

Schooling Australia

Changes in NSW Primary Syllabuses 1905; 1912; 1916; 1922; 1925 (reprinted 1928; 1929; 1932; 1935; 1936; 1937 [all have same preface as 1925])

1905, 1916, 1922 – Prefaces by P. Board

1925, 1928, 1929 – Prefaces by S.H. Smith

1932 – 1937 – Preface by G.R. Thomas [but identical to Smith's 1925 version]

1905 and 1916 Prefaces are almost identical [all changes listed below from scanned documents]

1905	1916
Paragraph 7	Paragraph 7
In this connection, it is provided that, in addition to <u>the prescribed reading-books</u> , the pupils should read approved books <u>supplementary to the ordinary course</u> . These will enable the pupils to widen their range of interests, and, as the books chosen <u>should be</u> such as deal with subjects suitable to the ages of the children, progress in the mechanical part of reading will be more rapid, and from the first the pupil will learn to look to books as a source of pleasure, thus laying the foundation of an appreciation of literature.	In this connection, it is provided that, in addition to <u>the School Magazine</u> , the pupils should read approved books. These will enable the pupils to widen their range of interests, and, as the books chosen <u>are</u> such as deal with subjects suitable to the ages of the children, progress in the mechanical part of reading will be more rapid, and from the first the pupil will learn to look to books as a source of pleasure, thus laying the foundation of an appreciation of literature.
Paragraph 8	Paragraph 8
The Syllabus in mathematics deals with quantities, expressed by numbers, literal symbols, lines, and geometrical forms. From the <u>earliest</u> stages, the child is led to deal with quantities of actual things, and with the measurement of quantities, using various units - sticks, bundles, tens, dozens, feet, pence, ounces, &c.	The Syllabus in mathematics deals with quantities, expressed by numbers, literal symbols, lines, and geometrical forms. From the <u>earlier</u> stages, the child is led to deal with quantities of actual things, and with the measurement of quantities, using various units - sticks, bundles, tens, dozens, feet, pence, ounces, &c.
Paragraph 9	Paragraph 9
<u>Nature knowledge is the term used in the Syllabus to embrace certain parts of geography, object-lessons, and elementary science. Here again the same fundamental principles should be kept in view</u> , the making use of the child's activity by getting him to do and to make things, the use of means to help him to form vivid mental images, and the encouragement of his interest in his surroundings.	<u>In the portion of the Syllabus dealing with Nature knowledge the same fundamental principles should be kept in view</u> , the making use of the child's activity by getting him to do and make things, the use of means to help him to form vivid mental images, and the encouragement of his interest in his surroundings.
Paragraph 10	Paragraph 10
As nature knowledge... <u>The treatment of English history recommended deals at first with those men and events around which the history of the English people in its broad aspects gathers itself, followed in successive years by a more detailed study.</u>	As Nature knowledge... <u>In the treatment of English history the first aim will be to create an interest in the subject by introducing to the pupils some of the more picturesque incidents of early English history, following this by a treatment in story-form of certain specified periods of national activity, whilst in the Sixth Class certain "history – wholes" will be dealt with in a more detailed way.</u>

