Creek Word Detectives

Use context clues to unlock science vocabulary.

4.L.V.1.a "Acquire a range of general, academic, and specialized vocabulary words and phrases through grade-level texts and content. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle three specialized science words and underline nearby words that help you infer each meaning.

Beavers Change a Creek

1. At Willow Creek, scientists watched a beaver family build a dam from branches and mud. The dam slowed the water and formed a pond. This new habitat gave frogs, fish, and insects places to live. The scientists began an investigation to learn how the pond changed the creek over several months, collecting observations after each rainstorm.

2. They noticed sediment, tiny pieces of soil and rock, settling on the pond bottom instead of rushing downstream. The pond acted as a filter, holding some of this material back. To compare the water, the team filled clear jars above and below the dam. Their evidence showed that the water below the dam often looked less muddy after storms.

3. Over time, water-loving plants grew around the pond, and more birds visited the area. The change affected the ecosystem, all the living things and their surroundings in one place. Scientists will continue to monitor the creek, meaning they will check it regularly. Their work may help the community decide where beavers can safely create wetlands.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does habitat mean in paragraph 1?

2. How do the words after sediment help you infer its meaning?

3. What does compare mean in paragraph 2?

4. What does monitor mean in paragraph 3?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly two sentences about a different animal. Use one specialized science word, and include context clues that help a reader infer what the word means.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle three specialized science words and underline nearby words that help you infer each meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does habitat mean in paragraph 1?	**A habitat is a place where living things live.**
2	How do the words after sediment help you infer its meaning?	**They explain that sediment is tiny pieces of soil and rock.**
3	What does compare mean in paragraph 2?	**It means to examine the water above and below the dam to look for differences.**
4	What does monitor mean in paragraph 3?	**It means to check something regularly.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A snowshoe hare uses camouflage because its white winter fur blends with the snow, making it hard for predators to see. In summer, its brown fur helps it hide among soil and plants.

Accept equivalent meanings when students use details from the passage as context clues. For the open task, accept any two-sentence response about another animal that uses a specialized word and gives enough surrounding information to infer its meaning.