

125 Years of Teaching Advice

The good, the bad, and the just plain bizarre—125 gems from our archives.

BY TEACHER MAGAZINE STAFF

We can't tell you how much fun we had exploring our magazine's archives—it was like a favorite childhood dream, where you stumble upon the best time capsule ever. We laughed (and cringed) at some of the ads—who knew that Coke was a health drink or that you were expected to teach gum massage along with fractions? We squirmed over the “charms” female teachers were expected to cultivate, and we loved seeing fashions over the decades! All that aside, what we were most amazed by were the teachers themselves, whose voices were a part of the magazine from its earliest days. They shared their best ideas, they helped families in hard times, they consistently talked of improving their craft. Just as you do today. Happy reading!

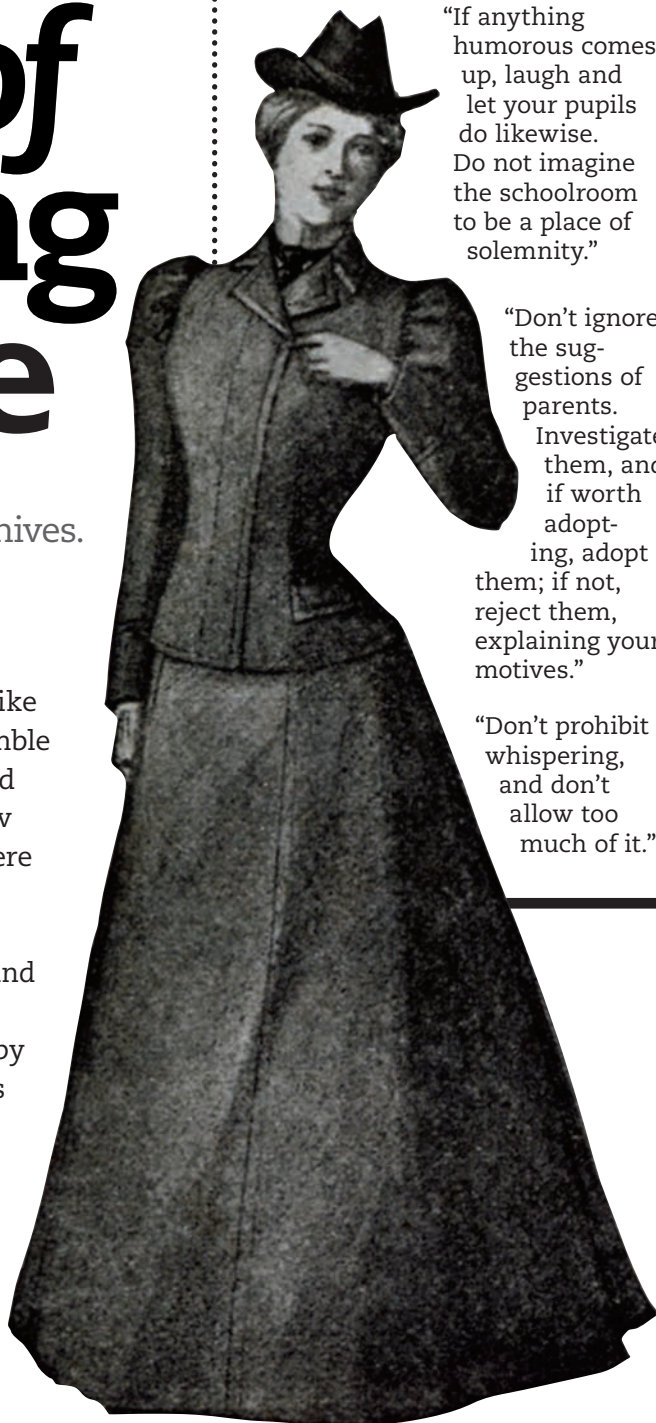
4 TIPS FROM OUR FIRST ISSUE

“The system of ‘cramming’... transforms a bright boy or girl into a temporary parrot...little more than a species of glib and empty-headed gabble.”

“If anything humorous comes up, laugh and let your pupils do likewise. Do not imagine the schoolroom to be a place of solemnity.”

“Don't ignore the suggestions of parents. Investigate them, and if worth adopting, adopt them; if not, reject them, explaining your motives.”

“Don't prohibit whispering, and don't allow too much of it.”



