Return to the Sky

Trace how a recovery idea develops through a historical account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.3 "Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that introduces the falcons' recovery. Circle two details that illustrate the recovery, then number two later details that elaborate on it.

City Falcons Return

1 In 1930, a pair of peregrine falcons nested on a cliff beside the Mississippi River near St. Paul, Minnesota. The birds were fast hunters, diving through the air to catch other birds. Decades later, peregrines nearly disappeared from much of the United States. A pesticide called DDT built up in their bodies and caused many eggshells to become too thin. By the 1970s, people in St. Paul had not seen a nesting pair for years. The missing falcons showed that a change in the environment could affect an entire species.

2 Then scientists, government agencies, and volunteers worked to help peregrines recover. DDT was banned for most uses in the United States in 1972, and wildlife experts raised young falcons in captivity. Beginning in the early 1980s, researchers released young peregrines from tall buildings in several Midwestern cities. The high buildings gave the birds safe places to practice flying, much like cliffs. As the falcons grew, they learned to hunt pigeons and other city birds. These releases illustrated how people could replace lost nesting sites with new ones.

3 Today, volunteers watch nests on bridges and tall buildings each spring. If a chick falls before it can fly, trained workers may return it to a nest box or place it on a nearby ledge. They also record the numbers on leg bands, which helps scientists learn where birds travel. These careful observations add to the recovery story. Peregrines now nest in many cities, including Minneapolis and St. Paul, where cliffs once seemed like their only choice. Their return shows how a ban, a release program, and years of monitoring can build on one another.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What problem does the first paragraph establish, and how does that problem set up the recovery idea in paragraph 2?

2. Which example in paragraph 2 illustrates one way people helped peregrines recover? Explain what the example shows.

3. How do the details about helping fallen chicks and recording leg bands elaborate on the recovery idea?

4. Why does the author present the falcons' decline first, then the recovery actions, and finally the birds' return to cities?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences explaining how the text develops the idea of peregrine recovery. Include the early problem, one recovery action, one later detail about monitoring, and how the details connect.

ANSWER KEY

Return to the Sky

GRADE 6 · RI.6.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that introduces the falcons' recovery. Circle two details that illustrate the recovery, then number two later details that elaborate on it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem does the first paragraph establish, and how does that problem set up the recovery idea in paragraph 2?	**Peregrines nearly disappeared because DDT caused thin eggshells. This loss creates the need for the recovery work described in paragraph 2.**
2	Which example in paragraph 2 illustrates one way people helped peregrines recover? Explain what the example shows.	**Researchers released young peregrines from tall buildings. This shows that tall buildings could serve as safe cliff-like places for the birds to practice flying and nest.**
3	How do the details about helping fallen chicks and recording leg bands elaborate on the recovery idea?	**They show that recovery continued through careful monitoring, help for young birds, and research about where peregrines travel.**
4	Why does the author present the falcons' decline first, then the recovery actions, and finally the birds' return to cities?	**This order shows the problem, the actions people took, and the result, helping readers understand how the recovery developed over time.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The text introduces peregrine recovery by describing how DDT caused thin eggshells and left St. Paul without a nesting pair. It illustrates a solution by showing researchers releasing young falcons from tall buildings that worked like cliffs. The last paragraph elaborates on the idea with examples of volunteers helping chicks and recording leg bands. Together, these details show that recovery depended on protection, reintroduction, and continued observation.

Accept responses that accurately trace the idea from decline to recovery action to ongoing monitoring. Students should explain how at least three details work together, not simply list facts.