

Dam Decisions

Use important details to identify key ideas in an informational text.

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

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each paragraph, underline two details that support its most important idea. Then write a short key idea in the margin beside each paragraph.

Beavers and Changing Waterways

- ① Beavers are often called ecosystem engineers because their dams change the flow of water. Using branches, mud, and stones, they build barriers across small streams. Water collects behind a dam and forms a pond. The pond can spread into nearby low ground, creating wetlands. These wetlands offer shelter and food for frogs, fish, insects, and water birds. A single beaver dam does not transform every stream, but in suitable places, several dams can reshape an entire valley.
- ② By slowing water, dams can also affect what happens during dry periods and heavy rain. Pondered water may soak into the soil and raise the water table nearby. During storms, a chain of ponds can hold back some water, so it moves downstream more slowly. However, beaver ponds are not a perfect solution to floods or droughts. Their effects depend on soil, stream size, rainfall, and the number of dams. Scientists study each watershed before deciding whether beaver activity can help meet local water goals.
- ③ People sometimes remove beaver dams when ponds flood roads, fields, or buildings. In other places, communities install devices that let water pass through a dam at a controlled level. These tools can lower a pond without destroying the beavers' home. Managers may also protect trees with wire fencing, since beavers cut trees for bark and twigs to eat and for building material. Instead of treating every dam alike, communities can weigh the benefits of wetlands against problems at a particular site.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the key idea of paragraph 1? Include one detail that supports your answer.

2 Which two details from paragraph 2 support the idea that beaver dams can affect water during both dry periods and storms?

3 How do the details about removing dams and installing water-control devices support the key idea of paragraph 3?

4 What is the overall key idea of the passage? Explain your answer with one detail from the text.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that a beaver pond is near your town. Write exactly three sentences that recommend a response. Use at least two details from the passage and consider one possible problem.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In each paragraph, underline two details that support its most important idea. Then write a short key idea in the margin beside each paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the key idea of paragraph 1? Include one detail that supports your answer.	Beaver dams can create wetlands that reshape habitats. For example, the wetlands provide shelter and food for animals such as frogs, fish, insects, and water birds.
2	Which two details from paragraph 2 support the idea that beaver dams can affect water during both dry periods and storms?	Ponded water may soak into the soil and raise the nearby water table, and chains of ponds can hold back some storm water so it moves downstream more slowly.
3	How do the details about removing dams and installing water-control devices support the key idea of paragraph 3?	They show that communities can respond to beaver-related problems in different ways instead of treating every dam alike.
4	What is the overall key idea of the passage? Explain your answer with one detail from the text.	Beaver dams can benefit habitats and water systems, but their effects and management must be considered at each site. For example, dams can create wetlands but may also flood roads, fields, or buildings.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town should install a water-control device instead of removing the beaver dam immediately. The device could lower the pond while keeping the beavers' home, and the pond may help water soak into nearby soil. Because the dam could also flood nearby buildings, officials should study the site before choosing a final plan.

Accept equivalent key ideas that connect beaver dams' benefits with the need to consider local conditions and problems. For Part 3, responses should have exactly three sentences, a clear recommendation, at least two accurate text details, and one potential problem.