



Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 8th Edition

Australasian Version

Progress Monitoring

Oral Reading Fluency

Grade 3

AU-Year 3 | NZ-Year 4

Student Materials

To Be a Poet

One summer morning, I woke before dawn and set out for Paris. I was only fifteen years old, but I was going to walk all the way to Paris to become a poet. I shut the door behind me without a sound, so as not to wake Mother.

I stuck my hands in my pockets and walked along fast, stumbling a little on the loose round stones. The sun blazed out, and the summer wheat gave off a dizzying smell. I took my hands out of my pockets and swung my arms to walk faster.

Once, I passed a small inn with an open door, but I didn't go inside. I just drank some cold water from the old well outside. Ah, I thought, that's good!

I passed no one else on the dusty white road but a man in green overalls leading a tired horse, and a group of shy schoolgirls. The man greeted me by touching his cap as we passed. The schoolgirls all blushed and ran off laughing into a field.

In the blue evening I was still walking, under a sky of winking stars. I was so tired I might have been dreaming. Am I me? Am I really a poet? Will they love me in Paris more than they did at home?

Clara's Secret Life

Clara was just four years old when she started her secret life. That day she had just learned how to write her name and a few other words. With her tongue sticking out of the side of her mouth, she wrote carefully in crayon. "Clara loves ..."

She sat back and thought hard. What does Clara love? A cloud was floating by outside the window. She bent over her paper and wrote "a cloud." Clara loves a cloud.

She folded up the piece of paper and stuck it into a hole in a gum tree. As she walked by the tree the next morning, she saw a brown possum run out of the same hole. The possum was holding a slip of folded paper in its mouth! It jumped to a high branch and with a crackling of its claws vanished.

Clara stood there in the cold wind with her mouth open. Her secret was out! But what would that silly brown possum do with the fact that she, Clara, loved a cloud? Would that possum deliver her message to the white cloud that had passed the window yesterday? But how would the possum find the right cloud? And how would the cloud read her crazy crayon writing?

Clara began to skip as she thought about the possibilities. What if she and the cloud she loved became pen pals? She would be the only little girl in the world with a cloud for a friend.

Mexican Food

The first Mexican people ate plants most of the time. Corn, beans, chillies, tomatoes, squash, and avocados are all native to Mexico. So are mangoes, limes, prickly pears, and guavas. But, they also ate fish, if they lived on the coast. They also caught rabbits, deer, and turkeys. They ate grasshoppers and ants, too.

The Spanish began to colonise Mexico about five hundred years ago. They brought with them food from home. They brought chickens, cows, goats, and pigs for meat. They brought milk and cheese. They brought rice, wheat, and spices.

Today, Mexican cuisine is a mix. Native and Spanish foods are used together, and cooking methods from both cultures are used.

Some popular dishes are tacos, tamales, and moles. A taco is cooked meat served in a corn tortilla. The tortilla is Mexico's beloved flatbread. Tacos are often served with chopped raw onion, fresh coriander leaves, and hot sauce. A tamale is a bit of meat or vegetable wrapped in dough made from ground corn. It is steamed inside a folded corn husk.

A mole is a thick sauce. It is made from as many as twenty ingredients. It is usually served over turkey. There may be rice and beans on the side. Tortillas are served to scoop up every bite. To drink, there may be a drink made with water, fruit, and sugar. A favourite street snack is fresh fruit sprinkled with lime and chilli.

The Chest

Andrew and Tracy knelt in front of an old chest on the dusty floor of an attic. Andrew was holding a brass key in the palm of his hand. They were both looking at the chest as if it might get up and walk, or leap at them like a tiger. “Do it,” Tracy said. “Nothing to be scared about.”

Andrew licked his lips and shuffled forward on his knees. He slipped the key into the lock and turned it. The lock clicked. Tracy let out a gasp. “Shh,” Andrew said.

Now he slipped his fingertips under the lid and slowly, slowly lifted it. It creaked and squealed as the rounded lid came slowly up on its rusty hinges. “Wow, it’s heavy,” Andrew said as puffing dust filled the air. Tracy took hold of it with both hands to help him lift.

Together they raised it higher, straining their arms, until it locked into place. The chest yawned wide open. The musty smell of a hundred summers ago drifted from inside.

Tracy and Andrew stood up breathless with their heads close together to look. By a ray of sunlight that beamed in through the dusty panes of a little attic window, they saw what lay in the dark depths of the chest.

