

Facts That Fly

Study how precise evidence, careful wording, and explanation strengthen a model paragraph set.

10.W.3.A "Revise writing for clarity of content, accuracy, and adequate elaboration."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline specific facts, circle words or phrases that limit a claim, and number the sentences that explain why a fact matters. These marks show how the writer makes the content clear, accurate, and fully developed.

Peregrines Above the City

- ① On a spring morning, a peregrine falcon may perch on the edge of a downtown office tower. The bird is not lost. Peregrines naturally nest on high cliff ledges, so a building ledge can provide a similar place to raise young. From that height, the falcon watches for pigeons, starlings, and other birds flying below. Peregrines hunt in the air, often striking prey after a steep, fast dive called a stoop. A writer who simply says the bird is "fast" leaves readers wondering how its speed helps it survive in a city.
- ② Accuracy also matters when writers describe a falcon's body or behavior. Adult peregrines have dark backs, pale barred undersides, and a dark "mustache" mark below each eye. Their top diving speed is often reported as more than 200 miles per hour, but that figure describes a dive, not their usual level flight. A careful writer names the source of a number and avoids turning one observation into a rule. For example, seeing one falcon carry a pigeon does not prove that pigeons are its only food. Specific, qualified wording protects readers from a misleading conclusion.
- ③ Elaboration connects facts so that readers understand their importance. In the mid-twentieth century, the pesticide DDT contributed to peregrine declines in North America by causing eggshell thinning. After DDT was banned in the United States in 1972, recovery efforts included protecting nest sites and releasing captive-bred birds. Today, some cities place nest boxes on tall structures and use cameras to watch nests without approaching them. These details explain why a falcon on a tower can represent more than an unusual sight. It can also show how scientific research, law, and local care helped a species recover.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Which two details in paragraph 1 make the word “fast” clearer?

2 Why does paragraph 2 say that the speed figure describes a dive, not usual level flight?

3 What phrase in paragraph 2 keeps the writer from making an overly broad claim about a peregrine’s food? Explain what the phrase does.

4 How does paragraph 3 elaborate on the statement that DDT contributed to peregrine declines?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a 90-110-word informational paragraph about a local species, a familiar animal, or a natural process. Include a clear main claim, two specific facts a reader could verify, an explanation of why one detail matters, a qualifying word or phrase such as “may” or “often,” and the name of a source you consulted in parentheses.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline specific facts, circle words or phrases that limit a claim, and number the sentences that explain why a fact matters. These marks show how the writer makes the content clear, accurate, and fully developed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two details in paragraph 1 make the word “fast” clearer?	The falcon hunts in the air and strikes prey after a steep, fast dive called a stoop.
2	Why does paragraph 2 say that the speed figure describes a dive, not usual level flight?	It prevents readers from incorrectly thinking peregrines usually fly at more than 200 miles per hour.
3	What phrase in paragraph 2 keeps the writer from making an overly broad claim about a peregrine’s food? Explain what the phrase does.	“Does not prove that pigeons are its only food” shows that one observation cannot establish the bird’s entire diet.
4	How does paragraph 3 elaborate on the statement that DDT contributed to peregrine declines?	It explains that DDT caused eggshell thinning, then gives recovery actions, including protecting nest sites and releasing captive-bred birds.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Honeybees are important pollinators in many gardens and farms. As a bee moves from flower to flower, pollen can stick to its body and reach another flower, helping some plants make seeds and fruit. A worker honeybee may visit dozens of flowers on one foraging trip, although the number changes with weather and available blooms. This work matters because crops such as apples, almonds, and squash depend on animal pollination for much of their production. Protecting flowering habitat gives bees food during the growing season and can support pollination when crops are not blooming. (Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture)

Accept answers that accurately identify precise details, qualifying language, and explanation from the passage. For the paragraph, accept varied topics and wording if the response meets the word count and includes accurate, specific, qualified, and explained information with a named source.