5

Things That Also Premiered in 1891



1

The Wrigley Company

2

Basketball

3

Carnegie Hall (then called Music Hall)

4

U.S. Court of Appeals

5

Thomas Edison's Kinetoscope

8 BITS OF FASHION ADVICE

"No teacher can afford to be dowdy. Well-dressed hair and a smile will make calico look like silk and satin."

—1894

"You are a lady before you are a teacher. In your pocket should be a pure Irish linen hand-stitched handkerchief."

—1903

"Colored smocks with suitable necklines and pockets large enough to hold pencils and notebooks are proper professional dress."

—1926

"Plain clothes and costume jewelry go together, like lobster and lemon butter. Garnish sparingly."

—1941

"The purpose of makeup [is] to enhance what nature gave, or to



"Wear clothes in which you feel comfortable and attractive...for short skirts, practice bending, sitting, and stretching in front of a full-length mirror. In some school districts, pantsuits are allowed. Good taste is always right."

—1973

put there subtly what nature overlooked."

—1941

"For messy tasks, look chic and professional in blue jeans with knee patches and

a grandfather's shirt."

—1976

"Restore gray hair to youthful gloss by combing it with the Ideal Hair Dyeing Comb."

—1905



Way Back in 1794... (from our 1894 issue)

Tomatoes were called love apples and thought to be poisonous.

There was not a public library in the United States.

Schoolrooms [often lacked] maps, charts, or globes.

Webster's spelling book was just 11 years old, and in many quarters was looked on as a startling innovation.

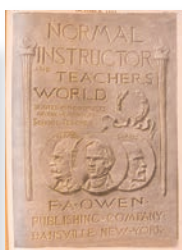
Umm...What?!

"Of 650 women who took teachers' examinations in Chicago, more than 100 who were inclined to scrawniness sought to gain [plumpness]." —1904

7 Names We've Gone By



Normal Instructor (1891)



Normal Instructor and Teachers World (early 1900s)



Normal Instructor and Primary Plans (1920s)



The Instructor (1930s)



Instructor and Teacher (1980s)



Instructor (1990)



Scholastic Teacher (2015)

PARENT PROTOCOL

"Visit families and invite them to visit the school." —1891

"Do not share information that a parent might use to taunt a child. When you know the parent better, this information might be shared constructively." —1961

"Ask the child to tell [her] story in front of the parent: I tell parents, 'I'll believe half of what

they say about you if you believe half of what they say about me.'" —2014



A PENNY SAVED...

"Vaseline jars make handy receptacles for holding paste. If desired add two drops of oil of wintergreen and the paste will keep indefinitely." —1916

"Conservation is patriotic, and each of us can do something about it. Learn or create some slogans. Start a Clean Plate Club. Collect wastepaper." —1937

"Several ten-quart tomato baskets make wonderful toy carriers for my kindergarten. A little paint and some decals and they are ready to hold Tinker Toys, car models, games, and about anything you wish." —1966

CHARM SCHOOL: TIPS OF THE TIMES

"Choose the charms you wish to hunt. Kindly laughs, sympathetic understanding, generous helpfulness, good-humored conduct, sincere compliments, interested listening, and interesting talking always make good charm hunting." —1935

"Change your attitude toward the weather, and make the children change theirs. Because it inconveniences us slightly, upsets our plans, or spots our silks, why should we selfishly consider it 'nasty weather?' —1916

"The first essential in educating children to correct speech is that the teacher herself use pure,

simple English, never stilted, pretentious or 'school-ma'ammy.'" —1926

"It is never wise to attempt to present a new song to your class until you are perfectly familiar with the words and music yourself. If you are

not sufficiently well prepared to look at the children as you sing, it is not half so easy to capture and hold their attention." —1953

"The teacher needs to give constant attention to developing her personality." —1937



Innovations in Tech

"Have some rather rare article, such as a microscope, a stereopticon, or a graphophone, to show pupils before school. Scholars will come in early to get a sight of [it]."

Suggested film: Alexander Learns Good Health.

