them to teach others, that could not so readily learn, to know all the letters in a few houres space, by asking them, what stands A. for? and so concerning other letters backwards and forwards, or as they best liked.[120]

Again, unfortunately no copies of this textbook survive;[121] note however that he suggests this technique has been in use for some time. There are earlier picture alphabets which look at first as if they might be teaching aids, notably the much-illustrated animal one by Johannes Romberch (1533), itself based on one by Jacobus Publicius (c.1475): but they turn out to be memory systems.[122] Publicius also illustrates alphabets where household implements and other common objects are used to replicate the shapes of the letters.[123] Any or all of these may of course have been based on or related to teaching alphabets, which are themselves a form of memory system. Indeed the whole genre of memory training is, as one might expect, closely enmeshed with formal learning. (Note however that there is no suggestion that Idleness is using a physical picture alphabet, merely drawing her teaching method from one.)

Comenius, however, possibly because his book was originally published in two languages, Latin and German, has decided to go for the sound the animal actually makes, rather than the initial letter of its name. 'The Crow crieth á á **A a**', 'The lamb bleateth bé bé **B b**', 'The Mouse chirpeth í í **I i**', and so forth, right down to 'The Breeze or Horse-flie saith

PLATES 4A and B: 'Hear thou hast a lively & vocal Alphabet'
Johann Amos Comenius translated Charles Hoole *Orbis sensualium pictus*

© British Library Board E.2116.(1.)
(London: J. Kirton, 1659) 4–5.

ds ds[124] **Z** *z*'. Rather than eye-reading these sounds, try saying them out loud, phonetically: [a:], [bɛ:], [i:]. The technique assumes that the child is familiar with both the creatures and the sounds (including horseflies), and was probably intended to go further ('thy tongue knoweth how to imitate') than merely to imagine them.[125] A Comenius-oriented infant classroom could have sounded like a well-disciplined farmyard.

This was by no means a new idea. There was a long and parallel literary tradition of confecting lists of the sounds which animals and birds (*voces animantium*, 'sounds of living creatures') made.[126] Some, like the influential lists of Suetonius and Aldhelm, are impressively lengthy.[127] Here is a comparatively short one from Isidore of Seville:

> *Infans vagit, bos mugit, equus hinnit, asinus ragit vel rudit, leo rugit, elephas barrit, sus grunnit, ovis balat, serpens sibilat, rana coaxat, corvus crocitat, grus arsat, milvus jugit, canis baubat, vel latrat, vulpes gannit*.[128]

Since they are mostly onomatopoeic, there seems little point in translating them, but:

> The baby wails, the ox moos, the horse whinnies, the ass *ragit*[129] or brays, the lion roars, the elephant trumpets, the pig grunts, the sheep baas, the serpent hisses, the frog goes 'coax!', the crow croaks, the crane ?whoops,[130] the kite whistles,[131] the dog howls or barks, the fox whimpers/squalls.

To check on these sounds, listen to the samples on the RSPB and British Library websites;[132] then try to transcribe them. You will soon understand why they were classified by the grammarians as *voces confusae*, ones which cannot be recorded in writing.[133]

They were also inevitably used as a memory device: Jacobus Publicius gives a list (not this time connected with a picture alphabet) which includes the alliterating *strix … strid[e]t* ('the night-owl shrieks'), and *crastinat corvus* ('the crow says *cras*! — tomorrow'); *Nonnihil etiam ad hanc rem operis onamathopeya nobis affert id est cognitio verbi e sono vocis ducta … vsu et consuetudine vocis sonitu imagines prebebunt* ('Onomatopoeia, that is the knowledge of a word drawn from the sound of [its] voice/noise,[134] is also extremely effective in this kind of work … through use and habit they will provide images by the sound of their voices').[135] Again, one can imagine them also being used to help children to remember the names and sounds of their ABC. We can cautiously use Comenius as a benchmark for Idleness's use of the technique, even though, as Hoole points out, his

'*Symbolical Alphabet* is fitted for German Children rather than for ours', and not all the images, and possibly the sounds, match the English words.

This appears to be what Idleness wants from Ignorance. It is impossible to tell whether she expects him to have learned this very basic stuff already, and so is reverting to it as familiar ground, or whether she is using it, inappropriately, to represent syllables.

Even at this level, and using this technique, the lesson is not plain sailing. The trouble is, animals can make more than one noise: *canis baubat, vel latrat*. Deciding which one to choose is as much a matter of convention as deciding whether A is for Apple or for Adam. (Both appeared in later picture alphabets, sometimes, suitably, together.)[136] Idleness and Ignorance have a difference of opinion as to what the appropriate sounds are here. He thinks the dog should bark. His version is 'wrong' because he is the pupil and she is the teacher, but in this he actually agrees with most of the literary[137] lists: *Canis latrat*. (English and Latin onomatopoeia differs here.) But she, like Comenius, wants something more aggressive: 'dog ran'. This is not the past tense of the verb *to run*, but a growl: 'grrrrr!' As Comenius's alphabet says, as translated by Hoole, 'The dog grinneth: err **R r**'.[138] To *grin* is 'to snarl', baring your teeth: Huloet's revised *Dictionary* (1572) translates Latin *hirrio* as 'To grinne lyke a madde dogge'.[139] And again, we discover that Idleness is not being random in her choice: there was a long grammatical tradition, apparently separate from the *voces animantium* topos, that dogs said 'Rrrrr'.

> **R** ... *Persius* calleth it the dogges lettre, because it is vttered with a quauering of y^e^ tonge, and semeth to imitate the Arring that a dogge maketh, being angry.[140]

> **R** with the Greekes and Latines termed *Litera canina*, so the Spaniard calleth him *Letra perrina*, the doggish letter, because dogs, in grinning their teeth, when they would bite, sound this letter R.[141]

> **R** is the *Dogs* Letter, and hurreth in the sound: the tongue striking the inner palate, with a trembling about the teeth.[142]

This last is Ben Jonson, who among his other productions also wrote an *English Grammar* with a very competent phonetic introduction on the sounds of the English alphabet. He like Huloet, Minsheu, and others, quotes Persius' *First Satire* as his authority: *Sonat hic de nâre caninâ | Litera* ('Here the dog's letter sounds from the nose' — literally, as Persius is describing the fate of the unwanted poet who cannot gain admittance to a

patron's house, and is left freezing on the doorstep while the watchdog growls at him).[143] Grammarians and lexicographers clearly empathised with this and it became the standard reference.

Idleness's version *ran* sounds like a one-off onomatopoeia for a dog growling. I cannot find any other examples of it. It begins with an **r**; the accepted version uses the same sounds but arranges them the other way round: 'Narre lyke a dogge whiche is madde'.[144] Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* says of the wrathful man as fool, *Rancidulo semper ructatur in ore canina | Litera*, ('the doggish letter continually erupts from[145] his rancid mouth' — note the repeated *rrr*). Barclay translates as

> This man malicious which troubled is with wrath,
> Nought else soundeth but the hoorse letter R *Persius*
> Though all be well, yet he none aunswere hath,
> Saue the dogges letter, glowming with nar nar.[146]

The more common version can start even more aggressively with a **g**, *gnarr*, or with an **s**, *snar*: the frequentative is our *snarl*, though it is not recorded till the later part of the century.[147] There is no real reason to believe that Idleness's version was not equally current, just not recorded.

