

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

## DIBELS

### *DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring First Grade Student Materials*

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Available:

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

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Instructions:

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

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## The Ant Hill

Dad and I took a hike in the woods. We walked for a long time and stopped to take a rest. We sat down on a log and had a drink of water. A big hill was nearby.

Dad said, “Look, there’s an ant hill.”

I walked up to the hill and took a closer peek. At first it looked just like a dirt hill. Then I noticed a few ants running around. I looked closer. I saw little ants carrying pieces of mushroom. The pieces were almost as big as the ants.

“What are they doing, Dad?” I asked.

“They’re taking food inside the hill. They probably have thousands of ants to feed inside.” Dad said, “Watch this.” He gently poked a twig into a small hole on the hill. All of a sudden, many ants came out.

“The ants are on alert, trying to protect their hill,” he said.

I bent down to look closer. Some ants climbed on my shoes.

“We should leave now,” Dad said. Dad and I walked and walked until we were home. Now whenever I see one ant, I stop and think about the city of ants they might be feeding and protecting.

## The Rainy Day Picnic

I was so sad. This was the day we were going to the park for a picnic. I wanted to go to the playground. I wanted to swing. I wanted to lay on the grass and look up at the fluffy clouds. But that morning it was raining. There were puddles everywhere. And we could hear thunder. I started to cry.

My mother said, “Wait! We will still have the picnic!”

I cried, “But how? It won’t be fun if it’s wet!”

She told me to sit down and read a book. Then she said she’d make an indoor picnic for us. I could hear her doing things in the kitchen. She told me not to look. Then, when she was ready, she said to come into the living room.

I saw a blanket on the rug. I saw the picnic basket full of sandwiches and potato chips and fruit. I saw pillows to lie on. My mother was wearing her straw hat and sunglasses.

“Come on,” she said. “It’s picnic time!”

It was the best rainy-day picnic I ever went to.

## Visiting Aunt Rose

My Aunt Rose invited me to spend the weekend. Aunt Rose doesn't have kids. She said I could be her kid for two days. She's like my big sister.

I like to go to visit my Aunt Rose's home. She likes to do the same things I like. I like to go swimming. So does my Aunt Rose. The pool where she goes also has a hot tub. I like to sit in the hot tub. So does my Aunt Rose. I always bring my swimming suit when I visit.

Our weekend was perfect. On Saturday we went out for breakfast. I had strawberry pancakes with whipped cream. Then we went shopping. She bought me a pink shirt. Then we went swimming and sat in the hot tub.

On Sunday she helped me make oatmeal cookies. Then we painted each other's nails. Our fingers and toes match. They are bright pink. Then we went to the movies. We saw *The Lion King*.

Aunt Rose drove me home. I handed my mother a plate of the oatmeal cookies. I showed my brother my new shirt. Dad admired my bright pink nails.

"Dad," I asked, "Could I live at Aunt Rose's?"

"No," he said. "If you went there all the time it wouldn't be a special treat."

## The Robin's Nest

There was a robin's nest outside our kitchen window. The nest was in a tall bush. The mother robin sat in the nest all day long. One day when I was watching, the mother bird flew away. I saw the eggs she was sitting on. There were four blue eggs.

I watched and watched. Pretty soon the eggs started to move. I watched some more until the eggs started to crack. Finally, the eggs hatched. I saw four baby birds. The baby birds opened their beaks wide. I heard them peeping. Soon the mother bird came back. Then the mother robin put worms in their mouths.

Every day I watched the baby birds and their mother. Pretty soon the babies were so fat there was no room for the mother. Then one morning the nest was gone from the bush.

"Mom!" I cried. "Something has happened to the robins!"

We went outside and looked around. The nest lay on the ground. It was still in one piece. But there were no robins anywhere. Just then, we heard chirping. We looked up, just in time to see five robins fly away.

Goodbye, little robins!

## My Rock Collection

I started a rock collection. It began when I visited the coast. There were so many rocks on the beach. They were wet and shiny from the water. They came in many beautiful colors. They were pink, green, black, and white. Some rocks had been worn by the waves. One even had a hole in it. When the rocks dried they were not so colorful.

I found more rocks when we went to the desert. They are made of sandstone. They are dark red and tan. They are rough. Some sparkle like gold and silver.

When we went to the mountains I found more rocks. They are red and full of little holes. They are called lava. Lava is rock that became so hot it melted. Then it cooled. There are different kinds of lava. Some kinds of lava are shiny and black. They feel like glass.

My favorite rocks came from the river. They are round and smooth. They got that way when the water ran over and over them.

I like rock collecting. Wherever I go, I can pick up new rocks. It doesn't cost a penny. I keep my rocks in a shoebox under my bed. I'm going to take them to school for sharing day.

## The Snow Person

This morning when I woke up it was freezing cold. I looked out and the ground was covered with white. It had snowed during the night. Mom said there would be no school because of the snow. She said I could go outside and play in the snow. I had to eat a hot breakfast first.

I dressed in my warm clothes. I wore mittens and a stocking cap. Mom helped me with my rubber boots. I was so bundled up I could hardly walk.

The grass was covered with soft snow and it was very quiet. Then all my friends came out to play. It wasn't quiet for long! My friends helped me make a snow person. We made snowballs first. We rolled them up until they were big. Then we stacked three big balls of snow on top of each other.

Mom let us use one of Dad's old hats. We used rocks for buttons and eyes. My friend found a carrot to use for the nose. We made arms from branches and ears from small snowballs. Our snow person sure looked handsome.

Then we lay down on the snow. We moved our legs and arms back and forth. That's how you make snow angels. Mom brought out cups of steaming hot chocolate. They had marshmallows on top and tasted wonderful.

The next morning all that snow had melted. Only the hat lay where the snow person had been.

## The Cell Phone

My dad has a cell phone. He's a salesman and drives all over the state. He uses the cell phone to let people at his work know what his customers need. He can ask someone at the office to help a customer before he returns. He can call home and tell us he's going to be late.

Until last week my mother didn't have a cell phone. She said she didn't need one. She said we had more important things to spend our money on. Then on the way home her car ran out of gas. She was way out in the country. It was almost dark. She had to walk a long way to a house and ask to use the phone. Then she had to walk back to the car and wait for the tow truck to come.

When she tried to call us our line was busy. I started to worry because she was very late. My dad didn't know where she was. Finally she got home. It was almost my bedtime.

My mom said, "I think I am ready for a cell phone now."

My dad said, "You are right. We will buy you one tomorrow. Then you will feel safe and I won't worry."

## The New Baby

The family next door has a new baby. The baby is a little girl. Her name is Robin. She was born about two months ago. Everyone on our street is happy about the new baby. Nobody else on our street has a baby. All the kids in our neighborhood are older.

It was pretty quiet at night before baby Robin came. But Robin cries a lot at night. Her crying wakes me up. My mother says she has her days and nights all mixed up. Mom says she isn't old enough to know nights are for sleeping. She doesn't know her days are for eating, growing, and playing.

During the day Robin sleeps almost all the time. She never hears dogs barking or the radio. If the doorbell or phone rings, she keeps on sleeping. She doesn't wake up when I come home from school. She never wakes up when we play hide and seek in her yard.

Then one night Robin slept the entire night. Everyone in our family had a good night's sleep. Then Robin was wide awake the next day. When I came home from school Robin was still awake. Her mother said I could hold her on my lap. She looked at me and smiled. I like Robin but I'm glad she lives next door.

## A Birthday Party for Twins

I went to a birthday party last week. It was for my two friends. They are twins. That means they look just the same. They have the same birthday. They are in my class at school.

My mom and I went shopping for presents. I picked out two presents. I got a red yo-yo and a book.

Lots of people came to the party. The twins got many presents. The best part of the party was the food. There were hot dogs and hamburgers. They even had two birthday cakes. One cake was chocolate and one was angel food. There were two flavors of ice cream. I liked the mint chip best. There were two flavors of punch, too. I tried them both.

I liked everything I tasted. When I got home my tummy hurt. I think I ate too much. Next time I go to a party I will not eat so much. I won't eat two kinds of cake. I will just eat one kind. I won't eat a hot dog and a hamburger. I won't have two cups of punch. I won't have two dishes of ice cream, either. I will just have one dish. Then I can have a good time at the party and not get a tummy ache.

## The Train Trip

Mom and I went to visit Grandpa. We rode all the way across the state. I never had to wear a seat belt. That's because we rode on the train.

I like to ride the train. I can walk all around the train car whenever I want. We never have to pull over at a rest stop. I can make my seat lay down almost like a bed. If we get hungry or thirsty we can buy snacks.

There is even a kid's room with toys and games. Once they showed a movie. I made friends with a boy my age.

When you get on the train they tell you where to sit. Someone comes and takes your tickets. The suitcases go over the seats.

I like watching everything zip by when the train goes fast. Sometimes the train goes faster than the cars. The whistle blows when the train goes over crossings. You can look in people's back yards. I waved at some people as we went by. They waved back.

Finally we got to Grandpa's city. I could see him waiting for us. He waved and came to pick up our suitcases. Next week we'll go home the same way we came, on the train.

## The Ice Cream Truck

It was so hot yesterday. I was tired of running in the sprinkler. I was tired of splashing in the wading pool. I was tired of drinking ice cold water. I didn't want to play. It was too hot.

Then I heard it! Familiar music was playing somewhere. It was coming closer and closer. I knew that music. It came from the ice cream truck. It was not far away.

I asked my babysitter if we could buy something cold to cool ourselves off. She said yes and gave me some money. I went outside and waited. The ice cream truck came closer and closer. But it kept stopping. Other kids were buying cold treats.

“His truck will be empty when he gets here,” I said.

My babysitter said, “Just wait, it's a hot day and all the kids want a treat.”

Pretty soon there were five kids waiting for the ice cream truck. Finally he arrived and got out of the truck. I ran over and asked what kind of treats he had.

He said, “I'm all out of everything except root beer Popsicles. Will that be okay?”

I nodded. Root beer Popsicles are my favorite. I took my Popsicle and went back to our yard. I sat under the maple tree and ate it. It was so good. It cooled me off. I felt so much better.

## The Tea Party

My friend and I opened my dress-up box. She saw all the clothes inside. She wanted to play dress-up with me. So we put on dresses. We wore hats and gloves. We put on high heeled shoes. We pretended we were grown-ups.

Then we went outside. I rang the doorbell. We waited. When my mother opened it she looked surprised.

“Well, hello, ladies,” she said. “What are your names?”

I said, “Our names are Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Baker.”

She asked if we’d like to come in for a tea party. We said yes. She told us to come in and sit in the dining room.

Then she went into the kitchen. She got out china cups and the tea pot. She boiled water and made tea. She poured it in our tea cups. She put fancy cookies on a plate. She sat down beside us. She put on a purple hat. She still acted like we really were ladies.

We drank our tea and tasted the cookies. She said we could come for tea again sometime. After my friend left I asked my mother if she knew who we really were. She just smiled.

## The Beach

I love going to the beach. It is fun to run on the wet sand. I like it when the big waves come. The salty water splashes on my toes. I also like making sand castles. I always write my name in the sand with a stick. When the tide comes in, the water washes my name away.

One of my favorite things to do at the beach is to watch the animals. The seagulls wait for the tide to come in. Their feet make trails on the sand. The crabs hurry to get back in their holes under water. The sea lions pop their heads up in the waves. The sea lions have big brown eyes and bark like dogs.

Sometimes the water is too cold to go swimming. Then I search for things in the sand. I find pieces of driftwood and seaweed. I look for shells and sand dollars. Sometimes I find pretty shells. I like to take them home. I keep the shells on a shelf in my bedroom. Whenever I want to, I look at the shells in my room. I think about the fun I have at the beach.

## The Farmer's Market

I like summer because we go to the farm to buy fresh fruit and vegetables. You can buy big red tomatoes and corn on the cob. They sell peaches, melons and berries. My favorites are corn and peaches.

Sometimes we pick the fruit right off the trees or bushes. Sometimes the farmer has already picked it and puts it in baskets. He puts out samples to taste.

Once we picked black cherries. They were so good. You could eat as many as you wanted to. We could even reach the cherries from the ground.

We can also pick flowers to take home. Sometimes we can pet the sheep and goats. We always ask first. The farm dog is always happy to see us. She likes to be petted, too.

When fall comes we go to the same farm and pick out pumpkins. They sell apples and nuts. You can sample fresh apple cider. We bought an apple pie to take home.

Last year we walked in the farm's corn maze. I could hide in the tall corn. I almost got lost. We went on a wagon ride through the apple trees. We saw a giant pumpkin. It was so big nobody could take it home.

## My Big Sister

I have a big sister. She is six years old and I am four. We play together sometimes. I like to play with her, but there are times she makes me upset. She can be a bully. Sometimes she takes my playthings away from me. She can be mean to me. I don't like it when she's mean. But she says I'm just her little brother.

So I tell my parents. Then my sister gets into trouble and gets punished. She has to take a time out and stay in her bedroom. She can't come into my bedroom. Then she acts nice again. Mom says she is learning how to be a nice big sister.

We're getting a new baby at our house next month. We don't know if it's a boy or a girl. I hope it's a brother so I can play trucks with him. My sister hopes it's a sister so she can play dolls with her.

No matter what it is, a boy or a girl, soon I will be a big brother. But I'm not going to upset the baby. I won't make the baby cry and I'm not going to be a bully. I won't take playthings away. I'll be nice, not mean, and I won't need any time outs.

I can't wait for our new baby to come.

## Camping at Home

My brother and I have a pup tent. Our uncle used it when he went backpacking. It's too small for him now. Dad helped us put it up in the back yard. It's just big enough for my brother and me. We put our sleeping bags inside. They fit perfectly.

Dad said, "Now you can camp in the backyard."

He said we could make a camp under the maple tree. My uncle said we could use his old backpack and dishes in the camp. We had to pretend to have a campfire. We pretended to prepare dinner. We pretended to eat hot dogs and roast marshmallows.

It was getting dark. Dad asked us if we wanted to sleep outside.

"Sure!" we said.

We climbed into our sleeping bags. Dad and Mom zipped them up. Dad gave us each a flashlight.

"We'll leave the door open," he said.

Mom said, "You can come into the house anytime you want."

They said good night and went in the house. They turned out the lights. We were all by ourselves. Then we heard strange noises outside. We missed our beds. So we came in and went to sleep in our own beds. But we still camp during the day!

## My Lemonade Stand

It was a very hot day and I was bored. My sister was bored, too. I asked my mom what we could do. She said we could have a lemonade stand. But she said we couldn't argue. We said we would get along.

I was in charge of the sign and the stand. I found a card table and put it on the sidewalk. I took out two chairs. Then I made a sign. It said, "Lemonade, ten cents."

My sister made the lemonade. She took out lemons and sugar and water. She added ice cubes. Mom gave us a plastic jug to use. She said we could use plastic cups, too.

Even before we sat down the mailman stopped.

"It's a hot day and I could use a cool drink," he said.

Then some big kids on bikes stopped. They bought two cups each. By the end of the day we had sold twenty cups of lemonade. My sister had to make the lemonade three different times. We counted our money. We had made three dollars.

But my mom said the best part was that my sister and I worked together.

"I'm proud of you," she said. "You can have a lemonade stand another day, if you want."

## The Frog

I heard a frog outside. It said, “rivet, rivet.” I went to see where it was. I looked under the porch. I looked under the car. I looked all around the backyard. I even looked in the garbage can but I could not see a frog.

I kept hearing the frog, so I sat on the porch and listened. When I heard it again, it sounded like it was so close I could touch it. I looked all around me, but I still could not see the frog. I waited until the sun went down and the moon came up. I couldn’t wait any longer because it was my bedtime. My mother said it was bedtime and I had to go inside. I heard the frog again when I was in bed.

“Mom,” I called. “The frog is still outside. Can I keep searching for it?”

“No,” she said. “It’s too late and you have to go to sleep now. You can look tomorrow.”

The next day I sat outside where I thought the frog was. I sat really quietly to see if I could hear the frog. I thought I saw something move in the grass. Then the frog just jumped up out of the grass. It came right up to me. It made the same sound again, “rivet, rivet.”

I think that frog was saying hello to me.

## The Best Birthday Present

My favorite birthday present ever was from great-grandma. She gave me a crisp ten dollar bill! It was the most money I've ever had to spend.

I thought and thought about how to spend it. I could take a friend to the movies. My friend and I could go to the wave pool. I could buy a new book. I could spend it on candy. I could buy myself a new T-shirt. Or, I could go to the toy store.

I decided to go shopping. The toy store is full of neat things. First I looked at games. They all cost more than ten dollars. Then I looked at the magic tricks. I already had most of them. The puzzles cost too much, too. Then I looked at the sports equipment. Everything cost a lot more than ten dollars.

Then I saw the books. There were rows and rows of them. I spotted a joke book. It looked just right for me. It was only five dollars. I asked mom if my friend and I could go for ice cream. She said yes. We had chocolate ice cream sodas for five dollars.

I think I really got my money's worth with that ten dollars. I have a new book and my friend and I had a special treat.

## My Soccer Team

I am so happy! I just found out I can be on the soccer team. We have our first practice on Saturday. We practice at my school right after lunch.

Our team is called the Blue Bombers. Our colors are blue and white so I get to wear blue shorts and a blue and white shirt. The number on my shirt is seven. I'm seven years old, too. I think seven must be my lucky number.

We play our first game next week on Saturday. I can't wait to play. My dad said if I practice a lot I will do well at the games. My dad is going to practice with me tonight.

Right after dinner my dad is going to take me to the store to buy some soccer shoes and a soccer ball. Then we will play on the grass by my school. My dad will help me to kick the ball and to run fast and kick the ball at the same time.

I am so excited I don't think I will get to sleep tonight. I need to sleep so that I can be rested and strong for my soccer practice.

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## Riding the Bus to School

I ride a big yellow bus to school. I stand on the corner of our street with my friends and we wait for the bus. My friend's grandma waits with us. When it's raining, she holds an umbrella to keep us dry. Sometimes when it's cold she brings us hot chocolate.

I leave my house to walk to the bus stop after my parents go to work. I watch the clock so I know when to leave. Sometimes mom phones me from her office to remind me. Sometimes she can't call, so I have to be sure to watch the time.

Our bus driver puts his flashing yellow lights on and then stops right next to us. When he has stopped he turns the red lights on so all the cars will stop. He makes sure we are all sitting down before he starts to go. He watches out for us very carefully.

