

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

## DIBELS

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

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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.

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## The Grand Canyon

What is one of the world's biggest holes in the ground? It's more than a mile deep and almost three hundred miles long, and more than ten miles wide at some points. If you guessed the Grand Canyon, you're right. The Grand Canyon is an enormous gorge carved over millions of years by the Colorado River in northwestern Arizona.

Among the world's great tourist attractions, the Grand Canyon is walled by colorful strata, or layers, of rock dating back millions of years. The reds, pinks, and yellows in the rock are the result of traces of different minerals.

Most tourists visit the South Rim of the canyon, where there are hotels and many trails to explore. Bright Angel Trail is a popular hiking trail. The South Rim is open year round to visitors. The North Rim is cooler and quieter than the South Rim but is open only six months of the year.

The only ways to reach the inner canyon are by foot, on mule, or by raft on the Colorado River. Visitors can take daylong raft trips over smooth water or weeklong trips that include rolling rapids. Almost two hundred years ago, American John Wesley Powell led the first successful trip through the canyon. He and ten other men traveled down the river in four small boats, braving waters that had never been mapped.

Native Americans were the first to live and work in the canyon, more than eight hundred years ago. They lived in rock pueblos on both rims of the canyon, hunting and fishing, growing crops, making pottery, and weaving baskets.

Wildlife is abundant in the canyon. Hundreds of kinds of birds live there, as well as bighorn sheep, mule deer, beavers, bats, snakes, lizards, and frogs. There are also many types of trees, cacti, and wildflowers.

You can see that the Grand Canyon is much more than just a big hole in the ground. It is an amazing site, alive with stories of the past and present that are written on the rock, on the land, and on the river.

## Fossil Butte National Monument

If you visit Fossil Butte National Monument in Wyoming, you may meet a fish that is fifty million years old. The park was established to preserve the rock formations that contain a wide variety of fossil remains of plants and animals from a lake that covered the area long ago. The fossils are so well preserved that scientists can use them to study relationships among the plants and animals. Scientists can also use the fossils to study the effects of climate change in the area.

Fossil Lake, now a dry bed, was once more than fifty miles long and twenty miles wide at its maximum. The lake and its surrounding area were alive with gars, stingrays, herring, perch, crocodiles, turtles, insects, and horses the size of dogs.

Scientists aren't sure why so much of the lake's life was preserved as fossils. One theory is that plants and animals that sank to the bottom of the lake were quickly covered with a substance in the water that protected them. Scientists can also tell that a great number of fish were killed suddenly, but no one has yet solved this mystery.

Fossil Butte is a high desert, with hot, sunny summers and cool nights and cold winters. It usually has perfect weather for hiking. It is easy to get out of breath as you hike, though, because it is so far above sea level. You're likely to see mule deer and a variety of birds in the park. If you're lucky, you might also see elk, moose, and beaver.

You can explore the park on your own or with a ranger. There are two groomed hiking trails in the park. A research

quarry, located on one of the trails, is open to the public. Here visitors can help the park staff excavate fossils. And here is where you might meet your fish, its skeleton, teeth, scales, and skin perfectly preserved and ready to tell you an ancient story.

## Training for Tennis

Tennis is one of the most popular sports in the world. If you've discovered the game of tennis and enjoy playing, you probably know the basics by now, such as the rules of play, ways to serve and return the ball, and, of course, tennis etiquette, or the good manners of tennis. Three other things that are just as important are warming up before and after playing, doing practice exercises, and cross training.

Stretching to warm up helps loosen the muscles of your body, which helps you avoid injuries during a tennis game. One example of a good stretching exercise is to sit on the ground with your legs straight out in front of you. While trying to keep the backs of your knees on the ground, reach for your toes or as close to your toes as possible. Hold this stretch for about twenty seconds, relax, and then repeat the stretch three more times.

Practice exercises will help you improve your speed and reaction time for tennis. An example of a good practice exercise is to stand a few feet away from a partner and throw each other a tennis ball at the same time. You have to aim carefully and throw underarm for this exercise. If this seems too easy, try clapping or turning around before you catch the ball.

Cross training has to do with engaging in a sport other than your favorite sport. The theory behind cross training is that participation in other sports helps tune your body for your main sport.

For example, if you're a tennis player, playing soccer or basketball can improve your coordination and strengthen your leg muscles for moving quickly around the tennis court.

Swimming and jogging can increase your endurance so that you don't tire out too quickly in a tennis match.

Another benefit of cross training is that it puts some variety in your sports life. If you focus all of your attention on tennis, you risk tiring of the sport too quickly. Variety in training will help you maintain your excitement about tennis or any other sport.

