Dam Changes

Trace how each paragraph builds an informational idea.

7.RI.3.A "Analyze ideas within and between selections including how specific sentences, paragraphs, or sections contribute to the development and meaning of ideas."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence in each paragraph that adds an important part to the idea that beaver dams change ecosystems. Number the underlined sentences 1, 2, and 3 to show how the idea develops from paragraph to paragraph.

How Beavers Change a Place

(1) A beaver does not need a bulldozer to reshape a landscape. Using its teeth and front paws, it cuts branches and piles wood, mud, and stones across a small stream. Water slows behind the barrier and spreads into a pond. This new pond can provide deeper water where beavers store food and escape some predators. The first change, however, is not just a new home for one animal. By holding back water, a single dam begins to change the conditions for many living things nearby.

(2) As water remains in the pond, sunlight reaches the shallow edges, and wetland plants may grow there. Insects use the plants and water, while frogs, fish, and birds can find food or shelter in and around the pond. The dam may also slow floodwater after heavy rain and help keep water in the area during dry periods. These effects show why scientists call beavers ecosystem engineers. Their building work changes physical features, and those features create opportunities for other species.

(3) Not every result of a beaver dam is helpful to people. A pond can cover a trail, flood a road, or drown trees that grew beside the original stream. When this happens, communities sometimes protect important structures with barriers or move beavers to another suitable site. This final information adds balance to the earlier benefits. It shows that changing an ecosystem can support many organisms while also creating problems that people must solve. Looking at both results helps readers understand the full effect of the beaver's work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the first sentence of paragraph 1 contribute to the passage?

2. How do the sentences about insects, frogs, fish, and birds develop the idea in paragraph 2?

3. How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1?

4. Why does the author include paragraph 3 after describing the benefits of beaver dams?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 sentences explaining how the author develops the idea of beavers changing ecosystems across all three paragraphs. Mention the job of each paragraph and include one quoted or paraphrased detail from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Dam Changes

GRADE 7 · 7.RI.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence in each paragraph that adds an important part to the idea that beaver dams change ecosystems. Number the underlined sentences 1, 2, and 3 to show how the idea develops from paragraph to paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the first sentence of paragraph 1 contribute to the passage?	**It introduces the surprising idea that a small beaver can reshape a landscape, setting up the passage's focus.**
2	How do the sentences about insects, frogs, fish, and birds develop the idea in paragraph 2?	**They give examples of other species that can use the pond, showing how the dam affects an ecosystem beyond the beaver.**
3	How does paragraph 2 build on paragraph 1?	**Paragraph 1 explains how a dam changes water and creates a pond. Paragraph 2 explains how that physical change affects plants, animals, and water conditions.**
4	Why does the author include paragraph 3 after describing the benefits of beaver dams?	**It adds possible problems for people, creating a balanced view of the dam's effects.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Paragraph 1 introduces the dam as a change to water and nearby conditions. Paragraph 2 develops that idea by showing that wetland plants and animals can use the new pond. Paragraph 3 adds that ponds can flood roads or trees, so the author presents both benefits and challenges.

Accept underlined sentences that identify the dam's ecosystem effects, including equivalent choices supported by a clear explanation. In the written response, look for an accurate sequence from physical change, to effects on organisms, to balanced effects on people.