Where Life Fits

Use evidence to compare three ecosystems.

L.5.3B.1 "Obtain and evaluate scientific information regarding the characteristics of different ecosystems and the organisms they support (e.g., salt, and fresh water, deserts, grasslands, forests, rain forests, or polar tundra lands)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one water or soil condition in each paragraph, then circle an organism and draw an arrow to a detail that helps explain how it lives there.

Three Places to Live

1. At the edge of a lake, a freshwater marsh stays wet for much of the year. Its water contains very little dissolved salt. Cattails grow in shallow water, and their tall stems give red-winged blackbirds places to build nests. Dragonfly young live underwater and eat small water animals. A marsh can dry out during a long drought, leaving less water for the dragonfly young.

2. Near the ocean, a salt marsh floods when high tides push seawater across the ground. The water and soil contain more salt than in a freshwater marsh. Cordgrass can survive there because it can release extra salt through its leaves. Fiddler crabs dig burrows in the muddy ground and eat tiny bits of plants and animals. If the marsh stops flooding, its water and salt levels may change.

3. Far inland, a desert gets little rain, and its soil is usually dry. A kangaroo rat gets much of the water it needs from seeds. It rests in a burrow during hot days and searches for food at night. Some desert insects also avoid heat by hiding under rocks. A desert is not lifeless, but organisms there face a different water challenge than organisms in wet marshes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which marsh offers a stated nesting place for red-winged blackbirds? What makes it suitable?

2. A student says cattails cannot survive in a salt marsh. Does the passage prove this claim? Explain.

3. A site has muddy ground that seawater floods at high tide. Would a fiddler crab likely find a suitable habitat there? Give two details from the passage.

4. How do dragonfly young and kangaroo rats meet different water needs? Use evidence from both ecosystems.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine your class is planting a garden beside a salt marsh. In three sentences, choose salt-tolerant or freshwater-only seedlings, support your choice with two details from the passage, and name one site condition you would check before planting.

ANSWER KEY # Where Life Fits

GRADE 5 · L.5.3B.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one water or soil condition in each paragraph, then circle an organism and draw an arrow to a detail that helps explain how it lives there. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which marsh offers a stated nesting place for red-winged blackbirds? What makes it suitable?	**The freshwater marsh has tall cattail stems where red-winged blackbirds build nests.**
2	A student says cattails cannot survive in a salt marsh. Does the passage prove this claim? Explain.	**No. The passage says cattails grow in freshwater, but it does not say whether they can survive salt.**
3	A site has muddy ground that seawater floods at high tide. Would a fiddler crab likely find a suitable habitat there? Give two details from the passage.	**Yes. Fiddler crabs live in salt marshes, which flood with seawater, and they dig burrows in muddy ground.**
4	How do dragonfly young and kangaroo rats meet different water needs? Use evidence from both ecosystems.	**Dragonfly young live underwater in a freshwater marsh. Kangaroo rats live in a dry desert and get much of the water they need from seeds.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would choose salt-tolerant seedlings because seawater floods the salt marsh at high tide. Cordgrass survives there by releasing extra salt through its leaves, showing that salt is a challenge for plants. Before planting, I would check how salty the garden soil is.

Accept answers that distinguish what the passage supports from what it does not establish. For the garden task, students should use two accurate passage details and check a relevant condition, such as soil salt or flooding.