

# Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

## DIBELS

### *Fourth Grade Scoring Booklet DIBELS Benchmark Assessment*

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Available:  
<http://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

#### Instructions:

This packet includes 2 parts: the student response form and student stimulus materials. The student response forms are photocopied back to back and saddle stapled. The same form is used by each student for each benchmark assessment throughout the year. The second part is the reusable student stimulus materials. Make one copy for each person who is doing the benchmark testing. They can be laminated and comb bound for reuse.

Good, R. H., & Kaminski, R. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (6th ed.). Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement.  
Available: <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

# DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency

Make sure you have reviewed the long form of the directions in the *DIBELS Administration and Scoring Guide* and have them available. Say these specific directions to the student:

**Please read this** (point) **out loud. If you get stuck, I will tell you the word so you can keep reading. When I say "Stop," I may ask you to tell me about what you read, so do your best reading. Start here** (point to the first word of the passage). **Begin.** Start your stop watch when the student says the first word of the passage.

At the end of **1 minute**, place a bracket (|) after the last word provided by the student, stop and reset the stopwatch, and say, **"Stop."** (remove the passage)

If the student reads more than 10 words correct, proceed with the retell part. Say,

**Please tell me all about what you just read. Try to tell me everything you can. Begin.** Start your stopwatch after you say "Begin."

The first time the student does not say anything or gets off track for 3 seconds, say **"Try to tell me everything you can."** This prompt can be used only once.

If the student does not say anything or gets off track for 5 seconds circle the total number of words in the student's retell and say, "Stop."

At the end of **1 minute**, circle the total number of words in the student's retell and say, **"Stop."**

**Discontinue rule-** No words read correctly in the first row.

**Hesitation rule-** 3 seconds- Tell the student the next word. If necessary, indicate for student to continue with the next word.

Do not give passage #2 and #3 and do not administer retell if student reads fewer than 10 words correctly.

<https://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

	Benchmark 1 Beginning/Fall		Benchmark 2 Middle/Winter		Benchmark 3 End/Spring	
Date						
DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency*	Correct (median)	Errors (median)	Correct (median)	Errors (median)	Correct (median)	Errors (median)
Retell Fluency* (Optional)	(Median score)		(Median score)		(Median score)	

\* Median scores do not necessarily come from the same passage

## Fourth Grade Scoring Booklet Benchmark Assessment

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**Benchmark 1.1**  
**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

The Water Cycle

12 It is amazing to think that a dinosaur might have stepped in

25 the water you drank last night. That is because the water you use

39 to drink, shower, or swim in is very old. The earth has a fixed

51 amount of water that keeps going around and around in what is

56 known as the water cycle.

67 The water cycle has four main phases. The first phase is

78 called evaporation. This occurs when the sun heats up the water

90 in rivers, lakes, and oceans. The heat turns some of the water

103 into vapor, or steam. At that point, the water is said to evaporate,

110 as it becomes part of the air.

120 The next phase of the water cycle is called condensation.

132 Water vapor in the air becomes cold, which causes it to change

143 back into liquid form. The drops of water come together and

154 form clouds. When the water becomes so heavy that the air

163 cannot hold it any more, the next phase occurs.

173 In the phase of the water cycle called precipitation, dark

186 clouds release their water, and it falls back to the earth. In warm

199 weather, clouds release water in the form of rain or hail. When it

213 is cold, water falls as snow or sleet. The rain, hail, snow, or sleet

226 falls on land as well as on rivers, lakes, and oceans. This begins

235 the final phase of the water cycle, called collection.

246 When water falls on land, the earth collects it. The water

257 might run along the ground, where plants and animals may drink

270 it. It might flow into rivers, streams, or lakes. Or the water might

279 soak deep into the earth and become groundwater. Groundwater

290 supports plants, which sink their roots down to find it. Human

She Reached for the Stars (Continued)

265 where she continued teaching and researching until the end of

267 her life.

277 Maria Mitchell served as an example to women around the

287 world. She inspired many young women to seek careers in

296 science. As she said, "We especially need imagination in

308 science. It is not all mathematics, nor all logic, but is somewhat

311 beauty and poetry."

Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**Benchmark 3.3**  
**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

She Reached for the Stars

Two hundred years ago when Maria Mitchell was born, most girls did not get a formal education. Instead, they learned how to cook, sew, and run a house. Boys, on the other hand, went to school to learn about math and science. Because there were few educated women, people took notice of them. Maria Mitchell was one such woman.

Maria Mitchell was born on Nantucket Island. She was lucky to have been born in this whaling village. Women were expected to be independent while the men were at sea. Maria was lucky in another way. Her father believed girls should be educated. He encouraged Maria's interest in astronomy.

Maria took a teaching job when she was sixteen years old. Then, two years later, she became a librarian. This job was perfect for her. She earned a good salary and had time to read the books that interested her.

One night, Maria was looking through her father's telescope. She enjoyed her time on the roof, studying the planets and stars. On this night, she noticed a new star. She watched it for several nights. Soon she decided it was not a star at all. It was a comet! The king of Denmark, who offered gold medals to those who discovered comets, heard of Maria's work. She was awarded a medal, and the comet was named "Miss Mitchell's Comet."

By this time, Maria had become well known. She traveled widely and worked with scientists around the world. She eventually became a professor of astronomy at Vassar College

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The Water Cycle (Continued)

beings dig wells or use water from underground springs to provide for their needs. 300  
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Water that falls on rivers and streams flows, sometimes for thousands of miles, into the oceans. When the sun shines on rivers, lakes, or oceans, some of the water turns into vapor. This vapor goes into the air, and the water cycle begins again. 314  
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Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell:

ORF Total: \_\_\_\_\_

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Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**Benchmark 1.2**  
**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

The Land at the Top of the World

12 When you hear the word desert, you probably think of a hot,  
23 sandy place. There is another kind of desert, though. This desert  
39 is very cold, and for part of the year, it is wet and soggy. It is  
43 called the arctic tundra.

55 The arctic tundra is a barren and treeless land just below the  
68 North Pole. For up to ten months each year, this land is bitterly  
78 cold. Dry, icy winds strip moisture from everything they touch.  
91 The earth lies frozen under a thin layer of snow during the long,  
93 dark winter.

103 Then, for a short time, the sun shines brightly. Temperatures  
116 rise. The snow melts, and a thin layer of topsoil begins to thaw.

126 Hardy plants spring into growth. Only fast-growing plants can  
138 survive here, since the growing season lasts a short six to ten  
147 weeks. Cotton grass, cushion plants, mosses, and lichens are  
157 plants found in the tundra during summer. These plants grow  
171 low to the ground. They can stand up to gusting winds as well as

175 great changes in temperature.

185 The water from melting snow cannot soak into the frozen  
197 subsoil. It runs off into shallow streams or stands in pools and  
207 bogs. The standing water provides a perfect breeding ground for  
217 many insects. Mosquitoes and flies swarm busily, looking for an  
222 animal on which to feast.

233 The insects do not have to look very far. During summer,  
244 many animals move onto the tundra in search of food. Polar  
254 bears, arctic foxes, and wolves are among the predators who

Maid of the Mist (Continued)

278 In all, the ride took about thirty minutes, which didn't seem  
290 quite long enough. I could have stayed, looking at those falls, for  
291 hours.  
301 "We'll have another chance to see the falls tomorrow," Mom  
313 reminded me. "We'll take the cable car ride and see the falls  
321 from the top instead of from the bottom."  
331 Suddenly, I was excited and looking forward to the next  
341 day's activity. And, unless the weather changed, I wouldn't have  
348 to worry about wearing a rain jacket.

Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell:

ORF Total: \_\_\_\_\_

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Notes:

Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Benchmark 3.2**  
**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

Maid of the Mist

Every year, my family begins planning our vacation during 9  
the cold days of winter. We pick a spot that everyone agrees on. 22  
Then we spend many pleasant evenings figuring out all the 32  
details, so we'll be ready to go when summer rolls around. 43

Last year we had one of our best vacations ever. We went to 56  
Niagara Falls, an amazing natural wonder. As usual, we had 66  
planned our trip in advance. One thing we all agreed on was that 79  
we wanted to take a ride on the Maid of the Mist, a large boat 94  
that takes passengers very near the falls. 101