My friends and I are the first ones to be picked up by the bus. We like to sit right behind the bus driver and watch while he picks up all the other kids. We know where everyone lives. By the time we get to our school, the bus is almost full. Sometimes the kids get noisy and the driver has to remind us to keep it down. He says their noise makes it hard for him to concentrate and drive safely. I am glad that our bus driver is so careful.

## Twins

Six years ago my family grew from two people to four people in one day. That was the day my sister and I were born. That was the day Mom and Dad had to start buying two of everything. My mom and dad say we were much more than twice the work of one baby. They also said we gave back more than twice as much love and fun.

We look just alike because we are identical twins, but we don't act just the same. My sister likes peas and beans and I hate them. I like grape juice and she likes apple juice. She likes to read. I would rather climb a tree than read a book.

Mom and Dad are the only ones who can tell us apart when we dress the same. They know the secret. I have a mole on my ear and my sister doesn't. We look so much alike that we can even fool Grandma and Grandpa.

It's nice to be a twin sometimes. We always have someone our own age who will share our secrets. Sometimes we don't want to share everything. Sometimes it is nice to have my mom or my toys all to myself. Dad says we aren't really that much alike because no person is exactly like anyone else.

## Open House at My School

We had open house at my school last week. My whole family went: my mom, my grandma, and I. We sat together at my table in my room. It was a tight squeeze for my mom and grandma, but they made it. My class has second and third graders in it. Some of my friends were there and their families came, too. My best friend was there. His stepfather and mother sat with him at his table. They took up the whole table because his little brother came along. I waved at him.

My other friend and her big sister came, too. Their family had two classes to visit at the same time because her brother goes to my school, too. Her mom went to her brother's room, and her big sister came to her room.

I like my teacher a lot. Our room looked really nice. Our teacher had been saving all of our best penmanship and drawings. They were hung all over the walls. My grandmother could tell right away which ones were mine. She used to be an artist. She says I take after her.

My teacher told all the parents how important it is for them to make sure we do our homework. He said anytime they have questions about us they can talk to him. Afterwards he talked to my mom and me. He said what a good job I was doing and my mom gave me a big hug when we left.

## Colors of the Rainbow

I decided my favorite color is the rainbow. It has all the colors in it: red, yellow, blue, green, and purple. They are all my favorite colors. How could I ever choose just one?

Red makes me feel like smiling. I love red cards and shiny red apples. My favorite type of candy is a red gum drop. My favorite flower is a red rose. I'm happy when I get to see a red sunset.

Blue makes me feel like taking a nap. My bed is fluffy blue and white with clouds all over it. I love the blue sky and ocean. Blue bubble gum is the best flavor of ice cream.

Yellow makes me feel like jumping rope. I love the sun in summer and the full moon in the fall. Our meadow is full of yellow flowers that dance in the breeze. Applesauce is one of my favorite treats, and it is kind of yellow. Fuzzy yellow ducklings always make me laugh.

Green makes me feel like climbing a tree. I love playing in the grass and the fields. Green gummy bears and pears are my special snacks. My favorite place to go is a park filled with trees and grass.

Purple makes me feel like eating grapes. I use my purple crayon so much it is almost gone. My favorite backpack is purple, too. Whenever anyone asks me what my favorite color is, I tell them it is a rainbow.

## The Wind Has a Job to Do

I learned that the wind is important for more than flying kites or making our wind chime make music. Without the wind, our world wouldn't have any people, food, or animals. Wind moves the heat from the sun all around the planet. Without the wind, about half of the earth would be too hot for any living thing. Most of the rest of the earth would be too cold. In fact, most of our country would be under ice.

Wind is useful to all living things. It brings moisture up from the oceans into the air. Then the wind blows the moisture around. The moisture falls as rain, dew, or snow and ice.

Many plants and trees depend on the wind. The wind helps them spread their seeds to new places. Wind also blows pollen around so trees, grass, and grains can ripen. Without the wind, farmers couldn't grow corn or wheat. Bees help the wind spread pollen. Their job is to fly from blossom to blossom with pollen on their feet and wings.

You can see for yourself how the wind spreads seeds. The next time you see a yellow dandelion that has turned into a white puffball, blow it. Or, if you find a maple tree seed with wings that looks like a helicopter, throw it. You'll see all of the seeds go flying and you will be helping the wind do its job.

## Writing My Life Story

Today our teacher said we would each write a story. She said if we wanted we could draw pictures to go with it. I decided to write my life story. I started with the night I was born. I drew a picture of me as a tiny baby. I wrote about what my first words were and how I liked to play.

When I was little I was always making tall towers. My grandfather said he thought I would build hotels when I grew up. I drew a picture of me playing with my blocks.

I also liked to ride my scooter and swing on the swings in the park. I drew pictures of me on my scooter and a picture of my dad pushing me on the swing. The next picture is of me licking an ice cream cone and getting it all over me. I still love chocolate ice cream.

Then I wrote about my first day at school. I wrote about how I cried and cried because I didn't want my mother to leave me. I made a drawing of me with a sad face. The last page is about my last birthday party. I drew of picture of me blowing out the candles on my birthday cake. There are six candles and I blew them all out.

## I'm a Good Babysitter

When I turned twelve years old I got to babysit for the first time. My aunt asked my parents if I could babysit my cousin. My aunt and uncle wanted to go to the movies. They said they would pay me! My cousin is two and still wears diapers. She knows me pretty well because my mother and my aunt are sisters. We spend a lot of weekends together and we live in the same town.

My parents talked it over and said yes. My uncle picked me up after supper and took me to their house. My cousin was waiting at the door. She was ready for bed and wearing her slippers. My aunt told me when to change her and put her in bed.

My aunt said we could both have graham crackers and apple juice for a snack and that my cousin loved bedtime stories. She gave me her cell phone number in case I had a problem. Mom called me about three times while I was babysitting. She said it was to make sure I was doing okay.

My cousin didn't even cry when her mom and dad drove away. I read her *Goodnight, Moon* and *Pat the Bunny*. I washed her face and changed her. She didn't even cry when I put her in bed. Once my aunt called to see if everything was all right. I just watched TV until they came home. I think babysitting is fun and I hope my aunt asks me again.

## Playing Shuffleboard With Grandpa

There is a shuffleboard court where my grandpa lives. Most of the men there play shuffleboard. Grandpa likes to play and sometimes he takes me with him. He says I can be his partner anytime. Grandpa is a very good player and often wins.

Shuffleboard is played on a very smooth walk. Grandpa waxes the walk before a game. Each player uses a long stick to push disks down the walk. You try to get the disks into spaces marked with numbers. You can get seven, eight, or ten points. You can lose ten points if your disk lands in the wrong section. You have to be very careful about how you push the disks.

Grandpa taught me how to play shuffleboard when I was five. He says the secret to playing well is to push the disk very smoothly. If you push too fast, the disk goes much too far. If you jerk the stick, it goes off the side of the court.

Last week there was a special family day at my grandpa's place. There were contests and games for people to play. Grandpa said I could be his partner in shuffleboard. We got the most points of any of the other teams and won a blue ribbon. Grandpa says I'm the shuffleboard champ of all time.

## I Want to Fly in Space

When I grow up I want to fly in space. I have my plan all worked out. First I will go to college and then I am going to learn how to fly planes. I will fly very fast planes that can go faster than the speed of sound. When I can fly planes very well, I will learn how to fly space ships.

I will get to wear a silvery space suit and live inside a space ship. I will be inside the space ship when we blast into space. When I am up in space, I will watch the sun and moon come up every day. I will be so close to the stars that I can count them. Maybe I will see other space ships and wave as they go by. I will float around whenever I want. It will be just like flying.

I will get to put on my space suit and walk in space. When I look down I will see the green and blue earth far below. I might even be able to see where I live. I will be on TV to describe what I see. The whole world will be watching and listening to me.

When we get to the moon, I will walk all across the surface. It will be dusty and crunchy. I will pick up samples of moon rocks to bring back. I want to drive all over the moon in a little moon buggy. I will plant the flag on the moon. I might even see some little green aliens running around. I can't wait to fly in space.

## The New Bookstore

Grandma said, “I want to take you and your sister to the new bookstore at the mall.” She picked us up from school and drove us to the mall. The bookstore is huge. There are books on pets, gardens, hobbies, and travel. There are rows of magazines and papers. There are tapes, videos, greeting cards, and calendars.

The new bookstore is so big it even has a place to get something to eat. We asked Grandma if we could have a snack. She said that we could have cookies and juice. Grandma had coffee.

Grandma wanted to look at the cookbook section. She showed us where she would be. Then she took us to the children’s corner. It was perfect for us. There were pillows and stuffed toys everywhere. The tables and chairs were all our size. There were more books than I had ever seen in one place. It was even bigger than the library. My sister started looking at picture books. I found books about magic tricks.

Grandma found us and said she was almost ready to go. She said because we were so good we could each pick out a book to buy. My sister got *When You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. I got a book about secret magic tricks.

## We Celebrate Kwanzaa

One holiday celebrated by African Americans is Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa means a gathering time like Thanksgiving. It means not only the gathering of foods for the winter, but also the gathering of family. It began in Africa many years ago. The holiday reminds us of the way of life of the first African Americans.

In America, houses are decorated in black, red, and green for Kwanzaa. Black stands for the color of the people. Red reminds us of our struggle. Green is for Africa and hope. Seven candles are on the table, one for each rule for how to live. An ear of corn for each child in the family is on the table. Everyone wears colorful African clothes.

The party lasts for seven days, from the day after Christmas to New Years' day. We do not eat during the day. Every night we feast and light a new candle. For dinner we have chicken and catfish. We add greens, black-eyed peas and corn bread. For dessert we have sweet potato pie and carrot cake. After dinner we play music and dance.

Kwanzaa is also a time for older family members to tell stories. We remember those who have lived before us. On the sixth night we give presents to each other. Kwanzaa is a very special time for our family.

## When Grandpa and I Garden

When I visit Grandpa he lets me help him in his garden. Grandpa says I have a green thumb. I don't know why he says that because my hands always get dark brown from the dirt.

We made a space in his garden just for me to grow things. We pulled up the weeds and made the dirt smooth and flat. Grandpa showed me how to use a hoe. He let me pick seeds to plant. I like to eat radishes and carrots so I wanted to plant those. I have one row of each. Grandpa likes strawberries so he grows those. He said I could eat some anytime I want.

Together we planted four rows of corn and two rows of beans. Grandpa also planted potatoes and squash. The plants are starting to come up now. At first they were so tiny I could hardly see them. When the days warmed up, the plants shot up like weeds. Now the strawberries are turning red.

It's a lot of work having a garden. We have to keep it watered and pull the weeds. We have to watch out for bugs and slugs. All the work is worth it when the strawberries are ready to pick. We have strawberry short cake for dessert with fresh ripe strawberries from the garden!

## Going to the Swimming Pool

On a hot summer day there's nothing I like better than going to the pool. Besides cooling off in the water, there are lots of things to do. I can swim laps or have races with my friends. I can do a cannonball when I jump in. I like to jump in with a big splash when my friends are not looking so I get them all wet. Sometimes I pretend I'm a giant whale, and sometimes we play games like water tag.

There are water slides at the pool, too. One slide is very tall and crooked. It tosses you out in the water when you get to the bottom. The other slide is wide and you can go down it with your friends.

I like the wave pool the best. My friends and I watch for the big waves to come our way. We body surf on top of the wave and let it move us across the pool. Sometimes my friend and I get on a raft and wait for the wave to push us. Sometimes we just float along when the waves come.

You can have a great time if you just remember the rules: no running and no pushing anyone into the water. Mom has her own rule. She says we should always remember to wear our sunscreen to protect our skin.

## I'm Adopted

My mother and father wanted me so much they adopted me. They said there were already too many children without homes. They wanted to make a family with a child who needed a home so they started looking for a baby girl to adopt.

They said they didn't care what she looked like or what country she came from. All they cared about was that she was healthy and that she needed a family to love her. They searched for just the right little girl who needed a home. Finally, they found her.

It just so happened that I was that little girl. My mother and father found me when I was three months old. They said when they saw me it was love at first sight. They could tell I loved them, too, so they took me home and made me their little girl. I don't remember it ever being any different.

Last year we decided it would be nice to add a little brother to our family. We looked and looked for a little boy who needed a family. It took a long time for everything to be arranged, but now I have a little brother. He isn't big enough to play with yet, but he likes to be held and walked. I think he likes me already. We are a pretty special family.

## Going to a Play

I went to the play “The Princess and the Pea” with my friends. The play was performed at the King Theater. Our seats were in the front row. When the play was about to begin, the lights were turned down low. When the curtain opened and the stage lights came on, we could see a castle in the clouds on the stage. Then people walked out on the stage.

Sitting in the front row was fun. We could see everything that was happening on the stage. All the actors were so close to us we could see the makeup on their faces. Even the men and boys wore makeup. We could watch some of the people behind the curtain as they moved the lights or prepared to go on stage.

At the end of the first act, about halfway through the play, the actors took a break. The lights came on and we got up from our seats. We walked out to the lobby to have punch and cookies. When the lights were turned down again we hurried back to our seats. When the curtain opened for the second act, we saw the woods and gardens around the castle.

Everyone clapped when the play was over. The actors came out on stage and bowed. I took my program up to the stage so the actors could sign it. They asked if we liked the play. We said we liked it very much.

## Going to the Movies at Home

I love going to the movies. My favorite place to go to a movie is not at the theater, though. My family doesn't like to go to the theater. Mom says we have to plan ahead so we don't miss the first part of the movie. Dad says we have to hunt for a parking place. My big brother says if we are late we have to take the worst seats. My sister says it's too noisy.

The favorite place for my family to see movies is at home. We don't have to find a parking place. We have the best seats in the house, our big soft couch. We can even lie on the floor on pillows if we want to. We don't even have to wear shoes.

We can watch a movie anytime we want. Even our dog, Boots, can watch the movies with us. Sometimes I can invite my friend or my cousin over. The popcorn is free at home and we can have all the seconds we want.

Sometimes Mom and Dad let me pick out the movie with their help. We go to the video store and rent it for the night or the weekend. On special nights Mom and Dad let me rent two movies. Dad makes the popcorn and we all get comfortable in the family room. I love going to the movies.

## I Want to Be a Police Officer

I decided I wanted to be a police officer the day two officers came to our school. They brought a police dog that is a member of their team. They told us all about their jobs and how the police dog works with them. They said the police spend more time helping people than anything else. They go wherever there is a problem and they try to help.

The police dog is an important part of the team. A trained dog can find missing people after smelling their clothes. He can help find people who are lost in the woods and he can lead them out. The officer said that police dogs work hard but they like to play when they can.

We were allowed to play with the police dog when he was at our school. We played hide the ball. We tried to find the best place in the playground to hide the ball. The police dog tried to find the ball using only his nose. He gave us a big wag of his tail when he found it.

When a police dog is working, he is very serious and doesn't play around. He listens carefully to the commands he is given and he starts work right away. He doesn't care about playing because he knows he has a job to do. I want to be a police officer when I grow up so I can help people, too. Maybe I'll be able to work with a police dog someday.

## If I Had a Cat

If I had a cat, I'd name her Princess. I'd treat her just like a princess. She would wear a gold ribbon with a big bow around her neck. She'd sleep on a red velvet pillow. She'd eat out of a fancy dish just like that white cat on TV.

My cat Princess would have green eyes. Her eyes would be narrow slits most of the time. Her eyes would be as wide as marbles whenever she looked at me. She would like me the very best of all the people in the world.

I can't have a cat because I have allergies. When I touch a cat my nose starts itching. If I touch my face after touching a cat, my eyes swell up. Sometimes I have trouble breathing. My mom has to give me medicine when that happens. If I'm at school when I have trouble breathing I have to go to the office and see the nurse.

Our neighbor has a cat named Gray Kitty. Gray Kitty likes me. He always comes up and rubs my legs. Even if I don't touch him I might start itching. I feel bad that I have to run away from Gray Kitty, because he likes me.

One day our neighbor surprised me. She gave me a cat of my own! Not a real live cat, but a stuffed one. She has silky fur and big green eyes and a gold ribbon with a big bow around her neck. I named her Princess and I can hold her all I want.

## Riding the Elevator

Today I got to go as high as a tall, tall mountain, but I wasn't outside and I didn't climb a trail to get there. I was inside all the time because I was riding in an elevator that went up almost a mile high. I went with my mother to visit her friend. Her friend works in a building that is 44 stories tall.

We took a taxi downtown to the building. We went inside and looked for the elevator. When we got on, there were four other people already on it. Everyone pushed a button for the floor they wanted. My mother pressed the button for the 44th floor.

The elevator started going up. The other people all got off by the tenth floor and we were the only ones left. The elevator moved so fast I had to hold on to the bar. My mom held my hand and smiled at me.

"Isn't this exciting?" she asked. I nodded but my tummy felt funny. It felt like I needed to eat lunch. My ears felt funny also. My mom said it was because we had gone up so high that the air pressure was different. Finally the elevator slowed and stopped.

"We're here," said mom. While we were up so high we visited the observation deck. There was quite a view. It felt like we could see all the way to the next state. My mom's friend says when there is a storm it is really exciting to watch.

## My Friend Is From Korea

It all started last year. Our class decided to find a pen pal from another country. I chose a girl my age from Korea. I wrote to her and she wrote back! We found out we like a lot of the same things. We both like our family. I told her all about my little brother and how he makes me laugh. She told me about her big sister who takes her on the bus to the movies.

We sent each other our picture and described where we live. As we wrote more and more letters I learned about her and she learned about me. We both like to eat, and dessert is our favorite part. The food we eat is very different, though. Even the desserts are different. Her favorite is Korean pear. My favorite is strawberry ice cream.

My parents took me to the Asian Festival so I could sample different Korean foods. I liked most of them. I liked the soups with noodles in them the best. My friend said she tried some American foods. She liked pizza but didn't like hot dogs.

We like to spend time learning about each other. My friend is teaching me to count and to write my name. I am teaching her the days of the week. I was surprised that her favorite song was the same as my favorite song. I hope we are able to meet in person someday.

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

## DIBELS

### *DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Third Grade Student Materials*

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Available:

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

Instructions:

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

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## A Present From Me

I wanted to take my stepmother out to dinner for her birthday and pay for our dinner with my own money. I wanted it to be a surprise and I wanted it to be just from me. The problem was, I didn't have any money!