In the same way, Ignorance thinks the goose goes 'lag lag!', and is probably perfectly correct. The *OED* only records *lag*, much later (1624), as a collective noun meaning 'a flock of geese'. Again, we are used to it the other way round, with the *g* first: as Comenius says, '*Ansur* gingrit *ga ga*', translated by Hoole, 'The Goose gagleth' — as in our familiar *gaggle* of geese.[148] But as with the dog, Idleness wants more aggression: 'hys horson hys' (a command rather than a reprimand?). In Comenius, this sound belongs not to the goose but the snake, which stands for the letter s: '*Serpens sibilat*, the Serpent hisseth'. Grammarians agree.[149] According to Jonson, '**S** Is a most easie, and gentle Letter and softly hisseth against the teeth in the prolation. It is called the *Serpent* Letter, and the chiefe of the *Consonants*'.[150] The grapheme S was thought to emulate the shape of a rearing snake.[151]

But geese also hiss,[152] and possibly more aggressively than serpents. Idleness may well want Ignorance to associate the sound with the goose, not because she is aggressive — by nature she is extremely laid back — but because imitating it gets the child more physically involved, thus involving kinaesthetic memory as well. The same goes for the snarling, rather than the barking, dog.[153] I have no contemporary evidence for the use of this technique: it is merely a speculation born of directing the scene. It is easy

enough to see why, looking at him, she thinks of the goose rather than the serpent. It was a byword for stupidity.[154] Earlier on, she calls him 'goose' (line 446), apparently affectionately, as she calls him 'fool' and 'whoreson'.

Syllable 5: **I**

Idlenes no[w] whois agood boy /
Ingnorance I I I I I I /

This is the one syllable for which Ignorance does not need a prompt. Whether it is strictly speaking the right syllable, or even in context a syllable at all, is a different matter.

However, as a long vowel it is perfectly plausible. The final syllable could take secondary stress, *íng-no-ran-cỳ*: the *-y* would be pronounced long, in this case as whatever stage the reflex of Middle English long **i** had reached, probably [əi].[155] It would thus rhyme with *why* and *sky* — and *I*. Compare the pronunciation of *company* in Henry VIII's

> Pastyme with good *com*panye
> I loue & shall untyll I dye
> gruche who lust, but none denye
> so god be plesyd, þ*us* leue wyll I.[156]

Can Idleness actually be said to have a system? We should remember that, especially in earlier periods, her name is not exclusively synonymous with 'laziness'. The original sense of *idel* in Old English is 'empty'. In the sixteenth century, besides 'slothful', *idle* meant 'Void of any real worth, usefulness, or significance; leading to no solid result; hence, ineffective, worthless, of no value, vain, frivolous, trifling'.[157] She herself comments as she sets herself to play the schoolmistress:

> sum say that Idlenes can not warke
> but those that so say now let them marke
> I trowe they shall see / that Idlenes
> can set her sealfe abowt sum busynes
> or at the lest / ye shall see her tryde
> nother Idle / nor yet well ocupyde[158] 438

Thomas Nashe uses the proverb to characterise Sloth: 'though they bee seldome idle, yet they are neuer well occupied'.[159] One would therefore

expect any system Idleness adopts to be possibly inventive but ultimately pointless.

The lesson has certainly run through a gamut of emotions in its pupil-victim. It moves from willing puzzlement ('Tis my thumb') to fear ('Shall I beat thine arse?'), to aggression (snarl, hiss), to pleasure and a misplaced sense of achievement ('Who's a good boy?'), to reward ('shalt have a new coat'). Theatrically, it creates a satisfying emotional arc; pedagogically, this ought to make it memorable. Ignorance is sent home happy with something to tell his mother. He ought to remember his lesson: but he won't. Why?

To be continued.

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NOTES

Quotations from *Wit and Science* are from the manuscript, British Library Additional MS 15233, checked against the facsimile *The Play of Wit and Science made by Master John Redford* edited John S Farmer (Tudor Facsimile Texts; London and Edinburgh: T.C. and E.C. Jack, 1908). Modern editions supply their own punctuation, whereas the layout in the manuscript is often more revealing about possible delivery. I have merely standardised on italics for the characters' names and missed out the MS / after them. The line numbers are from the edition in Peter Happé *Tudor Interludes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972); scene at pages 198–202.

1. He died in 1547, just after Henry VIII. For further information about Redford, see John Caldwell, 'John Redford', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online at www.oxforddnb.com; 'Redford, John' in *New Grove Dictionary* xxi 54-6; also my article '*Wit and Science*: John Redford' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* edited Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford UP, 2012) 224–45.

2. 'Statutes (not included by Baldock & Lisieux): Epitome of the Statutes, by Dean Colet, 1505–18' in *Registrum Statutorum et Consuetudinum Ecclesiae Cathedralis Sancti Pauli Londiniensis* edited W. Sparrow Simpson (London: Nichols, 1873) chapter 22, 'De Elemosinario'; online at www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=49143; also Thomas Gyles, Indenture of appointment as Almoner and Master of the Choristers, 22 May 1584: *REED: Ecclesiastical London* edited Mary Erler (London: British Library and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008) 158.

   On almonry schools, see Nicholas Orme *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1973) 243–7.

3. For complaints of the bad behaviour and insubordination of the Paul's choirboys, see 'Statutes (not included by Baldock & Lisieux): Visitation by Archbishop Bancroft, 1598', in Simpson *Registrum Statutorum*, 272–80: www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=49149.
4. John Southworth *Fools and Jesters at the English Court* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998; pb edition 2003) 199–213, also 80–3, 139–53, 92–100; Leslie Hotson *Shakespeare's Motley* (London: Hart-Davis, 1952); T.W. Craik *The Tudor Interlude* (Leicester UP, 1962) 66–72.
5. The primary meaning at the period: see *OED* sv *boy* n[1]. 'Innocents' are often represented as having low-level jobs: for example, John in the Hospital in Robert Armin's *Foole vpon foole* (see note 11) is employed to lead 'blind Alice' (sig. F1[v]), and the sexton of Christ's Church sets him to work to ring the bell for prayers and burials (sig. F2[v]).
6. John Redford *The Moral Play of Wit and Science and Early Poetical Miscellanies from an unpublished manuscript* edited James Orchard Halliwell (London: Shakespeare Society, 1848) vi.
7. Sidney Race 'The Moral Play of "Wit and Science"' *Notes and Queries* (March 1953) 96–9. He also adduces this from the number of swear words in the script, saying 'It would be remarkable if an organist of St. Paul's had been responsible for them'. He concludes, '"Wit and Science" is a worthless play, and its performance would never have been possible'.
8. Adolphus William Ward *A History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne*, 2 vols London: Macmillan, 1875) *1* 67.
9. T.W. Baldwin *William Shakspere's Petty School* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943) 12.
10. Jonathan Andrews 'Begging the Question of Idiocy: the definition and socio-cultural meaning of idiocy in Early Modern Britain' *History of Psychiatry* 9 (1998) 65–95, 179–201.
11. *Foole vpon foole, or Six sortes of sottes ... Shewing their liues, humours and behauiours, with their want of wit in their shew of wisdome. Not so strange as true ... Written by one, seeming to haue his mothers witte, when some say he is fild with his fathers fopperie, and hopes he liues not without companie. Clonnico de Curtanio Snuffe* ['Snuff, the Clown of the Curtain (Theatre)] (London: E. Allde for William Ferbrand, 1600). Armin wrote and played the role of John in his *The History of the two Maids of More-clacke, With the life and simple maner of Iohn in the Hospitall* (London: Thomas Archer, 1609).

