Dam Details

Notice how an author uses explanations, causes, and comparisons.

4.T.T.2 "Expository Techniques: Explain, analyze, and use expository techniques to shape understandings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline each definition or explanation of a term, and circle each word or phrase that signals cause and effect or a comparison.

Beavers at Work

1 Beavers are often called nature's engineers because they change the places where they live. Using their strong teeth, they cut branches and carry mud, stones, and sticks to a stream. Their goal is to build a dam, a wall that slows moving water. Behind the dam, a pond forms. The pond gives beavers a safer place to build their homes, called lodges.

2 When a dam blocks part of a stream, water spreads across nearby land. This change can create a wetland, an area of shallow water and water-loving plants. Frogs may lay eggs there, and ducks may find food among the plants. The dam also holds water during dry times. As a result, some animals have water to use even when the stream would otherwise become smaller.

3 Beaver dams do not help every part of a stream in the same way. Water above a dam becomes slower and deeper, while water below it may become lower for a time. People sometimes remove dams when roads or farms might flood. Still, scientists study beaver ponds because these ponds can provide homes for many kinds of plants and animals. This comparison shows that one dam can have both benefits and challenges.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the author explain the meaning of dam in paragraph 1? What does that explanation help you understand?

2. What cause-and-effect relationship does paragraph 2 show between a dam and a wetland?

3. What comparison does the author make about water above and below a dam? How does the comparison shape your understanding?

4. Choose one detail that supports the idea that beaver ponds help living things. Explain how the detail supports the idea.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 sentences explaining how a school garden changes a space. Include one definition or explanation of a word and one cause-and-effect connection using a phrase such as when, because, or as a result.

ANSWER KEY

Dam Details

GRADE 4 · 4.T.T.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline each definition or explanation of a term, and circle each word or phrase that signals cause and effect or a comparison. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the author explain the meaning of dam in paragraph 1? What does that explanation help you understand?	**The author defines a dam as "a wall that slows moving water." This helps the reader understand what a dam is and what it does.**
2	What cause-and-effect relationship does paragraph 2 show between a dam and a wetland?	**When a dam blocks part of a stream, water spreads across nearby land. This can create a wetland.**
3	What comparison does the author make about water above and below a dam? How does the comparison shape your understanding?	**Water above a dam becomes slower and deeper, while water below it may become lower. The comparison shows that a dam can affect different parts of a stream in different ways.**
4	Choose one detail that supports the idea that beaver ponds help living things. Explain how the detail supports the idea.	**For example, frogs may lay eggs in the wetland, and ducks may find food among the plants. This shows that the pond can provide what animals need.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A school garden is a small area where students grow plants. When students add compost to the soil, the compost gives plants nutrients. As a result, the garden can grow vegetables and flowers.

For Part 3, check for exactly three sentences, a clear explanation or definition, and a logical cause-and-effect connection.