

Water's Journey

Trace how land, water, and living things connect in a watershed.

6.8 "The student will investigate and understand that land and water have roles in watershed systems. Key ideas include a watershed is composed of the land that drains into a body of water..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline phrases that describe a natural process or human activity affecting watershed health, and circle each living or nonliving factor named in the last paragraph.

From Hillside to Bay

- ① After a spring rain, water may slide from a school field into a ditch, then enter a creek. The land area where all water drains to the same creek, river, lake, or bay is called a watershed. Hills and ridges often form watershed boundaries because they direct water downhill in different directions. Soil, plants, streams, and paved surfaces are all parts of a watershed. What happens on land can affect the water that collects downstream.
- ② Virginia contains several watershed systems. The Potomac, Rappahannock, York, and James River watersheds carry water toward the Chesapeake Bay. Other Virginia land drains toward the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, or North Carolina sounds. The Chesapeake Bay is an estuary, a place where fresh river water mixes with salty ocean water. Its wetlands and shallow waters provide habitat and nursery areas for many animals. The bay also supports fishing, recreation, shipping, and nearby communities in Virginia and beyond.
- ③ Watershed health changes when water moves across land. Rain and stream flow can naturally carry soil into a stream, especially after a storm. Plants along streambanks hold soil in place and can filter some pollution. People can improve water quality by planting trees, picking up pet waste, and reducing fertilizer use. However, construction, leaking vehicles, litter, and too much fertilizer can add sediment, oil, trash, or nutrients to waterways. Living things, such as plants and fish, and nonliving factors, such as water, soil, and sunlight, interact in every watershed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the passage define a watershed?

2 According to paragraph 2, name two Virginia river watersheds that carry water toward the Chesapeake Bay.

3 What makes the Chesapeake Bay an estuary? Name one function the bay provides.

4 Name one natural process and one human activity from the passage that can harm watershed health.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine a creek beside a park. Write three sentences that describe one human activity, one natural process or factor, and one action that would protect creek health. Explain how each connects land to water.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline phrases that describe a natural process or human activity affecting watershed health, and circle each living or nonliving factor named in the last paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the passage define a watershed?	A watershed is the land area where all water drains to the same creek, river, lake, or bay.
2	According to paragraph 2, name two Virginia river watersheds that carry water toward the Chesapeake Bay.	Any two: Potomac, Rappahannock, York, or James River watersheds.
3	What makes the Chesapeake Bay an estuary? Name one function the bay provides.	Fresh river water mixes with salty ocean water there. It provides habitat and nursery areas, or supports fishing, recreation, shipping, or nearby communities.
4	Name one natural process and one human activity from the passage that can harm watershed health.	A natural process is rain or stream flow carrying soil into a stream. A human activity may be construction, leaking vehicles, littering, or using too much fertilizer.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rain washes loose soil from a bare park slope into the creek, making the water cloudy. If visitors leave litter near the path, runoff can carry it to the creek. Park workers can plant native grasses on the slope to hold soil and keep runoff cleaner.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect land, flowing water, and watershed health. For question 2, accept any two of the four river watersheds named in paragraph 2.