    Tomaso Garzoni *The hospitall of incurable fooles* translated Edward Blount (London: Edmund Bollifant for Edward Blount, 1600) is dedicated by its translator to 'My most Neere and Capriccious Neighbor, ycleped Iohn

Hodgson, alias Iohn Hatter, or (as some will) Iohn of Paules Churchyard'. It has been suggested that John is the original of the phrase 'as mad as a hatter'.

12. See e.g. Orme *English Schools in the Middle Ages* 60–70; *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001) chapter 7, 'Learning to Read'; Frank Davies *Teaching Reading in Early England* (London: Pitman, 1973).
13. In Ipswich in 1477, the grammar school master had jurisdiction over all the scholar in the town, *exceptis petytis vocatis Apesyes and Songe* ('except the petties called ABCs and Song'): Arthur F. Leach *Educational Charters and Documents 598 to 1909* (Cambridge UP, 1911) 422–3.
14. See Joan Simon *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge UP, 1967) 19–32 for the often acrimonious relationship between these and the growing number of secular schools.
15. Jane Flynn 'The education of choristers in England during the sixteenth century', in *English Choral Practice, 1400–1650* edited John Morehen (Cambridge UP, 1995) 180–99. See Elizabeth Eva Leach 'Grammar and Music in the Medieval Song School' in *Medieval Grammar and the Literary Arts*; School' *New Medieval Literatures 11* (2009) 195–211 for an interesting discussion on the implications of this. Chaucer's 'litel clergeon' in *The Prioress's Tale* was a song-school pupil; *CT* VII 503.
16. In the 1584 contract issued to Thomas Gyles, it is stipulated that when the children 'shall be skilfull in musicke, that they shal be able conveniently to serve in the Churche', they shall be allowed to attend St Paul's School for three hours a day in the summer and two in the winter, 'that they may learne the principles of [Latin] gramm*e*r, and after as they shall be forwardes learne the said Catechismes in Laten which before they learned in Englishe, and other good bookes taught in the said Schole'; *REED: Ecclesiastical London* edited Erler 159. This should be compared with the eight hours a day put in by the full-time grammar school boys.
17. Thomas Morley *A plaine and easie introduction to practicall musicke set downe in forme of a dialogue* (London: P. Short, 1597) 37–8; modern edition by R. Alec Harman (London: Dent, 1952). For a version by Concerto Caledonia with the tenor and bass provided instrumentally, hear *Lion* (Boxwood: BOX 905, July 2007) track 10: see http://www.concal.org/albums.

    Morley's is not the only 'educational' part song. Some time on or after 1540, roughly the same time as *Wit and Science*, Thomas Tallis of the Chapel Royal set to music a sentence, 'O ye little boys of England ...', from the introduction to the latest edition of William Lily's standard *Latin Grammar*, prescribed by the King for use in all grammar schools in the realm. This would be like setting to music a sentence from the National Curriculum. It turns up as a keyboard piece in the Mulliner Book.

18. On the hornbook and its characteristic alphabet, see Andrew W. Tuer *History of the Horn Book* (London: Leadenhall Press, 1897; facsimile reprint New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968, Arno Press, 1979).

19. Sir Thomas Elyot *The boke named the Gouernour* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1537).

20. On William Lily (?1468–1522/3), High Master of St Paul's School, and the complicated history of his Latin *Grammar*, see *ODNB*. It was the royally approved standard grammar for English schools by 1542. His *Libellus de constructione octo partium orationis* (London: Richard Pynson, 1513) was published with a preface by Colet.

21. *The petie schole with an English orthographie, wherin by rules lately prescribed is taught a method to enable both a childe to reade perfectly within one moneth, & also the vnperfect to write English aright* (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1587).

    I discount John Hart's (1569) *Orthography* and (1570) *A Method* (see note 68), because his main interest is in spelling reform, although the methods he showcases are familiar from later works.

22. On Primers, see Charles C. Butterworth *The English primers 1529–1545: their publication and connection with the English Bible and the Reformation in England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953).

23. Juan Luis Vives *Tudor School–Boy Life: the Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives* translated Foster Watson (London: Dent, 1908); Erasmus, *All the familiar colloquies of Desiderius Erasmus, of Roterdam*, translated Nathan Bailey (London: J. Darby and others, 1725) especially 35–55; also *Colloquies* translated Craig R. Thompson (Collected Works of Erasmus 39–40; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); William Horman *Vulgaria viri doctiissime Guil. Hormani Caesariburgensis* (London: Richard Pynson, 1519); *The Vulgaria of John Stanbridge and … of Robert Whittington* edited Beatrice White *EETS* OS 173 (1932); Nicholas Orme 'An Early-Tudor Oxford Schoolbook' *Renaissance Quarterly* 34 (1961) 11–39; William Nelson *A Fifteenth-Century School Book … MS Arundel 249* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956).

24. Brinsley for example refers to 'our ancient Schoole master Master Leech, in his little questions of the Accedence and others'; John Brinsley *Ludus literarius: or, the grammar schoole* (London: Humphrey Lownes for Thomas Man, 1612) 92; John Leech published his *A book of grammar questions, gathered for the plainer teaching of that introduction to grammar which is by publike authoritie, set forth to be taught vnto children commonly called the Accidence* (London: no publisher given, c.1590).

25. Charles Hoole *A new discovery of the old art of teaching schoole* (London: J.T. for Andrew Crook, 1661); according to the title it was 'written about twenty three yeares ago, for the benefit of the Rotherham School where it was first used, and after 14 years trial by diligent practise in London in many particulars enlarged,

and now at last published for the general profit, especially of young schoolemasters', which would make it first written about 1638.

26. See *OED* and *MED* svv *appose*, *oppose*. They are variant forms of the same word, though *appose* was predominant in our period. The non-verbal sense of *oppose* developed later. Outside the schoolroom, its most familiar use is of the Catechism.

