Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Edition

DIBELS

Kindergarten Student Materials
DIBELS Benchmark Assessment

Edited By:
Roland H. Good III
Ruth A. Kaminski
University of Oregon

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

Instructions:
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DIBELS Initial Sound Fluency

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First Grade Student Materials
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Spring Is Coming

It has been so cold this winter. The wind blew and blew. It rained and rained. The days have been gray and dark. I had to wear mittens and a hat to school every day. It even snowed twice.

At first winter was fun. Now I’m tired of the cold. It has been too cold and wet to play outside. At school, we sit in the library and read during recess. After school I just stay in the house and play. I don’t want to play inside anymore.

But today was nice. The sun was shining brightly even though it was still cold. The wind didn’t blow. My friends and I played kick ball at recess. We had to take off our jackets because we were warm. We even got hot and thirsty.

On the way home from school I saw a purple flower on our street. It was blooming in the grass. I told my mother about it. She wanted me to show it to her. She bent down and touched it.

“Come sniff this,” she said. It smelled like perfume and sun all mixed together. “Spring must be right around the corner,” she said. “This is a crocus. It’s one of the first flowers of spring.”

I can’t wait for spring.
Ice Cream

When it is too hot outside, cold ice cream cools me off. I like strawberry the best, but rocky road is good, too. My brother likes bubble gum and vanilla.

The ice cream man comes down our street in the summer. When he gets close he rings his bell. All the kids hear the bell. They get some money and go outside and wait. They sit on the sidewalk until he comes. All of the kids want to buy some cold ice cream to eat.

The ice cream man has drumsticks, ice cream bars, and bonbons. His ice cream tastes good. I like bonbons best.

My mother makes the very best ice cream of all. She uses our old ice cream freezer. She puts milk, sugar, and eggs inside. She puts lots of ice inside, too.

I get to turn the handle. My hand gets cold and it takes a long time. My arm gets very tired turning the handle. Finally the ice cream is ready to eat. My mom lets me lick the ice cream paddle. I think the very first taste is the best.

Yum! That tastes great!
Having a Checkup

I don’t mind going to my doctor’s office. There are lots of things to do while we wait. My doctor has puzzles I like to put together. There is a big fish tank in the waiting room. It has yellow and black angel fish and a pretty blue fish. When I stare at the fish they stare back at me.

Every door has an animal painted on it. Inside there are chairs that look like zebras, tigers, or lions. Even the nurse wears a jacket with animals on it. They must like animals.

Then I have my checkup. First I stand on the scale. Then the nurse measures me. She looks in my ears. Then she asks questions about how I feel. My mother helps me with the answers if I’m not sure.

My doctor has taken care of me since I was a baby. She comes in when the nurse is done. She asks more questions. She says I look very healthy and won’t need to come back until next year.

I like having a checkup when I’m not sick. I didn’t even have to have a shot. And the nurse gave me some cool animal stickers.
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The Block Party

We had a big party on my street last weekend. We didn’t have to dress up or bring presents. There was food, music, and games. The party was so big it took up almost the whole street. There were signs across the ends of the street to stop the cars from driving on the street. It was safe to play in the street because there were no cars. The party was called a block party.

Lots and lots of people came to the block party. All of the people shared their food. There was so much food to eat. One whole table was filled with desserts. There was ice cream, apple pie, cookies, and angel food cake. I had cookies and ice cream. My mom said that was enough.

There was music at the block party. A band played. People danced in the street. There were games at the block party, too. You could play ball, run races, or play tag. If you didn’t want to play the games you could just watch the fun.

My dad and mom had fun, too. They said they would like to have a block party again next year. They liked talking to our neighbors. I liked playing with my friends. It was lots and lots of fun. I want to do it again next year, too.
The Sand Castle

My uncle, my dad, my brother, and I built a giant sand castle at the beach. First we picked a spot far from the big waves. Then we got out buckets and shovels. We drew a line to show where it would be. It was going to be big!

We all brought buckets of wet sand to make the walls. We scooped out holes for lakes and ditches. We made roads and a moat around the walls. We made molds for the buildings by filling the buckets with wet sand. We had to keep everything wet so it wouldn’t fall down. We had to work fast!

Then we filled up the holes with water. We had to do it over and over. Finally my dad found a piece of plastic. He laid it down in the holes. It kept the water from draining away so fast.

Finally we put shells, feathers, and rocks on the castle. We added driftwood roofs. We placed plants around the walls. We even found a flag to fly from the tower. We gave it a name. We called it The Beach Castle.

The seagulls walked around it. I think they wanted to live in it. Then the tide came in and waves crashed over it. A few feathers and rocks were all that was left.
Our Sick Kitty

Our kitten was sick. She would not eat and she stopped drinking. She did not purr anymore. She wanted to sleep all the time. She cried if I touched her.

