Falcons Return Home

Finding main ideas in an informational text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2 "Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the words or sentence that best show the passage's main idea. Then number three details that support that idea, using 1, 2, and 3.

The Return of Peregrine Falcons

1. High above city streets, peregrine falcons sometimes nest on tall buildings. A building ledge can resemble the cliff ledges where these birds naturally nest. From their high perches, falcons watch for pigeons and other birds. Peregrines are powerful fliers. During a hunting dive, called a stoop, they can reach speeds of more than 200 miles per hour.

2. During the mid-1900s, many peregrine falcons disappeared from parts of North America. A pesticide called DDT built up in the bodies of birds that peregrines ate. The chemical caused female falcons to lay thin eggshells. Many eggs broke before chicks could hatch. In 1972, the United States banned DDT for most uses, which helped falcon populations begin to recover.

3. Scientists and wildlife groups also helped the birds return. They raised young falcons in protected places and released them where peregrines had vanished. People placed nesting boxes on some tall buildings and bridges. Today, peregrine falcons live in many cities and natural areas. Their recovery shows how changing harmful practices and protecting habitats can help an endangered species grow in number.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the main idea of the whole passage?

2. Which two details explain why peregrine falcon numbers dropped during the mid-1900s?

3. How does the third paragraph support the passage's main idea?

4. Write a two-sentence summary of the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 45-55 word museum label about peregrine falcons. State the main idea and explain how at least three details from the passage support it.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 4 · RI.4.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the words or sentence that best show the passage's main idea. Then number three details that support that idea, using 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 whole passage?	**Peregrine falcons recovered in many places after DDT was banned and people took steps to protect and help the birds.**
2	Which two details explain why peregrine falcon numbers dropped during the mid-1900s?	**DDT built up in birds that peregrines ate, and it caused female falcons to lay thin eggshells that often broke.**
3	How does the third paragraph support the passage's main idea?	**It gives examples of actions that helped peregrines recover, including releasing young falcons and placing nesting boxes on tall structures.**
4	Write a two-sentence summary of the passage.	**Peregrine falcons declined because DDT made their eggshells thin. After DDT was banned and people released young birds and added nest boxes, populations recovered.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Peregrine falcons returned to many North American places after people reduced a serious danger and aided the birds. DDT had made eggshells too thin, so eggs often broke. The DDT ban, releases of young falcons, and nest boxes gave the population a chance to increase.

Accept equivalent main ideas that explain peregrine falcon recovery through the DDT ban and conservation actions. Summaries and museum labels should include the decline caused by DDT and key details about how the birds recovered.