Dam Effects

Find how details across paragraphs reveal an author's purpose.

4.RI.2.C "Explain the author's purpose for writing, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe based on the connections between particular sentences and paragraphs."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that explains why beavers build dams. Circle two details in paragraphs 1 and 2 that show what happens after a pond forms.

Why Beaver Dams Matter

1. Beavers are known for cutting branches and placing wood, mud, and stones across moving water. This wall is called a dam. When a dam slows a stream, water can spread behind it and form a pond. The pond gives beavers a deeper place to swim. It also makes it harder for many land animals to reach a beaver's lodge, or home.

2. A pond does more than protect beavers. Its water can provide homes for fish, frogs, turtles, and insects. Plants may grow along the pond's edge, where birds can find food and nesting places. The dam can also slow rushing water. During heavy rain, the pond may hold some water for a time instead of letting all of it flow downstream at once.

3. Beaver dams can change a small stream, but they are not built simply to make a pond for every animal. Beavers build dams mainly to create safer water near their homes. The ponds and slower water can also change the land nearby. For this reason, a beaver's work can affect an entire stream area, not only its own lodge.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the author mainly want to explain in this article?

2. What question does the author answer by explaining that a dam slows a stream and water spreads behind it?

3. How does the sentence about land animals having trouble reaching a lodge connect to the details about fish, frogs, plants, and birds?

4. Why does the author include the final paragraph?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 sentences explaining the author's purpose. Include one detail from the first paragraph and one detail from the second paragraph, then explain how the details work together.

ANSWER KEY

Dam Effects

GRADE 4 · 4.RI.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that explains why beavers build dams. Circle two details in paragraphs 1 and 2 that show what happens after a pond forms. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the author mainly want to explain in this article?	**The author wants to explain why beavers build dams and how the dams affect beavers, other living things, and water flow.**
2	What question does the author answer by explaining that a dam slows a stream and water spreads behind it?	**How does a beaver dam cause a pond to form?**
3	How does the sentence about land animals having trouble reaching a lodge connect to the details about fish, frogs, plants, and birds?	**The lodge detail shows how a pond helps protect beavers. The later details show that the pond also helps other living things.**
4	Why does the author include the final paragraph?	**The final paragraph connects the reason beavers build dams, safer water near their homes, to the larger effects dams can have on a stream area.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The author wants to explain why beavers build dams and why their work matters. The first paragraph says a pond makes it harder for land animals to reach a lodge, showing why beavers need safer water. The second paragraph shows that pond water can shelter other animals, so the author also explains effects beyond beavers.

Accept responses that identify the purpose as explaining why beavers build dams and the effects of dams. Students should use connected details from at least two paragraphs and explain how those details support the purpose.