After we bought our tickets, we waited on the dock for the 113  
boat. It was a short wait, and soon we were climbing aboard. The 126  
workers on the boat gave each of us a blue rain jacket, even 139  
though there was not a cloud in the sky. 148

“You’d better slip this on,” one of the workers said. “Without 159  
it, the spray from the falls will have you soaking wet in no time.” 173

The boat’s large engines roared to life, and we pulled away 184  
from the dock. Before long, though, we couldn’t hear the 194  
engines, because the roar of the water rushing over the falls was 206  
so loud! A heavy mist of water sprayed out from the falls, and 219  
we were grateful for the rain jackets. Still, water was dripping 230  
from my nose and covering every surface of the boat. I was glad 243  
we had planned in advance, because Dad knew to bring along a 255  
waterproof camera. Otherwise, there would have been no 263  
pictures for the scrapbook. 267

The Land at the Top of the World (Continued)

roam there. They feed on plant eaters, such as caribou, snowshoe 265  
rabbits, and lemmings. 268

All too soon, the days shorten and temperatures begin to 278  
drop. Animals begin to move to the south. The long arctic winter 290  
will soon cover the tundra once again in snow and darkness. 301

Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell: \_\_\_\_\_ ORF Total: \_\_\_\_\_

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**Benchmark 1.3  
DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

Georgia O'Keeffe

12 "My first memory is of the brightness of light." These are the  
22 words of Georgia O'Keeffe, a well-loved artist. She was

34 describing a day many years earlier, before she was even a year  
45 old. Her mother had carried Georgia outdoors and placed her on  
55 a brightly colored quilt on the ground. Georgia recalled the  
66 patterns on the quilt amid the brightness of the white pillows  
76 surrounding her. Clearly, from the start, Georgia was drawn to

80 the beauty around her.

91 Georgia was born over one hundred years ago and grew up

104 on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. At that time, girls often were not

114 educated. That was not the case in Georgia's family, though.

125 Georgia began school when she was only four years old. She

135 attended the same one-room school her parents had attended.

145 Georgia's mother noticed her child's interest in art. Back then,

157 art was not taught in school, so Georgia's mother paid for private

159 art lessons.

169 After high school, Georgia studied art in Chicago and New

180 York. Then, leaving art school behind, she began to work. One

193 of her first jobs after graduating was teaching art at a college in

205 the Texas Panhandle. She loved the land there. In fact, she made

213 fifty paintings of the nearby canyons and prairies.

224 Although she loved the West, Georgia decided to go back to

235 New York. There, she painted pictures of large flowers and tall

245 buildings. Many people admired her art. One admirer was a

256 famous gallery owner. The two spent a lot of time working

266 together and became close. After a while, they married. They

307 station right on schedule.

303 jumped on Jennie and made up for lost time, arriving at the next

290 pack, I was relieved to find the letters were still dry. I quickly

277 I thanked the man, and we parted ways. Checking inside the

The Youngest Rider (Continued)

Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell: \_\_\_\_\_  
ORF Total: \_\_\_\_\_

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**Benchmark 3.1**  
**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

The Youngest Rider

My name is Charlie, and I am the youngest rider on the Pony Express. The other riders call me Young Boy Charlie, because I am only twelve years old, but I have been riding for nearly ten months now, through the blistering heat and freezing cold. I ride six or more hours each day, changing horses every hour. I must tell you that yesterday was my most exciting day yet.

I was riding my favorite horse, Jennie, an excellent pinto and my last horse of the day. We were crossing a swift stream, when my horse spotted a mountain lion. Jennie reared up in fright, nearly knocking me off. Fortunately, that scared the mountain lion away.

I regained my balance, but the leather pack I was carrying fell into the stream. That pack holds all the mail, and it is my job to pass it to the next rider. I jumped off Jennie and ran down the bank, looking for the pack. I worried that the swift water had carried it away. Suddenly, a tall man appeared in front of me, holding my bag! I felt nervous, because I had heard stories about attacks on riders.

I said, "Hello, I'm Charlie, and I believe that is my bag."

Laughing, he said, "Aren't you a little young for a rider?"

