

HOW TO TEACH

GIJUBHAI

Translated by Mamata Pandya

Original Gujarati: *Kem Shikhavvun*

Akshargyan Yojana

Sanskar: Sahitya Mandir, PO Box No. 34, Darbargadh, Bhavnagar
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This is the booklet that accompanied the four part series of Reading Primers that Gijubhai and Taraben developed for adult education and which were used widely under the *Akshargyan Yojajana*.

Translating Gujarati language teaching instructions into English is perhaps an ill-advised endeavour. This is because the basic language systems of the two languages are entirely different. However what is equally important about this small booklet are the systematic guidelines to educators who are perhaps themselves taking on the task of adult education. This translation is primarily to share these sensitive and practical tips that every educator in every teaching-learning situation would find useful.

While I have included some basic examples in the context of the rules of Gujarati language, it is not possible to accurately translate many others which refer to specific examples from the original, as well as terms such as:

Barakhadi: Series of twelve letters made by adding vowels to consonants eg k, kaa, ki, kee, ku, koo, ke, kai, ko, kao, kn,
kaano: stroke | attached to a letter denoting the long vowel aa
kaano matra: vowel strokes *matra*: oblique stroke above a letter

ikaar: sound and letter

The lesson numbers refer to the lessons in the first primer *Chaalo Vanchiye*.

It is hoped that the process, if not the content would be of interest to readers.

ILLITERACY ERADICATION DRIVE

It is the duty of every one of us to get every person to learn to read. This activity has been taken up in Gujarat with zeal and vigour. It is the responsibility of every educated man and woman to contribute to this drive.

Resources have been developed to help in the teaching. For more information you may contact below:

Sanskar Sahitya Mandir, PO Box 34, Bhavnagar

GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATORS

Preparation

Every educator should read this booklet from start to end, and note the sequence of instructions. They must read and understand how each lesson is to be taught.

Materials Required

If there are more than a single learner in the class, every educator should use the blackboard and chalk. You will need a piece of cloth for wiping. If there is only one learner, a slate and slate pencil can be used. If there is a situation where neither blackboard nor slate and chalk/pencil are available, then letters can be writing in dirt with a stick.

Before You Begin

Before you start to teach: (1) Take attendance and fill the attendance sheet. (2) Ask the learners about their wellbeing (3) Tell them a short story, or recite a poem and get them to repeat, or read out a good quote or paragraph. Select the pieces to be read or recited keeping your learners in mind.

Before You End

At the end of the class engage the learners in exchanging riddles, poems, or rhymes, or play *antakshari*. Disperse after *ramdhun* (religious hymn).

While Teaching

Keep calm. Do not get disturbed if someone does not know something, rather think about why they do not understand

something. Do not scold the person nor make fun of them. If anyone else makes fun of the learner, express your disapproval. Encourage the one who does not understand; give them positive support even if they make a little progress. Use words like 'good, well done, wah'. Do not use derogatory terms like 'donkey, dumb, dunce' etc, even as a joke. Try to keep to the sequence in the book as far as possible. If a learner just cannot grasp a letter or cannot pronounce the letter, the try to avoid that letter, or words using that letter. Do not forcibly try to teach the letters but move on and ahead. Do not break the sequence and try and introduce new words and sentences. Keep going as straight as an arrow because by getting off the path, the links with the next lessons will be broken, and you will not have enough time to complete the course as per the schedule.

Do not be in a hurry but move on with determination. Use different ways to find out if the learners are learning. Make sure that they are really reading and not simply repeating what they heard or from memory by asking them to read or show text at random—from the middle, the end, etc.

Revision

Move ahead only after revision of the earlier work. Initially take revision of all the earlier lessons. As you progress, you can revise only the previous lesson. In the eagerness to teach new things, do not be in a hurry to get ahead nor to miss revision.

Do not teach with an always serious and sombre appearance, do bring in some humour at appropriate times. Provide some joyful moments in the teaching and learning in your lessons.

As the lessons proceed, tell the learners which lessons from *Chaalo Vanchiye* (Come Let Us Read) you will be reading next. Encourage them to keep reading these at home.

Learners are not expected to write during the class. If learner wants to write at home, do not object, but rather encourage them.

Some learners may not be comfortable with only visual recognition of letters. They can be encouraged to trace the shapes of the letters of a slate on in the sand or dirt with their finger. But use this method only if the learner is really unable to grasp visually.

Teach the letters exactly as they are given in the book. If this method does not work for a particular learner, then the educator may use his/her own judgement to try something different. But do not change the order or method for the rest of the learners. Keep to the book as far as possible.

