

Beavers Build Habitats

See how exact words explain changes in a stream habitat.

5W2.c "Use precise language and content-specific vocabulary to explain a topic."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle at least six content-specific words or phrases that name land, water, animals, or processes, and underline two precise action words that explain change. These choices show how exact language makes an explanation clear.

How Beavers Change a Stream

- ① Beavers change a stream by building a dam from branches, mud, and stones. The dam slows the current, so water spreads into a pond. Behind the dam, a wetland may form. A wetland is land that stays soaked or covered with shallow water for much of the year. This habitat can support fish, frogs, insects, and water birds.
- ② Beaver ponds do more than hold water. As water moves slowly through a wetland, sediment can settle to the bottom. Sediment is tiny pieces of soil, sand, or rock carried by water. Plant roots and wetland soil can also trap some pollutants before the water flows downstream. These processes can improve water quality in the stream.
- ③ Beavers are sometimes called ecosystem engineers because their dams reshape habitats. An ecosystem includes living things and the nonliving parts of a place, such as water and soil. A pond can provide shelter and food, but it may also flood nearby trees. When a dam breaks or is abandoned, the stream channel can begin flowing more quickly again.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What content-specific word identifies land that stays soaked or covered with shallow water?

2 Which precise verb tells what sediment can do when water moves slowly through a wetland?

3 The author uses a content-specific word instead of a broad phrase like "bad materials in water." What is that word?

4 What phrase describes beavers as animals that change habitats? Give two details from the passage that support this phrase.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write three sentences explaining how earthworms affect soil. Use at least three precise, content-specific words, such as burrow, tunnel, decomposer, nutrients, aerate, or castings.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle at least six content-specific words or phrases that name land, water, animals, or processes, and underline two precise action words that explain change. These choices show how exact language makes an explanation clear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What content-specific word identifies land that stays soaked or covered with shallow water?	wetland
2	Which precise verb tells what sediment can do when water moves slowly through a wetland?	settle
3	The author uses a content-specific word instead of a broad phrase like “bad materials in water.” What is that word?	pollutants
4	What phrase describes beavers as animals that change habitats? Give two details from the passage that support this phrase.	ecosystem engineers; beavers build dams that slow the current and form ponds, and their ponds can flood nearby trees.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An earthworm is a decomposer that eats dead plant material in the soil. As it moves through a burrow, it creates tunnels that aerate the soil. Its castings add nutrients that plant roots can use.

Accept other correctly circled content-specific terms, including dam, current, habitat, sediment, downstream, ecosystem, and stream channel. For the open response, check for three sentences and at least three accurate, precise vocabulary words used to explain earthworms and soil.