Dam Builders

Trace how facts and details build an effective explanation.

6.T.T.2.d "Apply expository techniques (e.g., main idea, facts, key details, sense of closure) to enhance writing and engage audiences. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one main-idea sentence in each paragraph, circle four facts or key details that support those ideas, and number the final sentence that gives the whole passage closure.

How Beavers Shape Habitats

1. Beavers do more than build homes. They reshape streams and ponds in ways that affect many living things. Using branches, mud, and stones, a beaver can build a dam across moving water. The dam slows the water and may create a pond. In that pond, beavers build lodges with underwater entrances, which help protect them from predators. Their construction work is not only for shelter. It can change an entire habitat, giving other animals and plants new places to live.

2. A beaver pond can support more than the animals that made it. Still water gives frogs a place to lay eggs, and pond edges can provide food and cover for ducks, fish, and insects. As water spreads into nearby soil, it can also help plants grow during dry periods. Scientists have found that beaver dams may reduce the force of floods by holding back water for a time. However, a dam can also flood roads or fields, so people sometimes manage where beavers build.

3. Because beavers influence water, plants, and animals, their dams matter far beyond a single lodge. Researchers study these animals to learn when their ponds can help restore wetlands and when they may cause problems for nearby communities. People can use this information to make careful choices, such as protecting a useful pond or guiding a beaver away from a road. Beavers are one example of how an animal's daily work can shape its environment. Looking closely at their dams helps us see connections among water, wildlife, and people.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What main idea does the first paragraph introduce about beavers?

2. What are two key details from paragraph 2 that show how a beaver pond can help other living things?

3. How does the detail about reducing the force of floods support the passage's main idea?

4. Which sentence gives the passage a sense of closure, and why is it an effective ending?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence explanatory paragraph about how beaver dams affect a habitat. Begin with a clear main idea, include two accurate facts from the passage, and end with a closing sentence that connects beaver dams to the larger environment.

ANSWER KEY # Dam Builders

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one main-idea sentence in each paragraph, circle four facts or key details that support those ideas, and number the final sentence that gives the whole passage closure. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What main idea does the first paragraph introduce about beavers?	**Beavers reshape habitats by building dams and lodges that change water and create places for living things.**
2	What are two key details from paragraph 2 that show how a beaver pond can help other living things?	**Still water gives frogs a place to lay eggs, and pond edges provide food and cover for ducks, fish, and insects. Water spreading into soil can also help plants grow during dry periods.**
3	How does the detail about reducing the force of floods support the passage's main idea?	**It shows that beaver dams can change water in ways that affect the larger habitat and nearby areas.**
4	Which sentence gives the passage a sense of closure, and why is it an effective ending?	**"Looking closely at their dams helps us see connections among water, wildlife, and people." It effectively ends by connecting the earlier details to the larger idea that beavers affect many parts of an environment.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Beaver dams can change a habitat for many living things. A dam slows moving water and may create a pond. Pond edges can provide food and cover for ducks, fish, and insects. By changing the water, beavers show how one animal can affect plants, wildlife, and people.

Accept reasonable statements of the main idea and any accurate supporting details from the passage. For the paragraph, look for four sentences with a main idea, at least two passage-based facts, and a concluding connection to the larger environment.