Beaver Balance

Trace how details build and refine a central idea.

ELA.10.R.2 "Reading Informational Text"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that states the passage's central idea. Then number one detail in each paragraph that develops or qualifies that idea.

Living With Beavers

1 After years of absence, beavers are returning to streams near many North American cities. Their dams slow moving water, creating ponds and wetlands. These changes can benefit wildlife, but they can also flood roads, yards, and culverts. For decades, communities often responded by trapping and removing beavers. That approach sometimes brought only temporary relief because another beaver could move into the same suitable habitat. Today, some cities are testing a different approach: reducing conflicts while allowing beavers to continue shaping stream ecosystems. The shift reflects a broader understanding that a problem animal can also provide valuable environmental services.

2 One tool is a pond-leveling device, a pipe that carries water through a dam at a controlled height. Because the pipe's intake is protected by a cage, beavers are less able to block it with branches and mud. The pond remains, yet water is less likely to rise high enough to damage nearby property. Cities may also wrap wire around vulnerable trees or install fences around road culverts. These methods do not treat every site alike. Officials must examine water flow, public safety, and the needs of residents before deciding whether coexistence is practical.

3 Supporters of these programs point to effects beyond fewer complaints. Wetlands formed by beaver dams can store water, trap sediment, and provide habitat for fish, amphibians, birds, and insects. Slower water may also reduce erosion in some stream reaches, although results depend on local conditions. This evidence does not mean that every dam should remain in place. Instead, it supports a more careful decision: use removal when danger is immediate, and use nonlethal tools where they protect both people and habitat. By matching the response to the site, communities can turn a conflict into a managed ecological partnership.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the passage's central idea?

2. How does paragraph 1 introduce the central idea?

3. How does paragraph 2 develop the central idea? Use one example from the paragraph.

4. How does paragraph 3 qualify, or limit, the central idea?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose an informational text you have read in class or independently. In exactly three sentences, state its central idea, explain how one detail from its beginning develops that idea, and explain how a later detail adds to, changes, or qualifies it.

ANSWER KEY

Beaver Balance

GRADE 10 · ELA.10.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that states the passage's central idea. Then number one detail in each paragraph that develops or qualifies that idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the passage's central idea?	**Communities can reduce conflicts with beavers while preserving their environmental benefits by using site-specific, nonlethal solutions when appropriate.**
2	How does paragraph 1 introduce the central idea?	**It presents the conflict caused by beaver dams, contrasts past removal with a newer approach, and introduces the idea that beavers provide environmental services.**
3	How does paragraph 2 develop the central idea? Use one example from the paragraph.	**It gives specific nonlethal solutions, such as pond-leveling devices, tree wire, and culvert fences, while explaining that officials must consider conditions at each site.**
4	How does paragraph 3 qualify, or limit, the central idea?	**It explains that beaver dams have ecological benefits but should not always remain. Removal is appropriate when there is immediate danger.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The article's central idea is that community gardens can improve neighborhoods when residents share responsibility for them. Near the beginning, the author describes vacant lots becoming vegetable beds, which shows how gardens can change unused space. Later, the article explains that schedules for watering and harvesting prevent conflict, qualifying the idea by showing that benefits require organized work.

Accept equivalent statements of the central idea that include both conflict reduction and protection of habitat or environmental benefits. For the open task, accept a clear central idea and accurate explanations of how an early and later detail develop it.