Beyond the Dam

Find the main idea in a read-aloud about beaver ponds

3.LF.29 "Determine the main idea of a text read aloud or information presented in an audible format."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Listen as your teacher reads the passage aloud. Then underline one sentence in each paragraph that best tells its main idea, and number those sentences 1, 2, and 3.

When Beavers Make a Pond

1. At a quiet stream, a beaver drags branches into the water. It packs mud and stones around them. Soon, the pile slows the moving water. This pile is called a dam. Beavers keep adding to it when water pushes through. Behind the dam, the stream spreads out and becomes a pond. One busy animal can change the shape of a whole stream.

2. The new pond gives many animals places to live. Frogs lay eggs in its still water. Ducks may swim among the plants along its edges. Insects live there, too, and fish can eat some of them. The pond also holds water during dry days. The dam is not just a pile of sticks. It helps make a wet home for other living things.

3. A beaver pond can cause trouble when it reaches a road or a walking path. Water may cover the path, making it hard to use. People sometimes place a pipe through a dam so some water can flow out. The pond stays, but its level may drop. By watching where the water goes, people can protect paths while leaving room for pond animals.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph? Tell it in your own words.

2. What main idea do the frog, duck, and insect examples support?

3. What is the main idea of the third paragraph, including what people can do?

4. What main idea ties all three paragraphs together?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A visitor wants to call this read-aloud "How Beavers Stack Branches." Write a better title and two sentences explaining why it fits more of the passage. Include one idea about animals and one about people.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Dam

GRADE 3 · 3.LF.29

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Listen as your teacher reads the passage aloud. Then underline one sentence in each paragraph that best tells its main idea, and number those sentences 1, 2, and 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the main idea of the first paragraph? Tell it in your own words.	**A beaver builds a dam that changes a stream into a pond.**
2	What main idea do the frog, duck, and insect examples support?	**A beaver pond provides a home for many living things.**
3	What is the main idea of the third paragraph, including what people can do?	**Beaver ponds can flood paths, but people can control the water while keeping the pond.**
4	What main idea ties all three paragraphs together?	**Beaver dams change streams into ponds that help wildlife but can also cause problems for people.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Dam Changes More Than Water
This title fits because a beaver's dam creates a pond where frogs and ducks can live. It also fits because people may use a pipe to keep water off a path while leaving the pond.

Accept main ideas stated in the student's own words. For the marking job, accept sentences that express each paragraph's central point rather than one small detail.