The remark annoyed me, but I was accustomed to being teased. I responded, "I am nearly thirteen, and I am good enough to ride any horse in the West."

Again, he laughed loudly and then handed me the pack.

"Well, good luck to you then," he said.

Georgia O'Keeffe (Continued)

were a happy couple, but Georgia was drawn back to the West. She tried to spend a few months each year visiting and painting in the West.

When Georgia's husband died and she was no longer tied to New York, she moved to New Mexico. Her paintings of the mountains and desert show the artist's respect for the beauty of the land. She lived there, continuing to work and paint, until she was quite old.

Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell: \_\_\_\_\_ ORF Total: \_\_\_\_\_

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94						

Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency  
Benchmark 2.1**

The Lion and the Mouse

11 Long, long ago, in a faraway place, the jungle animals could  
 23 speak to one another. This did not necessarily mean they were all  
 34 friends. In fact, most of the animals were terrified by the  
 37 ferocious King Lion.  
 48 King Lion ruled over all the jungle creatures. He was so  
 58 fierce that even the courageous elephants trembled in fear when  
 69 King Lion roared. Small animals, in particular, tried to keep out  
 80 of his way. Among these, Mouse was probably the most timid  
 93 and afraid. He would scurry into his burrow at the mere sight of  
 95 King Lion.  
 105 One day Mouse was busy searching for peanuts and didn't  
 115 notice King Lion walking past. Considering the animal a tasty  
 127 morsel, King Lion put his enormous paw on top of Mouse. Poor  
 138 Mouse was terrified and begged for his life to be spared.  
 150 "Please let me go," Mouse stuttered. "If you do, I promise I  
 157 will repay you for your good deed."  
 166 King Lion roared with laughter. "You could never repay  
 178 me," the lion said, "but you have entertained me by even making  
 187 such a suggestion. I will grant you your freedom."  
 196 Mouse scampered home, and he eventually got over his  
 208 fright. Days passed, and life got back to normal. The next week,  
 219 as Mouse was searching for food, he heard a terrible noise.  
 229 Creeping forward, Mouse saw that King Lion had been captured  
 233 by a hunter's net.  
 242 "Please, try to help me, Mouse" King Lion cried.

The Tenth Birthday Party (Continued)

263 "Why don't you open this one right away," said Carlos's  
 265 friend Molly.  
 274 Carlos opened the brightly wrapped present and found the  
 280 board game he had been wanting.  
 289 "This is great," Carlos exclaimed, "because even though we  
 298 can't swim, we can have fun playing this game."  
 308 The friends hardly noticed the rain as they enjoyed Carlos's  
 318 new game. Later, they ate a delicious lunch of sandwiches,  
 324 followed by Carlos's favorite carrot cake.  
 332 Carlos watched the raindrops splash against the pool's  
 344 surface and the clouds move across the sky. This had not been  
 358 the party he planned, but it turned out to be a terrific party after  
 359 all.

Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**Benchmark 2.3**  
**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

The Tenth Birthday Party

For his tenth birthday, Carlos wanted to have a party at the neighborhood pool. Together, he and his mother made invitations for the party so that Carlos could send one to each of his friends.

On the morning of his birthday, Carlos ran outside to check the weather and was relieved to see a bright blue sky. His mother said, "Well, it looks like a perfect day for a swimming party. Now let's have breakfast, and then we'll get everything ready to take to the pool."

As Carlos and his mother drove to the pool, Carlos noticed some dark clouds forming in the sky. "Oh, I hope it isn't going to storm," he said, remembering that lifeguards always closed the pool when there was lightning in the area.

Huge drops of rain splattered against the car's windshield as Carlos and his mom pulled into the parking lot. As he stepped out of the car, Carlos heard a clap of thunder and then the lifeguard's whistle.

"Everybody out of the pool!" the lifeguard yelled.

Carlos's mother gave him a hug and said, "I am so sorry that the weather hasn't cooperated with us. I know how much you were looking forward to swimming."

Then Carlos saw his friends gathered under the awning of the pool building. When they spotted Carlos, the friends clapped loudly and began to sing "Happy Birthday." Carlos ran to greet his friends and was surprised to find a table covered with good things to eat and some brightly wrapped presents.