Dad said, “We need to take her to the vet.” The vet is an animal doctor.

I held her in the cat carrier. I kept her wrapped in a fuzzy blanket. I talked to her because she does not like to ride in the car. But this time she was so sick she was quiet the whole ride.

When we arrived at the animal clinic, Dad took the carrier inside. The vet checked her all over. She took her temperature. She said our kitten had a feline virus. She gave us some medicine our kitten had to swallow. She told us to put the medicine in her food. She said to give our kitten lots of water.

We drove home. We made her take the medicine. She went right to sleep. Dad said she could stay in my bedroom until she got better. She usually sleeps on the back porch. When I woke up I heard my kitten purring. I looked down at her and saw her watching me. I felt so happy because my kitten was better. She does not like to be sick.
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Second Grade Student Materials
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Mom’s New Job

Yesterday my mom started her new job. Her job is to drive a school bus every morning. She took driving classes to get ready for her new job. She had to get a special license, too. She wears a dark blue uniform with a yellow vest.

Now that she is driving a school bus, my mom has to get up even earlier than we do. She has to be at work on time or the children won’t get to school on time. She does her best to get everyone to school on time.

When I came down to the kitchen for breakfast yesterday, Dad and Mom were eating cereal and drinking coffee together. Since Mom has to leave early, I knew she wouldn’t have time to make my breakfast anymore. I sat down and fixed myself a bowl of cereal.

“Did you make my lunch, Mom?” I asked.

“I made it for you,” said Dad. “I made mom’s and mine, too.”

“We’re all going to take turns making lunches,” Mom said. “Next week you’ll get to make all three lunches.”

That afternoon when I came home from school, I smelled something good. There was mom in the kitchen, taking chocolate chip cookies out of the oven.

“I made a treat for our lunches tomorrow,” she said. “Here, you may have one.”

“How was your second day on the job, Mom?” I asked. “Just great, honey. I love my new job,” she said.
My Handprints

We have our handprints hanging on the wall at our house. When my brother and I were little we made them for Mother’s Day. We each pushed our hands into the wet clay. After the clay dried, our teacher wrote our names on them. She made holes to hang the handprints up. After they were finished, we gave them to our mom. Mom said they were beautiful works of art.

Once we took a vacation to the Southwest. We saw how the Zunis used their handprints to tell stories. We visited caves where there were handprints all over the walls. The prints were very, very old. Some were little and some were big. The Zunis dipped their hands in colored clay that looked like paint. Then they pressed their hands on the walls of the cave.

Each handprint was like writing a name on the wall. Today the handprints are like history books. They tell the stories of the people who used to live there. We didn’t touch the handprints because even one fingerprint could ruin them.

We wanted to bring home reminders of our visit. We went to the Zuni gift shop. My mother bought a pin that is shaped like a handprint. I bought a book about a boy my age. He lived in one of the caves many years ago. The book told about how he lived and how he helped his family.
Meals on Wheels

Last Friday I didn’t have to go to school so my mom asked me to go with her to deliver Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels is for elderly people who have difficulty cooking for themselves. Some of them don’t have any children or family to look after them. Volunteers bring meals to their homes. My mom volunteers every Friday.

My mom and I went to the Meals on Wheels office and picked up the dinners. The dinners had meat loaf, potatoes, gravy, bread, salad, a piece of cake, juice, and milk. It made me hungry to smell them. We set off in the car to deliver the dinners. We were careful to wear our seat belts.

Mom let me carry the food up to the door. She introduced me to each person. I put the food down on the table and opened the milk and juice cartons. Some people were in wheelchairs and some used walkers. Some could answer the door but not walk very well. Everyone was nice. One lady was extra nice. She asked my mom if I could have a piece of candy for helping. Mom said I could.

Besides bringing a hot dinner, my mother checks to make sure that each person is all right. Mom says sometimes the Meals on Wheels volunteer is the only visitor who comes to their house all week. I asked Mom if I could help again some time. I really liked the people, and it made me feel proud to help. She smiled and said yes.
Riding the Roller Coaster

When I was seven, my dad took me for a ride on a big roller coaster. It is called The Screamer. It’s the biggest roller coaster around. You have to be at least seven years old and with an adult to ride it. The day after my seventh birthday, I told my dad I was ready to go and ride The Screamer.

When we arrived at the park I wasn’t so sure I was ready to ride The Screamer after all. It was so tall we couldn’t see the top and we could hear the people screaming as they rode on it. Some of the people looked nervous as they were starting the ride. They looked kind of wobbly when they got off.

I told my dad I would like to ride some of the smaller rides first. I wanted to get warmed up for the big one. Finally I was ready. Dad bought our tickets and we waited in line. Then we were next.

