Falcon Word Clues

Use word relationships to trace a conservation story.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.5b "Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline pairs of words or phrases that have the same or opposite meanings, then write S or O above each pair to show how the relationship helps you understand the words.

The Return of Peregrines

1 During the mid-twentieth century, peregrine falcons nearly disappeared from much of the eastern United States. The pesticide DDT entered food chains and caused many birds to produce thin, fragile eggshells. Eggs that should have been sturdy cracked before chicks hatched. As nests failed, the falcons' numbers declined, or fell steadily. By the 1960s, seeing a peregrine had become rare rather than ordinary in many cities and along coastal cliffs, where people once watched them nest each spring.

2 Scientists and volunteers began a careful recovery effort. They monitored, or watched closely, nesting sites, then protected the birds from disturbance. Some teams raised chicks in captivity and later released them, while others moved young falcons to safe ledges. These actions did not make the birds tame. Peregrines remained wary, or cautious, around people. Yet their habitat could become safer when climbers avoided nesting areas and city managers kept tall structures available for nesting during the breeding season.

3 Today, peregrines have returned to many places where they were once scarce. Their populations increased, the opposite of the earlier decline, after DDT was banned in the United States in 1972 and protection programs expanded. A return does not mean every population is secure. Biologists still inspect, or examine, nests and record threats such as new chemicals, collisions, and loss of nesting space. The falcon's recovery shows how repeated word choices can reveal change: numbers can fall, rise, remain rare, or become more common.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, what relationship do fragile and sturdy have? What does fragile mean in this passage?

2. How do the words watched closely help you understand monitored in paragraph 2?

3. Why does the author pair wary with cautious in paragraph 2? What does wary mean?

4. How does increased relate to earlier decline in paragraph 3? What does this relationship show about peregrine populations?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about a real animal, place, or invention. Use one same-meaning word pair and one opposite-meaning word pair, and underline both pairs.

ANSWER KEY

Falcon Word Clues

GRADE 8 · L.8.5b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline pairs of words or phrases that have the same or opposite meanings, then write S or O above each pair to show how the relationship helps you understand the words. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, what relationship do fragile and sturdy have? What does fragile mean in this passage?	**They are opposites. Fragile means easily broken or not strong.**
2	How do the words watched closely help you understand monitored in paragraph 2?	**They give a similar meaning. Monitored means watched or observed carefully.**
3	Why does the author pair wary with cautious in paragraph 2? What does wary mean?	**The words have similar meanings. Wary means careful and alert around possible danger.**
4	How does increased relate to earlier decline in paragraph 3? What does this relationship show about peregrine populations?	**They show opposite changes. The population rose after it had fallen.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At dawn, the marsh was silent, or quiet, except for a heron's call. By noon, wind changed the water from calm to rough.

Accept any correctly identified same-meaning or opposite-meaning pairs in the passage, including explicit explanation phrases. For the open task, accept accurate relationships that are clear from the student's two sentences.