Changing Alabama Rivers

How people have harmed and helped rivers over time

SS24.3.6 "Describe how Alabama's environment has been positively and negatively affected by human activity over time."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline each action people took, then write +, -, or both beside it to show whether it helped or harmed Alabama's environment.

A River Can Change

1. Long ago, many people in Alabama cleared trees beside streams to make room for farms. Rain then washed loose soil into the water. Muddy water made it harder for fish to live there. Years later, some farmers planted trees beside streams again. Tree roots held soil in place, so less mud reached the water. The same place could change in harmful and helpful ways.

2. In the 1900s, people built dams on Alabama rivers to make electricity. This power did not need fuel to be burned, so it caused less air pollution than power from burning fuel. Yet dams changed river habitats. Some fish could not swim past a dam to reach places where they laid eggs. One action helped the air but harmed some river animals.

3. Over time, trash from towns has also entered Alabama's rivers. Plastic can trap birds or fish, and animals may eat it by mistake. Today, people in some towns pick up trash along riverbanks. They also put trash in bins so it stays out of the water. These actions make river habitats safer for animals. What people do next will shape these places, too.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did clearing trees beside streams harm the water and fish?

2. How did planting trees later help Alabama's streams?

3. How did dams help Alabama's environment and harm some river animals?

4. How can trash harm river animals, and what have people done to help?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new road is built beside an Alabama stream. In two sentences, describe one way the road could harm the stream and a new way people could help it. Explain each effect, and use actions not named in the reading.

ANSWER KEY

Changing Alabama Rivers

GRADE 3 · SS24.3.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline each action people took, then write +, -, or both beside it to show whether it helped or harmed Alabama's environment. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did clearing trees beside streams harm the water and fish?	**Rain washed loose soil into the streams, making the water muddy and harder for fish to live in.**
2	How did planting trees later help Alabama's streams?	**Tree roots held soil in place, so less mud reached the water.**
3	How did dams help Alabama's environment and harm some river animals?	**Dams made electricity with less air pollution than burning fuel for power, but they kept some fish from reaching places where they laid eggs.**
4	How can trash harm river animals, and what have people done to help?	**Plastic can trap animals or be eaten by mistake. People have picked up trash along riverbanks and put it in bins.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rain could wash oil from cars off the road and into the stream, where it could hurt fish. People could make a grassy ditch beside the road to catch the dirty water before it reaches the stream.

For the marking job, accept both + and - beside dams. For Your Turn, accept other plausible road effects and helpful actions if the student explains how each affects the stream.