I took a deep breath, got into the car, and buckled the seat belt. The car slowly started up the track. The trucks on the highway below looked like toys. Then the roller coaster went over the top. We zoomed down so fast I thought we would leave the tracks, then we climbed slowly up again. We zipped around the curves and I threw my arms up in the air. It was so much fun that I wanted to do it again as soon as it was over.
Moving Day

Saturday is moving day. Our whole family is moving to a new house. My parents decided we were just too crowded in our apartment and we needed more room. At our new house my brother and I won’t have to share a room anymore. The house has two bathrooms so we won’t have to stand in line to use the bathroom anymore. We will have a garage for the car. We will even have a fenced yard with a swing set and room for a garden.

Our apartment is full of boxes. I have to pack up my clothes and my toys. I’m helping my brother pack his things because he is little. My mom is putting the dishes and pans in cartons. My stepdad is packing up sheets and blankets.

When we are ready, the moving van will load up our stuff. We will lead the way to the new house. Dad says by Sunday everything will be put away. Before long the new house will start to feel like home.

On Monday we will go to a new school on a new bus. I will miss all of my friends, but mom says they can come visit soon. Dad says we will make new friends at the new house and the new school.
Stars of the Sea

What fish looks like it belongs more in the sky than in the sea? The answer is a starfish. Most starfish have five arms, but some have many more. If a starfish loses an arm, it grows a new one. A starfish can lose one or two arms and still be just fine.

A starfish can stretch its arms to as long as two feet. The starfish uses its arms to move through water or along rocks. A starfish has tiny tubes on the undersides of its arms. The tubes are like sticky suction cups. The starfish can hold on to rocks even in the waves. The tubes work like hundreds of tiny feet. Starfish crawl along the ocean bottom, but they don’t move very fast.

A starfish eats tiny fish and plants. Its mouth is on the bottom, in the center of the star. Their favorite food is shellfish, and they can eat a lot. The starfish eats during high tide, when the waves bring in lots of food. During low tide you might find them holding onto the rocks and waiting for the tide to change.

Starfish come in many colors, including yellow, orange, red, blue, purple, pink, and brown. They come in all sizes, from tiny to very large. When many different ones are in the same area they look like a rainbow under water.
If I Had a Robot

If I had a robot, he would do everything I don’t like to do. First, he’d brush his teeth. Then, he’d get dressed for school. I would stay in bed. He would make my lunch. He knows pizza and cookies are my favorite. My robot would carry my books and lunch for me. He might even carry my friend’s books.

At school, my robot would tell me all the right answers. He would take my spelling test for me and get all of the words right. During recess, my robot would do extra credit while I played. I would eat the lunch my robot made. Everyone would want to trade for my cookies. I’d make my robot eat everything I didn’t like.

When school was over, my robot would do my homework. It would be perfect and in his best handwriting. I would play outside with my dog. After dinner, my robot would do my chores. He would pick up my clothes. He would empty the garbage. He would feed the cat and the dog. I would watch TV and play chess with my dad. My robot would bring me a big piece of chocolate cake.

My robot would take a bath and wash his hair. Then my robot would brush his teeth. I would hug my dad and kiss my mom goodnight. My robot would have to hug my little brother.
My Grandpa Snores

It’s hard to get a good night’s rest at my grandma and grandpa’s house because my grandpa snores. Grandma says he snores so loudly that he almost snores his head off. Grandpa sleeps in a bedroom all by himself because his snoring keeps Grandma awake.

Grandpa’s snore is so loud he sounds like a big bull elephant. He sounds like the largest lion in the zoo giving his loudest roar. He’s as loud as a huge grizzly bear or an old moose. Anyway, he’s very loud.

Grandma says that when she wants to get a good night’s sleep she just puts in her earplugs and shuts her bedroom door. When I spent the night, I didn’t get very much sleep. I tried putting my pillow over my head. Then I got all the way under the covers. Then I crawled under the bed. No matter what I did, I could still hear Grandpa. His snoring kept me awake almost all night long.

By morning I was so tired that I fell asleep at the breakfast table. I almost hit my cereal bowl with my chin. Grandma had to shake me awake.

“Wake up, Will,” she said. “Wake up, now you’re the one snoring.” We all laughed. I guess I learned how from my grandpa. Next time I sleep at Grandma and Grandpa’s house I am going to bring earplugs so I can sleep, too.
My Drift Bottle

I read a story about people who met because of a message inside a bottle. A man put the message inside the bottle and tossed it in the ocean. Months later, a lady found the bottle on a beach far across the ocean.

I asked my teacher if we could try sending a message in a bottle. She said she would save a bottle with a tight lid for me. She said we could launch the bottle on our next field trip to the beach. It was our class project. I wrote a letter about myself for the bottle. Some of my friends wrote letters, also.