The Tight Rope

One afternoon, Clara tied a rope between two pine trees out in the garden. Then she put on her yellow silk ballet slippers and stepped out onto the rope.

The trees cast a thick, dark shade. The sun was blazing in the blue sky. Insects buzzed, and birds sang shrill, clear notes.

Step by step, Clara walked slowly out onto the middle of the rope, stretching out her arms on both sides for balance.

The rope shook as she walked. A fresh breeze cooled her forehead. Several times, she swayed and almost fell. But she took a deep breath and balanced slowly by raising and lowering her arms just a little.

At the other end of the rope, she stepped off onto a pine branch. It felt strange to Clara, after walking across the six metres of shaking rope, to now be standing on something as solid as a pine branch.

She sat down and looked at the rope stretching in shadows and sunlight to the other pine tree. A bird sang two sharp notes. Clara felt oddly rested and calm.

Then she heard the sound of sharp clapping from below. Looking down, she saw her friend Charles. “Again!” he shouted. Clara smiled at him and, raising her arms gracefully, stepped out again onto the rope.

A Friend in Osaka

Byron woke up to a woman's voice booming through his room in the hotel. The voice was polite and spoke in English with only a slight accent. "Excuse me," it said. "But we have just experienced an earthquake. Please remain in your room. There is no danger." He sat up in bed. He was alone in the room. He had not felt any tremors. Nothing was shaking or rattling.

He left the hotel at about noon and walked along a street lined with shops and restaurants. All the signs were in Japanese, and he couldn't read any Japanese. He stopped at a corner to wait for the light to change. As the light changed to green, a woman's voice said something in Japanese. He jumped before he realised that it was another recording, probably one telling him that he could cross the street now. He crossed the street with a crowd of hurried Japanese people. Nobody paid any attention to him.

Byron looked in the restaurant windows as he passed them, hoping to see a picture of a bowl of ramen. He didn't recognise any of the food. His stomach rumbled painfully.

He soon found himself in a kind of park. There were small temples on hills amid the cypress trees.

He heard the pounding of big drums. Peering through a rusted gate, he saw a group of men in black shirts and trousers, hammering on enormous drums with wooden mallets.

He entered the gate and stood watching as the drummers banged in rhythm, shouting out words he couldn't understand.

One of the drummers noticed Byron and waved. He shouted over his shoulder, in English: "We practise today! Free show."

Byron smiled.

The man lowered his drum sticks and asked, “You feel hungry? Time for our lunch.”

Byron nodded and said, “Yes, I’m very hungry. My name is Byron. I’m alone in Osaka. I don’t have any friends here.”

The man reached out his hand. Byron shook it. The man said, “My name is Sho. I am the head drummer. We will eat now, okay?”

Byron sat down on a low stone wall with Sho and the other drummers. He watched as they opened boxes full of various kinds of food. It all looked delicious. Sho handed Byron a pair of chopsticks.

“Greetings, Byron,” he said. “Welcome. You now have a friend in Osaka.”

Meet Your Spleen

Your spleen is a small organ inside your body. It lives under your ribs, to the left, above your stomach. Most spleens are about two centimetres thick, eight centimetres wide, and thirteen centimetres long. It is purple or brown. Yours is as unique as the rest of you!

Your spleen has three main jobs. Its main job for your body is to filter your blood. Its second job is to help keep you healthy by fighting bacteria. It fights bacteria that cause serious illnesses. Last, it keeps an extra store of red blood cells. These come in handy if you ever need them.

Some people's spleens get injured or sick. If that happens, their spleens must be removed. Luckily, a person can survive without a spleen. A small number of people have a tiny extra spleen. Lucky them!

The word "spleen" has an interesting history. The Ancient Greeks used the word spleen in the same way we use the word heart. If they said someone was good-spleened they meant that person was kind. In England, they used to use the word in just the opposite way! If they said someone was full of spleen, they meant that person was grumpy and mean. In France, if they say someone is splenetic they mean that person is gloomy and sad.

So, you see, your spleen is an important and meaningful organ!

The Best Birthday Ever

I woke up today so happy because it is my birthday. My mum made me waffles and eggs for breakfast. She used strawberries and blueberries to make a happy face on my waffle. It tasted so good. I couldn't wait for my birthday party. My mum invited all my friends and family to come to my party later today.

