Builders of Change

Trace how details build a clear main idea and summary.

8.RI.1.A "Create a main idea statement and provide an accurate summary, clarifying the relationships among the key details and ideas or events."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show a cause or effect. Number three details you would use in a summary, choosing one from each paragraph.

How Beavers Change Streams

1. Beavers are often called ecosystem engineers because their building changes the flow of water. Using branches, mud, and stones, a beaver can build a dam across a small stream. Water then spreads behind the dam, forming a pond or wetland. These slower, wider waters can soak into nearby soil instead of racing downstream. A beaver family also builds a lodge, usually in or beside the pond, where it can rest and raise its young with some protection from predators.

2. The new wetland affects more than beavers. Pond water gives frogs, fish, insects, and water birds places to feed or breed. Plants growing along the edges can hold soil in place, which may reduce erosion. During dry periods, water stored in the pond may keep part of the stream flowing. However, a dam can also flood trails, roads, or fields. When beavers cut trees for food and building material, people may worry about the loss of valued trees.

3. Because beaver activity brings both benefits and conflicts, communities use several responses. In some places, workers install devices that let water pass through a dam slowly, lowering a pond before it reaches a road. Landowners may wrap wire around tree trunks to prevent chewing. Where habitat has been damaged, wildlife agencies have also returned beavers to suitable streams. These choices show that people can limit specific problems while keeping wetlands and the services they provide.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

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

2. How does a beaver dam change a stream? Explain the cause-and-effect relationship using two details from paragraph 1.

3. Name one benefit and one conflict caused by beaver activity. How do both details support the passage's main idea?

4. How does paragraph 3 connect to the ideas in paragraphs 1 and 2?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 45 to 60 word summary of the passage. State the main idea and explain how beaver activity leads to both benefits and conflicts, then include community responses.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that show a cause or effect. Number three details you would use in a summary, choosing one from each paragraph. 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.	**Beavers reshape streams into wetlands that benefit ecosystems but can create problems for people, so communities use methods that reduce conflicts while preserving wetland benefits.**
2	How does a beaver dam change a stream? Explain the cause-and-effect relationship using two details from paragraph 1.	**A dam blocks a small stream, causing water to spread behind it into a pond or wetland. The slower, wider water can soak into nearby soil instead of rushing downstream.**
3	Name one benefit and one conflict caused by beaver activity. How do both details support the passage's main idea?	**A benefit is that wetlands provide places for wildlife to feed or breed, while a conflict is that dams can flood roads, trails, or fields. Together, these details show why beaver activity can help ecosystems while causing problems for people.**
4	How does paragraph 3 connect to the ideas in paragraphs 1 and 2?	**Paragraph 3 responds to the benefits and conflicts described earlier by explaining ways communities can reduce problems while keeping beaver wetlands.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Beavers build dams that slow streams and create ponds or wetlands. These wetlands support wildlife, hold soil, and store water, but dams and tree cutting can also damage roads, fields, trails, and valued trees. Communities respond with water-control devices, tree protection, and reintroduction in suitable habitats.

Accept main idea statements that connect beavers' stream changes with ecological benefits, human conflicts, and responses. Summaries should be 45 to 60 words and accurately connect causes, effects, conflicts, and solutions.