After we were done, we showed our letters to my teacher. She said we could put all the letters in the bottle. We asked whoever found the bottle to write to us at our school. We wanted to know how far the bottle would go. We took the bottle along on our next trip to the shore. We stood on the beach until the tide started to go out. Then I threw the bottle as far as I could. We watched it bob in the waves until we could not see it anymore.

Now every day I wonder if someone has found our message. I wonder if the bottle is still drifting on the waves. I wonder if it is traveling across the ocean and imagine the different countries it might reach. I hope someday we find out where it went.
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My Friend

I have a new friend at school. She can’t walk so she uses a wheelchair to get around. She comes to school in a special van that can transport four people who use wheelchairs. The van brings my friend and another boy to school. My friend is in third grade with me, and the boy is a fourth grader.

I like to watch my friend get in and out of the van. The driver pushes a button and part of the van floor lowers to the driveway to form a ramp. My friend just wheels up the ramp and goes inside. After she is inside, the driver pushes the button and the ramp puts itself away. When it is time to get out of the van, they do the same thing again. Sometimes I help open the door so she can roll right inside.

My friend and I do everything together. Our teacher lets us sit together in the front row, and we always go to lunch together. My friend moves so fast down the hall that she always gets the best seats in the cafeteria. Sometimes we trade sandwiches. At recess, we always play on the same team. My friend sure has strong arms. She hardly ever misses a shot when we play basketball, and she can throw the farthest of anyone in third grade.
Going to Family Camp

My favorite part of family camp is the campfire program at the lake. We wait until the stars and moon are out. We walk down to the edge of the water where a big bonfire is going. We all snuggle together watching the flames because it’s cold after dark.

The camp director leads everyone in songs. He plays the banjo. We sing “You are My Sunshine” and “She’ll be Coming Around the Mountain.” Then he divides the group in two and we sing rounds like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” and “Are You Sleeping?”

Then we have stories and skits. The stories are usually tales about campers at family camp in previous years and a funny or brave thing that they did. One story was about my older brother rescuing a cat. The skits are always silly.

When the campfire burns down to coals, it’s time to toast marshmallows. Some people like their marshmallows golden brown. Other people like theirs crispy. Some kids can’t wait to toast them and eat their marshmallows right out of the bag. We toast marshmallows to make ‘Some Mores.’ ‘Some Mores’ are graham crackers with chocolate that is topped with a hot marshmallow. They taste so good you want some more, but they are really sticky! Everyone has to wash up before bed.

Now we are all sleepy and ready to go back to our cabin. We stand together and sing a song called “Taps.” My mom and dad say they have been singing “Taps” at campfires since they were little kids like me.
Planting a Garden

We eat lots of fresh vegetables at our house. Mom is an excellent cook, and she has lots of recipes for making them taste delicious. Sometimes they are expensive to buy at the store so Dad suggested we grow our own.

Dad asked all the members of my family what our favorite vegetables were. I said carrots, broccoli, and beans. My mother likes tomatoes the best. Dad said he wanted to grow green onions, spinach, potatoes, and corn.

We went to the hardware store and bought seeds and little broccoli and tomato plants. We all helped prepare the garden in our backyard. We turned over the dirt with shovels. Then we used a hoe to make little ditches for planting the vegetable seeds. We dug deeper holes for the broccoli and tomatoes. We watered everything and sprinkled some fertilizer around.

I checked the garden every day to see if any vegetables were coming up. After about a week I saw tiny green leaves where the carrots were planted. Then each day more seeds sprouted.

In two months we could eat the spinach, onions, and broccoli. It was almost the end of summer before we could harvest the other vegetables. Everything we grew in our garden was delicious. It was worth the wait, especially for the fresh green beans that my mother cooked with bacon and onion. My dad said the corn was the best he ever tasted.
The Field Trip

Last week our teacher said we were going on a field trip to the fish hatchery. She gave us permission letters to take home to be signed by our parents before we could go. She encouraged us to ask our parents if they would like to come along. We needed some parents to help provide transportation. Everyone was supposed to bring a snack and a sack lunch.

My dad surprised me by volunteering to go. He said he could take a vacation day and that our car could hold a couple of my friends. Three cars and two vans were needed to take the whole class. Two of my friends rode in our car.

At the hatchery, we saw ponds full of fish. We learned the fish were rainbow trout. You could see the colors of the rainbow on their sides. The ranger let us take handfuls of pellets to feed the trout. When we threw the pellets into the ponds the fish got very excited. Some leaped out of the water. The fish could see the food coming from far away.

