Falcons Above Cities

Trace central ideas and connections in an informational text.

8.DSR.B "Proficiently read and comprehend a variety of literary and informational texts that exhibit complexity at the higher range of the grades 6-8 band (See the Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis charts for determining complexity in the..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence in each paragraph that you think is most important to the passage's message. Circle words or phrases that show cause, contrast, or an example so you can follow how the author connects ideas.

Peregrines Return

1. In the mid-twentieth century, peregrine falcons nearly disappeared from much of North America. The pesticide DDT accumulated in the birds they ate and caused many females to lay eggs with unusually thin shells. Eggs broke during incubation, so fewer chicks survived. After the United States banned most uses of DDT in 1972, biologists also raised young falcons in captivity and released them at suitable sites. These efforts helped populations recover, though recovery required decades rather than a single season.

2. Cities became important recovery sites for some peregrines. A ledge on a tall building can resemble the cliff nests that the birds use in less developed places, while pigeons and other city birds provide prey. Researchers and volunteers sometimes watch known nests, place bands on chicks, and report observations to wildlife agencies. Yet an urban location is not automatically safe. Glass collisions, construction near nests, and limited nesting ledges can endanger falcons or disturb breeding pairs. A city population therefore depends on both suitable habitat and careful human decisions.

3. Monitoring does more than count birds. When observers record the dates that eggs hatch, the number of chicks that fledge, and the places adults hunt, they can notice patterns that a single sighting would hide. For example, repeated nest failures near a building project may lead officials to adjust work schedules during the breeding season. At the same time, a falcon seen on one tower does not prove that the whole regional population is secure. Long-term records help scientists judge whether a recovery is stable and identify new threats before losses become severe.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What central idea does the passage develop about peregrine falcon recovery? Use details from at least two paragraphs.

2. How does paragraph 1 explain the connection between DDT and the decline of peregrine falcons?

3. According to paragraph 2, what two broad conditions are needed for a successful city peregrine population?

4. Why does the author contrast one falcon sighting with long-term records in paragraph 3?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write 3 to 4 sentences explaining how the passage develops the idea that wildlife recovery requires long-term action. Use one detail from paragraph 1 and one detail from paragraph 3, and explain how the details work together.

ANSWER KEY

Falcons Above Cities

GRADE 8 · 8.DSR.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence in each paragraph that you think is most important to the passage's message. Circle words or phrases that show cause, contrast, or an example so you can follow how the author connects ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What central idea does the passage develop about peregrine falcon recovery? Use details from at least two paragraphs.	**Peregrine recovery depends on long-term conservation work, suitable habitat, and continued monitoring. The DDT ban and captive releases aided recovery, while cities require careful management and long-term records reveal whether populations remain stable.**
2	How does paragraph 1 explain the connection between DDT and the decline of peregrine falcons?	**DDT accumulated in the birds falcons ate, causing females to lay thin-shelled eggs that broke during incubation, so fewer chicks survived.**
3	According to paragraph 2, what two broad conditions are needed for a successful city peregrine population?	**The population needs suitable habitat and careful human decisions.**
4	Why does the author contrast one falcon sighting with long-term records in paragraph 3?	**The contrast shows that one sighting cannot prove a regional population is secure, while long-term records reveal population patterns, stability, and threats.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The passage develops the idea that recovery takes long-term action, not a quick fix. Paragraph 1 explains that DDT harmed falcon eggs and that recovery took decades after the ban and releases. Paragraph 3 adds that scientists need long-term records to tell whether recovery is stable and to find new threats.

Accept responses that accurately synthesize ideas across the passage, rather than listing isolated facts. For the open task, students should use a relevant detail from each required paragraph and explain the connection to long-term recovery.