A Dam's Reach

Read across a science text to understand connected effects.

RI.6.10 "By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one cause-and-effect connection in each paragraph. Circle a detail that shows why people must think carefully before changing a beaver pond.

What Happens When Beavers Build?

1. At the edge of a narrow stream, a beaver pushes a branch into a growing dam. The branch does not seal the stream like a wall. Water still flows through and around the structure, but it moves more slowly. As the water backs up, it spreads into a shallow pond. Mud and sand carried by the stream settle to the bottom instead of washing farther downstream. Over time, the pond can change a dry stretch of streamside land into a wet place with new kinds of plants.

2. That change affects more than beavers. Frogs may lay eggs in the calmer water, and insects can live among the pond plants. Some birds feed on those insects, while other animals use the thick plants as cover. The dam can also hold water in the area during a dry spell. Yet a pond does not help every living thing in the same way. Trees whose roots stay underwater for too long may die, leaving bare trunks above the pond.

3. People living near beaver ponds face choices, too. A dam close to a road may raise water high enough to flood the road. Removing the dam can lower the water, but beavers may rebuild it, and the pond habitat may disappear. In some places, workers place a pipe through a dam to let some water pass while leaving much of the pond in place. This approach does not work at every site. Before choosing what to do, people must examine both the land nearby and the wildlife using the pond.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does slower water change what happens to mud and sand in the stream?

2. How can pond plants help birds, even if the birds do not use the plants for cover?

3. Why does the passage mention trees dying after describing ways the pond helps wildlife?

4. Why might workers use a pipe instead of removing a dam? What must they consider before choosing?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your town wants to build a walking path beside a beaver pond. In three or four sentences, recommend where to place the path, using two details from the passage to explain your choice. Include one possible downside of your plan.

ANSWER KEY

A Dam's Reach

GRADE 6 · RI.6.10

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one cause-and-effect connection in each paragraph. Circle a detail that shows why people must think carefully before changing a beaver pond. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does slower water change what happens to mud and sand in the stream?	**Mud and sand settle to the bottom instead of washing farther downstream.**
2	How can pond plants help birds, even if the birds do not use the plants for cover?	**Insects can live among the pond plants, and some birds feed on those insects.**
3	Why does the passage mention trees dying after describing ways the pond helps wildlife?	**It shows that the pond does not benefit every living thing. Water covering tree roots for too long can kill the trees.**
4	Why might workers use a pipe instead of removing a dam? What must they consider before choosing?	**A pipe can let some water pass while keeping much of the pond habitat. Workers must consider the nearby land and the wildlife using the pond because a pipe does not work at every site.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Planners should put the path away from the pond's edge and on higher ground. A beaver dam can raise nearby water, so a low path might flood. Pond plants provide a home for insects and cover for other animals, so keeping the path away could protect that area. A path farther from the pond might give walkers a less direct view of the wildlife.

Accept other path locations if the student supports the choice with two accurate passage details and names a plausible downside. For the marking job, accept any correctly connected cause and effect in each paragraph and a circled risk or limit.