I went out to try to find ways to earn money. The lady who lives in the apartment upstairs said she wanted to get rid of all her empty soda cans and bottles. She said I could keep the money for the deposit if I took all of the cans and bottles back to the store. It took me five trips, but I got them all taken back to the store.

The man in the apartment downstairs said I could walk his dog after supper every night for two weeks. Our neighbor lady said she could use some help putting out the trash and getting rid of old newspapers. One lady in our building said she would like some help with her groceries, but she couldn't afford to pay me. I helped her anyway. She said she would give me some flowers to give to my stepmother.

The day before her birthday I asked Mom if she would go on a date with me for dinner. She was surprised when I paid for the dinner with the money I had earned. She made me tell her where I had gotten the money. Then she gave me a big hug and said it was the best birthday present ever. I think she liked the flowers the best of all.

## The Olympic Games

Our whole family watched the Olympics last summer. We didn't have to travel anywhere to see the games. We watched them on TV in our family room.

The Olympics are held every four years. There is both a summer Olympics and a winter Olympics. My favorite sports in the summer are swimming and track and field. In the winter, my favorites are sledding and ice skating. The skaters are so skilled that they make skating look easy, even though it isn't. I like to watch their jumps and spins.

The athletes who come in first, second, and third place receive medals. First place is gold and second place is silver. The third place medal is bronze. When they get their medals, the athletes stand beneath their country's flag. His or her country's song is played for everyone to hear.

The Olympic Games have been around for two hundred years. They began with only one race. The games soon grew to last five days and more sports were added. The Olympics had strange rules at first. One rule was that only men could be in the games or even watch.

Today, both women and men take part in over twenty different sports. The athletes come from all around the world. The games always open with a parade and the lighting of the Olympic flame from a burning torch. Teams of runners carry the torch from the site of the first games all the way to the country hosting the games.

## Mother's Day

My stepfather and I surprised Mom on Mother's Day. We got up very early in the morning and fixed her breakfast. We planned the surprise the day before. We went to the grocery store and bought food and real flowers to make the breakfast special. We decided to bake waffles and serve them with fresh strawberries and whipped cream. We know Mom likes strawberry waffles because she had them once when we went out for breakfast.

We told Mom to sleep in as long as she wanted. We said, "When you wake up, just knock on the kitchen door but don't come into the kitchen."

I washed the strawberries and removed the tops. Then I put silverware and a plate on a tray and Dad put the flowers in a little vase. Dad made the special coffee Mom loves. Then I helped Dad make the waffles. We used a waffle mix so it would be easier. We had to heat up the waffle iron first. The first waffle didn't turn out too well so Dad said I could eat it. It tasted excellent even if it looked funny!

The next waffle was perfect. Just when we had the waffles all figured out, Mom knocked on the kitchen door. We put a waffle on the plate and spooned the berries on it. Then I squirted whipped cream over the top.

We walked up to the bedroom and tapped on the door. Mom said, "Come in!"

She said it was the best breakfast she had ever tasted.

## Surprise Party

My dad had his fortieth birthday last month, so my mom planned a big surprise party for him. She said I could assist with the party, but that I had to keep the party a secret. She said I couldn't tell my dad because that would spoil the surprise.

I helped Mom organize the guest list and write the invitations. I was responsible for making sure everyone was included. I also addressed all the envelopes and put stamps and return addresses on them. We wrote the invitations before Dad came home from work. We had to sneak them to the post office so Dad wouldn't see them. We planned to have the party at Dad's friend's house. All of the guests were supposed to come early so Dad wouldn't be suspicious. Dad thought he was just having dinner with his friend.

Every time I looked at Dad before the party I thought about the secret. It was very hard not to say something. I thought I had to tell someone or I would burst. I decided to whisper my secret to my pet cat because I knew she could be discreet.

Finally the day of the party came. Everybody waited at our friend's house with the lights turned off and everyone hidden. Then Dad rang the doorbell and Dad's friend opened the door. We all yelled, "Surprise!" Dad was so shocked he was speechless. Dad's brothers and parents were there. All his friends from work came, and even some old friends from high school were there.

## The Sun

Did you know sunshine actually comes from a star? That's because the sun is a star just like the millions of stars in the sky. The sun is so big that more than a million Earths can fit inside it. The sun is not the biggest star, though. Many stars are actually bigger and brighter. The sun looks bigger and brighter because the Earth is closer to the sun than any other star.

The sun is a huge ball of glowing gases. It's so hot you could never touch it. The temperature of the surface is one hundred times hotter than the hottest summer day. Sometimes the sun's surface gets so hot it creates solar flares. Sometimes solar flares cause difficulty on Earth. Solar flares can cause static on radio stations. When solar flares are large, they can even cause electric power failures.

The sun's energy reaches us in the form of heat, light, and radio waves. The sun is millions of miles away from us. It takes the sunlight about eight minutes to travel to the Earth.

The sun gives us light and heat. Without it, no plants, animals, or humans could grow or survive. The sun gives off so much light it can be converted into solar energy. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity. Solar cells can be used to provide power for cars and lights. Some solar cells are as small as a stick of gum and some are as big as a football field.

## My Dad Goes to School

My dad goes to school just like me. My sister is in second grade and I am in fourth grade. My dad isn't in a grade. He goes to school at the community college where he is studying computer science. Every morning he walks with my sister and me to the bus stop. We all ride the same bus to my school and then he says goodbye to us.

We all ride the bus home in the afternoon, but at different times. My sister and I get home first. As soon as Dad arrives, the three of us sit down at the kitchen table and do our homework together. I think Dad has the most homework. After he gets his homework done, my dad goes to his job and works until midnight. When he gets home it's very late and the rest of the family is sound asleep.

Dad says he is studying hard because he wants a better job. He says he's looking forward to being home in the evenings and relaxing with all of us. In another year he will finish his degree and he can find a better job.

I admire my dad. Sometimes when I'm not in the mood to do my homework he pats me on the shoulder and says, "You're doing very well. You keep it up and you won't have to go to school when you're an old guy like me."

## Satellites

I like to look up at the sky at night. I like to look at the stars and find different constellations. I can find the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper. The Big Dipper always points to the North Star. The North Star is an important star because it helps people who are lost to find their way.

My favorite object to watch for in the night sky moves quickly across the sky and you have to be alert to see it. It's a satellite. Satellites look like tiny dots of light and travel from side to side without blinking or stopping. Satellites are different from planes because they do not make any noise.

Satellites circle the Earth hundreds of miles above the ground. Some satellites have cameras to take photos of land and sea. Some look out into space and send back information about stars and planets. Others watch weather patterns and send weather reports back to Earth.

The first satellite was launched from Russia. It was named Sputnik and had a radio that sent signals back to Earth. Sputnik went around and around the Earth for thirteen weeks. Modern satellites can stay in the sky for years. One satellite, Skylab, even has people living in it. It is fun to think of people living up there.

## Elephants

Elephants are some of the largest and smartest animals on Earth. There are two types of elephants: Asian and African. Asian elephants are found in the forests of India and Southeast Asia. They are often caught and trained to help people do heavy work. People use them to clear forests and tow heavy logs. The elephants' handlers often become good friends with the elephants.

Most African elephants live in preserves where they are protected from hunters. Preserves also help keep them from damaging crops and fields. African elephants have very large ears that they flap to scare off other animals or to keep cool. They have long ivory tusks.

Both kinds of elephants have very long trunks. They use their trunks to reach down to the ground and high into trees to find food. Plants and leaves and small branches from trees are their favorite foods. The trunk is also used for drinking, smelling, and greeting other elephants. Sometimes they even use their trunk like a snorkel in deep water. Elephants like to raise their trunks full of water and give themselves a shower.

Most people only see elephants in zoos or circuses. Sometimes they have learned to do tricks like standing on their hind legs or hooking their trunks around another elephant's tail. Someday I'd like to see some elephants in the wild.

## The Sea Park

I like to go to the sea park. There are all kinds of sea life in different areas of the park. Some areas are for animals like sea lions that swim and dive. In the sea lion area there are windows that are partly below the water so visitors can watch what happens under the water. The last time I was at the sea park, I watched the sea lions have lunch. A trainer tossed fish into their pool. The sea lions quickly swam and grabbed the fish.

Another area of the sea park shows how sea plants live in deep water. You could see their tops, middles, and bottoms. You could even see the crabs and clams that live at their base.

In another part people can walk inside a glass tube while the fish swim all around. Once when I was in the tube a shark came right up to my face. It feels as if the fish are swimming freely and it's the people who are in the tank. There is also an area for the shorebirds that live along the ocean cliffs. I liked the sea birds with the large gold bills. They spend a lot of time grooming their feathers.

My favorite sea creatures at the sea park are the jellyfish. They float around inside huge tanks. They look like lacy hats with long ribbons flowing below. They fill up with water and squeeze it out to move. As the jellyfish move it reminds me of a dance. I could watch them for hours.

## I Belong to a Big Family

I belong to a big family. My three brothers, two sisters, and grandma all live in our house. That makes nine people in our family! You can bet it gets pretty busy sometimes. We have rules because we have such a big family and my parents want to make sure no one gets left out.

Our rules are not the same kind of rules we have at school, like sitting in your seat before the bell rings. We have rules about homework, TV, housework, and keeping our rooms clean. My parents say we need to be organized and everybody has to do their part.

This is how our rules work. If all of us finish our homework by supertime, we can watch TV together. Children who have not finished their homework have to stay in their rooms without the radio on. If all of us do our share helping with the laundry and housework, we get to watch a video together. If we all eat our dinner, we can have dessert. Grandma usually bakes a pie or cookies.

My dad says being in a big family is like having a job. We all have to be responsible and do our part. When all the work is finished, we get to relax and have fun together. My favorite time is when the chores are done and we play games. We have lots of games to choose from. The game I like best of all is spoons because it's fun to play with nine people.

## I'm an African American

Many people in America have ancestors who once lived in Africa. Africa is the second-largest continent in the world and it has many different nations and languages. My great-great-great grandmother was born in Africa. She came to America when she was very young.

Today, there are more than fifty nations in Africa. Each nation has its own flag with a unique design and colors. The colors of the flag often have special meaning. On some flags, green stands for plants and trees. Yellow can stand for the sun. Red can mean the blood of the people. Blue usually means the sea. White stands for peace and black stands for freedom.

There is great diversity in the way people look and the languages they speak. Skin color ranges from white to very black. People there may live in tiny villages or they may live in huge cities with skyscrapers. Just like people in the United States, some are farmers, some are doctors, and some are truck drivers.

Africa has some of the most beautiful land on our planet. There are tall mountains and the world's deepest lake. Across the middle is a huge desert. Diamond mines and other natural resources are plentiful. Just as important as the land, there is a wealth of animals like zebras, lions, and elephants. I hope to visit Africa someday so I can see where my ancestors lived.

## Strawberry Jam

Dad never liked the jam we bought at the grocery store. He said it just didn't taste as good as the jam his grandmother used to make. When we told Grandma, she said she would show us how to make real homemade strawberry jam. She said we could make the jam as soon as the strawberries were ripe.

When the berries were ripe we all drove out to the farm to pick fresh strawberries. Grandma knows where to go to get the good ones. She showed us how to choose the reddest ones to make the best jam. The farmer gave us buckets and told us which rows we could search for berries.

It took us a while to fill our buckets. The nice thing about picking the berries is that we were allowed to eat a few. They were delicious.

Grandma finally said we had enough berries to make jam. The farmer weighed our buckets and told us how much to pay. Dad asked if he wanted to weigh me too for all the berries I had eaten. The farmer just laughed.

When we got home, Mom had jars and sugar set aside to make the jam. Grandma washed the berries and showed me how to hull them. Next we measured everything into a big pot and started to cook the jam. When it was finished we poured the hot jam into jars and sealed the jars with metal lids. Of course, we had to try some jam on toast after it cooled. Our jam was much better than any in the store.

## The Dragon

When it's time to celebrate the Chinese New Year, make-believe dragons appear everywhere. The dragons are not scary, though. They bring good luck and are not alive. There's no such thing as a real, live dragon. All dragons are make-believe. In China, dragons are very important. They have been part of the Chinese culture for thousands of years.

Dragons appear in Chinese New Year parades and celebrations. They have large gold and red heads with long fangs. Sometimes a dragon is so long it stretches for an entire city block! Dozens of people walk underneath the dragon holding up its big head and long body. They walk down the street, weaving back and forth. All you can see are the dragon and the legs and feet of the people. Sometimes puffs of smoke come out of the dragon's mouth.

Dragons are important in Korea, too. Koreans believe a blue dragon protects them from enemies on the eastern border of their country. The white tiger is said to protect Korea on the western side. In Korea there are blue dragons on the eastern walls of some buildings and white tigers on the western walls.

One way to tell the difference between a Chinese and Korean dragon is by the different number of claws they have. Dragons from China have five claws on each foot. Those from Korea have only four.

## The Sun Dance

We are studying the history of the Lakota-Sioux at school. The Lakota-Sioux lived on the Great Plains. The Great Plains are located in the Midwest. They are mostly flat, with no mountains. At one time, the Great Plains were covered with grasslands as far as the eye could see.

Huge herds of buffalo were once found on the plains. Buffalo were very important to the Lakota-Sioux. The buffalo provided meat that could be cooked and eaten right away or dried and eaten later. Their hides provided clothing and shelter. The buffalo bones were used to make tools. Nothing was wasted. Hunting the buffalo was critical for the well-being of the tribe.

Before a buffalo hunt, the Lakota-Sioux performed the Sun Dance. They made masks that looked like buffalo skulls. The masks were colored with special dyes made from clay or plants. Black meant the earth and red stood for the people. Small dots painted on the masks stood for prayers. They hung feathers from the horns for decoration. The hunters believed that when they wore the masks the buffalo would not be afraid or run away.

The Lakota-Sioux also carried charms when they went hunting. They believed the charms brought them luck. The charms might be shells or rocks or carved bones. Small pieces of animal skins were shaped into bags that the hunters wore around their necks. Grass or leather strips were used to lace them shut. They were decorated with beads made from nuts and seeds. A few herbs from a healer were often added.

## Nicknames

When I was born I was named after my grandfather. Most people call me by my nickname instead of my real name, though. I got my nickname when I was about six months old and starting to eat solid foods. My mother would dip the spoon into my baby food and start to bring a bite to my mouth. Before the spoon even touched my lips, I would open my mouth very wide and make a little noise.

My mother said to my father, “Look at him eat. Isn’t he cute?”

My father said, “He looks just like a baby robin in his nest waiting for a juicy worm.”

After that, my father started calling me Bird as a nickname. He mostly kept it to himself, but then my grandfather began calling me Bird. Finally, even my mother called me Bird.

Now I’m in the third grade and most of my classmates call me Bird. Only my teacher uses my real name. I am so used to my nickname that when my teacher calls on me I sometimes don’t realize she is talking to me.

Whenever my parents really want my attention, they call me by my real name. When they call me by my full name and even use my middle name I know I’d better pay attention.

## I Have My Own Savings Account

I earn extra money by doing chores for people. I babysit for my cousin, walk my neighbor's dog, and I rake leaves for another neighbor. Last week I made fifteen dollars doing chores. When I got a birthday card from my great grandma, it had ten dollars inside. The next day Mom paid me five dollars for cleaning the garage. That makes thirty dollars.

Dad said we should open a savings account so nothing happens to my thirty dollars. He says that is a lot of money for a kid. He said it would also make it easier for me to save my money if it is in the bank. I would like to save enough money to buy a skateboard. It will be hard not to spend it on movies and magazines, though.

We went to the credit union and opened a savings account in my name. Dad filled out some forms and I gave my money to the man at the credit union. He gave me a little book with my name in it to keep track of my money. He also gave me a cool pen and a calendar with all the high school football games on it.

My dad said if I leave the money in my account the credit union will pay me interest on the thirty dollars, even if I don't save any more money. I am proud of the money I have saved. Over time, the interest will add up. Pretty soon I'll have saved enough money to buy a skateboard.

## I'm Proud to Be an American

My country is the United States of America. The United States is made up of fifty different states. The states are like smaller countries within a great big nation. Some states are very small, like Rhode Island. Some are very large, like Alaska. The United States has deserts, mountains, rivers, plains, forests, and oceans. It has cities with skyscrapers and villages without any stoplights.

All of us in the United States are Americans, no matter where we live. We just don't all look the same. Americans come in every color and race. English is our official language but many of us speak different languages. Some people even speak sign language. We have many different customs and traditions. Sometimes we celebrate different holidays.

Some Americans have ancestors who have lived here for thousands of years, like the Native Americans. Some Americans have ancestors who came here on ships from other lands looking for new homes, and a place to be free. Some Americans were born in other countries and arrived just a few months ago.

Our country is so big I'll probably never get to visit it all. So far I've been to six different states. On our next family trip I hope to visit two more states. Even though every state was different, all of the people we met were proud of their homes and their heritage. I'm proud that I'm an American.

## Dream Catchers

We made dream catchers at our club meeting last week. Do you know what a dream catcher is? It's a round wooden hoop with a web woven all across it. Usually the web is made of strips of leather. Feathers and glass beads hang below.

Some people believed that both good and bad dreams floated around every night while they slept. They hung dream catchers over their beds to catch the dreams. They believed that the bad dreams would get trapped in the web and would not be able to get out. The bad dreams would disappear when the sun came up. That way, their sleep would be pleasant and untroubled.

Happy dreams were also thought to drift around during the night. The dream catcher was supposed to help the pleasant dreams float down through the feathers. Happy dreams would land on the person sleeping below. Dream catchers were often hung over newborn babies and newly married couples.

At our club meeting, we made our dream catchers out of paper plates. First we cut the centers out. Then we punched sixteen holes all around the outside. We wove a piece of yarn through all the holes, going back and forth to make a web. Then we tied a feather and beads through a bottom hole and let them hang below. I put mine over my bed and I haven't had a bad dream since.

## Clouds and Weather

The clouds that float across the sky look like fluffy balls of cotton. Clouds are not made of cotton, though. They are filled with tiny droplets of water and tiny ice crystals. The water droplets form when warm moist air rises and cools. When the droplets become too large, they fall out of the sky as rain or snow.

There are three main types of clouds. The different types of clouds form at different heights in the air. One type of cloud is high and feathery. The high feathery clouds are so high they contain only ice crystals. High feathery clouds usually mean rain is coming.

Big fluffy clouds float midway to low in the sky. Sometimes they look like pillows or sheep. Sometimes they look like mashed potatoes, or angels. They can look like just about anything at all. Once I saw a big fluffy cloud that looked like a birthday cake with ten candles. Another type of cloud looks like sheets across a gray sky. These clouds usually hang low in the skies and move very slowly.

