

Weather Changes Life

Trace how weather changes food, water, shelter, and habitat.

4.4.b “common and extreme weather events affect ecosystems; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each weather event. Circle each effect on plants or animals, then write the same number beside an event and its effects.

When Weather Shifts

- ① Weather is part of every ecosystem. A rainy spring can fill ponds and help plants grow. More plant food can support insects, frogs, and birds. A dry week may shrink puddles, so some animals travel to find water. These common weather changes can affect living things, but ecosystems often recover when normal weather returns soon.
- ② Extreme weather can bring bigger, faster changes. After a hurricane, heavy rain and strong winds may flood a coastal forest. Floodwater can cover animal nests, while wind can break branches and knock down trees. Salt water pushed inland can harm plants that usually grow in fresh soil. Animals may lose shelter and food, and some move away until the area begins to recover.
- ③ An extreme drought can also change an ecosystem. When very little rain falls for many months, soil and plants become dry. A lightning-caused wildfire may spread quickly through dry grass and trees. Fire can destroy plant cover and animal homes. Later, new plants may grow in the burned area, but recovery can take years and depends on rain, soil, and surviving seeds.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How can a rainy spring affect plants and animals in an ecosystem?

2 What might some animals do when a dry week shrinks puddles? Why?

3 Name two ways a hurricane can affect a coastal forest ecosystem.

4 How does a drought make a wildfire more likely to change an ecosystem?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a weather event not described in the passage. Write two sentences that tell whether it is common or extreme and explain two ways it could affect an ecosystem.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each weather event. Circle each effect on plants or animals, then write the same number beside an event and its effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How can a rainy spring affect plants and animals in an ecosystem?	It can fill ponds and help plants grow. More plant food can support insects, frogs, and birds.
2	What might some animals do when a dry week shrinks puddles? Why?	They may travel to find water.
3	Name two ways a hurricane can affect a coastal forest ecosystem.	Heavy rain can flood the forest and cover animal nests. Strong winds can break branches and knock down trees. Salt water can also harm plants in fresh soil, and animals may lose food and shelter.
4	How does a drought make a wildfire more likely to change an ecosystem?	A drought makes soil, grass, and trees dry. A lightning-caused wildfire can then spread quickly and destroy plant cover and animal homes.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A sudden hard freeze is an extreme weather event when spring flowers are growing. It can damage flower buds, leaving bees with less nectar, and it can reduce food for animals that eat seeds or insects.

Accept accurate cause-and-effect explanations that identify a weather event as common or extreme. For Part 3, accept reasonable ecosystem effects on plants, animals, food, water, or shelter.