

Beaver Dam Decisions

Use details from an informational text to support your analysis.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.9 "Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each main claim in the passage, then number three details that support or limit a claim. These marks will help you choose strong evidence for your answers.

When Beavers Change a Stream

- ① Beavers are often called ecosystem engineers because their dams change how water moves through a landscape. Using branches, mud, and stones, a beaver can block part of a stream and create a pond. The pond slows water that once rushed downstream. This change can spread water into nearby soil, which may keep the ground wetter during dry periods. A dam does not simply make a home for beavers, it can reshape an entire small stream system.
- ② Scientists have found that beaver ponds can provide habitats for many living things. Fish may rest in deeper, slower water, while frogs and insects can use the pond edges. Plants often grow in the wet ground around a pond, offering food and shelter to animals. The ponds can also trap sediment, tiny pieces of soil carried by moving water. When less sediment travels downstream, water farther along the stream may become clearer than before.
- ③ However, a beaver dam is not helpful in every place. If a dam blocks a culvert, a tunnel that carries water under a road, water can back up and flood nearby land. Landowners sometimes remove dams for this reason. Other communities protect beavers by placing special pipes through dams, allowing water to flow while the pond remains. These choices show that people must study local conditions before deciding whether to remove or keep a dam.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Make a claim about how a beaver dam changes a stream system. Support your claim with two details from paragraph 1.

- 2** Explain how trapping sediment in a beaver pond can affect water farther downstream. Use evidence from paragraph 2.

- 3** The author says that dams are not helpful everywhere. What situation supports this point, and what response do some communities use instead of removing a dam?

- 4** Based on paragraphs 2 and 3, explain why a community should study local conditions before deciding what to do with a beaver dam. Use one benefit and one possible problem from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

A town is deciding whether to remove a beaver dam near a road. Write four or five sentences that advise the town. State a recommendation, use one benefit and one risk from the passage as evidence, and explain what local information the town should investigate.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each main claim in the passage, then number three details that support or limit a claim. These marks will help you choose strong evidence for your answers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Make a claim about how a beaver dam changes a stream system. Support your claim with two details from paragraph 1.	A beaver dam can slow moving water and reshape a stream system. It creates a pond, and it can spread water into nearby soil, keeping the ground wetter during dry periods.
2	Explain how trapping sediment in a beaver pond can affect water farther downstream. Use evidence from paragraph 2.	A pond traps sediment, so less soil travels downstream. As a result, water farther along the stream may become clearer.
3	The author says that dams are not helpful everywhere. What situation supports this point, and what response do some communities use instead of removing a dam?	A dam can block a culvert and flood nearby land. Some communities place special pipes through dams so water can flow while the pond remains.
4	Based on paragraphs 2 and 3, explain why a community should study local conditions before deciding what to do with a beaver dam. Use one benefit and one possible problem from the passage.	A community should consider benefits such as habitat for fish, frogs, insects, and plants, or clearer downstream water. It should also check for problems, such as a blocked culvert that could flood nearby land.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The town should study the dam before choosing to remove it. Beaver ponds slow water and can keep nearby ground wetter during dry periods. But a dam that blocks a culvert can flood nearby land. The town should find out whether the dam affects the road culvert and whether the pond provides useful habitat before deciding.

Accept a clear recommendation supported by one accurate benefit and one accurate risk from the passage. The response should identify relevant local conditions to investigate, such as the culvert, flooding risk, water flow, or habitat.