When the trout grow to about six inches long they will be scooped up and put inside a tanker truck. The truck will take the fish to nearby rivers and release them. In the river, the fish will have to learn to find their own food. When my dad goes fishing, maybe he will catch some of them and bring them home for our dinner.
Keiko the Killer Whale

Keiko the whale was captured near Iceland and brought to California. He became a famous performer who did tricks at a theme park. He even starred in a movie! Keiko is an Orca whale. Orcas are called killer whales because they feed on seals.

Keiko was not healthy at the theme park. He was thin and his skin was covered with sores. His body was too big for the tank he lived in. The water was not cold enough for him to be comfortable. He couldn’t get enough exercise to be healthy. He was not a happy whale.

Keiko was taken to the Oregon Coast Aquarium to get healthy and eventually be released back into the wild. At the aquarium, he ate the kind of fish he would have caught himself in the ocean. He lived in a very large tank full of cool ocean water. Trainers took care of him and helped him remember what it was like to be wild again.

Keiko ate well and exercised every day. He gained about two tons and got healthy again. When he was well he was moved back to his new home in the ocean. He was so big he had to be flown in a special plane with a pool that took up the entire inside of the plane.

Keiko’s new home is in a pen in the ocean, not a tank. Trainers are helping him learn to catch his own fish. Someday they hope he will be released into the wild again. Maybe he will find his original family of Orcas.
Getting Email

At our house, the mail carrier isn’t the only one who brings us messages. Our computer also brings mail. Our family has an email address. All we have to do is turn on the computer and get on the Internet. Our computer tells us if we have new mail.

Email is much faster than regular letters. If I send a regular letter to my cousin who lives in Japan it can take weeks to get an answer. If I email my cousin, she usually emails back the same day. She lives 4,000 miles away and across the Pacific Ocean, but our email messages come and go very quickly.

My cousin is nine years old, just like me. We send email to each other almost every day. We tell each other about our schools, our friends, and our soccer teams. Sometimes we send jokes back and forth. Sometimes we ask questions about what we hear in the news about our countries. Sometimes we play chess with each other using the computer. We think of our moves on separate chess sets and then use email to send our moves back and forth.

My dad and mom send email messages back and forth to Japan as well as to Hawaii, where we have many relatives. Because our relatives live so far apart it is hard for us to get together. If it weren’t for email, we wouldn’t be able to stay in touch as easily. With email, we can communicate without having to wait for a letter or buy expensive stamps.
Pots

My family makes pots out of clay at our pueblo. These aren’t just any pots, though. They are pretty special. Our pots are on display all over the world. People travel for miles to visit our pueblo and collect our pots. We have shown many of our pots in competitions, and we have won lots of awards. Someone even wrote a book about my aunt and the pots that she makes.

I am learning to make our pots from my family. From my grandfather I am learning about the clay. We collect the clay from special areas of the river and process it just right. We have to keep the clay moist and we have to work the clay to force any air bubbles out. If there is an air bubble in the clay the pot will break when it is fired.

We hand build our pots. That means we don’t use a wheel or a mold. Instead, we have a picture in our mind of how we want the pot to look. We build the pot layer by layer from the base. We are careful to make the pot match the shape in our mind at each step.

Our pots are decorated with designs that tell a story or have a meaning. If you know how to read the designs, you can learn many important lessons about life. I can tell if a pot was made by one of my relatives from the designs. I can tell who made it, and sometimes I can tell you about when it was made.
Animal Tracks

I saw a show on TV last night about animal tracks. Animals and people leave their footprints, or tracks, wherever they go. Each track tells a story. A good tracker can tell what kind of animal made the tracks. For instance, members of the dog family have four toes on each foot. A tracker can see the toenail marks in the footprint of a dog. The dog family includes foxes, coyotes, and all pet dogs.

The cat family also has four toes on all four feet but their toenails don’t show. That is because cats pull their toenails in when they walk. Cats could be mountain lions, bobcats, or pet cats. Rabbits have four toes on all four feet also. A tracker can tell a rabbit from a cat or dog because a rabbit’s back feet are much larger than their front feet.

Animals with five toes on each foot are members of the weasel family. The weasel family includes skunks, otters, and raccoons. Most members of the rodent family have four toes in front and five in back. Rodents could be mice, rats, chipmunks or squirrels.

A person who learns how to read the story in the tracks can use their knowledge to help track people who are lost. A tracker who is really good can tell men from women and boys from girls. A good tracker also can tell the height and weight of a person just from the footprints.
My Parents

I’m Mexican American because my parents were both born in Mexico and I was born in America. My parents came to work in the United States before they even finished school. They were just a little older than I am now when they moved here. They got married in Texas, and then they moved to California because their families lived there.

