

T. W. McGRATH.
READING CASE.

Patented July 31, 1894.

WITNESSES:
Edward Howland.
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

TIMOTHY W. McGRATH, OF HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, ASSIGNOR TO THE
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READING-CASE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 523,676, dated July 31, 1894.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, TIMOTHY W. McGRATH, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Hartford, in the county of Hartford and State of Connecticut, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Reading-Cases, of which the following is a specification.

The object of my invention is to provide means to permit words, sentences, names and the like to be readily constructed or composed from blocks or plates carrying letters, characters, figures or symbols, by placing said blocks or plates side by side in the desired order. The invention is specially adapted for children's use, although applicable to commercial uses such as store advertisements and other purposes.

The invention consists in a block or plate carrying letters, figures or symbols, on as many sides as desired, (preferably on two or four sides) part of said letters, figures or symbols being arranged in reverse order, that is to say one letter, figure or symbol on each face being placed upside down or inverted with relation to an adjoining one on the same face.

The invention also consists in a case or box containing said blocks or plates and made of a width sufficient to enable said blocks or plates to be moved across it to justify the letters, figures or symbols one with another.

The invention further consists in a case or box containing said blocks or plates, and having an opening in its top or side, of a width to permit one row of letters, figures or symbols to appear while covering or hiding the others on the respective blocks or plates beneath.

The invention further consists in the novel details of improvement and the combinations of parts that will be more fully hereinafter set forth and then pointed out in the claims.

Reference is to be had to the accompanying drawings forming part hereof, wherein—

Figure 1 is a partly broken plan view of my improved reading case, showing its opening for inspection of the letters, &c., also showing the manner of moving the blocks to justify them. Fig. 2 is a cross section on the

line 2, 2, in Fig. 1, and Fig. 3 is a perspective view of one of the blocks.

In the accompanying drawings the numeral 1 indicates a block, plate or other suitable body adapted to carry letters, figures or symbols as may be desired. Any or all of the blocks or plates 1 may have a blank space 2 for the purpose of spacing between words, as shown in Fig. 1. A block or plate 1 may carry all capitals or all small letters or capitals and small letters, as well as figures or other symbols in any desired order or arrangement.

A distinctive feature of my invention is that the letters, figures or symbols on the blocks or plates 1 are arranged in reverse order, that is to say, so arranged that while one or more letters, &c., are in proper reading position one or more others upon the same face or side of the block or plate will be upside down or inverted. This feature enables a block to be adjusted or justified beside another one by turning it around without the necessity of sliding it longitudinally or side-wise as far as would be required to justify were all the letters, &c., placed in the same relative reading positions. Thus, suppose two letters, figures or symbols were arranged on one side of the block or plate 1, in reverse order or inverted as stated, and two blocks were placed side by side and it were desired to bring into position one letter on the bottom row. The block carrying that letter would then merely be turned around to bring said letter in line with the upper letter on the next block. Suppose each block or plate carried several letters or symbols on a side, part being in reverse order or inverted as shown, and it was desired to compose a word or sentence. The several blocks or plates would be arranged side by side and the initial letter placed in proper position. The next block or plate would then be moved to bring the next desired letter uppermost and if that letter should be in proper relative position the block or plate would be moved along until said letter was brought in line with the initial letter. But, if the letter to be selected were in the inverted position on the block or plate the latter would be turned around to bring the desired letter into proper reading

position and then moved along to justify. By having part of the letters, figures or symbols on the side or face of the block or plate arranged in reverse order or inverted the distance that a block need be moved to bring a letter in line with another is materially reduced from what would be required were the letters, &c., all arranged in the same reading order on the block or plate. Guide lines 3 are or may be placed between letters on the block or plate to enable the proper and quick justifying and alignment of the letters, said lines 3 being shown between two letters.

I provide a case or box 4 in which the blocks or plates 1 are carried, and in which they can be adjusted to compose words, sentences, &c., and whereby a convenient medium is afforded for retaining and carrying the blocks or plates.

The case has a longitudinal opening 4^a in its top or side, of a width sufficient to permit one row of letters, symbols, &c., to appear, while the other letters on the blocks or plates 1 in the case 4 are hidden from view. To permit adjustment of the blocks or plates 1, within the case or box 4, the side having the opening 4^a is preferably made movable as in Fig. 2, and for this purpose the lid or side 5 is shown made in two parts, one or both of which may be hinged to the case as at 6, the distance between the inner edges of the parts of lid 5 forming the opening 4^a. The inner sides of the lid 5 are preferably beveled inwardly, as shown, to permit ready inspection of the letters, &c.

