The Beaver Trade-Off

Read closely to connect benefits, problems, and possible solutions.

8.RI.10.a "Demonstrate proficiency in reading and comprehending grade-appropriate texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that explain how a dam helps during dry weather, circle one problem it can cause, and box one limit of the pipe solution. Use your marks to track the passage's main idea.

When Beavers Change a Stream

1 At the edge of a dry meadow, a beaver builds a dam from branches, mud, and stones. The dam slows a stream, causing water to spread into a pond and soak the nearby ground. Instead of rushing away after a storm, some water remains stored in the pond and wet soil. This can help plants survive a stretch without rain. A beaver does not plan to manage a drought; it builds to create deep water near its lodge, where it can move more safely from predators.

2 That extra water can matter to other animals, too. Researchers studying small streams in the western United States have found that beaver ponds can provide damp places for plants and wildlife during dry periods. Pond edges may support willows, which give birds shelter and food. Yet a dam changes more than the amount of water: it can flood a trail or block a narrow pipe under a road. For people living nearby, the same rising water can be useful in one place and a problem in another.

3 Removing every dam is not the only way to handle a conflict. In some places, workers install a pipe through a dam to keep the pond from rising above a chosen level while leaving much of the pond in place. This approach requires regular checks because branches and mud can clog the pipe. It also may not work at every site. Decisions about a dam depend on the land nearby, the risk of flooding, and the benefits of keeping wet habitat during dry weather.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the passage's main idea? Include both a benefit and a concern in your answer.

2. Explain how slowing a stream can help plants during a dry stretch.

3. How can a pipe address a problem caused by a dam while keeping a possible benefit?

4. Why might two people living near the same dam disagree about whether it should stay?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A beaver pond near a community garden is close to flooding the garden path. In four sentences, recommend what the community should consider doing, use two details from the passage, and explain a trade-off or limit of your plan.

ANSWER KEY

The Beaver Trade-Off

GRADE 8 · 8.RI.10.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that explain how a dam helps during dry weather, circle one problem it can cause, and box one limit of the pipe solution. Use your marks to track the passage's main idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the passage's main idea? Include both a benefit and a concern in your answer.	**Beaver dams can keep land wet during dry weather, but they can also cause flooding, so people must consider conditions at each site.**
2	Explain how slowing a stream can help plants during a dry stretch.	**Slower water spreads into a pond and soaks the ground. Water stored in the pond and wet soil can help plants survive without rain.**
3	How can a pipe address a problem caused by a dam while keeping a possible benefit?	**A pipe can limit how high the pond rises while leaving much of the pond, and its wet habitat, in place.**
4	Why might two people living near the same dam disagree about whether it should stay?	**One person might value the water and wet habitat during dry weather, while another might be concerned about a flooded trail or blocked road pipe.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The community should check whether a pipe through the dam could keep water below the garden path. The pond and wet soil may store water that helps nearby plants during dry weather. A pipe could reduce flooding while leaving much of the pond in place, but branches and mud might clog it. Workers should check the pipe regularly and choose another approach if it cannot keep the path safe.

Accept recommendations that use at least two accurate passage details and explain a relevant trade-off or limit. Students need not recommend a pipe if they justify another response using the text.