A Changing Stream

Trace how details build and complicate a central idea.

RI.7.2 "Determine central ideas of a text and analyze their development through citing textual evidence, paraphrasing or summarizing."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle words in paragraph 1 that suggest the passage's central idea. Underline one detail in each paragraph that develops or complicates that idea.

The Beaver's Changing Stream

1 At the edge of a dry meadow, a beaver stacks branches across a narrow stream. Water slows behind the dam and spreads into a pond. That pond is more than a home for beavers. During dry weeks, its stored water can keep nearby soil damp and give fish a deeper place to swim. Water also seeps into the ground and may feed the stream later. By changing the flow of one stream, a beaver can make the surrounding area less vulnerable to drought.

2 The changes reach beyond the pond. Insects gather around the wet banks, and birds feed on them. Fallen trees and partly flooded shrubs create shelter for other animals. Beaver ponds can even slow a wildfire where the ground stays wet, although they cannot stop every fire. These effects do not appear all at once. First, the dam raises the water level. Then plants and animals respond to the new conditions. A single construction project becomes a changing habitat for many species.

3 A dam can cause trouble, too. Water may flood a farm field or block a road culvert, the pipe that carries water beneath a road. Removing every beaver might solve an immediate problem but also erase the wet habitat. Some communities instead place a pipe through a dam to control the pond's height, or protect important trees with wire fencing. These steps do not work everywhere, but they show a different approach: manage the flooding while keeping some of the benefits that beavers bring.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. State the passage's central idea in your own words. Give one detail from paragraph 1 that supports it.

2. How does paragraph 2 develop the idea introduced in paragraph 1? Use one detail from paragraph 2.

3. What complication does paragraph 3 add to the benefits described earlier? Cite a detail.

4. Paraphrase why removing every beaver might not be the best solution. Use evidence from two paragraphs.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence blurb for a town meeting handout about living with beavers. Summarize the passage's central idea and trace how it develops across all three paragraphs, using at least two specific details from different paragraphs. Explain why the final paragraph matters.

ANSWER KEY

A Changing Stream

GRADE 7 · RI.7.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle words in paragraph 1 that suggest the passage's central idea. Underline one detail in each paragraph that develops or complicates that idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	State the passage's central idea in your own words. Give one detail from paragraph 1 that supports it.	**Beavers change streams in ways that can help an area, though their dams may cause problems. In paragraph 1, their ponds store water that keeps nearby soil damp during dry weeks.**
2	How does paragraph 2 develop the idea introduced in paragraph 1? Use one detail from paragraph 2.	**It shows that the effects of a dam reach beyond stored water. For example, insects gather near wet banks, providing food for birds.**
3	What complication does paragraph 3 add to the benefits described earlier? Cite a detail.	**A dam can create problems for people, such as flooding a farm field or blocking a road culvert.**
4	Paraphrase why removing every beaver might not be the best solution. Use evidence from two paragraphs.	**Removing beavers could eliminate wet habitat that supports animals, as paragraph 2 describes. Paragraph 3 explains that a pipe through a dam can sometimes control pond height while keeping some benefits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Beavers change streams in ways that can help other living things, but their dams can also cause problems for people. First, the passage explains that ponds store water and keep nearby soil damp during dry weeks. Next, it shows how wet banks attract insects that provide food for birds. Finally, it explains that dams can flood farm fields and that some communities use pipes to control pond height. This ending matters because it shows that people can sometimes protect property without losing all the benefits of beaver ponds.

Accept accurate paraphrases and relevant evidence from the named paragraphs. The blurb should connect the benefits, the problem, and the possible response rather than list details without explaining their relationship.