My mother and father worked very hard to make our lives better. At first they worked on farms. They both worked seven days a week when there was work and the weather was good. Sometimes the farms that needed workers were far away, and they had to travel a long distance. Sometimes it would rain, and they couldn’t work for days. At other times the crops weren’t ready when they arrived. There could be too many people to do the same work, and sometimes there was no work at all.

My mother is bilingual because she speaks both English and Spanish. She can understand almost everyone. She was able to get another job because lots of places need employees who can speak English and Spanish.

My father speaks only Spanish, but not for long. He is taking English classes at night so he can find another job. He says English is a difficult language to learn. I’m really proud of my parents.
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Edition

DIBELS

Fourth Grade Student Materials
DIBELS Benchmark Assessment

Edited By:
Roland H. Good III
Ruth A. Kaminski
University of Oregon

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.

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.”
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DIBELS

Fifth Grade Student Materials
DIBELS Benchmark Assessment

Edited By:
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Something’s Missing!

Missy couldn’t believe that the day she had been looking forward to had arrived at last. She and her father were leaving on a bus to visit Aunt Martha’s farm. Missy looked forward to seeing her aunt, but she was especially excited about seeing her favorite cousin, Ralph.

Although the bus was crowded, Missy and her father found seats together near the front. Her father suggested that Missy sit next to the window, and she eagerly scrambled into her seat. She put her backpack on the floor in front of her and began looking out the window. Right below her, workers were busy unloading suitcases from a large pushcart and tossing them into the bus.

As soon as the bus jerked into motion, Missy reached for her backpack and got out her science book. She knew that if she didn’t do her homework before they arrived at the farm, she would have less time to spend with Ralph. She got out a sheet of paper and began busily writing the answers to the questions at the end of the chapter. As she worked, the hum of the motor and the gentle rocking motion of the bus made her feel very drowsy. “I’m going to splash some water on my face,” she said to her father as she put her book on the floor.

A few minutes later, Missy returned to her seat, refreshed and ready to work. However, when she reached for her science book, she discovered that it was gone. Alarmed, she began looking all around for it. The book wasn’t under the seat in front
of her or in her backpack. Then Missy looked at her father, who was reading a newspaper, and noticed that the corners of his mouth were turned slightly upward.

“All right, Dad, hand it over,” she said. Smiling, her father reached under his newspaper, slowly pulled out Missy’s science book, and handed it to her with a smile.

“I just want to make sure that you have an exciting trip to the farm,” he said, laughing.
A New Habitat

Last month, my teacher suggested that my class choose a project to help our community in some way. My classmates suggested many different ways we could help. I suggested that we help with a beach cleanup, and my best friend suggested that we set up a recycling program at school. We finally decided to participate in a national program that helps protect wildlife. The program is called the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program. Its purpose is to help people create habitats that shelter wildlife.

My class decided to create a rock wall in a corner of our playground. The wall will provide shelter for animals such as frogs, toads, and chipmunks. It will even protect the spiders, bees, and beetles that live there.

Building the rock pile was lots of fun. We used rocks that had been dug up at the front of the school. First, we carried the rocks to the playground and laid them out so we could see their shapes. Then we began stacking the rocks, fitting them together like a puzzle. My teacher explained that the wall should be sturdy so that it will not topple over and trap small animals. The animals can use every little opening between the rocks in the wall for their homes.

We learned that all habitats must have a way for animals to get both food and water, so we planted a garden on top of the wall, using native plants. We selected plants that provide food such as fruits, seeds, and nectar. When the plants are grown, they will also provide shade for the animals. To provide water, we created shallow pools in several places in the wall, and we also added a birdbath.
Everyone in the school is enjoying the new addition to the playground. Teachers and students both have said that it is an interesting place to visit and that it adds to the beauty of our school. I just hope the animals like the new addition as much as everyone else seems to.
Mount Rainier

Near the western coast of our country stands a stately mountain called Mount Rainier. People below the mountain often watch the mountain’s ever-changing face as shadows and light pass over it. However, many are not aware that constant changes are also taking place within the mountain.

Mount Rainier began to form about twelve million years ago. At that time, magma, or melted rock, from the earth’s core began to build up under the earth’s surface. This created a great amount of pressure. Finally, one million years ago, this pressure was released when a weak spot in the earth’s crust gave way. Lava poured out of this opening and rock and ash exploded into the air. The volcanic cone that resulted grew into a huge mountain. However, the story does not end there. Today, Mount Rainier looks like a mountain that has had its top blown off. That is exactly what happened about six thousand years ago when the volcano erupted once again. Smaller eruptions have occurred in the years since.

