Forest Food Web

Trace how each paragraph builds an informational idea.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.5 "Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In the margin, label each paragraph Introduce, Explain, or Broaden. Your labels should show how the text builds its idea about kelp forests.

Otters and Kelp Forests

1. Along the rocky Pacific coast, kelp forests rise from the seafloor like underwater towers. Their long, brown blades need sunlight, so they grow best in shallow water. Many animals use the forests for food and shelter. Sea otters are especially important there because they eat sea urchins. This relationship may seem small at first, but it helps explain why some kelp forests stay thick and healthy while others disappear over time, after changes in the food web.

2. Sea urchins feed on kelp, and a large group can strip blades from the rocks. Otters limit that damage by hunting urchins. When otter numbers fall in an area, urchin numbers can increase. In some places, this has created an "urchin barren," a rocky seafloor with few living kelp plants. The loss affects animals that hide among kelp and people who rely on healthy coastal waters for fishing, recreation, and protection from waves near shore.

3. Scientists and local communities use this idea when they plan coastal protection. Counting otters alone is not enough. They also watch urchin populations and measure how much kelp covers the seafloor. These observations help people see whether the whole food web is changing. They can use the results to decide where protection or restoration may be most useful. By studying several parts of the food web, people can notice changes before a kelp forest is badly damaged.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does paragraph 1 fit into the structure of the whole text?

2. Why does paragraph 2 come after paragraph 1? Explain how it develops the idea introduced earlier.

3. How does the sentence "Counting otters alone is not enough" help paragraph 3 do its job?

4. How are the jobs of paragraphs 2 and 3 different?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a habitat other than a kelp forest. Write three two-sentence informational paragraphs about one relationship in that habitat. Label the paragraphs Introduce, Explain, and Broaden, then write one sentence explaining how your paragraph order develops the main idea.

ANSWER KEY

Forest Food Web

GRADE 6 · RI.6.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

In the margin, label each paragraph Introduce, Explain, or Broaden. Your labels should show how the text builds its idea about kelp forests. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does paragraph 1 fit into the structure of the whole text?	**It introduces kelp forests, sea otters, and sea urchins, then presents the main idea that their relationship affects the health of the forest.**
2	Why does paragraph 2 come after paragraph 1? Explain how it develops the idea introduced earlier.	**Paragraph 2 explains the cause-and-effect chain: otters eat urchins, urchins eat kelp, and more urchins can lead to loss of kelp.**
3	How does the sentence "Counting otters alone is not enough" help paragraph 3 do its job?	**It shifts the focus from otters alone to the whole food web and introduces the need to observe urchins and kelp too.**
4	How are the jobs of paragraphs 2 and 3 different?	**Paragraph 2 explains what can happen in the ecosystem, while paragraph 3 broadens the topic to how scientists and communities study and protect the ecosystem.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Introduce: Beavers change streams by building dams from branches, mud, and stones. Their dams slow moving water, creating ponds where frogs, fish, and water birds can live. Explain: When a dam holds water, nearby soil stays wetter. Plants grow along the pond's edge, and their roots help keep soil from washing away. Broaden: People who study wetlands measure water levels, plant growth, and animal activity. Their observations show how one animal's building can shape an entire habitat over time. This structure introduces the change, explains its effects, and broadens the idea by showing how people study the habitat.

Accept equivalent descriptions of each paragraph's structural role when they are supported by details from the passage. For the open task, accept any accurate habitat relationship with a clear introduction, explanation, and broader final focus.