27. Brinsley *Ludus literarius* 257.

28. Brinsley *Ludus literarius* 263. He also says, 'by apposing each other ... emulation and fear of discredit, will make them envy who shall excel'; preface, no pagination. See, slightly later, Charles Hoole, who gives a detailed description of the apposing of an entire form in *A new discovery* 35–6.

29. Brinsley *Ludus literarius* 50.

30. John Stanbridge *Vulgaria* in *Vulgaria* edited White, 25; originally published c. 1509 (Stanbridge) and 1523 (Whittington). From the victim's point of view, the word can come to mean 'make someone completely nonplussed', as in Matthew Merrygreek's 'He might appose me now that should aske where I dine'; Nicholas Udall *Ralph Royster Doister* (line 4), or Nichol Newfangle in Ulpian Fulwell's *Like will to like* who when asked what his name is, says, 'By the faith of my body you wil appose me by and by', as his mother never told him.

31. Jan M. Ziolkowski 'Performing Grammar' in *New Medieval Literatures 11: Medieval Grammar and the Literary Arts* edited Chris Cannon, Rita Copeland, and Nicolette Zeeman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009) 159–76.

32. John Brinsley *The posing of the parts. Or, A most plaine and easie way of examining the accidence and grammar, by questions and answeres, arising directly out of the words of the rules* (London, Thomas Man, second edition 1615) 1v–2r. Brinsley, like Leech before him turns the standard textbook by Lily into a dialogue.

    The question and answer format can be used for the student to elicit information and explanations from the master.

33. *The English Schoole-maister teaching all his scholers, the order of distinct reading, and true writing our English tongue* (London: Widow Orwin for Ralph Iackson and Robert Dextar, 1596) 32. Earlier editions on *EEBO* are missing the first gathering containing the title page and the Preface. For these I refer to the 1627 edition: Edmund Coote *The English schoole-master teaching all his schollers, of what age soeuer, the most easie, short, and perfect order of distinct reading, and true writing our English tongue, that hath euer yet beene knowne or published by any. And further also, teacheth a direct course how any vnskilfull person may easily both vnderstand any hard English words, ... Deuised for thy sake, that wantest any part of this skill, by Edward* [sic] *Coote, Master of the Free-schoole in Bury Saint Edmond* (London: George Purslewe for the Company of Stationers, 1627)

On Coote (c.1562–1610), Master of the Grammar School at Bury St Edmunds, see also http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/ret/coote/ret2.html, a full transcription and edition by Ian Lancashire and others (1997) with introduction but no facsimile. Coote's book remained in print for 141 years.

34. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 35–6. Interestingly, we discover that their non-fictional counterparts were also meant to learn this dialogue off by heart. The marginal note says: 'When your Scholers first learne this Chapter, let one read the questions, and another the answer. When your Scholers oppose one the other, let the answerer answer without booke'; Coote *English Schoole-maister* 32.

35. For an account of the process of catechising, see *The vvhole workes of W. Tyndall, Iohn Frith, and Doct. Barnes, three worthy martyrs, and principall teachers of this Churche of England* (London: John Daye, 1573) 276–7. Cranmer's 1548 *Catechism* (London: Nicholas Hill for Walter Lynne, 1548) has an introduction addressed to schoolmasters on how they are to teach it.

36. Brinsley speaks of the shame and loss of reputation

> when I haue taken a great deale of paines, and haue made my schollars very ready in construing & parsing; yet come and examine them in those things a quarter of a yeer after, they will be many of them as though they had neuer learned them, and the best farre to seeke: whereby, when gentlemen or others come in and examine them, or their friends try them at home, in the things which they learned a quarter, or halfe a yeere before; they are ordinarily found so rawe, and to haue so forgotten, that I do receiue great reproach, as though I had taken no paines with them, or as they had profited nothing
>
> *Ludus literarius* 90

He nonetheless suggests a system of annual external examining 'by the Gouernours of the schoole, or some specially appointed thereunto ... That in these their exercises, all may see their profiting, at least in writing, and receiue some other contentment' (282). Coote *English Schoole-maister* (see note 33) suggests that the local Minister should inspect the school from time to time to hear the children pronounce. For an ad hoc apposing for the gratification of the parent, see *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Act 4 Scene 1, described by T.W, Baldwin in *William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* 2 vols (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944) 561–7; also Sir Aminadab's apposing of Pipkin at the dinner table in Thomas Heywood's *A pleasant conceited comedie, wherein is shewed, how a man may chuse a good wife from a bad* (London: Mathew Lawe, 1602): 'yes indeed forsooth I am his scholler, I would you should well thinke I haue profited vnder him too, you shall heare if he will pose me'. Both apposings are disasters.

Rastell also includes a small spelling-lesson joke in passing in *A New Interlude and a Mery of the Nature of the Four Elementis*; in *Three Rastell Plays* edited Richard Axton (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979) 992–1011, and there is a

brief ABC episode in the Cornish *Beunans Meriasek*; *The Life of Meriasek* translated Markham Harris (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1977) 22.

37. See *OED* sv *try* (7). Used in a school context: 'For what Schoolemaster that seeketh by triall to encourage or approue his scholler, and to commend him to others (as the Lord doth his tried seruants) will appose a petite that learneth his A, B, C, in Greeke or in Hebrew?'; *Abrahams tryall a sermon preached at the Spittle, in Easter weeke. Anno Domini 1602. By George Downame Doctor of Diuinity* (London: R. Field and F. Kingston for Humfrey Lownes, 1602) 25–6.

38. Nicholas Orme *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (see note 12) 54–5. See also John Lawson and Harold Silver *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen, 1973) 112–13; they also illustrate an 'Elizabethan dame school' in a woodcut on 138, but give no provenance for it except for 'B.T. Batsford'.

39. The earliest reference in the *OED* to the term is 1841, though there are earlier references to *dames* who taught (1641). There were also schoolmistresses who possibly taught at a more advanced level : Orme *English Schools in the Middle Ages* 54–5; Davies *Teaching Reading* 49–50, 52.

40. Hoole *A new discovery* 28.

41. That is, you can 'hear' your pupils without stopping what you are doing with your hands; Coote *English Schoole-master* (George Purslewe for the Company of Stationers, 1627) sig. A3^{r}.

    Francis Clement (*The petie schole* 9) enthusiastically recommends his own book as an aid to the Parish Clerk, the tailor and the weaver, and adds:

    > The Semstresse she (a Mistresssse now)
    > hath lore as much to reade,
    > As erste she had in many yeares
    > compast by silke and threede.

42. Clement *The petie schole* 4. The boys are monitors from a higher form or ushers.

43. Elyot *The Gouernour* 26^{r-v}.

44. Richard Sherry *A treatise of schemes & tropes* (London: John Day, 1550) sig. [L vij^{v}–L viij^{r}]. Desiderius Erasmus *De pueris ... instituendis* (Strassburg: Christian Egenolph, 1529) fol. 29^{v}: *quidam filios suos mittunt ad ebriosam mulierculam, ut legendi scribendique parent facultatem. Præter naturam est fœminam in masculos habere imperium, tum nihil immitius eo sexu, si qua ira commouerit animum, & incalescit facillimè, uix autem conquiescit, nisi uindicta satiata.* See translation by Beert C. Verstraete in *Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings 4* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1985) 325.

45. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 30–31. Some of his examples are now Standard English; some are older forms. Some of his 'correct' forms are spelling-pronunciations. See E.J. Dobson *English Pronunciation 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957) 36–7.
46. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 34–5. Coote was schoolmaster at Bury St Edmunds, and 'our Clarke' and 'my Dame' presumably had East Anglian accents.
47. Orthoepists manage to suggest that all London English is Standard. They say little to suggest that there was a distinctive lower-class London accent.
48. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 31.
49. Elyot *The Gouernour* 18–19.
50. See Stanley F. Bonner *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (University of California Press, 1977).
51. Quintilian c.35–before 100 AD: *Institutio Oratoria* edited with translation by H.E. Butler, 4 vols (Loeb Classics: London: Heinemann 1933) 32–3 (ivory letter shapes).
52. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 21. See also e.g. Francis Clement *The petie schoole* 20–21.
53. See Martin Irvine *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory 350–1100* (Cambridge UP, 1994) chapter 3, 88–117, especially 91.
54. Donatus 'A letter is the smallest part of articulate utterance' ; L. Holtz: *Donat et la tradition de renseignement grammatical: étude et édition critique* (Paris: CNRS, 1981); online as Donatus *Ars maior* ed. L. Holtz 1981, at http://htl2.linguist.jussieu.fr:8080/CGL/text.jsp?id=T27; this section at http://htl2.linguist.jussieu.fr:8080/CGL/text.jsp?topic=generalia et uaria&ref=603,1–4 H. See Irvine *Making of Textual Culture* 98. Priscian connects it more precisely with writing: *litera est uox, quae scribi potest indiuidua* ('A letter is a sound which can be written as in individual item'.
55. The test-word is *strength*. This is made up only seven phonemes, of course. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 16.
56. On *dictio*, its meanings, and other words for 'word', see Malcolm D. Hyman 'Terms for "Word" in Roman Grammar', online at http://archimedes.fas.harvard.edu/mdh/verba.pdf.
57. This appears to be the wrong way round, but the correct order would not scan.
58. William Hornby *Hornbyes hornbook Iudge not too rashly, till through all you looke; if nothing then doth please you, burne the booke* (London: Aug. Mathewes for Thomas Bayly, 1622) sig. B2v.
59. Nowadays this is known as 'synthetic phonics'. Research suggests that it is the most successful method: see for a succinct survey Steven Hastings 'How

Children Read' *TES* (2 July, 2004**,** updated 11 May, 2008), online at http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=397306. The only sentence with which I would take issue is that 'The phonics movement has roots in the mid-19th century'.

60. Charles Hoole *A new discovery* 19:

> I observed it a great defect in some of Mr. *R.* Scholars, (whose way was to teach to read presently [*immediately*] without any spelling at all) that when they were at a losse about a word, they made an imperfect confused sound, in giving the force of the consonants, which if they once missed they knew not which way to help themselves, to find what the word was.

61. Hoole *A new discovery* 4. The 'English character' is black-letter.
62. This seems to mean 'enunciate' rather than 'give its name', which was recognised to be different.
63. Brinsley *Ludus literarius* 15.
64. Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria 1* 32–3 (Book 1.1.24–5).
65. John Wyclif's *De veritate sacrae scripturae* edited Rudolf Buddensieg, 3 vols (London: Trübner for the Wyclif Society, 1905–7) *1* 44.
66. Richard Sherry *A treatise of schemes & tropes* (see note 44) sig. [Kviij]^{r}.
67. Hoole *A new discovery* 2.
68. William Lily *Institutio compendiaria totius grammaticae* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1540) fols 3^{r}–4^{r}; translation from *An English grammar: or, A plain exposition of Lilie's Grammar in English … Which may serve as a comment for them that learn Lilie's grammar. By R.R. Master in Arts* (London: Felix Kyngston for Mathew Walbank and Laurence Chapman, 1641) 3–4.

    Note that, despite all evidence to the contrary, the English alphabet was treated as if, like the Latin one, it contained all available phonemes. Early spelling reformers like John Hart reacted against this, and provided new graphemes for consonant sounds like [θ], [ð], and [ʃ], but left the vowels alone, despite observing how they were 'abused'; *An Orthographie and a methode or comfortable beginning for all vnlearned, whereby they may be taught to read* (London: Henry Denham, 1570): edited Bror Danielsson in *John Hart's Works on English Orthography and Pronunciation* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1955).. School grammars, even in the seventeenth century, seem never to have realised that the Great Vowel Shift was irrevocably divorcing the long and short vowels.

69. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 35.
70. See for example,

> It is important that the children have plenty of experience of listening to adults modelling oral blending before they are introduced to

> grapheme–phoneme correspondences. For example, when giving children instructions or asking questions the adult can segment the last word into separate phonemes and then immediately blend the sounds together to say the word: (e.g. *It's time to get your c–oa–t, coat!* or *Touch your t–oe–s, toes! Who can touch their f–ee–t, feet?*) Use only single-syllable words for oral blending.
>
> *Letters and Sounds: Principles and practice of high quality phonics — Phase One Teaching Programme* (The National Strategies | Primary; September 2008): online at https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00113-2008 screens 40 (pronunciation) and 48 (blending). Crown Copyright: reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence: (accessed December 2012). The objectives of this stage are to 'develop oral blending and segmenting of sounds in words'. The overall aims of this phase include getting the children to:
>
> discriminate phonemes;
>
> reproduce audibly the phonemes they hear, in order, all through the word;
>
> use sound-talk to segment words into phonemes
>
> *Letters and Sounds* screen 7.

Apart from the terminology, sixteenth-century teachers would easily recognise these aims.

71. The word 'spelling' is not mentioned in the 2008 brochure, probably because this is associated nowadays with reading and writing.

72. A classically difficult question, marked out as an exception by all the grammar books.

73. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 32.

74. Ben Jonson *The English Grammar* in *The Workes of Beniamin Ionsone* (London : John Beale, James Dawson, Bernard Alsop, and Thomas Fawcet for Richard Meighen and Thomas Walkley, 1640/1641) 35 (work has separate pagination).

75. Is this the source of the ogre's cry?
> Child Roland to the dark tower came,
> His word was still, 'Fie, foh, and fum,
> I smell the blood of a British man'. *King Lear* Act 3 scene 4.

76. He has just suggested that they should learn their vowels by repeating them 'after the manner of fiue bels', which seems to suggest chanting them in a scale: *do re mi fa so*; Brinsley *Ludus literarius* 19.

77. Brinsley *Ludus literarius* 19.

78. Coote *English Schoole-maister* 16.

79. *The primer in English moste necessary for the educacyon of chyldren abstracted oute of the manuall of prayers or primer in Englishe and laten, set forth by Ihon laet byshop of*

Rochester, at the commaundement of the ryght honorable, Lord Thomas Crumwell, lord priuie seale, vicegerent to the Kynges hyghnes (London: John Maylart for John Waylande, 1539?).