Clouds provide important information that people use to predict the weather. Observers from around the world report on the clouds and wind. Pictures of the clouds taken from outer space show patterns in the clouds where the winds are blowing. Weather stations from all over can tell how fast the wind is blowing and how much water is in the air.

## Firefighters

Firefighters are always busy, even when there are no fires to put out. After each fire, the firefighters have to dry their fire hoses. They also clean their trucks and inspect their tools. The air tanks and the water tanks must be refilled. Even the boots, hats, and coats must be cleaned and checked. Everything must be ready for the next call.

When they are not at fires, firefighters spend time getting ready for the next call. They also provide training in fire prevention and fire safety. They go to schools and businesses to make people aware of all they can do to prevent fires. They know the best way to respond to a fire is to keep it from happening in the first place.

When there is a call, the firefighters really get busy. The firefighters must get to the fire as quickly as possible. If the fire is in a building, the first job is to make sure everyone is safe and out of the building. They also try to prevent the fire from spreading. The firefighters hook up their hoses in front of the building and quickly put out the fire. Everything must be fast and organized.

After the fire is out, firefighters must check the building carefully and wait to make sure there is no fire left. Even one live ember can get the fire started all over again. After each call the firefighters go back to their station and clean up all over again.

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

## DIBELS

### *DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Fourth Grade Student Materials*

Edited By:

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*University of Oregon*



Available:

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

Instructions:

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

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## The Bakery

Light crept through the bedroom window and woke Josh up. At first he was a bit disoriented and did not recognize the room, but he quickly remembered where he was. Yesterday had been moving day, and this was his new home.

“Today, I’ll explore my new neighborhood and, with any luck, I’ll make some friends,” he said to himself.

Josh jumped out of bed and pushed open the window. He stretched and took a long, deep breath, and that’s when he noticed it. The air was filled with the most wonderful aroma.

“I’ve got to find out where that incredibly delicious smell is coming from!” exclaimed Josh, as he threw on his clothes and ran down the stairs.

In the kitchen, his stepmother and dad were conversing about their plans for the day over breakfast.

“Did you notice that wonderful aroma?” his stepmother asked.

“Absolutely,” replied Josh, “and I’m going to investigate where it’s coming from as soon as I finish breakfast.”

“That’s not necessary,” Dad said, “because I can tell you it’s the smell of fresh bread from a nearby bakery. In fact, I bought these breakfast muffins there just a little while ago. You should stop by and introduce yourself. Mr. Lee, the baker, really wants you to meet his son.”

After he had devoured his breakfast, Josh ambled down the sidewalk toward the bakery. He found it at the corner where his street intersected the main road. Inside the bakery, Josh saw a

counter where loaves of bread were stacked alongside muffins, cookies, and sweet rolls. They all smelled and looked mouthwateringly delicious.

Mr. Lee came out and welcomed Josh to the bakery. After they chatted for a while, he introduced Josh to Li-Young, his son. The two boys began talking and soon found they had many things in common. Li-Young offered to show Josh around the neighborhood, and they spent the morning roaming around together.

Josh headed home for lunch with a good feeling. He had, indeed, made a new friend, and what could be better than waking up each day to the smell of fresh-baked bread? He couldn't wait to learn more about his new neighborhood and meet more friends.

## The Woodsman and the Lost Ax

A Woodsman was chopping wood beside a deep, blue lake. He whistled as he chopped, happy to work in such a beautiful place. Without warning, he stumbled over a root and lost his balance. When he reached to steady himself, his axe slipped from his hand and into the depths of the lake.

The Woodsman tried desperately to recover the axe, but he was unsuccessful. Recognizing that his means of earning a livelihood was lost, the Woodsman began moaning in desperation.

Just then, Mercury, the messenger of the gods, appeared and asked the Woodsman why he was despondent. After the Woodsman described what had happened, Mercury plunged into the lake and retrieved a gleaming, golden axe.

“Is this the axe you lost?” demanded Mercury.

The Woodsman assured him it was not, and Mercury disappeared beneath the surface again. Soon he returned with a silver axe in his hand.

“Is this the axe you lost?” demanded Mercury.

The Woodsman said it was not, and Mercury dived beneath the surface yet again. This time, he returned with the Woodsman’s axe.

“That’s it!” exclaimed the Woodsman. He embraced Mercury and thanked him profusely. Mercury was impressed with the Woodsman’s honesty, so he presented him with the golden and silver axes, as well as the one he had lost.

When the Woodsman returned home that evening, he told his coworkers what had happened. One of them decided he wanted to experience similar good fortune. He hurried to the lake and

threw his axe into it. Then he sat down beside the lake and pretended to cry. As before, Mercury appeared and inquired why the man was crying. When he learned the reason for the man's grief, Mercury again plunged into the lake and brought up a golden axe.

“Is this the axe you lost?” demanded Mercury.

“Yes! That's it!” the man lied. He grabbed the axe greedily.

Mercury did not like being deceived so he took the golden axe away from the man and refused to recover the axe the man had thrown into the lake. Thus, the man ended up with no axe at all, but he did learn a valuable lesson about the importance of being honest.

## A Tour of Jewel Cave

“Ready to explore?” asked Maria’s father. Maria, her dad, and her five-year-old brother, Carlo, had just arrived at Jewel Cave National Monument. This was the kind of outing Maria’s father loved. “You’re going to see some amazing formations,” he said enthusiastically. On the way to the cave, Maria’s dad had explained how crystals could be seen hanging from the cave’s ceilings. “That’s why they call it Jewel Cave,” he explained.

At the cave’s entrance, they each got a lantern to light their way. Maria felt her heart pounding as an elevator took them down into the cave’s depths. When the doors opened, she felt a blast of cold air.

“It’s about forty-nine degrees in here year round,” said the tour guide. Maria was glad she was wearing suitable clothing. She had chosen rubber-soled boots, long pants, and a jacket.

Leading the way, the guide advised everyone to be careful, since parts of the winding path were slippery. Then the group walked down some steep, wooden steps into a large room where the crystals made strange, waxy formations. Maria loved the way the light sparkled off them.

It was about that time that Carlo began to complain.

“I want to leave, because I’m cold and Jewel Cave is boring,” he whined.

Suddenly, there was a rush of wind accompanied by a high-pitched noise. Some of the lanterns blew out as dark shapes flew toward the group. Carlo grabbed Maria’s hand, closed his eyes, and ducked his head.

“Don’t worry,” laughed their dad. “It’s just the bats.”

“They like it here, too,” said the tour guide. The bats passed overhead, flying into another room.

“Now are you bored?” asked Maria.

“Don’t you dare tease me,” said Carlo, pulling her forward to see what was up ahead.

When they got back home, Carlo told everyone how much he enjoyed exploring the cave. He was already planning the things he would see and do the next time they went to visit Jewel Cave.

## The Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the great wonders of the natural world. It stretches over a thousand miles in the southern Pacific Ocean. The Reef is the largest coral reef on the planet. It is the only living thing that can be seen on earth from outer space.

Coral reefs begin as a colony of small sea creatures. Over time, as the creatures die, their connected skeletons form the base of the reef. Other creatures join the colony, and the process continues. Reefs grow slowly, at a rate of a few millimeters per year.

The Great Barrier Reef is not one reef. Rather, it is made up of over three thousand small reefs that lie close to each other. They are home to a huge number of animals and plants. Many of these can be found nowhere else on earth. Thousands of types of fish and hundreds of different birds live there. The Reef is also home to animals such as sea snakes and sea turtles. The Reef serves another purpose, as well. Many scientists believe that reefs like this one keep our oceans clean and healthy.

The Reef is filled with brilliant color and eye-catching shapes. Its beauty draws thousands of visitors each year from all over the world. Many of them enjoy swimming and diving in the clear, blue-green waters. Just think about sharing the water with a school of hot-pink fish or coming face to face with a sea snake! Visitors who do not want to brave the water can view it from one of the islands. They can also watch and enjoy the many kinds of birds that live there.

The Reef is fragile, and it can be easily damaged. It was recently added to the World Heritage List as a special protected

site. The listing helps to make sure that the Reef will be protected. With luck and special care, the Reef will continue to benefit the earth and its people forever.

## Wilma Rudolph

More than sixty years ago, Wilma Rudolph was born into a very hard-working family with little money. She was one of twenty-two children. Wilma had been small and weak at birth. Because of this, she suffered one illness after another. Her family could not afford a doctor. Wilma's mother cared for her as best she could.

When Wilma was six years old, she fell ill with polio. The disease left her legs weak, and doctors said she would never be able to walk. Mrs. Rudolph finally found a hospital willing to help Wilma. The workers there helped Wilma gain strength in her legs. At home, her brothers and sisters helped with the treatments, too. By the time she was twelve, Wilma was walking without help.

Wilma not only walked, she ran, and ran quickly. She decided to become an athlete. At first, she played basketball. Soon she became a star, leading her team to a state championship.

Wilma also developed her track skills. By age sixteen, she had won a bronze medal in a relay race at the Olympic games. Wilma went on to become the first American woman to win three gold medals at the Olympics. She won three different races, two sprints of different distances and one relay race.

Using her fame as an athlete, Wilma reached out to others. She coached students in high schools and colleges. She made regular appearances on TV and radio shows. Wilma also set up a group to help bring sports into poor neighborhoods.

Wilma was African American. At the time she was born, many opportunities were not equally available for all people. It would be many years before the laws and opportunities of our country were applied equally to all people. Wilma's successes were all the more meaningful because of the challenges she faced. Today, women and men from all backgrounds remember Wilma Rudolph with pride and respect.

## A Train Ride to Gran's House

Mom and I were trying to plan exciting things to do during summer vacation, and she suggested that we take the train to Gran's house. Gran lives far from our town, so we would spend one day and one night on the train just getting there. Her plan sounded awesome to me!

The day of our trip, Mom and I went to the train station. The train arrived and we climbed aboard. It seemed dark and cool inside, compared to the bright, warm day outside. The conductor took our tickets and showed us to the car where we would ride. There were large windows along the sides of the car, so we would have a fine view. We stowed our overnight bags away and settled in for a comfortable ride. Soon the train pulled away from the station, and we went speeding down the tracks.

Out the windows, familiar buildings quickly gave way to countryside. I saw ranchers on horseback and farmers on tractors. From time to time, children who lived near the tracks would run out to wave as we passed. By lunchtime, the train had climbed onto a high plateau, and we could see mountains near the horizon.

Mom and I took our meals in the dining car. Small tables with chairs were arranged so that we could enjoy the passing scenery while we ate. The menu offered a variety of food choices. It was like being in a restaurant on wheels!

At bedtime, we were shown to our sleeping compartment. The beds were bunk style, with mine above Mom's. I climbed into bed and closed the curtain for privacy. The rocking motion of the train made it easy to fall right to sleep.

When morning came, we were near the town where Gran lived. Mom and I quickly dressed and gathered our things. As the train slowed to a stop, we saw Gran waving at us from the platform. Spending the week with Gran would be wonderful, but I was already looking forward to the train ride back home.

## These Students Made a Difference

The teacher watched his fourth-grade students struggle with the dried, cast-off Christmas trees. They were placing the trees, one by one, in a long row. Passers-by must have wondered why the students were “planting” dead trees on their town’s beach. If anyone asked, the students would explain that they wanted to protect and rebuild the sand dunes.

Dunes are hills of sand that help to hold the beach in place and protect coastal areas from rising ocean water. They also provide a home for plants and animals. Over the years, storms had destroyed many of the dunes along the beach at Margate, New Jersey. Some people had the idea that placing used Christmas trees sideways on the sand would help rebuild the dunes. Volunteers put this plan into action, but it did not work. During storms and at high tide, the trees were loosened from the sand and washed out to sea.

A group of fourth-grade students at Union Avenue School thought they had a better idea. They would place the trees upright on the beach. They reasoned that the tree limbs would catch blowing sand, causing new dunes to form around the trees.

To put their plan into action, students dug a three-foot deep trench in the sand. Then they stood the trees in the trench and filled sand in around the trunks. This held the trees firmly in place. To test their plan and make sure it was working, students tied red ribbons to the treetops. Each week they measured the distance between the ribbons and the sand. In a short while, they saw that the level of the sand was rising. The dunes were being rebuilt!

When the trees are completely covered with sand, the students plan to scatter grass seed. Dune grasses will send down roots that will help hold the new dunes in place.

Students in nearby communities learned about the new dunes. They asked for help in planning their own dune-building projects. Now dunes all along the coast are being protected, thanks to the work of one fourth-grade class.

## Yellowstone

Imagine a place where you can see grizzly bears, hot springs, fossil forests, and steam shooting from the ground. You can find just such a place in northwest Wyoming. It is called Yellowstone National Park.

For thousands of years, Native Americans lived in the area known today as Yellowstone. It was rich in resources, and the people could find plenty of food and fresh water. They also enjoyed the beauty of the place. Then an explorer who had traveled with Lewis and Clark made his way there. He had never seen such a place! It was a large, forested plateau surrounded by tall mountains. There were amazing sights everywhere he looked! The explorer told others about what he had seen. Soon, people from back East wanted to see the views for themselves.

Photographs and paintings of Yellowstone showed people in the East the wonders of the area. They began to push the government to protect this natural gem. Over one hundred years ago President Grant signed a bill turning it into a national park. It was the first national park in the world.

Today, millions of people visit Yellowstone each year. They come to see the towering mountains and beautiful scenery. Many hope to see wild animals, such as bear, elk, and wolves. Bird watchers look for bald eagles, geese, and other birds of interest. Others come to hike, boat, or fish.

People also come to Yellowstone to see its natural features. Canyons show off walls of red, yellow, orange, and brown. They hold rock formations in strange shapes. Old Faithful, a famous

geyser, shoots steam and hot water into the air right on time—every seventy-five minutes. Many hot springs form striking pools and terraces.

Clearly, Yellowstone is special to Americans. It is special to other people, as well. It has been named a World Heritage Site. People all around the world want to see this very special place protected for future generations to enjoy.

## Humpback Whales of Glacier Bay

There is a park in southeast Alaska named Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. It is a land of green forests and snow-capped mountains. Glassy waters mirror the scenic landscape. Two hundred years ago, this place was covered by sheets of ice, called glaciers. When the ice melted, it left behind a rich and beautiful environment.

During the brief summer in Alaska, daylight lasts for many hours. The sun warms the water in Glacier Bay. Small, floating plants bloom in the warming water, and tiny marine animals feed on them. The tiny animals, in turn, are the favorite food of huge humpback whales.

Glacier Bay has become famous as a summer home to humpback whales. These whales can often be seen swimming or feeding close to the shore. Humpbacks do not have teeth. Instead, they have filters called baleen. As a whale swims forward, water rushes into its mouth. As the water rushes back out, the tiny marine animals are caught in the filters and swallowed by the whale.

Humpback whales also eat larger fish. In fact, humpbacks sometimes work together to catch fish, using a process called bubble netting. A group of whales makes a circle of bubbles around a school of fish. Then the whales dive under the fish and rise up through the water. Holding their mouths open, the whales catch as many fish as they can hold. On average, a humpback whale eats almost five thousand pounds of food each day.

Humpback whales stay near the surface of the water. From time to time, they leap into the air. This action is called

breaching. Whales also swim on top of the water and slap their tails noisily against it. No one knows for sure why whales do these things, but they appear to be having fun.

In September, the days become shorter in Alaska. The waters begin to cool. The food the whales depend on is no longer plentiful, so most of them leave for warmer waters. They spend the winter near Hawaii. Then, when the days begin to lengthen, the humpback whales turn again toward their summer home at Glacier Bay.

## A Field Trip to the Museum

My friends and I had been looking forward to this day for weeks! Our class was finally going on the field trip to the new State History Museum. Mrs. Lopez gave each student a nametag to wear. Then we got on the bus, and after a short ride we arrived at the museum. We lined up and followed Mrs. Lopez into a large entry hall.

“The rooms are set up like a time line,” she said. “We will begin in the room that shows how the very first Native Americans lived in our state. Then we will progress through time, right up to the present. There will be a few stops along the way to watch short movies about interesting people or events.”

The rooms were filled with life-like scenes. There were also displays of clothing, jewelry, cooking pots, and so forth. When we got to the room showing how early settlers lived, I became really interested. This was the part of our history I liked the best. I must have wandered away from the class, because when I looked up from the display I had been studying, everyone was gone. I guess I looked lost because a museum guard came over and offered to help.

“I think I know where your class is,” she said, leading me toward a darkened theater. “They are watching a movie about an early settler family. Just slip quietly through this door and take a seat near the back. No one will ever know you were left behind.”

I did just as she said, and within minutes, I was caught up in the story unfolding on the screen. When the film ended and the lights came up, we all followed Mrs. Lopez into the next room. I

paid attention to all the details about the first industries in our state, but I can assure you I also kept a close eye on Mrs. Lopez. One experience of getting lost was quite enough for me!

## Mountain Ecosystems

Have you ever looked into the distance and seen a steep and rugged peak? If so, you have probably seen a mountain. A mountain is a land formation that is much higher than the land that surrounds it. Mountains are usually narrower at the top than they are at the bottom, and they normally exist in ranges consisting of peaks, ridges, and valleys.

Mountains affect life in many ways. They influence climate all over the world. High mountain ranges have the most impact. These big mountains act as barriers to air masses coming from the ocean.

Ocean winds carry moist air inland. Because of their size and shape, mountains block this air and force it upwards. The water in the air then cools and forms clouds. When the clouds become full, they release their water as rain or snow. That is why it is usually wet on the ocean side of a mountain range, while deserts often form on the other side.

Mountains are sometimes called nature's water towers. All of the world's major rivers begin in the mountains. These mountain rivers flow into lakes, and they eventually spill into the oceans. People use mountain water to grow food, to make electricity, and to drink. Every day, one out of every two people on Earth drinks water that started in the mountains!

You might think of mountains as tough and stable. However, mountain ecosystems can be fragile. An ecosystem is a system of plants, animals, and other life forms living together. Because the sides of mountains are so steep, soil easily wears away, or erodes. This can harm the plants that live there. When plants die

from lack of soil, the animals that feed on those plants suffer, too. Deep-rooted plants, like trees, help by holding the soil in place.

Mountains are a dramatic and beautiful part of the landscape, and many people like to hike, ski, and fish there. You can see, though, that mountains play a much greater role in peoples' lives. They are an important and valuable part of the planet Earth.