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The Lion and the Mouse (Continued)

Using his large, strong teeth, Mouse began chewing the thick ropes holding the lion down. One by one, the ropes fell away, and soon King Lion was free!

"You have saved my life," King Lion said to Mouse. "We will be friends forever."

King Lion gained a good friend and learned that small friends can be excellent friends.

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Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell:

ORF Total: \_\_\_\_\_

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Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

**Benchmark 2.2**  
**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency**

Airplane History

11 For as long as people have watched birds swirl through the  
 25 air, they have longed to fly. Long ago, people would try to fly by  
 36 acting like birds. They would build wings, tie them onto their  
 47 arms, and then jump from a high point, flapping the wings.  
 57 Sadly, this process never worked. Later, people had success in  
 70 using hot-air balloons to rise into the air. There was a problem,  
 81 though. The balloon went wherever the winds blew it, and the  
 87 pilot had little or no control.  
 96 One hundred years ago, two brothers, Wilbur and Orville  
 108 Wright, built a small, light airplane powered by a gas engine. For  
 118 several years, the brothers had worked on gliding airplanes. They  
 129 practiced flying in these until they were sure of their piloting  
 140 skills. Finally, they knew they were ready to test the powered  
 150 airplane. Sure enough, their first attempt was a success. Wilbur  
 161 Wright flew more than one hundred feet in just twelve seconds.  
 173 Later the same day, his brother, Orville Wright, stayed in the air  
 184 for almost a whole minute, flying more than eight hundred feet.  
 193 Finally, humans had achieved the dream of powered, controlled  
 194 flight.  
 202 Soon others were building powered airplanes. These early  
 212 airplanes were noisy, low-flying machines made of wood and  
 224 cloth. Pilots sat in the open, without protection from the wind or  
 236 the weather. There were no airports, so airplanes had to take off  
 248 and land in fields and pastures. Pilots didn't have maps to tell  
 259 them where to go. Rather, they relied on direction signals painted  
 262 on barn roofs.

Airplane History (Continued)

271 Since those days, airplanes have changed in dramatic ways.  
 280 Today, huge, jet-powered airplanes transport people in air-  
 289 conditioned comfort quickly from place to place. Airplanes also  
 299 carry manufactured goods from one city or country to another.  
 311 This makes it possible for people to find products from all parts  
 322 of the world in their local stores. Airplanes have truly changed  
 333 not only the way people travel, but the way people live.

Total words: \_\_\_\_\_ – errors: \_\_\_\_\_ = words correct: \_\_\_\_\_

Retell: \_\_\_\_\_ ORF Total: \_\_\_\_\_

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Retell Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

# Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

## DIBELS

### *Fourth Grade Student Materials DIBELS Benchmark Assessment*

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Available:

<http://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

Instructions:

These are reusable student stimulus materials. Make one copy for each person who is doing the benchmark testing. They can be laminated and comb bound for reuse.

Good, R. H., & Kaminski, R. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (6th ed.). Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement.  
Available: <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

## The Water Cycle

It is amazing to think that a dinosaur might have stepped in the water you drank last night. That is because the water you use to drink, shower, or swim in is very old. The earth has a fixed amount of water that keeps going around and around in what is known as the water cycle.

The water cycle has four main phases. The first phase is called evaporation. This occurs when the sun heats up the water in rivers, lakes, and oceans. The heat turns some of the water into vapor, or steam. At that point, the water is said to evaporate, as it becomes part of the air.

The next phase of the water cycle is called condensation. Water vapor in the air becomes cold, which causes it to change back into liquid form. The drops of water come together and form clouds. When the water becomes so heavy that the air cannot hold it any more, the next phase occurs.

In the phase of the water cycle called precipitation, dark clouds release their water, and it falls back to the earth. In warm weather, clouds release water in the form of rain or hail. When it is cold, water falls as snow or sleet. The rain, hail, snow, or sleet falls on land as well as on rivers, lakes, and oceans. This begins the final phase of the water cycle, called collection.

When water falls on land, the earth collects it. The water might run along the ground, where plants and animals may drink it. It might flow into rivers, streams, or lakes. Or the water might soak deep into the earth and become groundwater. Groundwater supports plants, which sink their roots down to find it. Human

beings dig wells or use water from underground springs to provide for their needs.

