

# National Education Association English Round Table of the High School Section

## To Principals of High Schools and Teachers of English in High Schools

At the meeting of the English Round Table of the National Education Association, in Boston, July 1, 1910, it was decided to appoint a committee to lay before the College Entrance Examination Board the views of the high school principals and teachers of the country in regard to the present entrance requirements in English and the examinations set upon them. The members of that committee so far appointed are: Charles Swain Thomas, Head of the Department of English in the Newton (Mass.) High School; Benjamin A. Heydrick, Head of the Department of English in the High School of Commerce in New York; Henry B. Dewey, State Superintendent of Schools, Olympia, Washington; Edwin L. Miller, Assistant Principal of the Central High School, Detroit, Michigan; Mrs. Henry Hulst, Head of the Department of English in the Grand Rapids (Mich.) High School; Rueben Post Halleck, Principal of the Male High School, Louisville Kentucky; Miss Fannie W. McLean, Head of the Department of English in the Berkeley (Cal.) High School; and James Fleming Hosis, Head of the Department of English in the Chicago Teachers College.

The purpose of the committee is to learn from those best qualified to say, whether the present system of entrance requirements and examinations in English fosters the best sort of English work in the high school, and what changes, if any, should be urged upon the College Entrance Examination Board through its sub-committee on English and its Board of Review. The supreme consideration is to unite the teachers of the country in support of sound principles of secondary education, in order that boys and girls passing through high school may receive the kind of training in English best fitted to develop them and to prepare them for life.

To accomplish this purpose, it is necessary to enlist the sympathetic interest of supervisors, parents, and college examiners and instructors, as well as that of high school teachers. It is proposed, therefore, that every association of teachers of parents in the country, likely to be able to assist in reaching a consensus and decision on the questions at issue, be asked to appoint a co-operating committee, to gather evidence, direct discussion, and report conclusions to the committee of the Round Table, which shall compile

and edit a final report. This central committee will report progress at the next annual meeting of the National Education Association, and hopes to complete the work within the following year.

The central committee, in order to get this work under way in a definite fashion, makes the following suggestions

### To Co-operating Committees

Each co-operating committee should secure, as soon as possible, the judgment of its constituency upon the main question: Do the college entrance requirements in English, as at present administered foster the best kind of English work in the high schools? If not, what changes should be made? The results of correspondence, discussion, and conference should be formulated and placed in the hands of the central committee, together with a digest of the evidence upon which each conclusion is based.

The following questions, particularly those under 1, 2, and 3, should be carefully considered:

#### 1. The Influence of the Uniform College Entrance Requirements in English upon the High School.

- a) What is the influence of these requirements upon the high school course in English? In what field is the influence most felt?
- b) What is the influence of these requirements upon methods of teaching English in the high school?
- c) What is the influence of these requirements upon the pupil's attitude toward his English work?
- d) What changes, if any, would you make (1) in the high school course in English and (2) in methods of teaching English in the high school if the problem of preparation for college were eliminated?
- e) Do you offer the same courses to your college and your non-college group? Why or why not?
- f) Are certain high schools affected in special ways by the entrance requirements or examinations of particular colleges? If so, specify.

#### 2. The High School Course in English.

- a) Is the following statement of the aims of the high school course in English satisfactory? If not, how should it be modified?

"The aim of the high school course in grammar and composition is to develop the power of the pupil to express the ideas that come to him from the whole range of his experience. The aim of the high school course in literature is to develop in the pupil (1) a liking for good reading and (2) the power to understand and appreciate it."

- b) What principles should be followed (1) in the selection of reading for the high school course in literature and (2) in distributing the reading throughout the course? Should the list be (1) prescribed, (2) advisory, or (3)

open? Do the Uniform Requirements include too many books? too few? sufficient variety of type? Should the distinction between reading and study be dropped? What provision should be made for the study of the history of literature?

### 3. Entrance to College.

a) Would the following specifications provide a suitable test of efficiency in English upon graduation from high school and entrance to college?

(1) A test of the pupil's power of written expression by one or more compositions on subjects suggested by the personal experience or the general information of the candidate.

(2) A test of the range and quality of the reading of the pupil and of his power of literary appreciation by means of:

(a) The answering of a number of simple, suggestive questions on standard texts not previously prescribed.

(b) The explanation of two out of three or four passages of prose or poetry of ordinary difficulty, selected from books not previously prescribed.

(3) A test of the candidate's power of oral expression by reading aloud and by conversing.

b) Should a high school diploma be given to a pupil whose deficiencies in English are such as to prevent his being recommended for admission to college?

c) Which is preferable, certification or uniform examinations for entrance to college? Why? Is there a third method, better than either?

d) How should the National Conference on College Entrance Requirements and Examinations be constituted?

4. What books or articles may be cited as expressing sound views (a) of the present situation with regard to high school English? (b) of the high school course in English and of methods of teaching English in the high school? (Give full library reference in each case.)

5. What additional matter or matters do you wish to have laid before the various co-operating committees throughout the country? (Please answer this question very soon.)

Note.—To be available, reports and suggestions from co-operating committees must be in the hands of the central committee not later than January 10, 1912. Correspond with the member nearest you (see addresses above).

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April 25, 1911