I was the first one at my party. Then my friends and family came. We all skated and played games. Then everyone sang happy birthday to me. We ate cake and ice cream and then my mum and dad said that I could open my presents.

When I looked at the table I saw so many gifts. Some were small and some were gigantic. There were so many that they couldn't fit them all on the table. Some of the presents were on the floor under the table. I couldn't wait to open them all.

My family and friends gave me money, gift cards, toys and clothes. I thanked everybody for all the nice gifts.

We left the party room to go back and skate. My mum and dad took all my presents to the car.

When my party was over I thanked everyone for coming and gave my mum and dad a huge hug. I thanked them for giving me a wonderful party.

The Man Who Lived in a Hollow Tree

In the old days people did some peculiar things. One man I heard about lived all his life in a hollow tree. He slept at night standing up. During the day, he'd speak to people through a hole in the tree. You could only see his mouth as he spoke, because the hole was that small.

Nobody knew how this man ever got into the hollow tree. Some said he must have dug his way underneath it and climbed up between the roots. Others claimed the tree had grown up around him as he stood there lost in thought. He himself refused to speak of it.

"What does it matter how?" he'd say. "That's how life is. Nobody knows the how of anything."

People brought him food, which they spooned through the hole into his mouth. He'd thank the people in a gracious way for whatever they gave him. He never complained.

When asked if he was lonely in the hollow tree, he'd reply that he wasn't. After all, he could hear the birds shrilling out clearly at dawn and dusk. And sometimes when people weren't nearby, a big black crow with glossy wings or a little brown chirring possum would come to sit there and keep him company.

Turkey Vultures

Every year, in the early spring, turkey vultures start to arrive in the New England area. The birds winter in the south. But as the weather warms they slowly work their way north. They will spend the summer here, feeding, mating, and raising their young.

But they are not easy to spot. They fly pretty high. Just like eagles, they ride the wind on large, upturned wings. The turkey vulture got its name because it resembles a wild turkey.

Their keen sense of smell allows them to sniff out food as far as a kilometre away. Most birds cannot smell at all.

Though these vultures don't vocalise very well, they can utter hisses and grunts. They use these sounds to communicate with each other. They often hiss when fighting over food. The young grunt when they are hungry. The adults hiss when they feel threatened. And the birds grunt at each other during courtship.

A group of vultures that are feeding is called a "wake." A group resting in the trees is called a "committee." And when in flight, the birds are referred to as a "kettle."

Like most vultures, they have featherless heads. And they have two sets of eyelashes that protect their eyes while they are feeding. Because they have stomachs equipped to kill deadly germs, they can eat parts of dead animals.

Sometimes a vulture will eat so much that it is unable to fly. If an over-stuffed bird suddenly finds itself in danger, it will vomit to reduce its weight. Then it can fly to safety.

It is a crime to harm or kill a turkey vulture.

Let's Play

There is so much to do when you play outside. There are a lot of games you can play outside that you can't play inside. You can play soccer, basketball or just run. You can ride your bike, climb trees, roller skate or rope skip. Some kids only like to play outside, and they wish they could play outside all day. They don't like when it gets dark because then it's time to go inside. If it is raining, they can't play outside.

Playing inside can be fun too. You can't run or yell inside, but you can play video games, board games or watch movies. You can listen to music, play air hockey or pool. There are other things to do like drawing, writing, reading, or playing games on your phone. Some kids only like to play inside, and they don't like to go outside at all. They love rainy days.

First Snow

Miguel's parents had left in the morning, waving as they drove off. They'd be gone for a week at least. His grandmother was there to look after him while they were gone.

Over that afternoon, the air turned cold and grey. Then the first soft snowflakes fell.

Miguel went outside and gathered together all the sheep. He herded them into the barn, all forty of them. The sheep crowded together against the far wall and one of the lambs let out a thin baa.

"Good night, sheep. Good night, little lambs," he said grandly, with a formal bow. "Sleep well."

Then he went out into the blowing snow and trudged up the path to the house, snow whirling around him.

It was good to get inside. The stove was humming as it gave off heat. Miguel knocked the crusted snow off his boots on the stone floor of the entryway. Miguel remembered when his father had set down the stone, a big slab of slate. Miguel had watched him lift it out of the truck and put it in place, his big muscles straining.

