# Falcon Comeback Files

Trace how a scientific recovery story is built.

**7.RI.2.B** "Analyze how an author's word choice, organizational pattern, and language structure impact the author's purpose and support the reader's comprehension."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline one phrase that shows the problem, number the recovery steps in paragraph 2, and circle one word or phrase that creates hope. These marks will help you track how the author's organization and word choice guide your understanding.

### The Return of the Peregrine Falcon

1 On many city bridges, a small shadow dives past the traffic. It is a peregrine falcon, a bird that once nearly vanished from much of the United States. In the mid-1900s, the pesticide DDT built up in the falcons' prey. The chemical made many eggshells dangerously thin, so eggs broke before chicks could hatch. By the early 1970s, some regions had only a few nesting pairs. The problem was not simply fewer birds. It threatened a powerful hunter in city and coastal ecosystems.

2 Scientists and wildlife workers responded step by step. First, the United States banned DDT for most uses in 1972. Next, specialists raised young falcons in captivity and placed them in safe nest boxes, including boxes on tall buildings. Adults were later released near places with suitable food. These actions did not work like a quick switch. Falcons needed time to find mates, defend territories, and raise young. Still, the careful sequence gave the population a chance to grow instead of continuing its steep decline.

3 Today, peregrine falcons nest in many areas where they had disappeared, and people may spot them on skyscrapers, cliffs, or webcams. Their return shows why scientists watch entire food chains, not just one species. A pesticide can travel from insects to smaller birds and then to a predator. The falcon's recovery also shows that environmental rules and patient restoration can matter. The story begins with a loss, moves through solutions, and ends with evidence of recovery. That structure helps readers follow both the danger and the reason for hope.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the passage's order, from the falcons' decline to recovery actions and then to current evidence, support the author's purpose?

2. What effect do the words "dangerously thin" and "steep decline" have on the reader's understanding of the early problem?

3. Why does the author write, "These actions did not work like a quick switch. Falcons needed time"?

4. What idea does the phrase "not just one species" add to the author's purpose?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose another animal recovery effort or environmental problem you know. Write 3 or 4 sentences that begin with a problem, explain actions in time order, and end with an outcome or needed next step. Underline one precise or vivid phrase and circle one short sentence.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 7 · 7.RI.2.B

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase that shows the problem, number the recovery steps in paragraph 2, and circle one word or phrase that creates hope. These marks will help you track how the author's organization and word choice guide your understanding. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How does the passage's order, from the falcons' decline to recovery actions and then to current evidence, support the author's purpose? | **The order explains the problem, shows how people responded, and provides evidence that recovery efforts can work. It helps readers follow the cause, response, and result.** |
| 2 | What effect do the words "dangerously thin" and "steep decline" have on the reader's understanding of the early problem? | **They make the danger sound serious and urgent, helping readers understand how severely DDT harmed peregrine falcons.** |
| 3 | Why does the author write, "These actions did not work like a quick switch. Falcons needed time"? | **The comparison and short follow-up sentence emphasize that recovery was slow, not immediate. They help readers understand why patient, long-term work was necessary.** |
| 4 | What idea does the phrase "not just one species" add to the author's purpose? | **It expands the purpose beyond peregrine falcons by showing that scientists must consider the whole food chain when protecting ecosystems.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Southern sea otters declined along California's coast because fur hunters killed them for pelts. After protections limited hunting, their numbers rose in some areas. [Underline: By eating sea urchins, otters help kelp forests.] [Circle: Recovery takes time.]

For Part 3, accept any accurate topic with a clear problem-to-action-to-outcome structure, a marked precise phrase, and a marked short sentence.