1890s



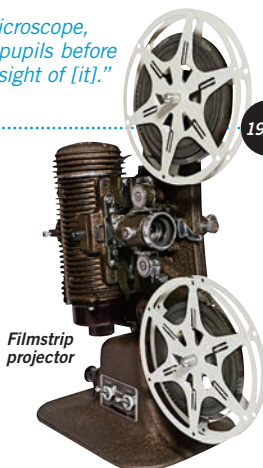
Typewriter

1915



Automatic pencil sharpener

1940s



Filmstrip projector

1959



Xerox machine

1960s



Overhead projector

Morning Exercises in 1895

A chapter in the Bible read by the teacher.

Roll call, answered by quotation.

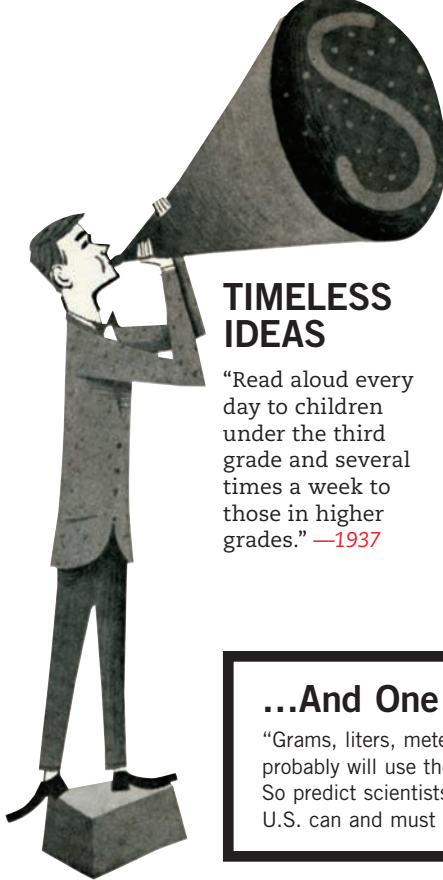
Take a standard author each morning.

The leading events of the week read—taken from some reliable newspaper.

A good song sung by the school.

Make your pupils familiar with that old patriotic song, "America."

Calisthenics.



TIMELESS IDEAS

"Read aloud every day to children under the third grade and several times a week to those in higher grades." —1937

"If the teacher is to give off both heat and light, he must become an integral part of the community where he teaches." —1960

"Many students are fascinated with the grotesque. We must

allow them to explore those limits, but also help them learn when they've crossed the line." —1996

"When discussing a sensitive topic such as slavery...don't

allow children to be treated as if they represent an entire racial group. When you feel uncomfortable or notice students squirming, acknowledge the discomfort." —1999

...And One Way Off-Base

"Grams, liters, meters—young children now in school probably will use these units when they are grown up. So predict scientists and economists who say that the U.S. can and must switch to the metric system." —1966



4 Ways to Calm a Rowdy Class

"Don't shout to get their attention—just be absolutely still and look at them until they stop." —1973

"Periodically have Teacher Laryngitis Day. Teacher communications must be presented to the class in writing, so that, one way or another, the children in the room are forced to deal with the written word." —1976

"The afternoon is a good time to set aside for yoga. If you are inside, turn off most of the lights to create a quiet atmosphere." —1975

"When the spirit of unrest begins to take possession of the schoolroom, a sprightly song, if only one verse, will quicken the thoughts and brighten energies." —1915



"A listening center makes reading group the coolest."

1975



Headphones

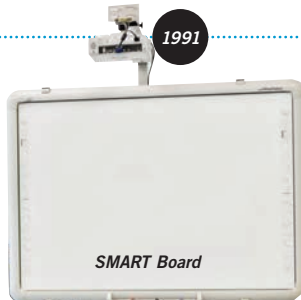
"[Students] should know how to handle a disk without damaging it, how to access a program, and when to press the RESET key."

1983



Personal computer

1991



SMART Board

"iPads? That's so 2013. The newest revolution in classroom computing can be found in Chromebooks."

2015



Chromebook

2016



VR headset

4

Sources of Teacher Anxiety, 1976



Fear of a mental breakdown

Unfavorable rating

Confrontation with individual pupils

Dissatisfaction over personal dress and appearance

Crafts We'd Rather Forget



Asbestos mats



Mousetrap letter holder



Peanut baby



Pouffy pets



Geometric Santa

Teacher Pay by Decade



1933
\$1,227

1950
\$4,000

1970
\$8,626

1990
\$31,367

2013
\$56,383



1916 Writing Prompts

Reverie of the Family Dog

Autobiography of an Olive

A Spool of Thread Entertains the Sewing Class

Where may whiskey, beer, etc. be bought?
Do good men buy them or use them?