Paragraph 12	Paragraph 12
<u>The Syllabus for schools under one teacher provides for the classification of pupils into two divisions. This arrangement will enable the teacher to concentrate his teaching, and thus make it more effective. It will still be frequently found necessary to form sections in one or both of these divisions for pupils of varying attainments in arithmetic and the mechanical difficulties of reading; but, as the necessity for reading the whole of certain reading books in a definite order is not demanded, and the mechanical parts of arithmetic are treated in a much simplified form, it will be found that children can be more readily grouped together and the need for many sections can be in most cases avoided.</u>	<u>In schools under one teacher the pupils should be classified into two divisions. This arrangement will enable the teacher to concentrate his teaching, and thus make it more effective. Within these divisions there will be groups of pupils, corresponding to the classes in a larger school. These groups will work separately in such subjects as arithmetic and reading, but will combine for instruction in geography, history, etc.</u>
Paragraph 13	
<u>A greater freedom in the classification of pupils is provided for, since it is based on the child's general development, rather than on his proficiency in one particular branch of study, or his having read certain prescribed books, while provision is made for a special classification of pupils in arithmetic.</u>	Paragraph Omitted
Paragraph 14	Paragraph 13
The Syllabus for large, completely organised schools provides a course of instruction, first for <u>Infant Classes</u> , and afterwards for each year of the pupil's school life. An Infants' Department is regarded as the <u>first class</u> of a school, and the course prescribed for <u>First Class</u> or Infants' Departments indicates the range of instruction for children up to the age of about 8 years, <u>and will occupy from one and a half to two and a half years, according to the age at which the pupils are admitted.</u> It is considered desirable that, in dealing with pupils under 6 years of age, their occupations in school should be determined on kindergarten principles, and that, while instruction of a more formal character may be introduced after 6 years of age, the whole of the <u>Infant or First Class</u> course should be modified by and specially permeated with the spirit of the kindergarten methods.	The Syllabus for large completely organized schools provides a course of instruction for each year of the pupil's school life. An Infants' Department is regarded as the first <u>and second classes</u> of a school, and the course prescribed for an Infants' Department indicates the range of instruction for children up to the age of about 8 years, <u>and will occupy two years, viz., from 6 to 8 years of age.</u> It is considered desirable that, in dealing with pupils under 6 years of age, their occupations in school should be determined on kindergarten principles, and that, while instruction of a more formal character may be introduced after 6 years of age, the whole of the Infant course should be modified by and specially permeated with the spirit of the kindergarten methods.
Paragraph 17	Paragraph 16
Courses of study are provided up to the <u>Fifth Class</u> , and, as is more fully shown in the explanatory notes, the limits of a distinctly primary course of instruction are determined by the proficiency required from pupils at the termination of the work prescribed for <u>Fifth Class.</u> <u>On passing beyond this stage into the Sixth and Seventh Classes, pupils are</u>	Courses of study are provided up to the <u>Sixth Class</u> , and, as is more fully shown in the explanatory notes, the limits of a distinctly primary course of instruction are determined by the proficiency required from pupils at the termination of the work prescribed for <u>Sixth Class.</u> <u>The Seventh and Eighth Class pupils are considered as entering upon either higher primary or</u>

<u>considered as entering upon either higher primary or secondary courses.</u>	<u>secondary courses. On reaching this stage pupils should be prepared to obtain a Qualifying Certificate indicating their fitness for more advanced instruction.</u>

1922 Preface is completely different from 1905 and 1916:

There is a new emphasis on the **Teacher** in the first few paragraphs: (Para 1) ‘BEHIND the use of a Syllabus of Instruction there stands the teacher's conception of the function of a school. It is what he conceives that to be, that shapes the whole of his work as a teacher. It determines the spirit in which he works, the methods he employs, and the aims he keeps in view’.

[In 1905 and 1916 the emphasis was on the more impersonal ‘school’ and what ‘it’ imparts: (Para 1): ‘THE school aims at giving to its pupils the moral and physical training and the mental equipment by which they may qualify themselves to meet the demands of adult life with respect to themselves, the family, society, and the State. By its influence upon character it should cultivate habits of thought and action that will contribute both to successful work and to upright conduct, and, by the kind of instruction it imparts, it should prepare the pupils for taking up the practical duties of life and give them tastes and interests that will lead to activities beneficial both to themselves and to the community’.]

2nd paragraph 1922: new emphasis on the **child** and the relationship between teacher and child: ‘This syllabus is, therefore, prefaced by the definition that the function of the school is to supply the circumstances and conditions most favourable to the growth of each child. The teacher cannot cause the child to grow either in body or in mind. The process of growth is essentially the child's own. It is not the teacher's. The teacher and the school do, however, create conditions that foster or retard the growth of the child’.

The school provides ‘material to work with’, but ‘The active force is the child’s own’. A stronger emphasis than 1905/1916 which did provide the statement that ‘the principle of the correlation of the subjects of study’ was ‘to make “the self-activity of the pupil the basis of school instruction”’.

3rd paragraph: new emphasis on **teaching as a profession**: ‘In its [the syllabus’s] compilation regard has been paid to the higher degree of professional training that an increasing number of teachers are now able to bring to their work’.

In the following paragraphs there is no reference to particular subjects and their content, as in 1905 and 1916, but the emphasis is on the teacher’s choice. Also a new emphasis on **method**: (Para 7): ‘Throughout the syllabus teachers will find suggestions as to methods of treatment. No particular method of teaching any part of a subject is imposed, but where a method is indicated it may be regarded as one which experience has shown to be effective. It is recognised, however, that teachers have found other methods to be successful. The method to be employed is that which the teacher finds to be for him the most useful instrument in securing the result to be aimed at in his teaching’.

