

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Edition

DIBELS

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring Fifth Grade Student Materials

Edited By:
Roland H. Good III
Ruth A. Kaminski
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/>

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.