Now he sat down on the pine bench and struggled to untie the frozen, snow-caked laces of his boots. Finally, he managed to loosen them just enough to yank the boots off his numb feet. He left the boots standing there side by side in a puddle of snowmelt.

The Alley Cat

The sun was shining in the alley. A black and white cat slipped between the boards of the fence behind the house where he lived with his people. The sun felt good on his fur. He flopped down and rolled onto his back.

It was nice lying in the dust, but it wasn't quite what he wanted to do. So, he rolled back to his feet and walked on. The garden next door was shaded by a gum tree, and it was a good place to watch possums.

The cat went under the fence. But it had rained during the night, and the ground under the tree was still wet, and the cat didn't like the way it felt under his paws. He turned back, shaking the sticky dirt off each paw as he went. Then he sat on the warm footpath. He stretched out each leg and groomed his toes. When they were clean, he walked on.

He came to a planter growing weeds and flowers next to a brick house. The cat jumped from the planter to a wide, stone ledge under a window on the back of the brick house. There was a table on the other side of the window, and on the table, there was a glass bowl filled with water. It had colourful gravel in the bottom, green water plants, and a golden fish swimming around. The cat sat happily on the warm window ledge and watched the fish.

A little boy came walking down the alley with his dad.

"Maybe the cat and goldfish are friends," he said.

"Maybe so," said his dad.

The Tram

Homework is so boring sometimes. Like last night, reading history - I could feel my eyelids sliding shut against my will, almost like there were magnets in them. Miss Dunn, our teacher, says doing something different is the best way to fight sleepiness. So I shut my book and looked at my wall, at a drawing my uncle made of a tram chugging up a hill in North Melbourne.

My uncle's drawings don't look like real life. He draws in black pen, with an old man's shaky hand. Because of this, all his lines are wavy. But somehow, this effect makes the tram look like it's moving. As I gazed at it, I could almost see the tram clicking over the tracks in the road. It shuddered from side to side as it moved over bumps in the road. A familiar-looking woman stood on the outside step, smiling and waving at someone. I thought she was waving at me. I raised my hand and waved back. She stuck out her tongue.

Rude, I thought. I stuck out my tongue too. She kicked out her leg. The bottom of her pants swirled and flapped around her ankle. This can't be happening, I told myself. Pictures don't come to life. I squeezed my eyes shut tight and took a deep breath. When I opened them, the woman had jumped off the tram and was standing in the middle of the tracks with a sign in her hands. The sign said, "Wake up and do your homework!"

And then I realised where I'd seen her before. She was my mum!

The Cat's Meow

Kittens meow to their mothers to get attention and care, but as they grow, they learn the language of adult cats. Adult cats speak to one another with scent messages, body language, and facial expressions. But humans aren't very good at understanding tail talk and ear signals, and they cannot read scent messages, so cats must use their baby talk to communicate with people.

Cats meow to say, "Hello! I'm glad to see you!" They meow when they want their dinner. Cats meow when they want to go out. Cats meow when they want to come in. They meow when they want you to play with them and pat them. They meow when they've decided it's time for you to get out of bed in the morning. They meow when you're not sticking to the schedule and when you're not doing what you're supposed to do. They meow when they're annoyed.

Some cats meow more than others. Cats who were well-socialised with people when they were kittens might be extra talkative. Older cats may meow more than young ones. Some breeds are known for being more vocal. A cat who is suddenly meowing more than usual might be sick, and should be taken to the vet.

Shadow Puppet Theatre

An interesting way to tell stories is with shadows. It is not difficult to construct a shadow theatre.

To begin you will need a light source and a dark enough space. If you're staging your show in the daytime you'll need to create a dark area. You can use any room where you can block outside light from coming in.

For a light source, a torch is best. You can move it around more easily. If you need to use a lamp, always check with an adult first.

You should first practise making simple shadows on the wall. Try creating different shapes with just your hands.

Move your fingers to make a mouth or ears. Or curl one finger and let a dot of light pass through to make an eye. See how many creatures you can make using just your hands.

Or you can cut out shapes from cardboard to make puppets. The puppets might be people or animals, or cars, or spaceships. Make your own scenery, such as tree shapes, or a house, or maybe a castle.

It's a good idea to think about the story you want to tell. Then you'll know what shapes and puppets you'll need.