Today, some scientists consider Mount Rainier to be the most dangerous volcano in the United States. If it should erupt, a flood of hot rock, ash, and lava will gush over its top and sweep down its sides. Adding to this danger are earthquakes that occur in the area. A few years ago, an earthquake in the area caused more than two hundred injuries. Scientists worry that such events may cause huge rocks inside the volcano to shift, causing another eruption.
Several towns lie in the path of a possible eruption. Fortunately for those towns, the volcano would likely send up danger signals before it erupts. These signals would appear in the form of steam rising from the mountain. This would give people in the towns below plenty of time to escape before the eruption.
Do You Mean Me?

What a thrilling week this has been! At my piano lesson on Monday, my teacher, Ms. Hawkins, announced some wonderful news. She explained that she has a friend named Luis who plays violin in our city’s symphony orchestra. She said that Luis had invited all of her students to a performance on Thursday evening at Central Theater. She explained that I would see a performance called “The World Dances,” which includes both music and dance. I was so excited I ran all the way home.

On Thursday, I went to Central Theater with Ms. Hawkins and several of her other students. Even though we were the only children there, we had seats in the very front row. The performance began right on time with a lively folk dance. A group of dancers wearing brightly colored costumes skipped, clapped, and stomped in time to the music.

When the folk dance was finished, Luis walked up to the microphone and looked directly at our group. After he thanked us for coming, he invited the student sitting in seat A3 to come forward to play with the orchestra. I couldn’t believe that I was the student sitting in that seat!

As I walked to the stage, my legs trembled and my heart pounded in my chest. Luis led me to a piano and invited me to sit down. Then he sat down beside me and pointed to the sheet music on the piano. He explained that I was to play a chord once at the beginning and again at the end of the song, which was a march. That’s all I had to do because Luis and the dancers did the rest.
When we finished playing, I took a bow with Luis and the dancers to the sound of loud cheering. It was wonderful to receive such support from the audience, but I was also very relieved to get back to my seat.

When I got home, I told my parents about being selected to play with the orchestra. Then I went to bed and dreamed that I was a famous concert pianist.
Making a Difference

Grandma adjusted Sara’s costume and stood back to examine her. “You’ll certainly be the hit of the harvest play,” she said enthusiastically. Sara’s class was performing a harvest play for the senior citizens living at Bay View Community Center. Sara was especially excited because Grandma lived there.

Sara, who was performing as an ear of corn, wore green leggings and a yellow shirt with yellow felt squares attached to it. “Your role in the play is important.” Grandma explained. “Corn is the most important part of the harvest. It could be used to feed livestock and to make bread, so it stands for the importance of a good harvest.”

Sara glanced at the clock on the wall and reviewed the lines she had memorized one more time. “I’d better go downstairs, Grandma. Curtain time is in just thirty minutes, and the director wants us to be prepared.” Hugging her grandmother, she said, “Be sure to come down a little early, so you can find a seat in the first row.”

Downstairs, Sara found her classmates nervously gathering on the stage. She greeted her best friend, Linda, who was dressed as a farmer, and the girls took their places on the stage. When the curtain rose fifteen minutes later, Sara’s heart was pounding so hard, she was certain the audience could hear it.

Before Sara knew it, she was taking a bow with the rest of her class while the audience was giving a standing ovation. She could see Grandma sitting with her parents in the front row. Sara could tell from her expression that Grandma had found the play entertaining and was very proud of her.
When the applause died down, Sara was surprised to see her grandmother walking toward the stage. Grandma went to the microphone and greeted the students. Then she said, “We’ve planned a little surprise as a gift to thank you for performing at our center. Just give us a minute to get organized.” A few minutes later, several men and women had gathered onstage, with Grandma at the piano, and presented a concert of holiday songs.
Dogs Helping People

“Raising this puppy was one of the most wonderful experiences I’ve ever had,” says Bryan Shin. He pauses to stroke the head of a black Lab at his feet. Then he continues, “Raising puppies is always fun, of course, but it’s even better when you know the puppy will become a guide dog for a person who is blind.” Bryan and his family are part of the Seeing Eye program, which selects families to take care of puppies that will be trained as guide dogs. The program usually selects families with children aged nine to nineteen.

Because raising a puppy for the program takes a lot of time, the whole family must agree to get involved. The volunteers and their puppies go to training classes, meetings, and on organized trips. The families even go to puppy camp to learn more about taking care of dogs. The families are also urged to include the dogs in family activities like trips to the mall and visits to friends. Being in a lot of different situations helps the puppies become more confident in different environments.