When you ask a learner to read or recognise letters, ask them to first read it silently in their mind, before they read it aloud. Instil this as a habit for reading.

If there is a very slow learner, do not ask them too many questions, but let him/her observe. If the learner is made to feel again and again that he/she does not know, they become more nervous, and make more mistakes.

For those who are lagging behind, try and give them more time and effort after the class; it is difficult to keep everyone at the same pace, but try and keep them together and keep moving on, because only then will you be able to manage. In case

there are many who are not able to keep up, it would be better to teach them in a separate class at a different time, or assign them to another educator.

Write the letters clearly on the slate or blackboard. Write them in the same size so that there is visual uniformity. Do not think that one lesson must be completed in one day. Proceed according to the capacity and capability of the learners.

ABOUT THESE BOOKS

1 These books have been written for the average illiterate population, not for any specific group. However as there is a large illiterate population in the rural areas, the lessons to some extent, reflect the life of rural farmers. But these lessons are such that would interest everyone, and can be understood by all.

2 The lessons in the books use commonly used words. If the words are familiar, the learners will easily relate to these and also remember them faster. Words that are difficult or complex have been avoided.

3 Learners are curious; they also have the common sense/practical (*vyavaharu*) ability to comprehend what they read, so the reading of sentences may be introduced at the earliest opportunity. It is not intended to keep them from reading until they have learned the alphabets. Rather the lessons have been planned so that after the first lesson itself the learner goes home with the confidence and satisfaction that “I learned something today; I could read today”. Thus for

the lessons, a few letters have been taken, the *aa maatra* has been attached, and the word *chhe* has been added to make a simple sentence.

For example the book *Chaalo Vanchiye* opens with the letters

ક ન દ મ (k n d m)

કા ના દા મા (kaa naa daa maa)

છે (Is)

કાકા છે દાદા છે નાના છે મામા છે

There is kaka There is dada There is nana There is mama

નાના કાકા છે નાના દાદા છે કાકા નાના છે મામા

નાના છે

કાના કાકા નાના છે.

If the learners are able to complete one lesson, they will be motivated to continue with confidence.

As the lessons proceed, new letters are introduced. These have been introduced in order to develop new lessons; the lessons have not been developed to introduce the letters. Letters which are a little difficult to teach, and which do not fit easily into the lessons have been kept towards the end of the book. The primary objective is not the learning of the letters

themselves, but the use of the letters in reading; although reading cannot happen without recognition of letters.

The introduction of vowel strokes are not necessarily in the prescribed order; they are introduced so as to make the reading of sentences interesting and fun. Hence small poems like *Maaro chhe mor* help to make the reading more interesting and easier.

4 No lessons have been given for revision or additional reading. The focus is on the main lesson. It is important that these lessons be learnt well, and thus these need to be revised again and again. The readers may be left to do any additional reading on their own if they are so inclined.

5 Lesson 17 introduces nasal letters and sounds which may be difficult to read. The recognition of and familiarity with words are more important than the sentences.

6 Lesson 21 is also about nasal letters but those that are pronounced differently. This lesson draws specific attention to these letters.

7 Letters with *aa* and *ao* sounds have not been used much. These do not have much use for preliminary reading.

8 Conjoint consonants or letters (*jodakshar*) are difficult to teach and for a new learner to grasp. So these have not been used frequently. Where simple ones have been used, tips on how to learn to read them are included.

9 A list of such words is given with the respective lessons. Once these can be read the learner can easily read more new

words with *jodakshar*, as they would be already familiar with the simple and common ones.

10 We have tried to make the content of the book as interesting as possible. We have also tried to see how the content could be useful in other ways. But we have tried to avoid being preachy. Such books that provide useful and life lessons should certainly be published. For now the main objective is to build the ability to read and the content has been planned and organised to meet this objective.

11 Folk songs and poems help in reading, and as they are familiar they help to reinforce reading. These have been included so as to give a sense of the known to the learner. There are many more wonderful folktales and poems, but how many can one put in such a small book?

12 The book has not been planned for a specific group or class of learners. This is designed for the ordinary illiterate class of learners.

WHICH LEARNING METHODS?

The above tips are to help how to use this book. However it is important to know the basic educational principles on which the book is based.

The Sight and Sound Method (Show and Pronounce) is the basis. Start by showing pairs of letters, then pronounce these and then show them, and get the learners to identify these by sound. This method has three components of Seguin.

The system of teaching *barakhadi* which is being used in the Balmandir has also been applied here. This method can be called the Moveable letters. The words *chhe* (is) and *aa* (this) and other words introduced later are based on the Beacon method. Thus the *shabda darshan* method had been accepted.

Let us keep to the method as planned in the book, and we will achieve success in our mission.