## Big Bend National Park

Big Bend National Park is a meeting place. It is where the United States and Mexico meet. The mountains meet the desert there. Visitors meet new and interesting plants and animals. In Big Bend, north meets south and east meets west.

The Rio Grande is the river that forms the border between Mexico and Texas. South of El Paso, the river makes a sharp turn. Big Bend is the area bordered by this turn. It gets its name from its place on a big bend in the Rio Grande.

There are many things to do at Big Bend National Park. Young people can join the Junior Ranger Program. They complete activities in the Junior Ranger Activity Booklet. This helps them learn a lot about the park. They also earn a badge. It identifies them as an official Junior Ranger!

Of course, the river is a popular activity spot. Visitors can float down the river in rafts. During some times of the year, the river is high. The water rushes through narrow canyons. This can make for wild rides. Any time of year, though, the scenery is awesome.

Many park visitors enjoy hiking. It lets them see up close what the park has to offer. More than four hundred kinds of birds live in or visit Big Bend. Along the trail, they might see a falcon diving to catch a kangaroo rat. Deer and jackrabbits run and hide from hikers. Some hikers might see mountain lions, bears, or even wild pigs. Rangers tell them to keep away from these animals. Hikers also enjoy the many types of desert plants on the trails. After a rain, the park bursts into colorful blooms. Flowering cacti and wildflowers compete for hikers' attention.

Rangers protect the plants and animals at Big Bend National Park. They also protect sites where scientists study the early people who lived there. They warn park guests to be careful not to change the place. That is why there are signs that say, “Take nothing but photographs. Leave nothing but footprints.”

## Swamps

In movies, swamps are often shown as dark, smelly places. They are filled with scary creatures. Viewers are afraid to think what might be hiding in the dark waters. In fact, swamps are important natural areas. They are home to many plants and animals, and they are often rich in natural resources.

Swamps differ in two major ways from other wetlands. First, swamps are covered by trees. Marshes, on the other hand, have mostly grasses. Second, swamps have mineral-rich waters. Another type of wetland, called a bog, is formed by rainwater, which has few minerals.

Freshwater swamps are found in low-lying areas around rivers. The soggy places might be in an old river channel or in an oxbow lake formed by a curve in the river. Because swamp soil does not drain well, the water stays in place. As a result, these areas have water standing on them for much of the year. Fish, frogs, and alligators make their home in the swamp's waters. Deer, raccoons, and other small animals and birds find food and shelter in the swamp. There are many swamps in the United States. Some of the largest ones are found in the southern states.

Saltwater swamps are formed by flooding or draining of seawater in flat coastal areas. Although most plants won't grow in the salty water, mangrove trees thrive. Some animals that do not like salt water live in these swamps. For example, green monkeys live in the tops of the mangrove trees. They never touch the water! Crabs, pelicans, and other sea animals live there, too. Saltwater swamps often form where large rivers meet the ocean. Some of these can be found in Asia, Africa, and South America.

Along with plants and animals, coal is a resource found in some swamps. Plants from millions of years ago decayed and formed the coal. Today, people mine the coal and use it as fuel.

Swamps may not seem appealing at first glance. But by looking closer, you can find many things to like about this interesting natural area.

## Tae Kwon Do

There is a kind of martial art that began many years ago in Korea. It is called tae kwon do. The name means “the art of hand and foot fighting.” It is one of the most popular martial arts in the world.

People of all ages, young and old, are welcomed as students. Working with a teacher, they learn a series of fighting moves. Many of the moves involve dramatic kicks. The kicks are often done while jumping and spinning. After students learn the moves, they practice them. This might mean fighting with other students in a controlled manner. Some students even break boards or other thick materials in practice!

Students learn more than just moves. They learn courtesy, determination, and self-control as well as loyalty to country, friends, and school. It also teaches the importance of respect for family, teachers, and elders. In fact, the goal of tae kwon do is to build a more peaceful world. It does this by helping one student at a time become healthy, happy, and more well-rounded.

In classes and at contests, students and teachers wear a white, loose-fitting uniform. Each uniform has a belt. The color of the belt shows the person’s rank, or level of skill. Beginners wear white belts. By passing tests, students earn different colored belts. They progress through yellow, green, blue, and red belts. The highest rank is the black belt. People who wear black belts are considered experts. It takes years of practice and instruction to achieve a black belt.

For over thirty years, tae kwon do has been practiced as a competitive sport. Those competing wear protective gear to

prevent injuries. Judges decide how well people perform their moves, break boards, and fight competitors. Recently, tae kwon do has become so popular that it is now an official Olympic sport.

## Cat Care

Cats are popular pets because they are easy and fun to live with. Most cats are quiet, clean, independent, and loving. They can bring joy and laughter into a home. In turn, pet owners can do a few things to keep their cats happy and purring.

Cats need to have regular checkups. A trip to the veterinarian each year can help keep your cat healthy. There are certain shots cats need to have. These shots prevent dangerous diseases. The vet can also look for problems with your cat's ears or skin. Most problems are easily treated if they are caught early.

Pet owners must choose among different kinds of cat food. A variety of dry cat foods are available to pet owners. By reading labels, owners can choose the one that is best for their cat. Some cats, though, are picky eaters and prefer canned food. This choice usually costs more than dry cat food, and it is not as easy to serve. Still, many owners are glad to pamper their picky pets. Along with good food, cats need plenty of fresh water. Owners should change the water in their cat's dish each day.

Pet owners can choose to keep a cat indoors. Sometimes a cat is allowed to explore outdoors if the cat is old enough and lives in a safe area. Indoor cats will need a litter box. The box should always be kept in the same place so that it is easy for the cat to find. It is important that the litter box be kept clean. Indoor cats also benefit from a scratching post. A good scratching post helps keep your cat from clawing at furniture or other items in the house. All cats should be checked regularly for fleas and ticks. Treatments are available for these problems. Some cats need to have their fur brushed to remove burrs.

Perhaps the most important things a cat needs are love and attention. They are often the easiest things to give, too. A warm, purring cat can be the source of great joy and satisfaction.

## Angel Falls

Angel Falls is the highest waterfall on earth. It lies in the heart of Venezuela, a country in South America. Starting from atop Devil's Mountain, it drops more than three thousand feet into Devil's Canyon. That makes Angel Falls nineteen times higher than Niagara Falls!

Flat-topped mountains surround the falls. These "table mountains" with their flat, steep sides add to the drama of the landscape. Water falls freely from cliffs and reaches the bottom of the valley as a fine spray. The mist then runs into a small creek, which eventually grows into a river.

Angel Falls was not named for heavenly, winged creatures. Rather, it is named for an American pilot and adventurer, Jimmie Angel. Jimmie Angel thought that the area around the falls contained a lost river where gold could be found. Over sixty years ago he took his small plane to search for the gold. He landed on top of a mountain near the river he hoped to explore. As luck would have it, his plane got stuck in a boggy marsh. Angel could not take off again. As he scouted around the area, the pilot heard a loud, roaring sound. Moving toward the noise, he came upon the amazing sight of the falls. Angel had to hike for days through the jungle to get back to his camp. When he finally arrived, he told others about the falls. Word spread, and soon people from all over wanted to see this wonder for themselves.

Many visitors have been drawn to the challenges and beauty of this land. It takes some determination simply to see Angel Falls, though. There is no way to reach the falls by road, so people must fly into the area. Planes usually land at a village

about thirty miles from the falls. Then the visitors take a small plane or a boat to see this amazing natural wonder.

Getting to Angel Falls is not an easy task, but people who go there agree the experience is well worth the effort.

## Automobile History

As early as the fifteenth century, inventors imagined vehicles that could move under their own power. It wasn't until almost three hundred years later, though, that such vehicles were built. The first ones were steam-powered carriages. It took another one hundred years after that before people began building cars powered by gas engines. These cars were safer and easier to use than the steam-powered ones.

At first, the new gas-powered cars were very expensive. Only rich people could afford them. Then, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a man named Henry Ford began making a car called the Model T. It was the first car produced on an assembly line. All of the Model T's were black, because black paint dried faster than other colors. Ford used to say, "You can have any color you want as long as it's black."

Using Ford's assembly line, a car could be built in shorter time, so it cost less. Finally, working people such as farmers, teachers, and factory workers could afford to own a car.

Since that time, many other companies have joined Ford in producing cars on an assembly line. Over the years, the cars have changed dramatically. Today they are available in a rainbow of colors and in many different styles. Air conditioning, sound systems, and other luxury features are common in cars. Modern cars are much more powerful than the early ones, and they are equipped with safety equipment unheard of in the early days.

Owning cars has changed the way people work and live. Before they had cars, people had to live close to where they worked. That is because most had to walk to work. If they lived in the country, people had to plan weekly or monthly shopping

trips. It was not easy to hitch up the horses and make the trip into town in a wagon. Today, of course, people live in suburbs and commute to work in the city. They drive at the spur of the moment to neighborhood shopping malls. Banks, restaurants, and other places of businesses are even set up to serve customers in their cars.

Today, companies work to make cars better and safer. Just imagine how cars might change in the next one hundred years!

## A Winter Day on the Farm

Turning away from the window's light, Sam pulled the covers up tightly around his shoulders. He hated to think about leaving the warmth of his bed to do chores. Sighing in resignation, he forced his feet onto the cold floor and scrambled for his clothes.

Sam had recently moved with his family to a farm on the prairie. He missed all his friends from town. Each weekday, they had gathered in the one-room schoolhouse, where they learned about math and science and faraway places. Things were different now. Town was hours away, and as for school, Sam's mother taught him his lessons each day.

Sam bundled up in warm clothes and set out to do his chores. He walked across the yard toward the barn. The north wind howled and gray clouds seemed to hug the earth. Sam struggled to open the barn door, because the wind was pushing so hard against it. Inside, Bessie the cow was chewing on what was left of last night's hay. Sam filled her feed tray and then began milking. Soon his pail was filled with fresh, foamy milk. He covered the pail and picked up the egg basket. In the chicken shed he found ten speckled hen eggs. He rewarded the chickens with an extra handful of feed, which he scattered on the floor for them to eat.

Leaving the barn with his pail and basket, Sam was greeted by large, wet snowflakes that were quickly covering the barnyard in a blanket of white. He hurried to the house and took the milk and eggs into the kitchen.

"Isn't the snow beautiful, Sam?" asked Mother. "Let's eat breakfast, and then we'll find your old sled. Your lessons can

wait a while! Dad has gone over to the Anderson's farm to see if their children want to come over and help us build a snowman," she added.

Suddenly, Sam did not feel quite so bad about the cold weather or the loneliness of farm life. He pulled his chair up to the table and hungrily began to fill his plate.

## Hurricanes

What is big and dangerous and has only one eye? The answer is a hurricane!

Hurricanes are large, strong storms. They form over warm ocean waters. Hurricanes usually begin as a small cluster of storms. Heat and moisture from ocean water fuel the storms and cause them to grow. As they grow, the storms begin to spin. This spinning mass is called a tropical storm. When winds reach a constant speed of seventy-four miles per hour, the storm becomes a hurricane.

At the center of a hurricane is an area called the eye. It usually measures twenty to thirty miles in diameter. The eye is relatively calm and free of clouds. The area around the eye is called the eye wall. That is where the most violent weather occurs. Wind speeds in the eye wall can be over one hundred miles per hour or more!

In the United States, hurricane season lasts from June through November. During this time, scientists keep a close eye on the tropics. They watch for a building storm. Then they track its movement on weather maps. This helps them figure out where the storm might go next. People living in coastal areas need plenty of warning if a hurricane is approaching. Scientists issue a hurricane watch when there is a chance a hurricane will reach land. They issue a hurricane warning when the threat becomes real.

When hurricanes reach land, they can cause great damage. Heavy winds and rain are problems. Another hazard is the storm surge. This is a dome of ocean water that is forced inland by the storm. It pushes aside everything in its path. Hurricanes die out

soon after moving onto land. They no longer have the warm moist air that is the fuel they need to grow. Often, the dying storm floods inland areas with rain.

Hurricanes can be damaging and dangerous. It is not necessary to fear them, though. Modern weather forecasts help people prepare for the storms. With plenty of warning, people can protect themselves from the force of a hurricane.

## Special Olympics

Forty years ago, Eunice Shriver started a sports camp. It was for children with disabilities. She held the day camp at her home. For the next five years, she helped start similar camps all around the country. A few years later, she started Special Olympics, a program of year-round sports training and athletic contests for people with disabilities.

Today, Special Olympics serves about one million people. There are branches in hundreds of countries. The program helps both children and adults improve their physical fitness. It also helps them build self-confidence and it is just plain fun. Once you see the joy of participating on a young athlete's face, you are likely to be hooked.

The Special Olympics offers sports for each season. During fall, athletes practice long-distance running and walking. They also bowl and play volleyball. In winter, they practice skiing and ice skating. Spring sports include soccer, diving, swimming, and cycling. In summer, athletes play tennis, softball, and golf.

Athletes never pay fees to compete in or practice sports. Coaches and helpers give their time freely. Family members and friends of athletes also help out in many ways. Money is raised by community groups. The money is used to sponsor events, buy medals, pay for sports gear, and so forth.

Every two years, Special Olympics holds World Games. Leading athletes from many countries compete in different sports. The next Winter games will be held in Japan. There, athletes will compete in downhill and cross-country skiing. Other competitions will include figure skating and speed skating. China will host the next Summer games. Athletes will

compete in swimming, diving, and gymnastics. Track and field events are also popular at the Summer games.

In communities around the world, Special Olympics makes a difference in people's lives. The purpose behind Special Olympics might best be summed up by its oath: "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

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

## DIBELS

### *DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Fifth Grade Student Materials*

Edited By:  
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*University of Oregon*

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

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## High-Speed Trains

Every day in places around the world, special trains called high-speed trains travel between cities at amazingly fast speeds. Passengers everywhere seem to love the ride these trains provide. Adam Lee, a teacher, recently rode a high-speed train in France. “I felt as if I was gliding along on a sheet of ice,” he reported.

One type of high-speed train was first introduced in Japan about forty years ago. The train is low to the ground, and its nose looks somewhat like the nose of a jet. Because of its sleek design, the train is called a bullet train. Early bullet trains provided the first passenger service that moved at a speed of one hundred miles per hour. Today, bullet trains are even faster, traveling at speeds of almost two hundred miles per hour.

There are many reasons that high-speed trains are popular. For one thing, the trains have excellent safety records. In Japan, three billion passengers have ridden on bullet trains, and yet not one person has ever been injured. In addition, high-speed trains do not use as much fuel as other forms of transportation. They are powered by electricity that comes from a wire running above the train. As a result, they burn less fuel than older trains and jets.

Another reason that high-speed trains are popular is their comfort. Passengers sit in wide, comfortable seats and watch the passing view from wide windows. In some trains, these happy customers are even served food and drinks.

Experts are using technology to design ever faster high-speed trains. One of the newest types makes use of magnets in the train

tracks. The magnets turn on and off rapidly, causing the train to “float” above the tracks. One train of this type can travel more than thirteen miles in just seven minutes!

In the future, high-speed trains will, no doubt, be even faster than they are today. In the meantime, if you ever have a chance to ride a high-speed train, don’t hesitate for a second. You may just miss your chance.

## A Streetcar Museum

During the early part of the twentieth century, people rode trolleys, or streetcars, in some cities. These streetcars were small railroad cars that operated on tracks. The earliest streetcars were pulled by horses. They were introduced in New York City almost two hundred years ago. Later streetcars were powered by electricity, which came from overhead wires or from underground rails. The use of streetcars decreased after the first World War, when city leaders began to replace streetcars with buses.

Today, people can still ride streetcars in a few of our nation's cities. They can also see examples of streetcars at museums. For example, the Shore Line Trolley Museum has almost one hundred streetcars. The people who created this museum carefully selected the streetcars on display. They wanted to show their visitors all the different kinds of streetcars that once existed. Visitors learn that most streetcars were built during a thirty-year period now called the streetcar's "glory days." The oldest streetcar at the museum is about one hundred and forty years old, and still looks in good shape.

People who visit the museum usually start with a guided tour of the exhibits. They learn about the history of streetcars, how streetcars used power to run, and how streetcars affected people's lives. They also see objects such as photographs, streetcar schedules, and tickets. Next, they may stop by the workshop at the museum. There, they can watch workers repairing streetcars and preparing them for display.

Most visitors end their visit to the museum with a ride on a streetcar. The ride takes the passengers along a scenic three-mile

route, traveling on rails that have been in place for a hundred years. Like the other streetcars at the museum, these streetcars are furnished to look just like those used long ago. As the passengers listen to the screech of the brakes and feel the side-to-side movement of the cars, they travel far more than just the three-mile route—they also travel back in time.

## What Now?

As the school bus pulled away from the school, Julia looked at her watch. Her class was headed to a park for the end-of-year picnic. The park was located about thirty miles outside of town, and the trip usually took about an hour. Even though she knew the bus trip would pass quickly, Julia was eager to get there. Her class had planned for relay races, swimming, and softball, and she couldn't wait for the fun to get started.

Julia sat in the back of the bus with her four best friends. When the bus went past the last building in town, the girls decided to sing songs to help the time pass more quickly. By the time they had sung "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "On Top of Old Smoky," and "Puff the Magic Dragon," everyone on the bus was singing in loud, laughing voices.

When the class had been singing for about half an hour, the bus slowed down and pulled to a stop at the side of the road. The bus driver, looking puzzled, turned the key and listened as the engine made a whining sound and then died with a cough. Then he got off the bus, looked under the hood, and scratched his head. When he explained that he'd have to call for another bus, all the students moaned in disappointment.

About that time, a car appeared at the top of a hill. As it pulled to the side of the road and parked behind the bus, Julia recognized the driver as her grumpy neighbor Mr. Lewis. "He's so grumpy, I doubt that he'd ever want to help a busload of children," Julia thought.

Mr. Lewis got a box of tools from the trunk of his car and walked to the front of the bus. A few minutes later, the bus

engine was humming, and all the students were cheering for Mr. Lewis.

“I guess I shouldn’t have been so quick to judge my neighbor,” Julia thought, getting out of her seat to thank him for his help.

## Judy Blume

You may have heard of a story character named Fudge and the adventures he shares with his family members and friends. Fudge has appeared in many books and even on a television show. The author who created this character, along with many others, is named Judy Blume. One of the most popular authors today, Judy has written twenty-two books. She also has won over ninety awards for her books, many of which were awarded by children.

