



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

Australasian Version

Benchmark

Grade 4

Student Materials

## The Raft

The girl crouched barefoot on the moving raft. The boy stood silent and pushed it along in the slow current with a long bamboo pole.

Mountains rose on all sides. The mountains were green close by, blue far off.

Monkeys howled in the trees. Mist rose in soft waves from the river. The boy wiped drops of rain from his face with a sleeve of his white linen shirt. His hair was soaked, and so was the shirt.

He leaned on the bamboo pole with all of his strength. Whenever he pushed, he let out a grunt. And each time he pushed, the boat surged forward on the river. There was no other sound but the howling of monkeys, and rain pattering quietly on the dark river.

The girl meantime crouched in silence, peering off into the jungle. She was shivering. She pulled the colourful shawl tighter over her bony shoulders. Her dark earlobes were beaded with rainwater.

The boy did not know where he was pushing this raft to on the dark, misted river in a deep jungle under the cold and incessant rain.

The girl had an idea of where they might end up together, if only the boy was strong and patient enough to keep on pushing the raft, but she didn't speak even a word about it.

## Honesty

My mum always tells me that honesty is the best policy. I wasn't quite sure what she meant by that until I found some money the other day.

I was walking home from school when I saw a bag in the street. I could tell that something was in it, but I wasn't sure what. I walked over to the bag, picked it up, and then walked back to the footpath. It was heavy and lumpy. I opened it up and in it was stacks of money.

I had never seen so much money before! I was baffled because I didn't know where it came from. I wanted to go to the shops and spend it. I thought about the things I could buy with all this money.

I stuffed it in my school bag and ran home. I wasn't sure if I should tell my mum or hide it in my room and spend a little at a time so no one would notice. I thought about what my mum always says about being honest. What if someone stole this money and the cops are looking for it?

So, I went into the family room and told my mum about my recent discovery. Then I showed her the bag of money. We drove to the police station and turned it in. They said that the money was stolen and that I did the right thing.

Three days later the police contacted my mum and told her to bring me to the police station to collect the reward money. It was a lot less money than had been in the bag, but I felt good about what I'd done and I was happy to be able to spend it without feeling guilty.

## Sunset at the Beach

The sun was setting now. The whole beach was empty except for a few seagulls. It was low tide and waves were rolling in slowly and breaking in long curves of surf.

Tommy and Linda and their parents had retired to their tent after a wonderful afternoon of swimming and eating sandwiches and drinking lemonade on the beach. It had been hot that day, and they were all tired.

They would go out on the beach again tomorrow. Their father had already promised to help the two children build a sandcastle the next day. But that was tomorrow. Right now, they sat by their campfire and watched as the sun sank into the sea.

As waves rushed up the beach they made a hissing sound on the hard, cold, wet sand. Then the waves hissed again as they withdrew, leaving trails of small bubbles behind. One after another the bubbles popped.

It got colder as the sun sank, colouring the sea red. Some of the gulls were crying cree cree cree! Tommy shivered, grateful for the fire's heat. Linda shivered, too, but more because the seagulls sounded so sad in the quickly darkening evening. She was glad for the fire's light.

Two small gulls with black heads and speckled bodies walked up and down nervously at the tide line where the waves were foaming and hissing. Another gull stood still and silent, just looking out at the thin evening clouds and the darkening sea. It reminded Linda of herself.