Water that falls on rivers and streams flows, sometimes for thousands of miles, into the oceans. When the sun shines on rivers, lakes, or oceans, some of the water turns into vapor. This vapor goes into the air, and the water cycle begins again.

## The Land at the Top of the World

When you hear the word desert, you probably think of a hot, sandy place. There is another kind of desert, though. This desert is very cold, and for part of the year, it is wet and soggy. It is called the arctic tundra.

The arctic tundra is a barren and treeless land just below the North Pole. For up to ten months each year, this land is bitterly cold. Dry, icy winds strip moisture from everything they touch. The earth lies frozen under a thin layer of snow during the long, dark winter.

Then, for a short time, the sun shines brightly. Temperatures rise. The snow melts, and a thin layer of topsoil begins to thaw. Hardy plants spring into growth. Only fast-growing plants can survive here, since the growing season lasts a short six to ten weeks. Cotton grass, cushion plants, mosses, and lichens are plants found in the tundra during summer. These plants grow low to the ground. They can stand up to gusting winds as well as great changes in temperature.

The water from melting snow cannot soak into the frozen subsoil. It runs off into shallow streams or stands in pools and bogs. The standing water provides a perfect breeding ground for many insects. Mosquitoes and flies swarm busily, looking for an animal on which to feast.

The insects do not have to look very far. During summer, many animals move onto the tundra in search of food. Polar bears, arctic foxes, and wolves are among the predators who

roam there. They feed on plant eaters, such as caribou, snowshoe rabbits, and lemmings.

All too soon, the days shorten and temperatures begin to drop. Animals begin to move to the south. The long arctic winter will soon cover the tundra once again in snow and darkness.

## Georgia O’Keeffe

“My first memory is of the brightness of light.” These are the words of Georgia O’Keeffe, a well-loved artist. She was describing a day many years earlier, before she was even a year old. Her mother had carried Georgia outdoors and placed her on a brightly colored quilt on the ground. Georgia recalled the patterns on the quilt amid the brightness of the white pillows surrounding her. Clearly, from the start, Georgia was drawn to the beauty around her.

Georgia was born over one hundred years ago and grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. At that time, girls often were not educated. That was not the case in Georgia’s family, though. Georgia began school when she was only four years old. She attended the same one-room school her parents had attended. Georgia’s mother noticed her child’s interest in art. Back then, art was not taught in school, so Georgia’s mother paid for private art lessons.

After high school, Georgia studied art in Chicago and New York. Then, leaving art school behind, she began to work. One of her first jobs after graduating was teaching art at a college in the Texas Panhandle. She loved the land there. In fact, she made fifty paintings of the nearby canyons and prairies.

Although she loved the West, Georgia decided to go back to New York. There, she painted pictures of large flowers and tall buildings. Many people admired her art. One admirer was a famous gallery owner. The two spent a lot of time working together and became close. After a while, they married. They

were a happy couple, but Georgia was drawn back to the West. She tried to spend a few months each year visiting and painting in the West.

When Georgia's husband died and she was no longer tied to New York, she moved to New Mexico. Her paintings of the mountains and desert show the artist's respect for the beauty of the land. She lived there, continuing to work and paint, until she was quite old.

## The Lion and the Mouse

Long, long ago, in a faraway place, the jungle animals could speak to one another. This did not necessarily mean they were all friends. In fact, most of the animals were terrified by the ferocious King Lion.

King Lion ruled over all the jungle creatures. He was so fierce that even the courageous elephants trembled in fear when King Lion roared. Small animals, in particular, tried to keep out of his way. Among these, Mouse was probably the most timid and afraid. He would scurry into his burrow at the mere sight of King Lion.

One day Mouse was busy searching for peanuts and didn't notice King Lion walking past. Considering the animal a tasty morsel, King Lion put his enormous paw on top of Mouse. Poor Mouse was terrified and begged for his life to be spared.

"Please let me go," Mouse stuttered. "If you do, I promise I will repay you for your good deed."

King Lion roared with laughter. "You could never repay me," the lion said, "but you have entertained me by even making such a suggestion. I will grant you your freedom."