A specially customised version is *The abc with the Pater noster Aue, Credo, and .x. commaundementes in Englysshe newly translated and set forth, at the kyngs most gracyouse commaundement* (London: Richard Lant, c. 1545).

The inventory of Rastell's stock at his death in 1538 included 90 copies of 'the abces with sillables'; R.J. Roberts 'John Rastell's Inventory of 1538' *Library* Series 6 volume 1 (1979) 34–42, at 36, quoted in *Three Rastell Plays* edited Axton (see note 36) 135, note to *Four Elements* line 1002.

80. Brinsley *Ludus literarius* 20.

81. Mass-market printed Primers with the major prayers in English, sometimes stated to be specially for children, become more frequent from the 1530s, and in 1539 John Wayland specifically makes the link between the Primer and teaching: 'I Haue here set forth (moost deare reader) a rude worke, whome it hath pleased me to cal the manual of prayers, because it is so commenly had in hande wyth the people, which before was called the prymer, bycause (I suppose) þat it is the fyrst boke that þe tender youth was instructed in'; *The manual of prayers or the prymer in Englysh & Laten set out at length … by Ihon by Goddes grace, at the Kynges callyng, Byshoppe of Rochester at the comaun demente [sic] of the ryghte honorable lorde Thomas Crumwell, lorde priuie seale, vicegerent to the Kynges hyghnes* (London: John Wayland, 1539) sig. [Aviij]^{v}.

82. *This prymer of salysbury vse is set out a long vvout ony serchyng vvith many prayers, and godly pyctures in the kalender in the matyns of our lady, in the hours of the crosse, in the vii. psalmes, and in the dyinge* (Parys: François Regnault, 1532).

83. Edward King and Martyr.

84. The Annunciation. Note the nice pun on 'send him to bed', which is then subverted by the rest of *Bethlehem*, pronounced 'Bedlam'.

85. Coote *English schoole-master* 13.

86. William Kempe *The education of children in learning declared by the dignitie, vtilitie, and method thereof. Meete to be knowne, and practised aswell of parents as schoolmaisters* (London: Thomas Orwin for John Porter and Thomas Gubbin, 1588) sig. F2^{v}.

87. John Phillip *The Play Of Patient Grissell* (London: Thomas Colwell, ?1565) edited R.B. McKerrow and W.W.Greg (Malone Society Reprints 10; London: Malone Society, 1909) lines 99–114: Politic Persuasion goes on a long hunt for his name before coming up with it triumphantly; Nichol Newfangle in Ulpian Fulwell's *Like will to like* lines 759–60; Ill Report in Thomas Garter's *Virtuous and Godly Susanna* line 505.

88. Coote *English schoole-maister* 16.

89. See e.g. Hoole *A new discovery* 17.

90. See *OED* svv *ignorance*, *ignorancy*.

91. *OED* sv *-ancy*. A kind of accommodation has since taken place between the two endings: the *OED* defines the modern use of forms in *-ancy* as 'expressing more distinctly the sense of *quality*, *state*, or *condition* ... as distinct from the sense of *action* or *process*, regularly expressed by the French form *-ance*'. This would seem to suggest that we should have kept *ignorancy*.

92. Especially if you know Greek γιγνωσκω. It should not of course be pronounced with an [ɪŋ], but it is extremely difficult for the English not to: Latin got rid of the first *n* presumably because it produced an awkward consonant cluster. See *OED* sv *ignorance*.

93. John Rastell *A New Interlude and a Mery of the Nature of the Four Elementis* in *Three Rastell Plays* edited Axton (see note 36) lines 1135–end.

94. *OED* sv *yes*: 'Formerly usually more emphatic than *yea* or *ay*'. See also 2(a): 'In answer to a question involving a negative. Formerly regularly used thus (and as in b) in distinction from *yea* (see *yea* adv. 1); the distinction became obsolete soon after 1600, and since then *yes* has been the ordinary affirmative response word in reply to any question positive or negative, and *yea* has become archaic.'

95. Baldwin *William Shakspere's Petty School* 15.

96. John Bulwer *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand. Composed of the speaking motions, and discoursing gestures thereof. Whereunto is added Chironomia: or, the art of manuall rhetoricke ...* (London: Thomas Harper, 1644).

97. Venerable Bede *De temporum ratione* *PL 90* chapter 1 *De Computo vel loquela digitorum* cols 295–8; ?Pseudo Bede *De loquela per gestum digitorum et temporum ratione libellus*, *PL 90* cols 685–98 includes commentary by Byrhtferth of Ramsey. For computation, see Sachiko Kusukawa 'A Manual Computer for Reckoning Time' in Claire Richter Sherman *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Trout Gallery Dickinson College with the Folger Shakespeare Library; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000) 28-34.

98. Juan Pablo Bonet *Reduction de las letras y arte para enseñar a ablar los mudos* (Madrid: Francisco Abarca de Angulo, 1620); colour facsimile online at http://bibliotecadigitalhispanica.bne.es under Obras Maestras > Filologia. Bulwer also published a deaf-and-dumb manual, *Philocophus: or, the deafe and dumbe mans friend* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1648).

99. See Sherman *Writing on Hands* 186–9. A complicated early version involved using Bede's numbers to refer to letters of the alphabet: so 1 would be A, 2 would be B, and so on.

100. Sherman *Writing on Hands* 64–5. She does not actually identify the image as the sacrament of penance, calling it 'The Hand as the Mirror of Salvation'.

101. Sherman *Writing on Hands* 153–5: woodcut from Stephan Fridolin's *Schatzbehalter der wahren Reichtümer des Heils* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1491) workshop of Wilhelm Pleydenwurff and Michael Wolgemut.

102. *Lac puerorum M. Holti anglice mylke for children* (London: Richard Pynson, 1510) sig. [Aiv]r. Earlier copies printed in Antwerp (from 1507, possibly 1505) for the English market. A number survive, showing signs of hard schoolboy use. On Holt, see Nicholas Orme 'John Holt: Tudor Schoolmaster and Grammarian' *The Library, series 6, 18/4* (December 1996) 283–305. He was a master at Magdalen College School, then went on to work for the Archbishop of Canterbury, and ended up as Latin master to the Prince of Wales, later Henry VIII, before dying in 1504. He was a friend of More.

103. *Die ‚Seligenstädter Lateinpädagogik': eine illustrierte Lateingrammatik aus dem deutschen Frühhumanismus: die Handschrift C678 der Universitätsbibliothek zu Uppsala* edited Monika Asztalos and others, 2 vols (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets akademien, 1989). Many thanks to Professor Asztalos for answering my questions on the illustrations.

104. See, for example, Matthias Ringmann (Philesius Vogesigena) *Grammatica figurata* (St. Die: Walther Ludd, 1509; facsimile edition Strassburg: Heitz, 1905), where Donatus is turned into a game of cards. The Noun is a parson; the Interjection a Fool.

