Clues Above City

Use nearby details and sentence structure to unlock meaning.

7.RV.1.B "Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) to determine the meaning of words or phrases."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four words or phrases whose meanings you can infer from the passage. Circle the nearby words or details that give you clues to each meaning.

Falcons on the Skyline

1 At dawn, a peregrine falcon perched on a downtown office tower. Below, traffic streamed through the streets, but the bird remained motionless, watching. Its narrow wings and hooked beak made it look built for speed. When a pigeon rose from a nearby roof, the falcon dropped in a steep dive. The hunt happened so quickly that most people never noticed the hunter above them. For the pigeons, however, the silent shadow was a warning from above.

2 These falcons were once scarce in many North American cities. A pesticide called DDT made eggshells thin, so nests often failed before chicks could hatch. After DDT was banned in the United States in 1972, populations began a gradual recovery. Biologists also placed young falcons in protected nest boxes on tall buildings. The boxes gave the birds a secure place to raise chicks, while the buildings copied the high cliffs where peregrines naturally nest. Today, volunteers watch some nests with cameras and report each chick that survives.

3 City life still brings hazards. Glass windows can confuse a fast-flying falcon, and loose netting may trap its feet. Some building managers respond by adding window markers or covering open shafts during nesting season. Other people leave food scraps outside, which attract pigeons and, in turn, the falcons that hunt them. This food chain can seem helpful to peregrines, yet it creates a dependence on human waste. A healthier city offers clean nesting sites and protects native birds, rather than supplying an endless buffet of discarded food.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 2, what does scarce mean? What details in the paragraph help you infer its meaning?

2. What does the phrase gradual recovery mean in paragraph 2? Use the events before and after the phrase to explain.

3. In paragraph 3, what does hazards mean? Which two details in the next sentence act as context clues?

4. What does dependence on human waste mean in paragraph 3? Which phrase helps you infer the meaning?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about protecting an animal. In the first sentence, use one challenging word and include context clues to its meaning. In the second sentence, state what the word means and name the clue that helped you infer it.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four words or phrases whose meanings you can infer from the passage. Circle the nearby words or details that give you clues to each meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 2, what does scarce mean? What details in the paragraph help you infer its meaning?	**Scarce means few or not plentiful. The nests often failed, and the population later began a recovery.**
2	What does the phrase gradual recovery mean in paragraph 2? Use the events before and after the phrase to explain.	**It means the falcon population increased slowly after DDT was banned and nests were protected.**
3	In paragraph 3, what does hazards mean? Which two details in the next sentence act as context clues?	**Hazards means dangers. The details say windows can confuse falcons and netting can trap their feet.**
4	What does dependence on human waste mean in paragraph 3? Which phrase helps you infer the meaning?	**It means relying on human waste for food or for the pigeons they hunt. The phrase "supplying an endless buffet of discarded food" is a clue.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At the beach, volunteers removed plastic bags that obstructed the hatchlings' path to the sea, blocking their way. From the words "blocking their way," I infer that obstructed means prevented or blocked.

Accept equivalent meanings when students use accurate nearby details as evidence. For Part 3, accept a reasonable inference if the first sentence provides clear context clues and the second sentence explains them.