Mouse scampered home, and he eventually got over his fright. Days passed, and life got back to normal. The next week, as Mouse was searching for food, he heard a terrible noise. Creeping forward, Mouse saw that King Lion had been captured by a hunter's net.

"Please, try to help me, Mouse" King Lion cried.

Using his large, strong teeth, Mouse began chewing the thick ropes holding the lion down. One by one, the ropes fell away, and soon King Lion was free!

“You have saved my life,” King Lion said to Mouse. “We will be friends forever.”

King Lion gained a good friend and learned that small friends can be excellent friends.

## Airplane History

For as long as people have watched birds swirl through the air, they have longed to fly. Long ago, people would try to fly by acting like birds. They would build wings, tie them onto their arms, and then jump from a high point, flapping the wings. Sadly, this process never worked. Later, people had success in using hot-air balloons to rise into the air. There was a problem, though. The balloon went wherever the winds blew it, and the pilot had little or no control.

One hundred years ago, two brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, built a small, light airplane powered by a gas engine. For several years, the brothers had worked on gliding airplanes. They practiced flying in these until they were sure of their piloting skills. Finally, they knew they were ready to test the powered airplane. Sure enough, their first attempt was a success. Wilbur Wright flew more than one hundred feet in just twelve seconds. Later the same day, his brother, Orville Wright, stayed in the air for almost a whole minute, flying more than eight hundred feet. Finally, humans had achieved the dream of powered, controlled flight.

Soon others were building powered airplanes. These early airplanes were noisy, low-flying machines made of wood and cloth. Pilots sat in the open, without protection from the wind or the weather. There were no airports, so airplanes had to take off and land in fields and pastures. Pilots didn't have maps to tell them where to go. Rather, they relied on direction signals painted on barn roofs.

Since those days, airplanes have changed in dramatic ways. Today, huge, jet-powered airplanes transport people in air-conditioned comfort quickly from place to place. Airplanes also carry manufactured goods from one city or country to another. This makes it possible for people to find products from all parts of the world in their local stores. Airplanes have truly changed not only the way people travel, but the way people live.

## The Tenth Birthday Party

For his tenth birthday, Carlos wanted to have a party at the neighborhood pool. Together, he and his mother made invitations for the party so that Carlos could send one to each of his friends.

On the morning of his birthday, Carlos ran outside to check the weather and was relieved to see a bright blue sky. His mother said, “Well, it looks like a perfect day for a swimming party. Now let’s have breakfast, and then we’ll get everything ready to take to the pool.”

As Carlos and his mother drove to the pool, Carlos noticed some dark clouds forming in the sky. “Oh, I hope it isn’t going to storm,” he said, remembering that lifeguards always closed the pool when there was lightning in the area.

Huge drops of rain splattered against the car’s windshield as Carlos and his mom pulled into the parking lot. As he stepped out of the car, Carlos heard a clap of thunder and then the lifeguard’s whistle.

“Everybody out of the pool!” the lifeguard yelled.

Carlos’s mother gave him a hug and said, “I am so sorry that the weather hasn’t cooperated with us. I know how much you were looking forward to swimming.”

Then Carlos saw his friends gathered under the awning of the pool building. When they spotted Carlos, the friends clapped loudly and began to sing “Happy Birthday.” Carlos ran to greet his friends and was surprised to find a table covered with good things to eat and some brightly wrapped presents.

“Why don’t you open this one right away,” said Carlos’s friend Molly.

Carlos opened the brightly wrapped present and found the board game he had been wanting.

“This is great,” Carlos exclaimed, “because even though we can’t swim, we can have fun playing this game.”

The friends hardly noticed the rain as they enjoyed Carlos’s new game. Later, they ate a delicious lunch of sandwiches, followed by Carlos’s favorite carrot cake.

Carlos watched the raindrops splash against the pool’s surface and the clouds move across the sky. This had not been the party he planned, but it turned out to be a terrific party after all.

## The Youngest Rider

My name is Charlie, and I am the youngest rider on the Pony Express. The other riders call me Young Boy Charlie, because I am only twelve years old, but I have been riding for nearly ten months now, through the blistering heat and freezing cold. I ride six or more hours each day, changing horses every hour. I must tell you that yesterday was my most exciting day yet.