105. John Colet and William Lily *Rudimenta grammatices et docendi methodus non tam scholae Gypsuichianae per reuerendissimum. D. Thomam cardinalem Ebor. feliciter institutae quam omnibus aliis totius Anglie scholis prescripta* (London: Peter Treveris, 1529) sig. Cjr:

In speche be these .viij. partes folowynge:

	Nowne		Aduerbe
Foure de=	Pronowne	Foure vn=	Coniunction
clinable	Verbe	declinable	Preposition
	Participle		Interiection.

Noun includes 'noun substantive' and 'noun adjective'.

106. Colet and Lily *Rudimenta grammatices* sig. Cjr.

107. See Susan Forscher Weiss 'The Singing Hand' in Sherman *Writing on Hands* 33–45. For a demonstration of this technique by Professor William Mahrt at the CMAA/Ward Center Sacred Music Colloquium in June 2006, using the Guidonian hand on the *Ut queant laxis*, the eighth-century hymn to St. John the Baptist from which the sequence *ut re mi fa sol* is taken, go to www.youtube.com/embed/RlleweQuq14 (uploaded by musicasacra, accessed 10.01.2013).

This familiar dialogue from *The Taming of the Shrew* suggests that Hortensio is seizing the opportunity to 'write' the scale out on Bianca's hand:

Gam ut I am the ground of all accord,
A re to plead Hortensio's passion;
B mi, Bianca, take him for thy lord,
C fa ut that loves with all affection.
D sol re one clef, two notes have I.
E la mi have pity, or I die.

108. Thomas Sternhold *Tenor of the whole psalmes in foure partes whiche may be song to al musicall instrumentes, set forth for the encrease of vertue: and abolishyng of other vayne and triflyng ballades* (London: John Day, 1563) frontispiece.

109. *Shakspere's Petty School* 15.

110. Rastell *The Four Elementis* (see note 36) lines 1145–50.

111. E.g. Erasmus *De pueris … instituendis* 31r–v, 33r–34r, translated Sherry *A treatise of schemes & tropes* (see note 44) sigs Miv–Miiv, Mvr–Mviv. On beating in schools and at home, see Orme *English Schools in the Middle Ages* 127–9; *Medieval Children* 84–5 and 154–6; and the *Vulgaria*, *passim*.

112. Edited from BL Add. MS 15233, with modern punctuation and some mistranscriptions, by James Orchard Halliwell in *The Moral Play of Wit and Science and Early Poetical Miscellanies* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1848) 62–5.

113. See note 117.

114. Johan Amos Com[m]enius *Orbis sensualium pictus. Hoc est, Omnium fundamentalium in Mundo Rerum, & in vitâ Actionum, Pictura & Nomenclatura. Joh. Amos Commenius's Visible World. Or, A Picture and Nomenclature of all the chief things that are in the World, and of Mens Employments therein. A Work newly written by the Author in Latine, and High-Dutch (being one of his last Essays, the most suitable to Children's capacities of any that he hath hitherto made) & translated into English, by Charles Hoole …* (London: J. Kirton, 1659).

115. Comenius *Orbis pictus* 3; translation by Hoole. *Hear* is the spelling given.

116. Introduction (unpaginated), sig A4v. Comenius also suggests that the child should draw the animal, providing further reinforcement. Latin text from http://www.grexlat.com/biblio/comenius/index.html.

117. The status of pattern books such as the Macclesfield Alphabet Book — facsimile edited Christopher Hamel and Patricia Lovett, (London: British Library, 2010) — and Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1504 is uncertain. Ashmole 1504 (East Anglian?, c 1520) used to be advertised as a child's picture alphabet, presumably because of its delightfully naïve style, but is now described as 'The Tudor Pattern Book' (online images from http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/ODLodl~1~1). The animal alphabet starts on fol. 30r with Aspida (a heavy crow-like creature with elephantine feet) and Ape, with an Ass thrown in for good measure. It is more of a catalogue than a picture alphabet, and seems to be based partly on a Latin

original, though other parts are definitely English, as with 'Honicorn' (unicorn) under H. On alphabet pattern books, see Jonathan J.G. Alexander *Medieval Illuminators and their Methods of Work* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1992) 126–7.

Danièle Alexandre-Bidon 'La lettre volée: Apprendre à lire à l'enfant au Moyen Age' *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 44e Année, No. 4 (1989) 953–992 purports to show examples. She casts her net very widely, and none of the illustrated alphabets she shows seem to have been specifically intended for children; for example, the Gothic alphabet of Mary of Burgundy, written in elaborate cadels, is hardly a child's ABC. The section initials of the *Omne Bonum* manuscript edited by Lucy Freeman Sandler (2 vols; London: Harvey Miller, 1996) have a mnemonic but not a direct teaching function.

Hoole talks about teachers (or parents) who have made pictures 'and by each picture have made three sorts of that letter, with which its name beginneth', and others who have 'had pictures and letters printed in this manner on the back side of a pack of cards'. It is possible that most of them were homemade and went the way of all toys: Hoole *A new discovery* 7–8.

118. Hart *A methode* sigs Bj^{v}–Bij^{r}; *John Hart's Works on English Orthography and Pronunciation* edited Danielsson (see note 68) 239, 241. It is arranged according to the type of sound, vowels first, then 'semivowels' (liquids and nasals), and so forth, according to the familiar pattern of Priscian.

119. This is the closing of a parenthesis that started well before the beginning of the quotation.

120. Hoole *A new discovery* 9–10.

121. On the mystery of Hoole's *New Primer, see* W. T Freemantle, *A Bibliography of Sheffield and Vicinity: Section I, To the end of 1700* (Sheffield: Pawson and Brailsford, 1911) 105.

122. Johannes Romberch de Kyrspe *Congestorium artificiose memorie* (Venice: Melchiorre Sessa, 1533) fol. 54r; online at the BN's 'gallica' website at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k594964/f107.image.r=.langEN. Jacobus Publicius *Ars memorativa* is printed at the end of his *Institutiones oratoriae* (Venice: Ratdolt, 30.11.1482); the image on fol. 63^{r} is reproduced online at http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0006/bsb00060375/image_129; it can also be downloaded from http://archive.org/details/OEXV540_P4. For Jacobus Publicius *Ars memorativa*, see *The Medieval Craft of Memory* edited Mary Carruthers and Jan M Ziolkowski (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, pb 2004) 226–54; on the alphabet see 229–30; also Linda Bolzoni *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* translated Jeremy Parzen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 98-100.

123. Publicius *Ars memorativa* fols 58^{v}–61^{v}.

124. The **ds** shows voicing of the sibilant [s] to [z].

125. Comenius makes it clear that the child is expected to copy the pictures.

126. On the genre, see D. Thomas Benediktson 'Cambridge University Library L1 1 14, f. 46^{r-v}: a late medieval natural scientist at work' *Neophilologus* 86 (2002) 171–7.