The 1922 preface concludes with another mention of teaching and its effects on the pupil: ‘In the Sixth Class the value of the teaching will be shown not merely by the body of useful knowledge

acquired, but also, and mainly, by the intelligence which has been exercised in acquiring it, and by the degree of personal culture that has resulted from it.’

The 1922 Preface is shorter than the 1905 and 1916 versions. BUT there is a new section following, called ‘General Notes on the Syllabus’, which outlines specific subject organization and programmes of lessons, as well as providing a suggested timetable for subjects – English given more time than any other subject, ranging from 10 hrs a week in Classes 1 & 2 (compared to Maths, 3) to 7 hrs a week in Classes 5 & 6 (Maths, 4).

1925 Preface (by S.H. Smith) [similar to 1922]:

The first paragraph of the 1922 preface [see 1922] on the teacher has been dropped and the 1925 Preface starts with a slightly revised wording of the second para (1922) emphasizing interaction of teacher and child.

1922 (paragraph 2)	1925 (paragraph 1)
<p>‘<u>This syllabus is, therefore, prefaced by the definition that</u> the function of the school is to supply the circumstances and conditions most favourable to the growth of each child. The teacher cannot cause the child to grow either in body or in mind. The process of growth is <u>essentially the child's own</u>. It is not the teacher's. The teacher and the school <u>do, however,</u> create conditions that foster or retard the growth of the child. The school is the agency by which the child's growing proceeds under <u>helpful</u> conditions. <u>Hence it</u> supplies him with material <u>to work with</u>. It supplies experiences that enrich his store of experiences. It encourages the formation of habits, muscle and nerve habits, thought habits and emotion habits. It affords opportunity for his interests to find expression in healthy forms. In all these things the school supplies the externals. The active force is the child's own. It is the child's own thinking and feeling and <u>appreciating</u> and imagining that <u>count towards</u> his growth, and not what he is told to think, or to feel, or to appreciate, or to imagine’.</p>	<p>‘THE function of the school is to supply the circumstances and conditions most favourable to the growth of the child. The teacher cannot cause the child to grow either in body or in mind. The process of growth is <u>inherent in the child</u>. The teacher and the school create conditions that foster or retard the growth of the child. <u>They provide a suitable environment and appropriate nutriment for the child, thus</u> the school is the agency by which the child's growing proceeds under <u>favourable</u> conditions. <u>The school</u> supplies him with the material <u>he needs</u>. It supplies experiences that enrich his store of experiences. It encourages the formation of habits, muscle and nerve habits, thought habits and emotion habits. It affords opportunity for his interests to find expression in healthy forms. In all these things the school supplies the externals. The active force is in the child himself. It is the child's own thinking and feeling and <u>understanding</u> and imagining that <u>ensure</u> his growth, and not what he is told to think, or to feel, or to understand, or to imagine. <u>The child must be an active participant in the process of his education, and not a passive recipient of instruction.</u>’</p>

The reference to the ‘professional training’ of teachers in 1922 (para 3) is dropped in 1925.

Paragraph 5 in 1922 preface has been dropped in 1925: ‘The time has gone by when the large majority of teachers should look for the narrow specification of the subject matter of their teaching.

Out of what this syllabus provides -various courses may be made, any one of which will give to the pupil the degree of training possible to each pupil in the primary stage of his education'.[from 1922 preface]

The rest of the 1922 and '25 prefaces are almost identical. Note changes, however, in final paragraph:

1922	1925
<p>The work of the Primary School <u>is rounded off</u> in the Sixth Class. <u>The course of instruction for that class, in order to be effectively completed, implies that the work of all the preceding classes has been efficient. If that has been so the Sixth Class work should occupy the majority of the pupils for one year only.</u> By the time a pupil reaches <u>that</u> class the habits upon which the mechanical processes <u>of schooling</u> depend should have been acquired. In the <u>Sixth Class</u> the value of the <u>teaching</u> will be shown not merely by the body of useful knowledge acquired, but <u>also, and</u> mainly, by the intelligence which has been exercised in acquiring it, and by the degree of personal culture <u>that</u> has resulted from it.</p>	<p>The work of the Primary School is <u>completed</u> in the Sixth Class. <u>The work of that class will be sound and satisfactory only if</u> the work of all the preceding classes has been efficient. By the time a pupil reaches <u>Sixth Class</u> the habits upon which the mechanical mental processes depend should have been acquired. In <u>that</u> class the value of the <u>school's work</u> will be shown not merely by the body of useful knowledge acquired, but mainly by the intelligence which has been exercised in acquiring it, and by the degree of personal culture <u>which</u> has resulted from it.</p>