

The New England Primer

Had you lived in New England in Puritan times, you would have been thoroughly familiar with two volumes: *The Bay Psalm Book*, from which you would have learned to sing at church, and *The New England Primer*, from which you would have learned to read at school. You would, in fact, have known the verses in both by heart. Issued before 1690, *The New England Primer* — America's first textbook — was used widely throughout the eighteenth century. It sold over 5,000,000 copies in all. The following alphabet is one of many exercises in *The Primer* to be memorized.

A In *Adam's Fall*
We Sinned all.

B Thy Life to Mend
This *Book* Attend.

C The *Cat* doth play
And after slay.

D A *Dog* will bite
A Thief at night.

E An *Eagle's* flight
Is out of sight.

F The Idle *Fool*
Is whipt at School.

G As runs the *Glass*
Man's life doth pass.

H My *Book* and *Heart*
Shall never part.

J *Job* feels the Rod
Yet blesses GOD.

K Our *KING* the good
No man of blood.

L The *Lion* bold
The *Lamb* doth hold.

M The *Moon* gives light
In time of night.

N *Nightingales* sing,
In time of Spring.

O The *Royal Oak* it was the Tree
That sav'd His Royal Majesty.

P *Peter* denies
His Lord and cries.

Q *Queen Esther* comes
In Royal State
To save the JEWS
From dismal Fate.

R *Rachel* doth mourn
For her first-born.

S *Samuel* anoints
Whom God appoints.

T *Time* cuts down all,
Both great and small.

U *Uriah's* beauteous Wife
Made David seek his Life.

W *Whales* in the Sea
God's Voice obey.

X *Xerxes* the great did die
And so must you and I.

Y *Youth* forward slips
Death soonest nips.

Z *Zacheus* he
Did climb the Tree
His Lord to see.