Name: Date: Score: / 6

Beavers: Nature's Engineers: Comprehension

Nonfiction: Animals · about 195 words

Read the passage. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

Beavers: Nature's Engineers

Beavers are the largest rodents in North America, and they are some of the best builders in the animal kingdom. With their sharp orange front teeth, beavers can chew through a small tree in just a few minutes. Their teeth never stop growing, so chewing wood keeps them from getting too long.

Beavers build dams across streams using branches, rocks, and mud. The dam blocks the flowing water and creates a calm pond. In the middle of the pond, beavers build a home called a lodge. The lodge has underwater entrances, which keep out predators like wolves and coyotes. Inside, there is a dry room above the water where the beaver family sleeps and raises its young.

Beaver dams change the land around them. The new ponds become wetlands, which provide homes for fish, frogs, ducks, and insects. Wetlands also soak up floodwater and filter dirt from streams. Because they change their environment so much, scientists call beavers a keystone species. Without them, many other animals would struggle to survive.

Beavers also have special features for life in the water. Their flat, paddle-shaped tails help them steer, and their back feet are webbed for swimming.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?

   A. the history of rodents B. why wolves hunt beavers C. how beavers build and change their environment D. how to cut down trees

2. **Detail:** Why does chewing wood help beavers?

   A. Their teeth never stop growing. B. It makes them strong swimmers. C. It keeps them warm. D. It helps them see.

3. **Detail:** What is a beaver's home called?

   A. a den B. a nest C. a lodge D. a burrow

4. **Inference:** Why does the lodge have underwater entrances?

   A. to keep out predators B. to let in light C. to catch fish D. to keep it cool

5. **Vocabulary:** A keystone species is one that...

   A. is very small B. lives only in the mountains C. many other living things depend on D. eats only plants

6. **Detail:** Name two features that help beavers live in the water.

ANSWER KEY

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