Dam Builders, Big Changes

Trace how details build a central idea.

ELA.6.R.2.2 "Analyze the central idea(s), implied or explicit, and its development throughout a text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows an effect of a beaver dam. Number your underlined details 1, 2, and 3 to trace how the central idea grows.

More Than a Beaver Home

1 Along streams in North America, beavers build dams from branches, mud, and stones. A dam slows moving water, causing it to spread into a pond. The pond gives beavers a safer place to live because deep water can make it harder for many predators to reach their lodge. However, a beaver dam does more than protect one animal family. By changing the flow of a stream, it begins changing the whole area around it in important ways.

2 Slow water lets sand and soil settle on the streambed instead of racing downstream. Plants often grow along the pond's edges, where the ground stays wetter. Those plants can provide food and shelter for insects, fish, birds, and other animals. The pond may also hold water longer during dry periods. In this way, a dam that began as a beaver's home project can create a wetland habitat, supporting many living things in the surrounding area besides beavers.

3 People sometimes remove beaver dams when ponds flood roads, farms, or yards. Yet some communities now use devices that guide water through a dam or protect valuable trees with wire fencing. These tools can reduce conflicts without destroying the pond. Scientists and land managers study beavers because the animals are not only builders of homes. Their dams can reshape streams, create habitats, and help landscapes hold water, showing how one species can affect an entire ecosystem.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What beginning idea about beaver dams does paragraph 1 establish? Use one detail from the paragraph in your answer.

2. How does paragraph 2 develop the idea from paragraph 1?

3. State the central idea of the whole passage in one sentence.

4. How does paragraph 3 broaden the central idea of the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence central-idea trail for this passage. In sentence 1, state the central idea. In sentence 2, use details from paragraphs 1 and 2 to show how the idea develops, and in sentence 3, explain how paragraph 3 broadens the idea.

ANSWER KEY # Dam Builders, Big Changes

GRADE 6 · ELA.6.R.2.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that shows an effect of a beaver dam. Number your underlined details 1, 2, and 3 to trace how the central idea grows. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What beginning idea about beaver dams does paragraph 1 establish? Use one detail from the paragraph in your answer.	**Paragraph 1 establishes that beaver dams do more than make safe homes. A dam slows a stream and creates a pond, changing the nearby area.**
2	How does paragraph 2 develop the idea from paragraph 1?	**It explains additional effects of the pond, including wetter ground for plants, food and shelter for animals, and water held during dry periods.**
3	State the central idea of the whole passage in one sentence.	**Beaver dams, though built as homes, can reshape water and habitats and affect an entire ecosystem.**
4	How does paragraph 3 broaden the central idea of the passage?	**It adds that dams can cause problems for people, but communities can manage conflicts while keeping the dams' ecosystem benefits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Beaver dams affect whole ecosystems, not just beavers. Paragraph 1 shows that a dam turns a stream into a pond, and paragraph 2 adds that the pond can become a wetland habitat for many animals. Paragraph 3 broadens the idea by showing that people manage both the benefits and problems these dams can cause.

Accept equivalent central ideas that explain how beaver dams affect areas beyond a beaver's home. For the open response, look for a central idea, accurate evidence from all three paragraphs, and an explanation of how the idea develops.