Teachers' Help-One-Another Club, 1930

- ▶ Gather dead wood to analyze native trees—then shellac!
 - ▶ Make various maps of the United States: a vegetation map, an animal map, a mining map, etc.
- ▶ Take a geography book into history class to pique children's interest in outside reading.
- ▶ When several children have read the same book, a short dramatization of an interesting chapter can be given.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"It was found that the city public-school child drank 1.47 glasses of milk and .81 cup of coffee per day." —1927

"Sauerkraut's cleansing effect will have a beneficial reaction upon the blood and a resultant reaction upon the complexion....Another proof that Sauerkraut spells health for pupils as well as for their parents." —1930

"Dates are extremely valuable as food. Weight for weight they are more nourishing than bread. Half a pound of dates—fresh or dried—with half a pint of milk makes a satisfying luncheon." —1945



1960s LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"I do not approve [of individualized reading]. Reading is a wonderful leisure-time activity...but we go to school to work. I won't pursue it farther." —1964

"Your new artist...is as cute as her artwork. Married?" Reply: "Yes." —1964



"...tish, tish, since when does *The Instructor* use bicycle as a verb? I expected better grammar than that from my favorite teacher's magazine." —1966

"Classroom Management via a Mouse' was too much for me. I am amazed that the school permitted a classroom to have a mouse outside of a cage." Reply: "Reread the third paragraph. It was a tin mouse." —1961

WE AGREE!

"Handing in [lesson] plans interferes with creativity and enthusiasm, since those qualities cannot exist in the 'Big Brother Is Watching You' atmosphere which handing in plans generates." —1960



DISCIPLINE DEBATE

"The great value of marching is in the drill. If all the boys in our public schools were drilled to march ever so little, they would be more patriotic, and better prepared to defend their country." —1904

An article notes that "catch the children being good" is the cardinal rule. "If he runs around the classroom a lot, she praises him for sitting still." —1970

"Physical punishment—using strength over someone who can't fight back—contributes to feelings of powerlessness, when what schools should be about is empowering kids." —1987

3

Odd Ads

Early ads touted everything from soft drinks to deodorant to "clean hands" charts.

Armhits Dry and Odorless

WOMAN'S most distressing and embarrassing problem is no longer a problem in more than a million homes where NONSPI (an antiseptic liquid) is used to destroy armpit odors and divert the perspiration to other parts of the body.

Women, formerly victims of excessive underarm perspiration, now keep their armpits dry and odorless and save their clothes from destructive perspiration stains with a few drops of NONSPI used on an average of twice weekly. These women use NONSPI the year around—spring, summer, fall and winter.

NONSPI will keep your underarms dry and odorless and save your dresses and lingerie from destructive perspiration stains.

NONSPI, used and endorsed by physicians and nurses is for department and drug stores. If, if preferred, send your letter postpaid for 50 cents, (except postage stamps) which will last you several months.

FREE TESTING SAMPLE SENT ON REQUEST.

THE NONSPI COMPANY
8499 Western Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri

Send for NONSPI sample to:

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____

Do you know
the 3 R's
of **BOTTLED**
CARBONATED SOFT DRINKS?

1 **RAPID Aid to Digestion!** Medical science has yet to find a more delicious way to aid the digestive system. Ask any doctor!

2 **RIGHT for Growing Youngsters...Also Older!** Soft drinks have a tasty way of boosting appetites. In addition, the 100 calories per 8 ounces do wonders in quickly replacing the youngsters burn up in their dizzy-paced lives. Too, these soft beverages ideally help to the body's daily fluid loss—which usually is 2½ quarts!

3 **RELAXING Enjoyment!** Even if flavored soft drinks were not food products...and your local food and health authorities say they definitely are...what a perfectly refreshing way to relax...to get ready for more and better work! Everybody deserves soft drinks, carbonated...in bottles. Serve them right with these delightful, wholesome supplements to the well-balanced diet! They're economical, too!

1955

Clean Hands Honor Roll

PUPIL'S NAME MON. TUE. WED. THU. FRI.

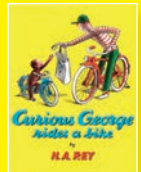
John Black	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jennie Brown	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edward Butler	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wilson Cole	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Better attendance—
higher marks...and
"Cleaner Hands" had a lot to do with it!

