A Dam's Ripple Effects

Follow cause, effect, and contrast across an informational text.

5.RI.10.a "Read and comprehend grade-appropriate text with increasing challenge in text difficulty and complexity (e.g., layout, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a sentence in each paragraph that links a cause to a result, and circle the word that signals that the last paragraph will show a different side of the story.

When a Beaver Builds a Dam

1. At the edge of a forest, a beaver cuts branches with its strong front teeth. It drags them into a narrow stream and stacks them with mud and stones. Water slows behind this dam and spreads over nearby ground. What was once a quick, shallow stream becomes a pond. The change starts with one animal, but it does not stop there.

2. Because the water moves slowly, bits of soil settle instead of washing downstream. The pond may become a wetland, an area where the ground stays soaked for much of the year. Frogs can lay eggs in the still water, while insects gather among the plants along its edge. Birds that eat those insects may arrive, too. A dam can turn one stream into several kinds of habitat.

3. Yet a beaver dam can create problems as well as shelter. The rising water may flood a walking trail or the roots of trees that do not grow well in soaked soil. People sometimes use a special pipe to keep the pond from rising too high while leaving the dam in place. This solution can protect a trail and let many wetland animals keep their home.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, how does the beaver's work turn a shallow stream into a pond? Include the step between building and forming a pond.

2. Use the words around *wetland* to explain what it means. How can the pond become one?

3. How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1 instead of starting a new topic?

4. What change in the explanation does *Yet* signal in paragraph 3? Give one detail that shows this change.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences to advise a town planner about a beaver dam near a walking trail. Recommend what to do, link at least two effects from different paragraphs, and use a contrast word to show a trade-off.

ANSWER KEY

A Dam's Ripple Effects

GRADE 5 · 5.RI.10.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a sentence in each paragraph that links a cause to a result, and circle the word that signals that the last paragraph will show a different side of the story. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, how does the beaver's work turn a shallow stream into a pond? Include the step between building and forming a pond.	**The beaver stacks branches, mud, and stones to make a dam. Water slows behind it and spreads over nearby ground, forming a pond.**
2	Use the words around *wetland* to explain what it means. How can the pond become one?	**A wetland is an area where the ground stays soaked for much of the year. Water spreading behind the dam can keep nearby ground wet.**
3	How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1 instead of starting a new topic?	**Paragraph 1 explains how the dam forms a pond. Paragraph 2 explains further effects of its slow water, such as settling soil and new habitats.**
4	What change in the explanation does *Yet* signal in paragraph 3? Give one detail that shows this change.	**It signals a shift from the dam's benefits to a possible problem. For example, rising water may flood a walking trail.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend keeping the dam but using a pipe to control the pond's height. The dam slows the stream and forms a pond. Because that pond can become a wetland, frogs and insects gain places to live. However, rising water could flood the trail, so the pipe could help protect it.

For the marking job, accept any sentence in each paragraph that connects a stated cause with a result, and expect students to circle “Yet.” For the open task, accept a supported recommendation that connects effects from different paragraphs and uses a contrast word.