The families return the puppies to the Seeing Eye program when the puppies are about a year old. At this time, the dogs are ready to be trained to help a blind person get around. They learn to guide their owners as they walk on city streets or through crowded stores. The dogs are also trained to be alert for situations where special caution is needed, such as stoplights and curbs. Because guide dogs are trained to be obedient, they are allowed into places where other dogs cannot go, such as restaurants.
When the dog’s training is complete, the family that raised it is invited to a Town Walk. During this “graduation ceremony,” they watch the dog at work. Families often have mixed feelings about these events. “Of course, we always hate to give up the dog, but we also feel proud to know that it will help someone,” Shin explains.
Help Is on the Way

You are standing on a sandy, white beach on the Gulf of Mexico, looking out over the water. You notice a huge bird with long, narrow wings gliding over the ocean. Suddenly, the bird tucks its wings to its side and drops a hundred feet straight down into the water! Before you can blink, it shoots out of the sea with a large fish in its claws and soars upward into the sky. You have just seen an osprey catch its breakfast. Unfortunately, the sight you have just seen has become quite rare.

There are far fewer ospreys today than there once were. One reason for this decline is that people have moved into places that were once osprey nesting areas. As more and more people settled in these areas, they cut down trees to build houses, shops, and buildings. The gradual encroach of civilization has left ospreys with fewer places to build their nests. In addition, people began to use fertilizers and other chemicals that drained into the water supply. This poisoned the fish that ospreys feed on. Finally, people sometimes frightened the ospreys away from their nests, leaving their eggs to be destroyed by the hot sun.

Fortunately, help is on the way. Many areas where ospreys build their nests are now protected. One of these is the Gulf Islands National Seashore, a park that stretches for more than one hundred miles along the Gulf of Mexico. Osprey nests can be found on almost all of the islands in the park. To protect the birds, people are not allowed in many parts of the park. As a result, the number of ospreys on the islands is slowly increasing. Also, many companies and wildlife clubs have set up man-made nesting platforms in places where ospreys live. These provide
ospreys with safe, sturdy nesting sites out of the reach of people.

Because of the hard work of concerned people, things are looking up for ospreys. Soon, watching an osprey swoop out of the sky to catch its morning meal might not be such a rare sight after all.
Whale Song

I live with my cousin, Jackson, who is a marine biologist. His job is to study the “conversations” that the whales have with each other. Jackson says the sounds these wondrous creatures make are really like singing. If you visit our house, you will hear these songs playing on our stereo more than any other kind of music.

These haunting songs have been described as creaks, groans, moans, chirps, whistles, and squeaks. The songs are not just sounds, but are really melodies with a beginning, middle, and end. A whale will repeat the same song over and over, but slowly the song changes over time and every few years, new songs appear.

Humpback whales are found throughout the world. Males from the same area sing similar melodies. Just like you can sometimes tell where people come from by listening to them talk, Jackson can tell where a whale comes from by listening to recordings of its song. My cousin thinks the songs are a way of sharing information and creating and maintaining a social community. His research examines how baby whales learn the songs of their region.

Male humpback whales can produce songs that last for up to twenty minutes—the longest of all animals. Scuba divers who hold their breath so they won’t make any noise, and swimmers who are at least ten feet below the surface, can hear the whales. To get a really good recording of the songs, you must lower a special microphone into the sea and be pretty close.
People have been recording these amazing whale songs for over thirty years. Next time you are in a music store, ask to listen to a recording of a humpback whale and you won’t believe your ears! At first I thought the songs were pretty strange. The more I listened, the more I liked them. Now I almost think I understand how the whale was feeling.
Mount Everest

Mount Everest, a mountain peak located in Asia, is the highest mountain in the world. It is named after George Everest, the scientist who first mapped the area. Climbers have made many attempts to reach the mountain’s peak. One of the first of these expeditions occurred about eighty years ago. However, it was not until thirty years later that two men finally conquered Mount Everest. By the end of the century, more than six hundred climbers had climbed to the top. The climb is very dangerous, though. More than one hundred people have died while attempting the climb.

Climbing to the top of Mount Everest is a dream of many explorers. One of them was once asked why the mountain holds such an attraction for so many people. He replied simply, “Because it is there.” Other climbers have other reasons for making the climb, but most would probably agree that the climb presents a tremendous challenge. To climb to the peak, climbers must battle ice, snow, and howling wind. They must cross hazardous gaps as big as canyons in the ice. Climbers sometimes lose fingers and toes to frostbite.

The lack of oxygen is one of the biggest problems that climbers face. A lack of oxygen to the brain can cause climbers to lose interest in eating and drinking and to become confused. It can also affect their sleep. Because of the harsh conditions during the climb, people who make it to the top do not stay there long. They immediately turn around and head back down the mountain.
People who climb Mount Everest today use more advanced climbing equipment than early climbers. While the first climbers wore clothing made of cotton and wool, today’s climbers wear high-tech fabrics designed to hold in warmth. They use oxygen tanks to breathe and satellite phones and computers to communicate with the world below. However, even though climbing today is made somewhat easier by these advances, the challenge of climbing Mount Everest is still without equal.
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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?
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.