

River, Risk, Return

Trace how precise evidence develops a thoughtful central idea.

8.10.B.ii “developing an engaging idea reflecting depth of thought with specific facts, details, and examples;”

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author’s central claim. Circle three specific facts, details, or examples that build it, and write 1 beside the detail that adds a complication or limit; these moves show how the writer develops a thoughtful idea.

A Bridge Back to Salmon

- ① When two dams were removed from Washington State’s Elwha River, the project did more than change a landscape. It gave salmon a route to mountain streams they had been unable to reach for about a century. The 108-foot Elwha Dam and the 210-foot Glines Canyon Dam blocked access to more than 70 miles of habitat in Olympic National Park. Their removal, completed in 2014, shows that repairing an ecosystem can require people to undo an earlier decision.
- ② Before removal began in 2011, the dams supplied hydroelectric power, but they also trapped gravel and sand behind their walls. Those sediments are important because salmon need gravel beds for laying eggs. Workers took down the dams in stages, allowing the river to carry much of the stored sediment toward its mouth. Scientists watched the changing riverbanks, fish numbers, and water quality. This detail matters: restoration was not a quick fix, but a carefully observed process with risks as well as benefits.
- ③ Results appeared gradually. In 2014, researchers observed Chinook salmon above the former Elwha Dam site for the first time in more than 100 years. Vegetation began growing on newly exposed sediment, while some beaches changed as the river delivered sand and gravel to the coast. The project does not prove that every dam should be removed. Instead, it offers a deeper lesson: communities must weigh energy needs against the long-term health of rivers, wildlife, and nearby people.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What central idea does the author develop about restoring the Elwha River?

2 Give two specific facts that show how the dams affected salmon habitat.

3 How does the information about trapped gravel and sand add depth to the author’s idea?

4 What example from the final paragraph shows that the river changed after the dams were removed? Explain what it supports.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences about a community or environmental decision, real or imagined. State a clear idea, develop it with one precise fact and one concrete detail or example, and include a complication or trade-off that makes your idea more thoughtful.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the author's central claim. Circle three specific facts, details, or examples that build it, and write 1 beside the detail that adds a complication or limit; these moves show how the writer develops a thoughtful idea. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What central idea does the author develop about restoring the Elwha River?	Restoration can require undoing earlier choices and carefully weighing human needs against the long-term health of an ecosystem.
2	Give two specific facts that show how the dams affected salmon habitat.	The dams blocked salmon from mountain streams for about a century, and they blocked access to more than 70 miles of habitat.
3	How does the information about trapped gravel and sand add depth to the author's idea?	It explains that the dams affected salmon breeding because salmon need gravel beds for eggs, and it shows that removal involved managing sediment and risks.
4	What example from the final paragraph shows that the river changed after the dams were removed? Explain what it supports.	Researchers observed Chinook salmon above the former Elwha Dam site in 2014 for the first time in more than 100 years. This supports the idea that removing the dams reopened habitat.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should turn the unused 20-by-30-foot grass strip beside the gym into a pollinator garden, not simply add more decoration. Four raised beds could grow native flowers, and a bench near the sidewalk would let science classes record bee and butterfly visits. Although the garden would need watering and weeding, shared care would make the space a living lesson and a calmer place at arrival.

Accept central ideas that recognize both ecological restoration and the need to consider trade-offs. For Part 3, accept varied topics if the response has exactly three sentences, a clear idea, precise support, a concrete example, and a meaningful complication or trade-off.