## Over the Rainbow

One rainy afternoon, Carlos was babysitting the children who lived next door, Maria and Aldo. The three had played two board games, eaten a snack, and read a story about a mouse and a whale that become friends.

As he watched the rain soak the front yard, Aldo announced that he was bored, and his sister, who usually agreed with Aldo except when it came to sharing a cookie, chimed in that she too was bored.

At last the rain stopped and Aldo, who was watching the sun emerge from the clouds, suddenly spied a rainbow. He asked Carlos whether the stories about finding gold at the end of a rainbow were true, to which Carlos responded that he wasn't so sure. After much persuading from the children, Carlos agreed to take them on a walk to investigate the rainbow's end.

“When we find gold, I'm going to buy a new bike,” Aldo shouted assuredly as he strode ahead of the others. After a while, Carlos saw Aldo stop and squat down to pick up a black object, and when Carlos and Maria caught up with Aldo, they saw that he'd found a wallet. Carlos unfolded the wallet, pulled out a card, and saw a name he recognized. The three walked a couple of blocks to a small white house where Carlos rang the bell and a woman named Mrs. Dale appeared at the door.

Mrs. Dale recognized Carlos, who introduced Aldo and Maria, and then handed Mrs. Dale the wallet. “Aldo found your husband's wallet on the street,” he explained. Mrs. Dale examined the wallet for a moment and then smiled gratefully.

“How kind of you,” she said, and then told the three to wait while she went inside for a moment. When she returned, she counted out four gold dollar coins for each of them.

The three thanked Mrs. Dale and then set out for home, chattering excitedly among themselves. “It’s true about the rainbow,” Aldo said, smiling and opening his hand to reveal the coins. “There really is gold at the end of the rainbow!”

## The Mouse and the Dolphin

A mouse named Abe lived near the ocean. Being such a small creature bothered Abe, so he tried to make up for his lack of size by exaggerating his strengths and even telling tall tales about himself. For instance, he bragged to others that he had once been governor of a vast island across the sea and that it was he who'd invented the sailing compass, but the idea had been stolen from him.

One day Abe began constructing a boat on the beach. When passersby inquired what Abe planned to do with the boat, he explained proudly that he would sail to Spain to be advisor to the king.

The day after Abe set sail, a great storm arose and washed him off the deck of his boat and into the sea. Abe found himself stranded in the middle of the ocean, many miles from shore. He began treading water and was soon feeling desperate and alone.

Just as Abe was about to abandon hope, along came a dolphin, who offered to transport Abe ashore on his back. After the mouse accepted this proposition, the dolphin reached with a fin under Abe and flipped him onto his back, and off they went toward shore.

Naturally, Abe couldn't resist telling his fantastic stories, and the dolphin listened intently. "You're a very distinguished fellow," said the dolphin with admiration.

Just then the two entered a large bay, and the dolphin, referring to the name of the bay, asked, "I suppose you're familiar with Herring Roads?"

Not wishing to appear ignorant, and assuming that Herring Roads was the name of a person, Abe replied, “Do I know Rhodes? Why, of course I do. He’s an old college acquaintance of mine, and related to our family!”

The dolphin suddenly realized that the mouse had been telling lies about himself to exaggerate his importance. This made the dolphin so annoyed that he made a great leap out of the water, sending his passenger flying into the air. By the time the mouse splashed down into the water, the dolphin was far from the shore.

Moral: A liar deceives no one but himself.

## Louise Erdrich

How does a writer become a writer? For author Louise Erdrich, family played an important role. The oldest of seven children, Louise was born fifty years ago to an American Indian mother and a German American father.

She was influenced by the stories she was immersed in through her family and community. “People in [Native American] families make everything into a story,” she has said. “People just sit and the stories start coming, one after another. I suppose that when you grow up constantly hearing the stories rise, break, and fall, it gets into you somehow.” Louise has integrated many of these stories and traditions into her novels.

She began writing when she was a child. Her father encouraged Louise and her sisters to write original stories. “My father used to give me a nickel for every story I wrote,” says Louise. Her mother created book covers for the stories. “So at an early age, I felt myself to be a published author.” As a teenager, Louise began thinking that she might want to become a writer, so she started keeping a journal and reading poetry.

During her junior year of college, Louise won a national poetry prize. After college, she taught writing and also worked at a variety of jobs, including being a waitress, weeding beet crops, and weighing trucks on an interstate highway. These jobs and the people she met through them gave her a deeper understanding of the human experience and have informed many of her stories.

Louise had published two books of poetry before writing her first novel, *Love Medicine*, which quickly became a bestseller. *Love Medicine* and several other of her books explore Native

American themes, and she has been praised for telling “real stories” about Native Americans. Her books of fiction and poetry have won numerous awards and prizes. Now a famous writer, Louise receives far more than a nickel for every story she writes.

