Falcon Facts in Flight

Notice how precise details build a clear explanation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.2b "Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four facts or concrete details that explain the peregrine falcon's decline or recovery. Put a star beside the detail you think is most useful because it clearly shows a cause, action, or result.

Bringing Back the Peregrine Falcon

1. By the 1960s, peregrine falcons had nearly disappeared from much of the eastern United States. The pesticide DDT built up in the birds' bodies after they ate contaminated prey. It caused females to lay eggs with thin shells, and many shells broke during incubation. In 1970, fewer than 40 nesting pairs remained in the continental United States. Scientists, conservation groups, and government agencies responded by banning DDT for most uses in the United States in 1972 and starting captive-breeding programs.

2. At breeding centers, biologists paired adult falcons and protected their eggs until chicks hatched. Young birds were raised with limited human contact so they could behave like wild falcons after release. Beginning in the 1970s, teams placed young peregrines in artificial nest boxes on cliffs, bridges, and tall city buildings. Adults can dive at speeds over 200 miles per hour, which helps them catch pigeons and other birds in flight. These hunting skills helped released falcons survive once they left the nest boxes.

3. Recovery took decades, not just a single law or release. In 1999, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the peregrine falcon from the federal endangered species list because populations had increased greatly. Monitoring still matters, however. Researchers check nest sites, count young birds, and watch for threats such as habitat loss and new chemicals. In cities, some building owners and wildlife groups set up cameras near nests. The cameras let people observe the birds while also helping scientists record nesting success.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two details from paragraph 1 explain why peregrine falcon numbers dropped?

2. Which dated detail shows that a recovery action began, and which dated detail shows a later result of recovery?

3. Why does the writer include the fact that peregrine falcons can dive over 200 miles per hour? Explain how this fact supports the explanation of their recovery.

4. Choose two details from paragraph 3 that support the idea that falcons still need monitoring. Explain how each detail helps scientists or conservation groups.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence explanatory paragraph about how your school could reduce cafeteria waste. Include at least three concrete details, including one number, and explain in your final sentence how one detail makes the plan workable.

ANSWER KEY

Falcon Facts in Flight

GRADE 7 · WHST.6-8.2b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four facts or concrete details that explain the peregrine falcon's decline or recovery. Put a star beside the detail you think is most useful because it clearly shows a cause, action, or result. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two details from paragraph 1 explain why peregrine falcon numbers dropped?	**DDT built up in falcons after they ate contaminated prey, and it caused thin eggshells that often broke during incubation.**
2	Which dated detail shows that a recovery action began, and which dated detail shows a later result of recovery?	**The United States banned DDT for most uses in 1972, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the peregrine falcon from the federal endangered species list in 1999.**
3	Why does the writer include the fact that peregrine falcons can dive over 200 miles per hour? Explain how this fact supports the explanation of their recovery.	**The speed detail shows that peregrines have strong hunting skills, which helped released birds catch prey and survive in the wild.**
4	Choose two details from paragraph 3 that support the idea that falcons still need monitoring. Explain how each detail helps scientists or conservation groups.	**Researchers check nest sites and count young birds to measure nesting success and population health. They also watch for threats such as habitat loss and new chemicals, or use nest cameras to record nesting success.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school could reduce cafeteria waste by placing clearly labeled compost bins beside lunch tables. A pilot at one table could begin with 30 students for two weeks, allowing staff to compare the amount of trash before and after the change. Student volunteers could show classmates that food scraps go in compost and plastic wrappers go in trash. The labeled bins make the plan workable because students can sort waste correctly without guessing.

Accept equivalent details and explanations that accurately connect evidence to the topic of falcon recovery. For Part 3, accept varied plans if the response has four sentences, at least three concrete details including a number, and a final-sentence explanation of how one detail supports the plan.