From Notes to Findings

Trace how research notes become a supported explanation.

5.LF.37 "Write about research findings independently over short and/or extended periods of time."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the writer's research question, number one finding from each day 1 and 2, and circle the two sentences in the last paragraph that bring the findings together.

What a Beaver Dam Changes

1. I began my research with a question: How do beaver dams change a stream? In a National Park Service article, I learned that beavers build dams from branches, mud, and other materials. A dam slows moving water, creating a pond behind it. My first notes said, "Beavers make ponds." That was true, but it did not explain why the change mattered.

2. The next day, I read a U.S. Geological Survey article about beaver wetlands. It explained that water held near a dam can soak into the ground and help keep nearby areas wet. I also learned that ponds and wetlands provide places for many plants and animals to live. I added these findings to my notes, then checked which facts answered my question.

3. After rereading both sources, I wrote a more careful finding. Beaver dams can turn a fast-moving part of a stream into a pond and nearby wetland. This change can hold water and create habitat for other living things. I used "can" because not every dam has the same effect in every place. Writing over two days helped me replace a simple note with a supported explanation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What question guides the writer's research, and which finding from the first day begins to answer it?

2. How does a finding from the second day make "Beavers make ponds" a more complete explanation?

3. Why does the writer use "can" in the final finding instead of saying every dam has the same effect?

4. How did writing over two days change the writer's explanation? Compare the first note with the final finding.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Research notes: Earthworms eat dead leaves and other decaying material; their tunnels let air and water move through soil; their waste, called castings, adds nutrients to soil. Write one paragraph of four or five sentences that states a question about earthworms and soil, explains at least two findings in your own words, and ends with a question you could research later.

ANSWER KEY

From Notes to Findings

GRADE 5 · 5.LF.37

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the writer's research question, number one finding from each day 1 and 2, and circle the two sentences in the last paragraph that bring the findings together. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What question guides the writer's research, and which finding from the first day begins to answer it?	**The writer asks how beaver dams change a stream. The first finding is that a dam slows moving water and creates a pond.**
2	How does a finding from the second day make "Beavers make ponds" a more complete explanation?	**The second-day findings explain that water near a dam can soak into the ground and that ponds and wetlands provide habitat.**
3	Why does the writer use "can" in the final finding instead of saying every dam has the same effect?	**The writer uses "can" because the effects of beaver dams are not the same in every place.**
4	How did writing over two days change the writer's explanation? Compare the first note with the final finding.	**The first note only said that beavers make ponds. After reading another source, the writer explained that dams can also hold water and create habitat.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

How do earthworms affect soil? Earthworms eat decaying leaves, helping break down material on the ground. Their tunnels give air and water paths through the soil, and their castings add nutrients. Would a garden with more earthworms absorb water faster than one with fewer?

Accept accurate paraphrases supported by the passage. For the paragraph, look for four or five sentences, at least two accurate findings explained in the student's own words, and a final question for later research.