Ponds and Fire

Use clues to explain how a beaver pond may affect a fire.

RI.5.10 "Routinely and flexibly develop and apply background knowledge along with a variety of comprehension strategies to understand and analyze grade-appropriate, complex informational text independently."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show how a beaver dam changes the land, then number them in the order they happen. Circle one detail that shows why a pond cannot always slow a fire.

Can a Beaver Pond Slow a Fire?

1. When a forest fire reaches dry grass, flames can move quickly. Wet ground is harder to burn. Beavers sometimes change how much water stays in a stream valley. They build dams from branches, mud, and stones. A dam slows the stream, so water spreads behind it and forms a pond. Water may also soak into the soil beside the pond, even where no open water is visible.

2. That hidden water can matter during a fire. Plants rooted in damp soil often stay greener longer than plants on dry slopes. Green plants can still burn, but their moisture makes them less likely to catch fire quickly. In some burned landscapes, researchers have found patches around beaver ponds that remained green. The pond did not put out the fire; the wet patch gave flames less dry fuel to use.

3. A beaver pond is not a fireproof wall. In a long drought, the pond may shrink and nearby soil may dry out. Strong winds can also carry burning sparks over wet ground. Still, a damp patch may give some animals a place to shelter while flames pass. To judge whether a pond might help, look for clues about water, plants, and weather rather than assuming every pond works the same way.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Use what you know about wet and dry materials to explain why flames might move more slowly near a beaver pond. Include two clues from the passage.

2. A student predicts that every beaver pond will keep all nearby plants from burning. Which clues should make the student change that prediction?

3. Trace the steps from a beaver building a dam to the green patches researchers found after some fires.

4. A hiker sees green plants beside a beaver pond but no water on the ground there. How could both observations make sense?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A ranger finds two beaver ponds, one full with green plants nearby and one shrunken with dry plants nearby. Write a short recommendation about which site to check first for animal shelter during a fire, using two linked clues from the passage and explaining why your choice is not guaranteed to be safe.

ANSWER KEY

Ponds and Fire

GRADE 5 · RI.5.10

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show how a beaver dam changes the land, then number them in the order they happen. Circle one detail that shows why a pond cannot always slow a fire. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Use what you know about wet and dry materials to explain why flames might move more slowly near a beaver pond. Include two clues from the passage.	**Water from the pond can soak into nearby soil, keeping plants greener. Those plants have more moisture and are less likely to catch fire quickly than dry plants.**
2	A student predicts that every beaver pond will keep all nearby plants from burning. Which clues should make the student change that prediction?	**Green plants can still burn. A drought can dry out the area, and wind can carry burning sparks over wet ground.**
3	Trace the steps from a beaver building a dam to the green patches researchers found after some fires.	**The dam slows the stream and forms a pond. Water soaks into nearby soil, helping plants stay green. Their moisture makes them less likely to catch fire quickly.**
4	A hiker sees green plants beside a beaver pond but no water on the ground there. How could both observations make sense?	**Pond water may have soaked into the soil, where the plants' roots can reach it, even though no open water is visible.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The ranger should check the full pond first because its water may keep the nearby soil damp. Plants growing there may hold more moisture, giving flames less dry fuel than the plants by the shrunken pond. The site is not guaranteed to be safe because wind can carry burning sparks over wet ground.

Accept other answers that use accurate passage clues to explain a reasonable inference. For the marking job, students may underline the dam slowing the stream and water soaking into nearby soil, then circle either the drought or wind detail.