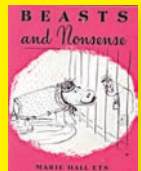
1930

6

Books
Reviewed
in 1953



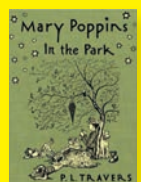
Curious George
Rides a Bike



Beasts and
Nonsense



Buffalo Bill



Mary Poppins
in the Park



Charlotte's Web



The Bears on
Hemlock Mountain



AWESOME ACTIVITIES

"Every morning I conduct a magic hour. What a wealth of lore exists in this fairyland of science. My tardinesses and

absences have decreased to a minimum." —1932

"To interest children in reading books on people of other lands, have a box of props. As a child selects a book,

he finds the costume that will transport him to the land of his choice." —1966

"Invite kids to 'adopt' a 'lonely' book...those that have not been borrowed in a long time. [The] child checks it out, reads it, and designs a new cover and a blurb. The covers are laminated and placed on the books, and kids' names are placed on the adoption roster in the library." —1986

"Use Shel Silverstein's poem 'Smart' for a math-based writing activity: 'The narrator starts with a dollar and ends up with five pennies because he doesn't understand the value of coins. Each student writes a letter to the character explaining the value of different coins.'" —1997



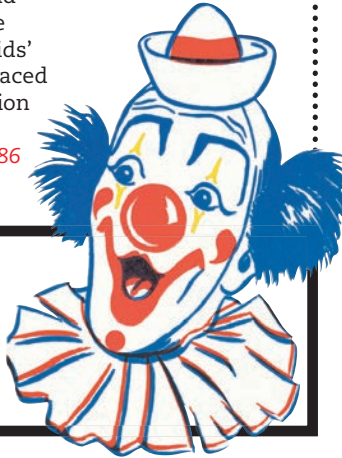
The Question of Marriage

"Old maids are often happier than wives. If you are a teacher with a secure place, don't think it necessary to get married." —1894

"If there is one profession where mother-experience may be profitably used it is in teaching. By depriving teachers, when they marry, of their positions, we deliberately encourage the short-time dilettantes who leave the service of the school just when they might be of some real value." —1929

...And One That Freaks Us Out

"Draw and color a large clown on a piece of poster board. Cut two slits in his stomach wide enough for adding machine tape to pass through. Print words on tape. Children read the words as they appear." —1973



Teach Beetles, Not Beatles...

"The shortage of male heroes and the entry into this vacuum of minstrels, such as the Beatles or Rolling Stones, as well as an assortment of demented antiheroes, hasn't helped. We need to step aside and let boys develop like boys." —1975

THE MORNING INSPECTION OF TEETH

From a Virginia principal comes the report that "the children in our school look forward eagerly to their regular morning gum massage drills."





Articles From 1970

Music Every Day: You Should... You Can... Here's How!

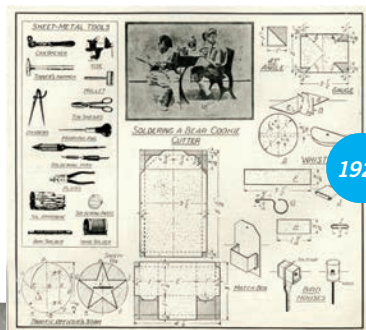
Tammy the Tape Recorder

Getting Through to Children... With a Polaroid Camera

Editorial: To Spank, or Not?

"MAKER" PROJECTS

STEM is nothing new, as these early lessons on making table lamps, metalworks, and a play steam shovel attest!



1929

1923



A Girl Making a Table Lamp

1955



6

Famous People in Our Pages



Jack Benny, 1953



Pat Boone, 1960



Al Roker, 2009



Susan Sarandon, 2014



Chelsea Clinton, 2015



Jamie Lee Curtis, 2016

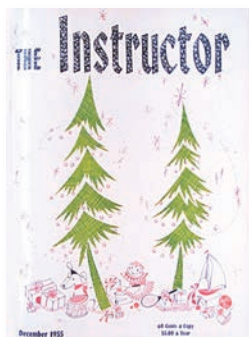
7 COVERS WE LOVE...



November 1917



September 1932



December 1955



October 1966



March 1989



Winter 2012



Summer 2013



April 1976

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