The case 4 is of such an interior width as to permit the blocks or plates 1 to be moved along for justifying or aligning the letters. For instance, on the blocks 1 are six letters on a side and the case 4 is as wide as the space occupied by eight letters so that each block or plate 1 can be moved a distance equal to two letters, as shown.

If, according to the location of a required letter, it were apparently necessary to move a block a distance equal to three letters, it would only be necessary to turn the block around to bring an inverted letter into position. By the foregoing arrangement I am enabled to provide a comparatively narrow case to permit movement of blocks or plates having a large number of letters or symbols.

The under side of the case 4 may have a longitudinal opening 7 in line with the movable lid to permit the operator's fingers to press the blocks or plates 1 outwardly in position to be grasped.

The device is simple to construct, readily manipulated by a child and will be found useful in giving instruction and amusement to children. The blocks or plates 1 can also be used for advertising purposes, as an adjustable sign, and in other desired ways.

Having now described my invention, what I claim is—

1. The combination of blocks or plates having letters, figures or symbols on their surface,

and arranged in vertical column, said blocks being movable in a vertical direction, with a case or box containing them, said case or box being larger in the direction of the vertical height of said blocks than the length of the blocks or plates to permit sliding movement of said blocks bodily in the direction of the height of the letters, and having an opening in its top or side arranged to permit inspection of a row of said letters, while obscuring the balance of the letters on the blocks, substantially as described.

2. The combination of blocks or plates having letters, figures or symbols on their surfaces, part of said letters &c. being arranged in reverse reading order or inverted, with a case to contain said blocks, said case being wider than the length of the blocks or plates, to permit longitudinal movement of said blocks, said case having an opening in its top or side to permit inspection of a row of said letters &c. and with a hinged top to permit adjustment of said blocks, substantially as described.

3. The combination of a series of blocks with a reading case having a lid or cover made in two parts, one part of said cover being movably connected with the case, and arranged to permit the blocks to be removed bodily from the case, with a space between the inner edges of said parts of said lid or cover to permit inspection of a row of letters, &c. while obscuring the others, substantially as described.

4. The combination of blocks having letters &c. on the surface, with a reading case having a movable lid or cover to permit adjustment of the blocks, and provided with an opening to permit inspection of a row of letters, and another opening in the opposite side of the case, to permit the entrance of fingers to push the blocks or plates outwardly through the space normally covered by the removable lid or cover in position to be grasped, substantially as described.

5. The combination with a case of a series of movable blocks or plates having letters or other symbols arranged in a single column on one face thereof, and with one or more of said letters in reverse order or inverted, said blocks or plates being arranged to be removed from the case to permit their reversal end for end as desired in parallel order side by side, and to slide in the case in the direction of the length of the block for justifying the letters, said case having an opening extending transversely of said blocks, and means for permitting the bodily removal of the blocks from the case substantially as described.

6. The combination of a case or like support of a movable block having a plural number of faces, each face displaying in column two or more letters, figures or symbols arranged one above the other with one of said letters figures or symbols on each face inverted or in reverse reading order with reference to others in the same column said blocks

being arranged to be removed from the case, and then turned bodily around end for end as well as on their longitudinal axes, and to slide in the case in the direction of the height of the letters or symbols, said case having an opening extending transversely of the series of blocks and means for permitting the bodily removal of the blocks from the case, substantially as described.

- 10 7. The combination with movable blocks having a display face with a series of letters, figures or symbols arranged one above the other on said face, of a case or box adapted to contain said blocks and of a width greater
15 than the length of said blocks to permit a bodily sliding movement of the blocks in the

direction of the column, said box having an opening extending transversely to the series of blocks to permit inspection of a transverse row of said letters, and means for permitting the bodily removal of the blocks from the case, said blocks being movable in said box transversely to said opening, substantially as described.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as my invention I have signed my name, in presence of two witnesses, this 9th day of May, 1893.

TIMOTHY W. McGRATH.

Witnesses:

JAMES W. McELHINNEY,
T. F. BOURNE.