Beaver-Built Changes

Notice how sources and details develop an explanation.

6.W.2.b "Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from various sources and texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one definition, circle two concrete details, and number the two sources named in the passage. Notice how each kind of information helps explain what beaver dams do.

What a Beaver Dam Changes

1 A beaver can turn a narrow stream into a wide pond without a shovel. The National Park Service explains that beavers pile branches, mud, and stones across flowing water to build dams. A dam slows the current, so water spreads across the land behind it. The flooded area can become a wetland, land where water covers the soil for at least part of the year. That definition matters because it shows that a beaver dam changes more than the stream. It creates a new kind of habitat.

2 The new pond is useful to animals besides beavers. According to the National Park Service, beavers build lodges with underwater entrances, which can help protect them from land predators. Frogs may lay eggs in the pond, and ducks may find food along its edges. These details show why a dam is more than a pile of sticks: it makes places for animals to feed, hide, and reproduce. One change to a stream can support several kinds of life, though the species present depend on the location.

3 Beaver ponds can also affect land during dry or fiery seasons. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that beaver-created wetlands can hold water on the landscape and may provide damp refuges during wildfires. This does not mean every pond stops a fire. It means a wet patch can stay different from the dry ground around it. Together, the park service's description of dams and the survey's findings about wet areas explain a larger point: by slowing water, beavers can change conditions for both wildlife and the surrounding land.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the definition of wetland help you understand about the effect of a beaver dam?

2. Which details explain how a beaver dam changes a stream into a pond?

3. Choose two animal details from paragraph 2. How do they support the idea that a pond provides habitat?

4. What does each named source add to the passage's explanation of beaver dams?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Source notes: The EPA says tree shade keeps sunlight off pavement, and the USDA Forest Service says trees release water vapor through their leaves, a process called transpiration that cools nearby air. Write four or five sentences explaining how city trees cool a sidewalk, using a fact attributed to each source, a definition of transpiration, and a concrete sidewalk example.

ANSWER KEY

Beaver-Built Changes

GRADE 6 · 6.W.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one definition, circle two concrete details, and number the two sources named in the passage. Notice how each kind of information helps explain what beaver dams do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the definition of wetland help you understand about the effect of a beaver dam?	**It shows that the dam can create a wetland, changing the land into a new kind of habitat.**
2	Which details explain how a beaver dam changes a stream into a pond?	**Beavers pile branches, mud, and stones across flowing water. The dam slows the current, and water spreads behind it.**
3	Choose two animal details from paragraph 2. How do they support the idea that a pond provides habitat?	**For example, frogs may lay eggs in the pond, and ducks may find food along its edges. These details show that animals can use the pond to reproduce and feed.**
4	What does each named source add to the passage's explanation of beaver dams?	**The National Park Service explains how beavers build dams and lodges. The U.S. Geological Survey adds that beaver-created wetlands can hold water and may provide damp refuges during wildfires.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

City trees can cool a sidewalk in two ways. The EPA explains that tree shade keeps sunlight from striking pavement, so a bench under a tree may be cooler than a bench in direct sun. The USDA Forest Service describes transpiration, the release of water vapor through leaves. This process can cool nearby air as well as the shaded ground. Together, these facts show that trees change both the surfaces and the air around a sidewalk.

Accept different concrete details for the marking job and questions when students explain how those details develop the topic. For Part 3, look for accurate attribution to both sources, a correct definition of transpiration, and a specific sidewalk example.