127. Suetonius has 52 creatures, and more sounds; Aldhelm 76 creatures and more sounds: *C. Suetonii Tranquilli Reliquiae* ed Augustus Reifferscheid (Leipzig: Teubner, 1860) 247–54; Aldhelm *Liber de septenario, et de metris, aenigmatibus ac pedum regulis*, *PL* 89 cols 219–20.

128. Isidore of Seville (Isidorus Hispalensis) *Differentiarum sive de proprietate sermonum libri duo*, *PL* 83 column 70; Book 1, 75, 607

129. I cannot find an independent example of this.

130. *Medieval Latin Word List* sv *arso* 'to make a rattling noise like a stork': seventh century.

131. For *iugit*, the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* cautiously gives 'utters its natural cry'. The red kite definitely whistles: http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/r/redkite/index.aspx. The American white-tailed kite, however, 'kewts', which the Cornell Ornithology Lab website describes as 'a whistled yelp': presumably *iugit* is trying to reproduce the [ju] sound which in English is spelt *ew*: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/White-tailed_Kite/sounds.

132. http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/c/crane/index.aspx
http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/r/raven/index.aspx
http://www.bl.uk/listentonature/main.html
http://www.angelfire.com/ar2/thefoxden/sounds.html

133. See Elizabeth Eva Leach 'Grammar and Music in the Medieval Song School' *New Medieval Literatures 11* (2009) 195–211, at 196–7; Martin Irvine *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory 350–1100* (Cambridge UP, 1994) 88–101.

134. Not a very clear definition. Isidore says *Onomatopoeia est nomen adfictum ad imitandum sonum vocis confusae, ut 'stridor valvarum', 'hinnitu equorum', 'mugitus boum', 'balatus ovium'*; *Etymologiarum Libri* edited W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957 reprint of 1911) Book 1, 37, 14.

135. Jacobus Publicius *Ars memorativa* (see note 122) fol. 64^{r}; translation adapted from *The Medieval Craft of Memory* 241–2.

136. Notably in *The New England Primer*, illustrating 'In Adam's Fall | We sinned all'. Text of the 1781 edition (Glasgow: John and William Shaw) available on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*.

137. I call them 'literary', but they are also used by grammarians and linguistic theorists.

138. In the Latin version, *Canis ringitur*. *Ringor* is 'to show the teeth', past participle *rictus*.

139. Richard Huloet *Huloets dictionarie newelye corrected, amended, set in order and enlarged … By Iohn Higgins late student in Oxeforde* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1572), under R. ANTE A; also '*Grinne lyke a dogge*. Ringo'.

140. Huloet *Dictionarie* under R. See also John Baret *An aluearie or quadruple dictionarie … Newlie enriched with varietie of wordes, phrases, prouerbs, and diuers lightsome obseruations of grammar* (London: Henry Denham, 1580) under R: 'women in France, and especially the fine dames of Parise (belike being the disciples of Persius, which calleth *R literam caninam*) are so deintie mouthed, that they cannot abide the iarring sound of R, but alwaies turne it into z'. This is an extended version of the original 1574 edition.

141. Richard Percival revised John Minsheu *A Spanish grammar, first collected and published by Richard Perciuale Gent. Now augmented and increased … by Iohn Minsheu professor of languages in London …* (London: Edmund Bollifant, 1599) 8.

142. Ben Jonson *The English Grammar* in *The Workes of Beniamin Ionsone* (London : John Beale, James Dawson, Bernard Alsop, and Thomas Fawcet for Richard Meighen and Thomas Walkley, 1640/1641]) 47 (work has separate pagination).

143. Persius *Satire I*, lines 109–10: *vide sis, ne maiorum tibi forte | Limina frigescant; sonat hic de nare canina | Littera*; *A. Persii Flacci satirarum liber* edited Carl Friedrich Hermann (Leipzig: Teubner, 1854 reprint 1900) 4.

144. Huloet *Dictionarie* under N. See *OED* sv *narr*, v. This is now Northern dialect.

145. *Ructatur* (deponent) is strictly speaking 'belches'.

146. Sebastian Brant translated and adapted Alexander Barclay *Stultifera nauis … The ship of fooles* (London: John Cawood, [1570]) fol. 68^{v} (Latin), 69^{r} (English). It is probably an accident that the word *narr* is also the word for 'fool' in German.

147. See *OED* under all these verbs.

148. See *OED* svv *gaggle* n and v; *MED* sv *gagelyn*.

149. Though not as universally as for the dog and **r**.

150. Jonson *Grammar* 47.

151. Percival revised Minsheu *Spanish grammar* 8; 'S With *x. z.* and *ç.* are pronounced (although the one more plaine and sounding, and the rest lesse) by putting the tongue to the roofe of the mouth, and then hissing out the voice with the lips open as a snake, and therfore the Greekes called this letter *S* by that hissing name, as also made it in fashion double as a snake, with his head lifted vp, accordingly is it made in Latine, Italian, and Spanish. In Spanish these letters are called *Culebrinas*, which is snakie, of *Culébra*, a snake, which

vseth hissing'. Presumably he is talking about the Greek final sigma, and the Latin-derived western s.

152. *OED* and *MED* sv *hiss*, n. and v. The *OED* definition starts 'To make the sharp spirant sound emitted by certain animals, as geese and serpents'.

153. Kinaesthesia is one of the learning styles in the Fleming VA[R]K model. I do not know enough about how it might work in this context, only that it appears plausible.

154. See *OED* and *MED* svv *goose*, *goosish*. E.g. Cranmer 'shal I stand stil like a goose, or a foole, with my finger in my mouth? Shall I be such an ydiot & diserde ...?' *Certayne sermons, or homelies appoynted by the kynges Maiestie, to be declared and redde, by all persones, vicars, or curates, euery Sondaye in their churches, where they haue cure* (London: Richard Grafton, 1547) sig. y ij^{v}.

155. On secondary stress, and the reflex of ME long *i*, see E.J. Dobson *English Pronunciation 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957) §265, 275 and § 137.

156. Online at http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/henryviii/musspowor/pastime/index.html.

157. *OED* sv *idle*.

158. Idleness in *The Marriage of Wit and Science* edited Lennam, lines 1181–2, repeats this saying, but later in the scene, after daubing Wit's face black, remarking 'the proverbe is verified | I am neither idle, nor yet well occupied'. The proverb is well-instanced in the sixteenth century, as a trawl through *EEBO* will confirm. It usually means 'frittering your time away', but in Thomas *Harman's A caueat or warening, for common cursetors vulgarely called vagabones* (London: 1567) it refers to thieves, 'in the night they be not idle neither as y^{e} common saying is (wel occupied)'. Sometimes the two are opposed, as in Huloet's definition of '*Woorkeman woorking easely, or scantly, more idle then well occupied.* Parcus *opera*'; *Dictionarie* (1572) under *W ante O*.

159. *Martins months minde that is, a certaine report, and true description of the death, and funeralls, of olde Martin Marreprelate* (London: Thomas Orwin, 1589) sig. A3^{r}.