I was riding my favorite horse, Jennie, an excellent pinto and my last horse of the day. We were crossing a swift stream, when my horse spotted a mountain lion. Jennie reared up in fright, nearly knocking me off. Fortunately, that scared the mountain lion away.

I regained my balance, but the leather pack I was carrying fell into the stream. That pack holds all the mail, and it is my job to pass it to the next rider. I jumped off Jennie and ran down the bank, looking for the pack. I worried that the swift water had carried it away. Suddenly, a tall man appeared in front of me, holding my bag! I felt nervous, because I had heard stories about attacks on riders.

I said, "Hello, I'm Charlie, and I believe that is my bag."

Laughing, he said, "Aren't you a little young for a rider?"

The remark annoyed me, but I was accustomed to being teased. I responded, "I am nearly thirteen, and I am good enough to ride any horse in the West."

Again, he laughed loudly and then handed me the pack. "Well, good luck to you then," he said.

I thanked the man, and we parted ways. Checking inside the pack, I was relieved to find the letters were still dry. I quickly jumped on Jennie and made up for lost time, arriving at the next station right on schedule.

## Maid of the Mist

Every year, my family begins planning our vacation during the cold days of winter. We pick a spot that everyone agrees on. Then we spend many pleasant evenings figuring out all the details, so we'll be ready to go when summer rolls around.

Last year we had one of our best vacations ever. We went to Niagara Falls, an amazing natural wonder. As usual, we had planned our trip in advance. One thing we all agreed on was that we wanted to take a ride on the Maid of the Mist, a large boat that takes passengers very near the falls.

After we bought our tickets, we waited on the dock for the boat. It was a short wait, and soon we were climbing aboard. The workers on the boat gave each of us a blue rain jacket, even though there was not a cloud in the sky.

“You'd better slip this on,” one of the workers said. “Without it, the spray from the falls will have you soaking wet in no time.”

The boat's large engines roared to life, and we pulled away from the dock. Before long, though, we couldn't hear the engines, because the roar of the water rushing over the falls was so loud! A heavy mist of water sprayed out from the falls, and we were grateful for the rain jackets. Still, water was dripping from my nose and covering every surface of the boat. I was glad we had planned in advance, because Dad knew to bring along a waterproof camera. Otherwise, there would have been no pictures for the scrapbook.

In all, the ride took about thirty minutes, which didn't seem quite long enough. I could have stayed, looking at those falls, for hours.

“We'll have another chance to see the falls tomorrow,” Mom reminded me. “We'll take the cable car ride and see the falls from the top instead of from the bottom.”

Suddenly, I was excited and looking forward to the next day's activity. And, unless the weather changed, I wouldn't have to worry about wearing a rain jacket.

## She Reached for the Stars

Two hundred years ago when Maria Mitchell was born, most girls did not get a formal education. Instead, they learned how to cook, sew, and run a house. Boys, on the other hand, went to school to learn about math and science. Because there were few educated women, people took notice of them. Maria Mitchell was one such woman.

Maria Mitchell was born on Nantucket Island. She was lucky to have been born in this whaling village. Women were expected to be independent while the men were at sea. Maria was lucky in another way. Her father believed girls should be educated. He encouraged Maria's interest in astronomy.

Maria took a teaching job when she was sixteen years old. Then, two years later, she became a librarian. This job was perfect for her. She earned a good salary and had time to read the books that interested her.

One night, Maria was looking through her father's telescope. She enjoyed her time on the roof, studying the planets and stars. On this night, she noticed a new star. She watched it for several nights. Soon she decided it was not a star at all. It was a comet! The king of Denmark, who offered gold medals to those who discovered comets, heard of Maria's work. She was awarded a medal, and the comet was named "Miss Mitchell's Comet."

By this time, Maria had become well known. She traveled widely and worked with scientists around the world. She eventually became a professor of astronomy at Vassar College

where she continued teaching and researching until the end of her life.

Maria Mitchell served as an example to women around the world. She inspired many young women to seek careers in science. As she said, “We especially need imagination in science. It is not all mathematics, nor all logic, but is somewhat beauty and poetry.”