When Judy was a child, she loved to dream up stories. She made up stories while bouncing a ball against the side of her brick house and while playing with paper dolls. However, she never dreamed about becoming a writer. Instead, she imagined that she might become a spy, a detective, or a dancer.

In school, Judy was a good student. She especially enjoyed having teachers who helped students learn to think for themselves. In high school Judy worked on the school paper, performed in plays, and took singing and dancing lessons. While she was in college, she trained to be a teacher.

After college, when Judy was already busy raising two children, Judy began to feel drawn to writing. She took a course in writing for children, not once but twice. The course gave her the encouragement she needed to begin writing. After publishing a few stories for magazines, she began to write books. Her third book became a huge hit, and she's been writing ever since. Although most of her books are written for children, she has also written novels for adults.

Today, Judy and her husband, who is also a writer, like to communicate with the thousands of people who read Judy's

books. They have created a Web site where fans can ask Judy questions and tell her how they feel about her books. Judy feels grateful that she has such a close connection with her readers. In fact, she has said that she has “the most loyal and loving readers any writer could ever wish for.”

## A Visit to Victoria Falls

Have you ever thought about places in the world that you would like to visit? One of the places at the top of many travelers' lists is Victoria Falls. Located on a river in Africa, this waterfall is one of the largest in the world. It was formed about one hundred and fifty million years ago when movement of the earth caused a huge break in the rock under the river.

Visitors to Victoria Falls become aware of the waterfall long before they actually reach it. Because the waterfall is about a mile wide, it is visible from forty miles away. In fact, Victoria Falls is sometimes called the world's largest falling curtain of water. From seven miles away, visitors come upon a foggy mist that blankets the area like a thick, dense cloud. The cloud is impossible to miss because it rises as high as a tall skyscraper.

The loud roaring noise of the waterfall is also impossible to miss. The noise is caused by huge amounts of water hitting the rock below the falls. With all the mist and noise, it's not surprising that people who live near the waterfall call it "the smoke that thunders."

Tourists who visit Victoria Falls have a wide range of activities from which to choose. Most begin with a walking tour of the falls, which comes with a drenching bath in the mist. Tourists who enjoy more active forms of entertainment may choose whitewater rafting or kayaking on the river. Others may decide to take a ride in a hot air balloon right over the falls. Expeditions to photograph elephants, lions, and cheetahs are also very popular.

After reading about Victoria Falls, you may have decided to visit the waterfall some day. If you ever make the trip, you will

certainly learn why the vast waterfall is called one of the natural wonders of the world.

## What Is a Desert?

When you think about deserts, you probably think of hot, dry places with sand stretching for miles and miles. While it is true that some deserts are hot, sandy areas, most deserts are different. For example, some deserts have mountains, and others have bare plains covered with stones and gravel. Some deserts are even quite cold.

The one thing that all deserts have in common is that they are dry. In fact, some deserts receive no rain at all for years at a time. In one South American desert, no rain has fallen in over forty years! The average amount of desert rainfall is less than ten inches a year.

The plants and animals that live in deserts have special features that help them survive in the desert's dry climate. For example, some desert plants have very long roots that grow deep into the ground to reach water. Other plants have very shallow roots that extend outward in a large area around the plant. These roots are close to the surface so they can take in water from even a small amount of rain. The leaves of some desert plants have a thick, waxy coating that holds water in.

Desert animals include snakes, birds, insects, rodents, and a few large mammals. Like desert plants, desert animals have special features that help them survive the harsh desert conditions. Desert foxes and rabbits lose heat through their long ears. Camels store fat in their humps and use the energy from the fat when there is no food. In hot deserts, smaller animals spend their days hiding in burrows or under stones. Then, when the temperature drops at night, they come out to look for food.

A few of the world's deserts are located in the southwestern part of the United States. If you ever visit this area, be sure to take your camera. Tourists love to take pictures of these deserts because of their beautiful colors of red, brown, and gold.

## Grandma Moses

Anna Mary Roberts was born long ago in New York. For most of her life, Anna worked very hard making a living on a farm. Then, when she was in her seventies, she began to paint. Before long, people around the world had heard of this elderly woman and her delightful artworks. They began to refer to her as Grandma Moses.

As a child, Anna didn't have a formal education in school. In fact, she had to leave her parents' farm when she was only twelve to work for another family. Later, she married a farmer and worked with him to earn a living while also raising five children. After her husband died, Anna began to create colorful embroidered scenes on canvas. However, as her hands grew stiff with age, this kind of sewing became painful. She decided to switch to painting instead, using house paint to paint the scenes. At first, she copied scenes from postcards, but later she began painting scenes from her childhood.

When Anna was almost eighty years old, she displayed some of her artwork in a drugstore in her town. The paintings were spotted by an art collector, who recognized Anna's remarkable talent. He drove to Anna's farm and bought all the paintings she had on hand. A few months later, three of her paintings were exhibited in a well-known art museum in New York City.

People loved looking at the old-fashioned scenes that Anna had created. They also learned what life was like in earlier times. For example, the painting called *Over the Bridge to Grandma's House* shows people going over a bridge in a horse-drawn sleigh in winter. Details in the painting show a boy on a sled, cows eating hay, and a landscape dotted with houses and barns. The

painting *Haying Time* shows farmers busy at work cutting grass and loading it on wagons.

Grandma Moses probably loved creating her paintings as much as people enjoyed looking at them. She lived to be over a hundred years old and even in the last year of her life, she painted twenty-five paintings.

## Temperate Forests

Temperate forests are forests found in temperate, or moderately warm, regions of the earth. These forests grow in places where the climate changes substantially between summer and winter. At one time, thick, dense, temperate forests were common in the northern parts of our planet. However, as the world's population increased, people used the natural resources of the forests and some forests were damaged by air pollution. As a result, the temperate forests of today are smaller than they once were.

Temperate forests are ecosystems that support different varieties of plants, trees, and wildlife. Visitors to a temperate forest in North America, for example, might see maple, oak, and elm trees and discover bears, rabbits, and deer.

Each season in a temperate forest brings fascinating changes. During the winter, many trees are dormant and have no leaves at all. Although these trees appear to be dead, they are actually adapting to the change in climate. They shed their leaves to conserve energy during the long, harsh winter. The leaves drift to the forest floor where, with time, they decay and become part of the soil.

In early spring, sunlight shines through the trees' bare branches and reaches the forest floor. Tiny buds appear on trees, and green shoots push through the soil. Soon, the ground is covered with a beautiful carpet of grass and flowers. This beautiful display comes to an end during the summer. At that time, the trees are full of leaves, and very little sunlight reaches the forest floor.

Although people enjoy temperate forests in all seasons, many would agree that fall is the most beautiful season of all. As the leaves on the trees begin to die, they change to vivid colors of red, yellow, orange, and gold. Tourists travel great distances just to see this spectacular sight.

Temperate forests are places of beauty and wonder. It is important for people to enjoy them and also help to protect them.

## Taking Off

Carl buckled his seat belt and pushed his backpack under the seat in front of him. “How much longer until the plane takes off?” he asked his mother eagerly. Carl and his mother were embarking on an adventure to another state to visit his grandparents. The flight, which would be Carl’s first airplane trip, would last about three hours.

Carl’s mother glanced at her watch and replied, “I think it will be about ten more minutes, Carl. I know you’re excited, but be patient because it won’t be long.”

Carl looked up and down the aisle of the plane and saw the other passengers searching for their seats. As he watched them push suitcases into overhead compartments, he considered his mother’s words. He knew that she was right. He was very excited about taking his first trip on an airplane, but he was also frightened, especially about taking off. He just hoped he could keep his anxiety under control until the plane was in the air after takeoff.

A few minutes later, the airplane rolled onto the taxiway and pulled behind a long line of planes waiting to take off. Carl nervously looked out the window and watched the planes at the front of the line soar into the air, one after another. Deciding that they looked like giant birds, Carl let out a breath and began to relax.

A few seconds later, Carl’s plane reached the front of the line and stopped. Then, it jerked, and with a loud rushing noise, began racing down the runway. To Carl, it felt as if he was riding in a huge car that was speeding along a long, straight highway. Then he felt the plane’s wheels lift off the ground and the plane

glide smoothly upward. He smiled as he watched his town grow smaller and smaller in the distance.

About thirty minutes later, a woman and a man pushed a large cart down the aisle and offered Carl and his mother a snack. While Carl ate his bag of pretzels and sipped his orange juice, he became very quiet. “Mom,” he finally said, “how do people learn to work with airplanes?”

## Dust Devils

Have you ever noticed swirling tunnels of dust that look like tiny tornadoes? These small whirlwinds, which are usually seen over open areas, are called dust devils. They are actually rapidly rotating columns of air, and they are fascinating to watch. Some dust devils may move together in a line as if they are marching in a parade. Others may twist, hop, and turn like twirling dancers.

Dust devils are fairly common during the spring and summer, especially in dry areas such as deserts. They are usually seen on hot, calm days when there are few clouds in the sky. As the sun beats down on the earth during the day, the ground becomes hotter and hotter. This causes the air right above the ground to warm up, and it begins to rise. As the heated air rises, it moves in a spinning motion, creating a funnel. The funnel begins to move across the ground, picking up dust as it goes. This dust makes the spinning air visible, and a dust devil is born.

Experts have observed many different sizes and numbers of dust devils in places all around the world. Eleven dust devils were once spotted moving along together in Africa. In the western United States, several smaller devils were seen following the path of a larger one as if they were a family. While many devils are only several feet tall in height, they can sometimes grow to be several miles tall.

The life of a dust devil is often quite short. Changing wind currents can just as easily destroy the swirling funnels as they can help the devils to form. In some cases, wind currents have supported stronger dust devils for up to eight hours. Now that is a long time to dance under the hot sun!

## Long Island Sound

Long Island Sound is a shallow bay in the northeastern part of our country. It is a long, narrow body of water about one hundred miles long and twenty-one miles across. Like all bays, Long Island Sound is a place where rivers and streams meet an ocean. The tide at Long Island Sound brings twenty-five billion gallons of saltwater into the bay twice each day. Three rivers bring most of the freshwater into the bay. Long Island Sound is home to many different animals and plants that like to live in water that is part fresh and part salty.

If you visited Long Island Sound, you would discover a busy place. Fishermen in boats pass through the bay on their way to sea. Visitors sail in sailboats and go skiing behind motorboats. With over one hundred and twenty-five different varieties of birds, the bay is also a popular place for bird watchers. Visitors also enjoy eating the delicious oysters that live in the bay. Some of these oysters are born and raised on oyster farms in the area.

Even though Long Island Bay is a beautiful place to visit, it has problems. One of the biggest problems is that, in some places, there isn't enough oxygen in the water during the summer. The problem is caused by fertilizers and pesticides that have washed into the bay. Because fish need oxygen to "breathe," they either die or swim away. The lack of adequate oxygen also affects plants.

Another problem is caused by the trash in the water and on the beaches of Long Island Sound. Animals sometimes swallow or become tangled in the trash. The trash can also get tangled up in the engines or propellers of boats.

People have been working together for many years to solve these problems. They organize cleanups and educate the public about pollution and litter. They hope that their efforts will bring this beautiful part of our country back to the condition it was in years ago.

## The Bay of Fundy

As you take a stroll near the Bay of Fundy in eastern Canada, you look out across an enormous area of mud. Suddenly the earth begins to shake. Then you hear a loud noise that sounds like thunder. “What’s going on?” you wonder. “Is a tornado approaching?” No, what you’re hearing is the approach of the Fundy tide, the highest tide in the world. Soon, the muddy area you’re looking at will be filled with seawater.

The Bay of Fundy tides have been called one of the natural wonders of the world. Like a high-speed train, the tides roll into the bay twice a day, bringing one hundred billion tons of seawater. They cause the water level in the bay to rise as much as fifty feet. That’s about the height of a four-story building. The movement of all this water creates dangerous currents and churning whirlpools.

When the Fundy tide goes out, the bay is completely emptied. A vast area of mud remains. Like the floor of the bay, animals that live in the bay are also exposed. Some of these animals, such as snails, worms, and fish, provide a feast for migrating birds. Every year, about two million sandpipers and other birds stop at the Bay of Fundy to feed while on their annual migration. Some have huge appetites. Each tiny sandpiper can eat up to sixteen thousand mud shrimp every six hours!

It’s no surprise that the Bay of Fundy is a popular stop for tourists. Some people come just to see the tides. Others enjoy exploring the mud flats, bogs, and forests in the area. Be careful exploring the mud flats, though. They can be extremely dangerous when the tide starts to come in. Birdwatchers come in late summer to observe the migrating birds. Whatever their

reasons, the visitors leave knowing that they have seen a place of unique natural beauty.

## Kerri Strug

When she was nineteen, Kerri Strug became known worldwide as the brave young woman who competed in the Olympics and helped her team in the overall gymnastics competition. During that competition, her team won the gold medal.

Kerri was born in Arizona and was very active as a child. When she was young, she liked to walk through the house on her hands. She also sometimes sped through the house on her tricycle. At one point, her home had a large carpeted room with no furniture. Kerri used the room as her private gym, doing cartwheels, handstands, and flips. She was very disappointed when her parents moved furniture into it.

When Kerri was older, she had to make a difficult decision. She realized that she had the skills as a gymnast to make it to the Olympics. She also realized that to reach this goal, she would need to be taught by the best coach she could find. She found a skilled coach in Texas and decided to move there. Even though she lived with different friends, she was sometimes lonely while she was there. She called her parents often for support. Her parents were very proud of her and excited to talk to her about her work and life as a gymnast.

Her coach had Kerri practice eight hours a day, six or seven days a week. He also required her to stay on a strict training schedule and to go to bed at a certain hour. Luckily, her aunt and uncle lived nearby. When she occasionally went to visit them, she would enjoy a more relaxed schedule than during her training. She even got to stay up past her bedtime to watch television.

After her experiences at the Olympics, Kerri worked to help children learn how to overcome difficulties to reach their goals. She gave talks about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and helped raise money for the Make-A-Wish foundation and Special Olympics. Kerri has written two books. One book, *Landing on My Feet, a Diary of Dreams*, tells about her life up until the Olympic games. *Heart of Gold* gives encouragement and advice for children to use to reach their own dreams.

## Doppler Radar

When people hear the word tornado, they pay close attention for a very good reason. Tornadoes cause a huge amount of damage to both life and property every year and are extremely unpredictable. A tornado may appear instantaneously and then, just as quickly, it may vanish. Fortunately, weather stations across the country are using a new method to track tornadoes called Doppler radar. Doppler radar helps weather stations identify the conditions that generate tornados. With early warning of an approaching tornado, many lives and homes can be saved.

In the past, regular radar was used to study storms. This radar only measured how hard rain was falling. Scientists using this radar studied the patterns of rainfall and then guessed if a tornado was forming. Their guesses sometimes led to false alarms. Other times, they discovered a tornado too late to prevent loss of life. Clearly, a better instrument was needed.

Then Doppler radar was developed to measure more than just rainfall. It was first created to show detailed information about the direction and speed of aircraft. When looking at the weather, Doppler radar follows raindrops instead of planes. By following the drops in a thunderstorm, it can “see” the direction and speed of the wind.

If Doppler radar shows raindrops moving both toward and away from it, experts know that a tornado may be forming. The weather service will then issue a “tornado watch” for the area. A tornado watch warns people to stay alert for possible tornadoes. If the radar later shows very strong winds moving in a circle, experts know that it has found a tornado core. The weather

service then sends out a “tornado warning,” which warns people that a tornado exists in the area.

Doppler radar has made a big difference in people’s lives. Tornado watches can be issued as much as seven hours in advance, giving people time to prepare. If a watch later becomes a warning, they are not caught by surprise. Tornadoes still produce some of the most dangerous of all weather conditions, but Doppler radar has made a big difference in how much damage they do.

## How to Stay Safe During a Winter Storm

You look out the window and see a bright, clear day. Then you turn on the television and hear that a dangerous winter storm is rapidly approaching your city. What should you do to prepare for such an event?

First, you should gather your family members and make a winter storm plan. Discuss that everyone should come home well before the storm is scheduled to arrive. However, stress that anyone who is unable to make it home in time should phone in. It's better to stay in a safe place than to try to drive in unsafe conditions.

Next, you'll need to check the supplies around your home. Make sure that you have extra blankets on hand in case you lose your heat. Locate a battery-powered radio and a flashlight as well as fresh batteries for both. If your home has a fireplace, you may want to get a supply of firewood.

You'll also need to have food in case the power in your home goes out. Buy a supply of canned goods and have a can opener available. Also buy bottled water; you'll need at least one gallon per person for a three-day period.

As the storm approaches, stay tuned to your local television and radio stations. It's important to know the difference between a "winter storm watch" and a "winter storm warning." A winter storm watch means a winter storm is possible in your area. A winter storm warning means a winter storm is headed for your area. A blizzard warning means strong winds, blinding snow, and a dangerous wind chill are expected. If you hear that a blizzard is coming, take shelter immediately.

If possible, stay indoors during dangerous storms and blizzards. If you must go outdoors, wear several layers of clothing, a warm coat, gloves or mittens, a hat, and waterproof boots. Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs. To avoid dangerous falls as you move around, watch for icy surfaces. If you shovel snow after the storm, be very careful. It is physically demanding work, so take frequent breaks.

## A New Catcher in Town

Robert stretched and then scrambled out of bed. Remembering that it was the day for Little League tryouts, he dressed quickly and dashed downstairs. His mother greeted him, gave him a hug, and served him a stack of delicious buttermilk pancakes.

“Tyrell’s going to help me practice this morning,” Robert explained between bites. “Did you know he played baseball for his college team?” Before his mother could answer, he continued, “He’s going to help me learn how to catch ground balls. That’s the skill I need to improve to convince the coach that I can play catcher.”

Robert had recently moved to this new town, and he wanted more than anything to play catcher on the town’s Little League team. He had read in the newspapers that the team might make it to the Little League World Series. Tyrell, his new neighbor, had been helping him polish his skills.

An hour later, Robert was standing in his back yard feeling very frustrated because he had caught only a few of the ground balls Tyrell had thrown. His thoughts drifted back to several months earlier when a grounder had hit him in the face. He worried that he still might be a little frightened of a ball approaching him at top speed.

At about that time, Tyrell walked over and started talking quietly to Robert. He explained that a fly ball had once jammed his finger and that he had been frightened of catching balls for a while. “I don’t know if you’ve ever experienced anything like that,” he continued, “but I learned something then that may help

you. When you see the ball coming at you, just move toward it a little, and you'll find it easier to catch."

