

Ponds With Purpose

Use important details to identify a passage's key idea.

3.6.G "evaluate details read to determine key ideas;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in each paragraph that helps explain an important effect of beaver dams. After reading, answer the questions and explain why your chosen details matter.

How Beavers Change a Stream

- ① Beavers spend much of their time near streams, where they gather branches, mud, and stones. Using their sharp teeth, they cut small trees and carry pieces to the water. Then they pack the materials together to build a dam. A dam slows the moving water. Behind it, water spreads out and forms a pond that can become the center of a busy habitat.
- ② The new pond can help many living things. Some fish can find quieter water, and frogs may lay eggs among water plants. Ducks and herons can search the shallow edges for food. The pond also gives beavers a safer place to swim because water surrounds the entrance to their lodge. These details show that a beaver dam does more than make a home for one animal.
- ③ Sometimes a beaver pond spreads toward roads, farms, or yards. Trained workers may install a water-control pipe that lets some water leave the pond. This can help lower the water level. Workers may also put wire around nearby tree trunks to protect them from chewing. The wire protects trees; it does not lower the pond. These different tools can help people share the space with beavers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- ① What is a key idea that connects all three paragraphs? Write one sentence.

- 2** Choose any two details from paragraph 2 that support the idea that ponds can help different animals. Explain what each shows.

- 3** How does paragraph 3 add to the key idea? Explain one detail from it.

- 4** A reader says the whole passage is mainly about sharp teeth. Choose one detail from paragraph 2 or 3 that shows a broader idea, and explain why.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Use details from all three paragraphs to build and check your own key-idea statement. You may choose different evidence from a classmate if it supports the idea.

1. Select useful details

Record one detail from each paragraph. Label the paragraph numbers. Choose details about important effects, rather than three details about just one small feature.

2. Connect and check

Write a key idea that the three details support. Explain how each detail helps. Then explain why that idea covers more of the passage than "Beavers have sharp teeth."

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in each paragraph that helps explain an important effect of beaver dams. After reading, answer the questions and explain why your chosen details matter. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is a key idea that connects all three paragraphs? Write one sentence.	Beaver dams change streams into ponds that can help animals and affect places where people live or work. Accept a supported key idea that covers the whole passage.
2	Choose any two details from paragraph 2 that support the idea that ponds can help different animals. Explain what each shows.	Accept any two relevant details: quieter water for some fish; plants where frogs may lay eggs; feeding places for ducks/herons; water around the beavers' lodge entrance. Each explanation must connect the detail to an animal benefit.
3	How does paragraph 3 add to the key idea? Explain one detail from it.	It adds effects on people and ways to share space. For example, a pipe can lower pond water near roads, while wire protects trees from chewing. Accept one accurate detail and connection.
4	A reader says the whole passage is mainly about sharp teeth. Choose one detail from paragraph 2 or 3 that shows a broader idea, and explain why.	Accept a relevant animal-habitat or human-impact detail with an explanation that the passage covers wider effects of dams. No single detail is the only correct choice.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Details: 1 - A dam slows water and forms a pond. 2 - Frogs may lay eggs among pond plants. 3 - Workers may use a pipe to lower water near places people use.

Key idea: Beaver dams change streams in ways that affect animals and people. The first detail explains the change in water, the second shows an animal benefit, and the third shows a human response. This idea connects all three paragraphs; sharp teeth explain only one part of how beavers build.

Accept different well-supported details and key ideas. Evaluate relevance and coverage, not agreement with a single preferred example. The source passage describes possible benefits, not a claim that every species benefits from every pond. Water-control devices and tree guards have different purposes.

Background checked against National Park Service: Busy Beavers (June 24, 2026), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/busy-beavers.htm> ; Beaver, Katahdin Woods and Waters (October 8, 2024), <https://www.nps.gov/kaww/learn/nature/beavers.htm> . No wildlife-management activity is assigned.