Falcon Comeback Story

Trace how a central idea develops across an informational text.

7.RI.1.A "Create a main idea statement and provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop through the text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence in each paragraph that helps develop the central idea. Then number your underlined sentences 1, 2, and 3 to show how the ideas move from problem to response to outcome.

The Return of Peregrine Falcons

(1) During the mid-1900s, peregrine falcons nearly disappeared from much of the United States. The pesticide DDT built up in the birds' bodies after they ate contaminated prey. It caused females to lay eggs with thin shells, which often broke before chicks could hatch. By 1970, peregrines had disappeared from most places east of the Mississippi River. Their numbers had fallen sharply in other regions as well, alarming conservationists. Scientists, bird watchers, and government agencies began searching for ways to rebuild the population.

(2) In 1972, the United States banned DDT, removing a major threat to the falcons. Wildlife experts also raised peregrine chicks in captivity. When young birds were ready to fly, workers placed them in protected nesting boxes on tall buildings and cliffs. This method, called hacking, let the birds leave gradually while people supplied food nearby. Researchers attached bands to some falcons and tracked whether released birds survived, migrated, and returned to nest. The information helped programs improve their release sites and timing.

(3) Recovery took decades because peregrines do not begin breeding until they are about two years old, and each pair needs a safe nesting territory. Still, the combined efforts worked. In 1999, the United States removed the peregrine falcon from the endangered species list. Today, peregrines nest on skyscrapers, bridges, cliffs, and other high places across much of the country. They still face dangers, including collisions with buildings and loss of habitat, so scientists and local groups continue to monitor nests and protect important sites.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a one-sentence main idea statement for the passage.

2. How did DDT contribute to the decline of peregrine falcons? Explain the chain of events.

3. How does paragraph 2 develop the central idea? Describe two recovery actions and explain how they helped.

4. In two sentences, summarize how the peregrines' situation changed from 1970 to today. Include at least one action people took.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 55 to 70 word museum label about the peregrine falcon's recovery. State a main idea, then explain how the problem, the recovery actions, and the current situation connect. Use at least two transition words.

ANSWER KEY

Falcon Comeback Story

GRADE 7 · 7.RI.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence in each paragraph that helps develop the central idea. Then number your underlined sentences 1, 2, and 3 to show how the ideas move from problem to response to outcome. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write a one-sentence main idea statement for the passage.	**Coordinated conservation efforts, including banning DDT and releasing captive-raised birds, helped peregrine falcons recover in the United States, although continued protection is needed.**
2	How did DDT contribute to the decline of peregrine falcons? Explain the chain of events.	**Peregrines ate contaminated prey, so DDT built up in their bodies. The pesticide caused thin eggshells that often broke before chicks could hatch.**
3	How does paragraph 2 develop the central idea? Describe two recovery actions and explain how they helped.	**Paragraph 2 explains the response to the decline. Banning DDT removed a major threat, and raising, releasing, and tracking young falcons helped experts rebuild and improve the population.**
4	In two sentences, summarize how the peregrines' situation changed from 1970 to today. Include at least one action people took.	**By 1970, peregrines had disappeared from most places east of the Mississippi River because DDT caused thin eggshells. After DDT was banned and experts raised, released, and tracked birds, peregrines recovered enough to leave the endangered species list, though protection continues.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

People helped peregrine falcons recover by removing a harmful pesticide and supporting the birds as they returned to the wild. First, DDT weakened eggshells, so few chicks survived. Next, experts raised and released young falcons while studying their progress. As a result, the population grew, although monitoring continues because buildings and habitat loss can still harm the birds.

Accept main idea statements that include the falcons' decline, human conservation actions, and recovery or continuing risks. Accept summaries and museum labels that are accurate, chronological, and explain how key ideas connect rather than listing unrelated facts.