That afternoon, Robert felt confident when he arrived at the baseball field. The coach suggested that they begin with a few ground balls, so Robert walked onto the field and turned to face the coach. As he adjusted his mitt, the coach asked him if he was ready.

"I couldn't be more ready," Robert answered cheerfully.

## A Big Imagination at Bighorn Canyon

Chico and his father pulled their canoe out of the Bighorn River, and Chico sat down on a rock. He looked around, unable to believe that this much anticipated day had finally arrived. For the last six months, he and his father had been planning this camping trip to Bighorn Canyon. They had read books from the library and done research on the Internet about the area. That morning, they had arrived at the campsite and set up the tent before taking a hike and canoeing in the lake. With its massive red cliffs and wild prairies, the canyon was even more spectacular than all the pictures Chico had seen.

“Let’s have some dinner,” Dad said, as they walked back to the tent. Soon, they were enjoying hamburgers and potato salad on the banks of the lake, while watching a glorious pink and orange sunset. Two hours later, Chico and his father had washed the dishes, and Chico felt so sleepy he could barely keep his eyes open. He and his father crawled into the tent and turned off the lantern, and Chico was asleep in seconds.

After a few hours, Chico awoke to a loud noise followed by a crashing and banging sound. Realizing that there was something right outside the tent, he sat straight up in his sleeping bag, his heart pounding. He became even more alarmed when he remembered reading that grizzly bears lived in the area.

“Chico, what’s wrong?” his father asked in a confused voice, rubbing his eyes and yawning drowsily.

“There’s something outside the tent,” Chico whispered, “and it must be a huge animal because it’s making so much noise. It might even be a ferocious grizzly bear.”

Dad quietly fumbled for his backpack, got out his flashlight, and turned it on. At that moment, they heard another loud noise near the garbage can. With Chico looking over his shoulder, Dad unzipped the tent and shined the flashlight outside, right into the eyes of a startled raccoon.

“There goes your grizzly bear,” Dad chuckled as the raccoon turned away from the tent and scampered into the woods.

## My Little Pal

This day has certainly been a day of highs and lows. This morning I went to the mall with my best friend Lamar, and while we were there, he told me that his family was moving to another state in four weeks. He and I have been best friends for six years, ever since we met in kindergarten at age five. Even though we immediately began making plans for me to visit his new home, his news made me feel as unhappy as I ever can remember feeling.

When I got home from the mall, I went to my room and put on some cheerful music, thinking it would help improve my mood. I started working on my homework, too, just to take my mind off of Lamar's news. While I was working, I heard somebody knocking on my door.

When I opened the door, I expected it would be my mother telling me it was time for dinner. Instead, an adorable, brown and white puppy bolted into the room, ran in circles, and then disappeared into my closet. A few seconds later, it returned with one of my old sneakers in its mouth. Laughing, I picked the puppy up to take the shoe from its mouth, and it licked my face with its wet tongue. As I stroked its soft fur, its tail, which had a white tip, was wagging so fast it looked like a blur.

Next, my mother and father walked in with huge grins on their faces. They explained that they had heard Lamar's news, too, and they wanted to cheer me up. I had been asking them if I could have a pet for years, and they finally had agreed. While the puppy continued to lick my face, we discussed that taking care of the puppy would be my responsibility. We reviewed my responsibilities for caring for the puppy, and then they asked me

what I would like to name him. I took one look at the cuddly ball of fur in my arms and the perfect name popped into my head. I decided to call my new pet “Pal.”

## Working in a Group

I never would have imagined that doing a class report could be fun. Yet last week, I gave a report to my class with three other students, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I learned a lot about an interesting subject, and I felt proud of our work. Here's how it all happened.

On Thursday, Ms. Tang gave everyone in my class an assignment, which was to present a report the next week. She explained that our subject would be tropical rainforests and that we would work with other classmates on the project. Then she arranged the class into groups with four students in each group. The other people in my group were Jerome, Miki, and Laura, who are also friends of mine.

Next, all the groups met in class to decide on specific topics and to divide the duties for doing the report. My group decided to write about rainforest plants that are used to make medicines. We decided that Laura and I would do the research, make notes, and create an outline. Jerome's job would be to use the outline to write the report, and Miki would use the outline to make a poster.

On Friday Laura and I went to the library to do research for the project. She and I found several good books on rainforest plants. I took notes from the books, while Laura took notes from a newspaper article. After that, we discussed what we had learned and listed the most important facts. After we created an outline from the list, we gave the outline and list to Jerome and Miki.

When we gave our report to the class, everyone seemed to pay attention to it, and a few people even asked questions. The

class involvement made me think that we had chosen an interesting topic. Answering the questions made me feel good, of course, but I felt especially excited when Ms. Tang told us how much she had enjoyed listening to our report.

## The Food Tree

Long ago, a group of animals lived deep in the forest. Every single one of these animals was gaunt and hungry, except for one, Bear. Early each morning, Bear left home and didn't return until nightfall. The other animals wondered where Bear went, but no one had the time or the energy to ask her because they were all too busy looking for food.

One day, Fox said to the animals, "Yesterday Bear smelled like a peach, and I think she had been eating fruit."

Deer looked thoughtful and then made a suggestion. "Why doesn't someone follow her to find out where she goes every day?" The animals all nodded their heads in agreement and began discussing who could follow Bear without being seen. Finally, they decided that tiny Mouse should track Bear the following day.

When Mouse returned the next evening, he announced that Bear had led him to the biggest tree in the world. He explained that each branch of the enormous tree grew a different kind of food. He had seen sweet bananas, juicy cherries, and perfectly ripened squash. The animals decided to see for themselves and hurried to the tree. They found Bear hungrily munching on a delicious melon.

"The branches are too high for us all to reach," said Deer, "so we'll have to chop down the tree." The other animals agreed to cooperate in the effort, and soon every animal was hard at work. The birds used their pointed beaks, the lions used their sharp claws, and the rabbits used their long teeth to weaken the tree. Finally, after three days of unceasing toil, the great tree toppled to the ground, causing the whole earth to tremble.

Immediately, lemon trees sprouted where the lemon branch hit the ground, and tomato plants sprouted where the tomato branch hit the ground. The animals looked surprised because lemon trees and tomato plants had never existed before. Soon, different kinds of foods were growing from the ground everywhere the animals looked.

A cheer arose from the group. They knew that because they had worked together, there would now be food for all the animals and people in the world to share.

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

## DIBELS

### *DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Sixth Grade Student Materials*

Edited By:

Roland H. Good III

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*University of Oregon*



Available:

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

Instructions:

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

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

## Another Kind of Water Safety

Suppose you're hiking with friends on a hot summer day, and you come to a sparkling stream of clear, cool water. The water in the stream looks so inviting, and you suddenly realize that you're thirsty. Should you take a drink from the stream?

The answer is as clear as the stream water: don't drink it! Most freshwater isn't safe to drink, even if it looks pure. Most mountain and forest water contains microorganisms—tiny living things—that you can't see but that can make you sick.

Your safety is optimized if you take your own water with you on outdoor adventures. If you can't carry all the purified water you'll need, though, you have some viable alternatives. You can boil freshwater to make it safe to drink. Boiling kills the harmful microorganisms, but it may not remove all toxins or dangerous chemicals from the water. It also requires that you carry heavy equipment such as a pot, a stove, and fuel.

You can also take along chemicals that kill germs in water. These chemicals make the water safe to drink, but they often give it a bad taste. Another method for purifying freshwater is to use filters, but experts caution people to choose carefully since not all filters make water absolutely safe to drink.

If you find yourself running out of water, you can conserve your "inner water" by staying out of direct sunlight, by covering your skin so that you don't lose as much water through perspiration, and by wearing a hat. Don't eat salty snacks, because these will increase your thirst.

In an emergency, if you have to drink untreated water, avoid water that is near shores. Drink from an upstream source of

water, if one is available, and beware of shallow water or water that has a bad odor. If you develop a stomachache a few days or weeks after drinking untreated water, visit a doctor to find out if you caught a disease from drinking contaminated water.

## Wondrous, Wet World

A tropical rain forest is like no other place on Earth, with its dense canopy of trees and amazing variety of animal and plant life. Howler monkeys, boa constrictors, and giant spiders are but a few of the inhabitants of these lush forests.

If you were a weather forecaster for a rain forest, your job would be easy. You could give a consistent forecast for almost every day of the year. “Today’s weather will be hot and humid, with a ninety percent chance of rain.” Tropical rain forests are located just north and south of the equator, the imaginary line that appears as a belt around the globe.

Although tropical rain forests cover only about seven percent of the world, more than half of the world’s wildlife resides there. We don’t know for sure how many different plants and animals there are, though, because the rain forest is so inaccessible. Scientists are still discovering new animal and plant species in rain forests. In the Amazon rain forest, for example, scientists have counted at least two thousand species of butterfly, and on just one jungle tree, they found two hundred different kinds of ants.

Many rain forest animals live their whole lives in trees that can grow as high as two hundred feet. Animals such as colobus monkeys find everything they need in their lofty tree homes and rarely descend to the ground.

Rain forests are endangered and some are quickly disappearing, though. People are chopping down the trees for wood or burning the forests to farm the land. This means that the animals that live in the forests are also disappearing. Scientists worry that the destruction of the forests will have dangerous

effects on global weather patterns and that many plants that might provide valuable medicines will become extinct.

Fortunately, people around the world are working to preserve the rain forest ecosystems. You can help by learning more about these forests and sharing what you learn with others. If you avoid buying endangered rain forest animals or plants, or products made from them, you reduce the market for them. You can also find out what different groups are doing to save the rain forests and consider helping them. Your help can make a world of difference.

## Food for Thought

Jay is growing up on a farm where almost nothing he eats comes in a wrapper. For example, for breakfast yesterday he had two eggs gathered from the henhouse and a peach he plucked from a backyard tree. For lunch, he ate a sandwich made with homemade bread, and for supper, he had squash and tomatoes picked from the garden and fish that his dad had caught.

Jay is aware of other ways of eating, though. He is familiar with the endless rows of snack foods on the shelves of the supermarket in town and the boxy restaurants that sell hamburgers and fried chicken to go. He doesn't understand why these are called "convenience foods," since you have to drive all that way to get them, when you could just walk to the kitchen and slice a piece of homemade pie or pick a plum off a tree in the yard. Jay thinks they should be called "inconvenient" foods because it takes so much more work to get them.

Last summer, he visited his cousin Ben for a week. "Are you hungry?" Ben asked on the day Jay arrived. Jay was indeed hungry after the long train trip, so Ben opened a huge bag of potato chips. In no time, Ben and Jay had eaten most of the chips.

Jay was surprised at how many chips he ate, but he was even more surprised at how hungry he still felt. As the week went by, Jay ate many other kinds of snack foods and fast foods. He couldn't exactly say that he liked the salty and sugary foods, but he found himself eating a lot of them, even when he wasn't hungry.

When Jay returned home and to his usual way of eating, he had a new appreciation for the fresh, homegrown foods his

family ate. He saw that it meant something to be connected to the food he ate, especially when it came to him from human hands instead of out of a bag.

## Zoo Food

Our class paid a visit to the zoo, but it wasn't an ordinary trip. We went to learn about feeding zoo animals. Before the field trip, our class researched the needs of various animals and made a list of questions. For example, one student wanted to know how they fed crocodiles, my friend wondered if anteaters ate ants, and someone else had questions about feeding snakes.

When the class arrived at the zoo, a caretaker greeted us in a special building where meals are planned and prepared. She explained that zoos rarely feed the animals what they eat in the wild. "An animal's natural foods aren't easily available," she said. "We have to find substitute diets that are appealing and good for the animals."

The caretaker took the class into the spotless zoo kitchen where several giant refrigerators are available for storing meat, fish, chicken, fruits, and vegetables. She showed students the storage room, with its huge bins filled with grain pellets, cereal, biscuits, peanut butter, nuts, and seeds. Then she let them read the notebooks that listed types and amounts of foods for each animal.

One of my friends inquired about the anteater. "We can't supply the thousands of live ants and termites this animal eats," the caretaker said, "But we've discovered they will eat cat food soaked in water." As for snakes, she explained that keepers open the door to a snake exhibit very carefully before placing a mouse or rat inside. "If several snakes live together, we'll separate them for a meal so they don't fight over the food," she added.

"With crocodiles, keepers usually go in the exhibit area, following the same routine every day, so the crocodiles get used

to them,” the caretaker said. “For extra safety, we carry long poles and never take our eyes off the animals.”

Before they left the zoo, the students watched a caretaker feed a rare pink pigeon chick. As the students boarded the bus to go back to school, our teacher asked them to sum up their feelings about the visit in one or two words. I raised my hand first. “That’s easy,” I said. “My overall feeling is, I’M FAMISHED!”

## The Coolest Game

Any game that's played on a frozen surface is bound to be cool, but hockey is cool in the other sense of the word. It's an exciting game played at lightning speed by two teams that consist of six players each. A team wins a hockey game by scoring more goals than its opponents.

The players use wooden sticks that curve at the bottom to move a rubber disk called a puck across the ice and into a net to score a goal. One player on each team serves as a goalie and is responsible for protecting the team's goal. Players wear padded uniforms and helmets, mouth guards, and ice skates with blades specially made for the sport.

In hockey, the action never stops. Referees and other officials monitor the action, while players keep the game moving and try to avoid penalties. A hockey rink is marked with red and blue lines and circles that show different playing zones.

No one knows for certain exactly how hockey originated, but the game most likely developed as a version of "stick and ball" games played on land in Europe for hundreds of years. British soldiers in eastern Canada first began playing ice hockey in the middle of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century, women had begun playing the sport, too.

Hockey rules, mainly based on the game of rugby, were written in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The rubber ball originally used in the game evolved into a block of wood and later into a hard rubber disk known as a puck.

Interest in the game of hockey spread quickly. With the invention of the first indoor rink of artificial ice, the sport caught

on in the United States. Early in the twentieth century, professional teams and leagues were formed.

Today there are professional teams all over the United States and the world. More people are playing and watching hockey than ever before. It's fast, colorful, and thrilling. In other words, hockey is one of the coolest sports around!

## Mount Fuji

The most famous symbol of Japan is not an electronic game or a car that saves fuel. It's a cone-shaped mountain known as Mount Fuji. Located near the Pacific coast about sixty miles west of Tokyo, Fuji is the tallest mountain in Japan. It rises to a height of over twelve thousand feet.

Fuji is actually a volcano formed from layers of ash and lava and crowned by a wide crater. Even more accurately, it is three overlapping volcanoes. Over thousands of years, lava and ash from the youngest volcano have covered the two older volcanoes. This process has helped create the tapered form of the mountain.

The name is thought to mean "everlasting life." Fuji has long been considered sacred in Japan. Its graceful cone has inspired poets and artists throughout the centuries. To add to its majesty, Fuji is surrounded by beautiful forests and lakes.

Fuji has erupted at least ten times since the eighth century. Although nearly three hundred years have passed since the volcano last erupted, geologists still consider it active. There are areas of hot sand on the rim of its crater. This leads some scientists to think that the volcano may erupt again.

Every year, thousands of pilgrims flock to the shrines and temples that surround the volcano. Hundreds of thousands of hikers and tourists from around the world also climb one of several zigzag routes to the summit during the summer climbing season. The hike up the mountain can take between five and seven hours or longer. The trip down can take about three hours. Some of the hikers set out at night, flashlights in hand. This allows them to reach the crater rim just as the sun is rising from

the ocean to set the sky ablaze. What could be more fitting than standing at sunrise on the highest peak in Japan, a country known as the Land of the Rising Sun?

## Jerome's Artwork

It began with idle doodling in the margins of his notes during class, which might have seemed to an observer like a nervous habit or a sign of boredom. At any rate, Jerome seized every opportunity to draw. Sometimes he used pencil, sometimes pen. He experimented with different styles of drawing by imitating lines and shapes from artworks he admired.

Jerome had to be secretive about drawing, because he didn't want his teacher, Ms. Holt, to catch him and assume that he wasn't paying attention to her lectures about pronoun antecedents or Civil War generals. When Ms. Holt's back was turned, he drew, and when she was across the room helping a student, he drew. As far as Jerome knew, his drawing had gone unnoticed by Ms. Holt.

One afternoon, Jerome was nearly out of the classroom when Ms. Holt called his name. "We have something to discuss," she said. Jerome turned around and walked to her desk, resigned to the fact that at last, he was going to get in trouble for drawing during class.

"I see that you like to draw," Ms. Holt began. "And by your responses in class and your work on tests, I can tell that drawing doesn't interfere with your learning. So I'm not going to ask you to stop." Jerome was relieved, but he could tell that Ms. Holt wasn't finished with the subject.

Ms. Holt explained that the school wanted to create a permanent mural for the main hallway and that she had recommended to the principal that Jerome design the mural. "We'd like for you to submit two or three suggestions for the mural," she said.

When Jerome left school that day, he was excited about the prospect of putting his drawing ability to good use. He worked all weekend on suggestions for the mural and turned them in on Monday. That day, as he listened to Ms. Holt's English lesson while sketching in the margins of his paper, Ms. Holt looked at Jerome briefly and smiled. Jerome smiled back and then went back to his drawing.

## The Subject of Subways

Some people call it the tube, some know it as the metro, and others call it the underground. You might know it as a subway. All these terms refer to an underground railway system of connected cars that transport people from place to place in cities and suburbs.

Subway passengers board or exit the cars at stations along a route. Steps or escalators usually connect a subway station to the street level. Some subways emerge above ground at the far end of a line. Most subways pass under city streets, but they can also pass under rivers or even ocean bays.

The first subway, in London, was begun less than two hundred years ago and finished three years later. Workers dug trenches below the streets, built bricked sides and arches in the trenches, and then covered them with earth and restored the streets to their original condition. The first subway line used steam locomotives. This new way to travel was an immediate success, carrying more than nine million passengers during its first year.

A few years later, another subway line was begun in London, using a special tunneling shield that pushed through the clay deep underground so that street traffic wasn't disrupted. On later subways, electricity was being used to operate the lines.

Other cities began to build subways. The first subway line in the United States was constructed in Boston and was completed about one hundred years ago. A few years later, New York City began what was to become the largest subway system in the world.

In the twentieth century, developers began using computer and aerospace technology to build automatic subway trains. The first completely automatic system was developed in the San Francisco Bay area. This system is operated by remote control. Most of today's subway cars have air conditioning and offer smooth, fast rides.