## Winner of the Race

On the day of the race, Lamont awoke early and checked all the equipment on his bicycle one final time. He had owned several bikes over the years, but this one, a red and silver road bike, was his favorite because he'd won the past two Town River races on it. The bicycle race was an annual event for teenagers, and this year the prize would be a new bicycle and helmet.

Lamont's neighbor and friend, Jay, walked with Lamont to the race site. The two had ridden bicycles together for the past three years, until six months ago, when Jay's bike had been stolen from his garage.

At the site, Jay wished Lamont good luck after the announcer called the race entrants to the starting line. When the fifty or so participants assembled behind the line, the mayor stepped up to the microphone to welcome the contestants and observers. Then he blew a whistle and the cyclists charged across the starting line.

Lamont hung back to let the first wave of riders sort themselves out. Then he began his progress toward the front of the pack, pacing himself and holding back a little to conserve energy for the final push.

Lamont passed one cyclist after another, moving cunningly and steadily to the front, concentrating intently. Soon he passed the lead cyclist and then, to ensure his lead, he churned his legs harder to put distance between himself and the rider in second place. When Lamont rolled across the finish line, the crowd whooped and cheered.

After the awards ceremony, as Jay admired the prize, Lamont said, “I want you to have the new bike. I don’t want to part with my old bike, which has seen me through three victories.” Jay blinked in disbelief. “I mean it,” Lamont said. “It’s yours.” Jay slowly placed the helmet on his head and got on the bike. He must have thanked Lamont twenty times during the boys’ ride back to their neighborhood.

## Mountains in Danger

People often go to mountains for relief from the pressures of modern life. The altitude, fresh air, and scenery can revive sagging spirits. But where do mountains go for relief from pressures of their own?

Many of the world's mountain regions are suffering from damage caused by modern life. They have been affected by climate changes, tourism, pollution, development, and other forces. Unless these forces are controlled, major problems will result. For example, erosion caused by unwise farming practices can lead to landslides, avalanches, and flooding.

Mountains and highlands cover a quarter of the earth's land surface. These areas are home to ten percent of the world's people. They provide a source of water for more than half of all people. These ecosystems are as important to the planet as are its oceans and rain forests.

Mining, logging, and overgrazing of farmlands have destroyed forests in mountain and highland areas. To some researchers, however, tourism is one of the main threats. The number of visitors to mountain areas is growing. More tourism means more development and more vehicle traffic. Increased development destroys wildlife habitats and taxes natural resources.

Along with these problems are threats posed by climate warming trends. Glaciers and snowcaps are melting at an alarming pace, which can lead to even more warming. When the ice melts, the newly exposed land and water surfaces retain more

heat. The warmer land and water can speed up warming around the world.

Taken as a whole, the problem seems as large as the mountains themselves. But each mountain system is unique. For one country, a threat to a mountain range may be the pressures of war, but for another, it may be unsound farming. People will need to address the problems as separate issues, one step at a time, as in climbing a mountain. Scientists and other groups are already taking steps in some mountain areas. They know that making a mountain healthier is good for the health of the whole planet.

## Virgin Islands National Park

Another name for Virgin Islands National Park might be paradise. The park, which covers much of St. John Island and most of Hassel Island, consists of fifteen thousand acres of clear water, white sand beaches, fragile coral reefs, tropical forests, hundreds of species of plants, and the remnants of earlier cultures.

The coral reef colonies here support many types of fish. They are also home to worms, sponges, urchins, mollusks, and lobsters. These are fragile communities that depend on just the right combination of conditions such as proper temperatures, enough sunlight and oxygen, and the right foods.

The park features several different land areas. These areas were created by differences in rainfall amounts, soil types, and varying effects of salt and wind. Along the north shoreline and the higher interior elevations are wet forests that receive a lot of rain each year. These areas support tall trees and lush forests.

Dry forests cover the eastern and southern parts of St. John, as well as some of the low coastal areas. Mangrove forests are also found in the park. Mangrove trees have adapted to conditions on the shorelines. Red mangroves even grow in the ocean, and their roots protect the shorelines and shelter marine animals.

Protection of the reefs and forests of this park present a challenge for the park service. More than one million people visit the park each year. People have a right to visit the park. But how many visitors should be in the park at any given time? How

many people should be allowed to swim in and around the reefs each year? How many boats should be allowed to anchor in the area?

The park staff, the Virgin Islands government, and others are working to answer these and similar questions. They want visitors to enjoy the park, but they are also committed to protecting the park's fragile natural features. Everyone who has visited the park wants this paradise to last for as long as possible.