You can tape handles to the puppets with pipe cleaners or chopsticks or even popsticks. Use the handles to make the puppets walk or dance. The closer you move your puppets to the light the bigger their shadows will grow.

Do a rehearsal or two before you invite your audience in to see the show. The art of shadow theatre is an ancient and exciting one.

At the Pond

On Tuesday our class walked to the duck pond like usual. We went in a line; Vanessa was my partner. We brought our snacks, and I brought the crusts of my sandwich from lunch.

When we got there, I threw my crusts in the water, and a bunch of shelducks raced to eat them. Each tried to reach its neck ahead of the others, and pecked at the bread. They made little greedy quacks that sounded like an argument.

Some of my friends were feeding the ducks, too. When we had nothing left to give them, we played chasey.

Then it was snack time. We ate our snack in two large pine trees: the boys' tree and the girls' tree. I climbed to my usual spot with my snack in my pocket. My spot is on the second widest branch up from the ground, out where it splits into two smaller branches. Jane perches on one of the smaller branches to my left, and Sammy sits on the other. Maddie and Vanessa sit against the trunk, on branches above mine. Poppy, Lola, and Katie have spots along a branch that grows out to the right.

I was happily eating apple wedges, raisins, and almonds, when I felt something drop on my head. I looked up and saw a cockatoo. He chattered at me like it was my fault he dropped his nut. We all laughed at how angry he was. Before I climbed down, I left an almond behind on my branch for him.

The Baker's Daughter

The baker had a small family with a wife and one daughter. The daughter's name was Sarah, but her father always called her Pie. Sometimes he called her Pumpkin Pie. Sometimes he called her Honey Pie or Sugar Pie. Once he even called her Pudding Pie. But mostly he just called her Pie.

In his shop, he claimed she was the best pie he had made. He told the people shopping for baked goods that she was the one pie that was not for sale.

One day, Sarah asked her mother whether her father knew her name was Sarah. Her mother said of course. Sarah asked, "Then why does he always call me Pie?"

Her mother smiled a great, big smile. She explained it was because Sarah was so sweet. Sarah nodded and sat silently. After a little while her mother asked if she wanted her father to stop calling her Pie.

Sarah thought about it for a few moments. Then she said, "No, that's okay." She didn't think he would know what else to call her.

Recycling

Recycling is taking something old and making it into something new. We are helping our planet when we do this. There is less rubbish to take to the tip. It saves energy and helps to keep the air clean.

There are three ways to turn something old into something new. If you want you can take your things to drop-off centres and they will handle the rest. You can also take them to buy-back centres. They will pay you money when you drop them off. You can put your recycle bin outside on the kerb and it will be picked up. This is for people who do not want to drive to the centres.

Everything is taken to a large collection centre. It gets put on a large moving belt and sorted out. It gets cleaned. Then it gets put into two piles. It goes into a heavy pile if it is heavy and a light pile if it is light. The belt separates the paper, plastic, cans and bottles. Cardboard is taken out by a machine or sometimes by hand. Next, a large magnet pulls everything that is metal on the belt and puts it in a different place. Glass is sorted by colour. This process is done over and over again.

A New Room for Ruby and Ron

Ruby and Ron had always shared a room. They were twins, but Ruby was older by six minutes. When they were little, they kept their beds pushed together so they wouldn't be alone at night. As they grew, they moved the beds apart to make more room for playing.

When they were nine, Ruby declared she needed her own room! Ron was too messy. Ron wanted his own room, too. He said Ruby's reading light kept him awake at night.

Their house had a kitchen, dining room, family room, bathroom, two bedrooms, and no extra space anywhere. What could they do?

Ron said he could take over the family room. But Dad said they needed the family room for a place to visit with their friends. Ruby said she could move into their parents' room. Mum said she and Dad needed their own bedroom, too. Then Ron said it was too bad they couldn't build a new room.

That gave Mum an idea. She called Uncle Chris, who was a builder. Uncle Chris came and measured the twins' room: up, down, front, back, and side to side. Ruby and Ron didn't understand. How could Uncle Chris build a new room without adding onto their house?

"You'll see!" said Uncle Chris.

One day, Uncle Chris came with a van full of wood, and the twins were sent to spend a weekend with their grandparents. When they returned, they saw that Uncle Chris had divided their old room in two! Now there was an upper level and a lower level

joined by a ladder. Ron could make a mess below, and Ruby could read at night above.