When you consider the problems caused by increasing traffic on city streets, subway travel makes good sense. You're doing your part for clean air, you're avoiding the bother and risk of car travel, and your attention is free for reading or daydreaming. The subway is a smart way to go.

## The Boy and the Scorpion: A Modern Fable

A boy and his family had recently moved to a home near the woods. To the boy, it seemed that he had moved to the Land of Ten Thousand Bugs.

Every day or night, there would be a new, jarring discovery. For example, the boy would be startled by a centipede crawling across the floor or a beetle clinging to the screen door. One morning, when the boy slipped a foot into his running shoe, he felt a fierce sting on his toe. He turned the shoe upside down and shook it, and out dropped an outraged scorpion that scampered away before the boy could respond.

After that, the boy declared war on insects and would stalk about the house, alert for any indication of a crawling creature. “The only good insect is a squashed insect,” was the boy’s motto.

One morning, the boy awoke and was halfway down the stairs when he felt the house suddenly rise and then come crashing down. The boy was tossed about like a rag doll.

When he regained his footing, the boy saw that his house had completely changed. The walls were made of canvas and had no windows, a huge flap lay in the middle of the floor, and two large ropes were draped on either side of the flap. The boy realized that he was standing inside an enormous shoe.

Next, he saw an immense human foot entering the shoe. Terrified that he would be squashed, the boy reached up and pinched the foot with all his strength, and the foot retreated quickly. Then the boy felt the shoe being shaken. He tried to cling to one of the ropes, but the force was too great and he

dropped to the floor, where he scrambled in panic under a giant bed.

When the boy awoke from his terrible and disturbing dream, he considered his experience and decided he had a new attitude toward insects. He saw that they meant no harm, except when they were threatened. From that time forward, when the boy found a bug in the house, he gently coaxed it into a jar and emptied the jar respectfully in the woods.

Moral: Before judging others, try putting yourself in their shoes.

## Yoga for Kids

What's your favorite type of exercise? For many kids, it's soccer, basketball, tennis, swimming, or maybe pressing the buttons on a computer game, but another form of exercise that's becoming more popular is yoga.

Yoga is a great way to exercise the whole body, regardless of your physical ability. Yoga exercises consist of poses, or postures, that help strengthen, stretch, and tone the body. In addition, they promote balance and relaxation.

No special equipment is required to practice yoga. Some people use exercise mats, but you can always use the bare floor and a towel. When practicing yoga, you should wear comfortable clothes such as tights or shorts and a loose shirt.

You can purchase or check out books and videotapes that teach the basics of yoga, or you can attend a class. The best way to learn yoga is from an experienced instructor who enthusiastically practices yoga.

If you were to attend a yoga class, you might begin by warming up with some gentle stretches. Next, you might do special work poses such as the "tree pose." In this pose, you stand on one leg with the foot of the other leg placed on the inside thigh of the standing leg. Then you slowly raise your arms above your head, placing your palms together.

Some poses may be sitting or squatting poses, or you might lie on your back with your legs stretched over your head. Some yoga poses may look strange, but they feel great, like a nice long yawn.

Breathing deeply and steadily is quite important in yoga, because it helps you stretch your body and relax into the poses.

Speaking of relaxing, an essential part of a yoga session is lying still and quiet for several minutes at the end. “Allow your body to melt into the floor,” a yoga instructor might say. This is a time of rest and making room for the calm, silent part of us that sometimes gets lost in the noise of everyday life. No wonder this is the most popular part of a yoga session!

## Hot Springs National Park

This is an idea that just doesn't make sense to most children. A person would actually travel long distances and pay money just to take a bath? It sounds outrageous, and yet, for more than two hundred years, people have come from all over the world to bathe in hot mineral springs in a resort in central Arkansas. In fact, Native Americans were the first to discover and bathe in the spring waters hundreds of years before that.

The springs are located at the base of Hot Springs Mountain in Hot Springs National Park, the oldest park in the National Park System. There are about forty-seven hot springs in the area. Minerals in the water are said to treat ailments such as arthritis. The average temperature of the water is around one hundred degrees Fahrenheit. There are also crystal-clear, cold-water springs in the park, which people use for drinking.

A spring develops when surface water from rain or snow finds its way deep into the ground through layers of rock, where geothermal processes in the earth heat the spring water. The spring water is uncontaminated, and the park service takes care to preserve its purity for bathing and drinking.

The park service has set up a system for collecting and distributing the spring water to the bathhouses in the park. What's it like to visit a bathhouse? First, you lock your valuables in a security box when you enter the bathhouse. Then you're escorted to a private bathing area, where you might be given a cup of hot, pure mineral water to drink to help you enjoy the atmosphere of your hot bath.

Next, you step into the bath and relax for about twenty minutes. After the bath you might take a bracing, cool shower.

Then you rest for twenty or minutes or so. Some people choose to receive a massage after their bath. After dressing and retrieving your valuables, you leave the bathhouse feeling relaxed and refreshed. The idea sounds wonderful, doesn't it, unless, of course, you're a typical child.

## Mrs. Lee's Other House

One day I asked my friend Jin Lee if we could visit the firehouse where her mother is stationed. The station happens to be in our neighborhood, so we walked there on a Saturday morning.

Mrs. Lee greeted us at the station. "Welcome to my second home!" she said, referring to the several nights a month that she sleeps there. The first things I noticed were the uniforms and helmets, called "turnout gear," all neatly hanging on hooks on a wall. Jin told me that the gear can weigh as much as seventy pounds.

Mrs. Lee showed us the dormitory bedrooms where firefighters sleep, the exercise room where they stay fit, the kitchen, and the recreation room with its television, VCR, and shelves full of books. There were two gleaming fire trucks in the garage, and as we sat in one of the trucks, Mrs. Lee described the feeling of going on a call. "The sirens are on, the lights are flashing, and your heart is pumping," she said. "During the ride, I wonder what I'll find and whether I'll be able to help."

I asked Mrs. Lee about the skills a person needs to be a firefighter. "First, you have to be physically fit because you have to carry around a lot of heavy equipment and move quickly," she said. "And you need good instincts and the ability to stay calm in an emergency."

"I like doing something exciting and necessary," Mrs. Lee said when I asked her what she liked best about firefighting. When I asked her what she liked least about the job, she said, "The worst part of my job is when I am not able to help, and I don't like to go on false alarms."

Walking back home from the fire station, my mind was buzzing with all I'd seen and learned. That night, lying in bed, I had a vision I hadn't had since I was a little girl. It was of me, dressed in full turnout gear, jumping out of a red truck to help people in need.

## Saving a Life

“Todd is going to be fine,” said the doctor to Todd’s mother in the television program. “He lost a lot of blood in the accident but the donated blood saved his life.” As Yoko watched the program, she became curious about blood donation. Then she realized that she could put her curiosity to work by using the topic for a school research report.

She began by listing questions about the topic. The next day, she called the local blood donation center and spoke to a volunteer named Hal, who explained that to be a donor, a person must be at least seventeen years old, weigh one hundred and ten pounds or more, and be healthy.

“First, you fill out a form about your health history to see if it’s safe for you to donate blood,” Hal said. “Next, we check your blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and red blood cell count to make sure you’re healthy. If you’re a suitable donor, you lie in a comfortable seat while we insert a needle and draw out a pint of blood. You’ll feel a slight pinch from the needle.”

He told Yoko that drawing out the blood takes about ten minutes and that most people feel fine afterwards. “The body replaces the lost fluids within a day,” he said.

Yoko learned from Hal that the blood is tested to determine the donor’s blood type and to ensure its safety. Then it’s separated into red cells, platelets, and plasma. Hal explained that these different parts serve different functions. “When we split the components into three parts, you have the chance to save three lives,” he said. “Then we store the components at an appropriate temperature until they’re needed.”

“Every two seconds, someone in this country needs blood,” Hal added. “Blood donations help people treated for accidents, surgeries, and serious diseases.”

After Yoko shared the information with her parents, they both donated blood. Yoko’s teacher also donated blood when she read Yoko’s report. Yoko was not yet old enough to be a donor. But, in a way, her curiosity about blood donation was on its way to saving lives.

## Martha Graham

Imagine a woman sitting for hours in front of a lion's cage in a zoo. She watches the lion very carefully, studying its every movement as it paces back and forth across the cage. Then, the woman goes home and teaches herself to move as the lion moved.

The woman so interested in a lion's movement was Martha Graham, one of the greatest dancers of the twentieth century. She changed people's ideas about what dance is by exploring new ways of movement and by connecting dance and feelings.

When Martha saw her first live dance performance as a teenager, she made up her mind to become a dancer. She began taking lessons, eventually becoming a lead dancer in the dance company that was part of the school where she studied.

Soon Martha was performing around the country and gaining fame as a dancer. After a few years, she struck out on her own, teaching and creating a personal dance style. She formed her own dance group, creating experimental dances that expressed feelings such as joy and grief in new ways and doing away with fancy costumes in favor of simple outfits and bare stages.

Not everyone loved Martha's dances. Some called them hard to understand and even "ugly," but Martha was not discouraged. She kept pushing her talent as far as she could, striking out in new directions. She added male dancers to her company and began to use spoken words. The company performed all over the world, and Martha became an international star, widely celebrated as a genius.

Martha's last dance performance was at the age of seventy-five. She continued to teach and to direct her company and travel

abroad with them until shortly before her death, at the age of ninety-six. Since her teenage years, dance had mattered more than anything in her life. “I did not choose to be a dancer,” Martha once said. “I was chosen.”

## Four-Legged Heroes

Not all of the heroes in a rescue are firefighters, police officers, or medical personnel. Some aren't even humans. They're dogs, most of them specially trained to search for humans who need help. Rescue dogs also help comfort victims and escort people out of danger.

Dogs such as Gus, a yellow Labrador retriever, appear on the scenes of disasters in the United States, often within hours of an event. Gus and his owner, Ed Apple, are part of the Tennessee Task Force One Urban Search and Rescue Team. Gus is trained to work closely with Ed, who uses hand signals and voice commands to guide Gus over surfaces such as unstable concrete and other wreckage. Gus's job is to sniff the air for the scent of a human trapped beneath the rubble.

According to Ed, rescue dogs love their work. "They'll keep looking until you call them off," he says. Rescue dogs usually work in shifts and take time out for rest and play. Some rescue dogs are specially trained to help comfort people. The dogs are brought to the site of a disaster so that victims can hug and talk to them. This helps people who are suffering from the fear and sadness of having gone through a disaster.

After undergoing special training for two years or more, rescue dogs have to pass difficult tests, such as safely climbing up ladders and through tunnels. They must obey a handler's commands without being distracted by other sounds or activities, and they must go only where their handlers indicate. When rescue dogs find survivors, they are trained to stay in one place and bark for thirty seconds.

Rescue dogs have saved hundreds of lives, and are important members of rescue teams. To Ed, Gus is far more than just a pet. “Gus really lives up to being called man’s best friend,” he says with pride.

## An Ideal Snack

Suppose you're asked to design the perfect snack food. The food must provide its own packaging, taste sweet and satisfying, give you a quick burst of energy, and be very good for you.

Actually, the perfect snack food has already been "invented." It's the banana, possessor of its own packaging, a thick peel that protects the fruit and is easily removed. Not only are bananas delicious, they're good for you. Bananas provide more potassium by weight than all other fruits except avocados. Potassium helps balance fluids in the body and regulate blood pressure and heartbeat. Bananas also contain carbohydrates, which provide quick energy.

Bananas ripen best after they've been picked. Some people like the tart taste of barely ripened bananas with spotless yellow skins that have green tips. Others prefer the sweet and creamy taste of fully ripened bananas whose skins are flecked with brown spots.

Bananas are available all year and are the most popular fresh fruit in the United States, but they're not grown commercially in this country. They're cultivated in tropical areas such as Central and South America.

The banana is actually a type of berry, and a banana tree is a type of herb. Banana "trees," whose "trunks" are tightly wrapped layers of leaves, can grow from fifteen to thirty feet high.

When shopping, look for bananas that are plump, firm, and brightly colored. Bananas that aren't completely ripe should be stored at room temperature. You can place them in a paper bag to speed up ripening. To slow ripening, place bananas in the

refrigerator. The skins will turn dark, but the fruit will be fine. Bananas will keep for up to two weeks in the refrigerator.

For snacking, you can't beat a banana. Actually, you can beat a banana with a little cold evaporated skim milk to create a tasty topping. You can slice and freeze banana chunks for a great frozen snack, or you can slice a banana on cereal. Any way you slice it, a banana is an ideal snack.

## Waterspouts

When is a tornado not a tornado? When that furiously spinning column of air known as a tornado is rotating over water, it's called a waterspout. A waterspout can form out of a small thunderstorm and drop down over water, or, in coastal areas, it can begin as a tornado on land and then move out over water.

A waterspout extends down from a towering cumulus cloud to a large body of water. Waterspouts have been spotted over lakes, oceans, and wide rivers. They are usually smaller than tornadoes, and the winds are not as strong, although there have been some exceptional waterspouts reported over the years. As with tornadoes, waterspouts can occur in series and take on different characteristics. Their usual speeds are about fifty miles per hour but their speeds can vary substantially.

A famous waterspout occurred over the ocean near Massachusetts a little over one hundred years ago. Those who witnessed the waterspout estimated that the column was about three thousand feet long. It lasted for about thirty-five minutes, disappearing and reappearing several times.

Where is a good place to see a waterspout in the United States? You can usually find them in the Florida Keys or on the Great Lakes. Waterspouts occur most often during spring and summer in the northern United States and year-round in southern areas.

Although there have been few proven cases of waterspouts destroying large ships, they can be dangerous to small vessels. They can also become deadly when they move from water onto land in populated areas.

One myth holds that firing a cannonball into a waterspout can break it up, but this has no scientific basis. Also, some people have reported waterspouts sucking up fish and seaweed from the water and then carrying them inland and raining them onto the land. I know what you're thinking. You're picturing the weather forecaster on the nightly television news pointing to the Florida coast and saying, "The forecast for tonight is cloudy, with a thirty percent chance of fish."

## Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

In a landscape of rugged mountains and stark plains grows a plant common in Mexico but rare in the United States. The plant is the organ pipe cactus. It is named for its clusters of tall fingers that resemble the pipes of an organ. It grows on slopes that face south, the better to catch the sun's rays. In late spring and early summer, its pale purple and white blooms open at night. This cactus is one of more than twenty species found in the desert wilderness of Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Arizona.

The animals and plants of the park have adapted themselves to extreme temperatures and little rainfall. Nature has equipped them with ways to conserve moisture, since there is little water to drink. Temperatures on summer days can be scorching. Nights are much cooler than the days, during all seasons.

Animals are less visible than the plants in the park, especially during the day. On an afternoon hike, you're not likely to see the kangaroo rats, elf owls, jackrabbits, or snakes. These creatures rest in cool, shady spots during the day. At nightfall, they emerge from their hiding places. If you are lucky, you might see bighorn sheep, birds, lizards, and coyotes in the early morning or late afternoon.

The park's mountains were formed from ancient volcanoes. Its basins were formed from flowing water. Perhaps the most unexpected natural feature in the park is the presence of springs. A variety of plants grow near these rare sources of water. Wildlife from the surrounding desert are drawn to the springs. The largest spring in the park can be reached from a hiking trail.

The park can fool the casual gazer. It may seem lifeless and unwelcoming at first. But to the careful observer, it reveals an abundance of life and amazing scenery under the clear desert sky.

## What Happened to Sky?

I can't recall a time when my sister, Rosa, wasn't in love with birds. When Rosa was four, my parents bought a birdfeeder, filled it with birdseed, and suspended it from a tree outside the kitchen window. Rosa would watch her feathered friends for hours, studying their behavior and then reporting on her observations.

After much pleading from Rosa, my parents finally surrendered and bought her a parakeet. Rosa was six at the time and had become an expert on pet birds, and understood the responsibilities of pet ownership. At a local pet store, Rosa selected a light blue parakeet, which she named Sky, for obvious reasons.

Every afternoon, for about half an hour, Rosa would let Sky out of his cage to get his exercise. One day Sky was flitting around the den and settling on his favorite perches in the room, including on our dog Sam's head and the fireplace mantel. The family was accustomed to this activity, so no one was supervising Sky closely. The next thing we knew, though, Sky had disappeared and it was hours before we found him.

At first, we suspected Sam, but Sky and the dog were good friends. Rosa called Sky, who recognized his name and usually came when called, but he didn't respond. We searched every square inch of the den.

By bedtime, we'd looked everywhere throughout the house and outside and were exhausted, so we all went to bed. I was fairly certain that Rosa wasn't going to get any sleep that night with her beloved bird missing, and I suspected that Sky had vanished for good.

Rosa later told us that she lay in her bed in the dark, alternately worrying and dozing. In the dark, she heard Sam pad into her room and approach the bed. Rosa extended her hand to pat Sam's head, but she felt something unusual, so she sat up and switched on the bedside light. There, atop Sam's head, perched Sky.

We never did figure out where that rascal Sky had gone. Too bad Sam can't talk.

## For the Love of Books

Several years ago, Jon's parents and others in the community raised money to build a small library because residents had grown tired of driving twenty miles each way to the nearest public library. The library building was modest, but its shelves bulged with all sorts of books that had been donated by people in the community.

The library director was a retired librarian named Mrs. Hong, who accepted a small salary for her work. Volunteers kept the bookshelves in order and helped library visitors find and check out books. During summers and sometimes after school, Jon volunteered at the library. He loved reading books, and he took pleasure in just being near them.

One day, Mrs. Hong was telling Jon about her dream of adding a children's wing to the library. She had learned that such an addition would cost much more money than the library could afford. When Jon left the library that afternoon, his mind was churning with ideas.

He talked to several friends about ways to raise money. With Jon's help, they developed a plan that consisted of various fundraising events kids could put on during the year, including car washes, bake sales, errand services, and yard cleanups. Jon and his friends went from classroom to classroom at school, inviting kids to help.

Jon was amazed at the kids' enthusiasm and willingness to help. Parents wanted to help, too, by donating items for an auction and by conducting a huge garage sale. Building a children's wing at the library became a community cause.

Less than a year after Jon’s conversation with Mrs. Hong, the community had raised enough money to build the children’s wing. During the ceremony for the dedication of the new wing, Mrs. Hong called Jon to the front. She was holding a plaque, which she read to the crowd. “This children’s wing is dedicated to the young persons in the community whose hard work, under the leadership of Jon Mills, made a dream come true.”