

What Happens When It Rains

By Vinnie Rotondaro



The next time you hear storm clouds off in the distance, stop what you're doing (if you have the time, of course) and take a look outside.

Try to spot some dirt. If you're in the city, look for a flower-bed along the sidewalk. If you're in the suburbs, look out onto your backyard. If you're in the country, just look out any-old-where.

You can see the flashes of lightning. You can hear the bursts of thunder. Pretty soon, it starts – the pitter-patter of the rain hitting the leaves, and the ground and the roof above your head. The storm cloud nears. The rain falls harder. Now look back at that dirt.

It's turning into mud. Maybe you can't see it so well if there's grass on top, but go outside and stick your finger into it if you have any doubts. You'll see. It's wet, squishy and it's moving all around. It's mud.

Before it rains, a flower bed or tree bed might be bumpy and craggy, with clumps of dry soil. But give it a few minutes in the rainstorm, let it turn into mud. It'll even out. Your backyard might have a hole in the ground. If it rains hard enough, that hole won't be there too long. It'll fill up with soil. And out in the country, out where there's dirt everywhere? The whole landscape can change. Over a very long time, mountains can wear down and ravines can fill up with rocks and soil. And there's a name for this process.

It's called erosion. Erosion is when rocks and soil of the Earth's surface get broken into smaller and smaller pieces by wind or water flow and moved to other locations.

It is a good thing that it rains, even though it means we can't play outside sometimes. Every living thing on the planet needs water to survive, and many animals rely on the rain for their drinking water. Some birds rely on the rain to make puddles for their drinking water. And you do like birds, don't you?

But get this. Birds also rely on the rain for their food. Have you ever noticed that when it rains and the ground gets muddy, earthworms start to come out? Earthworms like being wet and stay deep down in the ground when it's not raining because there is more moisture down there. Heck, they couldn't get up to the surface even if they wanted to when it's not raining because the earth is so dry and stiff. But when it rains, and the ground moves around a lot more easily, and earthworms can wiggle their way up, through the mud and water, they pop their little heads out. And that's precisely when the birds swoop down to feast.

Other animals rely on the rain, but for different reasons. Frogs need the rainwater to grow. Like worms, frogs have to be wet. If there were no rain, there would be no frogs. No ribbet-ribbet. No pitter-patter. No nothing.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does every living thing on the planet need to survive?

- A** erosion
- B** mud
- C** water
- D** thunder

2. The writer explains different effects of rain. How does rain help cause erosion of the ground?

- A** Earthworms start to come out of the ground when the ground gets muddy after it rains.
- B** Heavy rain fills up bird nests.
- C** Rain helps break down soil and rocks into small pieces.
- D** Soil may be dry before a rainfall.

3. Rain is important to birds, frogs, and humans.

What evidence from the text best supports this conclusion?

- A** Birds rely on the rain to make puddles for drinking water.
- B** Before it rains, a flower bed or tree bed might be filled with clumps of dry soil.
- C** Over a very long time, mountains can wear down and ravines can fill up with rocks and soil.
- D** Every living thing on the planet needs water to survive.

4. What would happen to birds if it didn't rain for a long time?

- A** Frogs would start eating birds.
- B** Birds would likely be thirsty and hungry.
- C** Birds would stop flying altogether.
- D** Birds would be scared of bursts of thunder.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A** how holes in the ground fill up with soil when it rains
- B** why birds like rainwater
- C** how rain affects the landscape and animals of the environment
- D** how to find mud in a flower-bed

6. Read the following sentence: "Before it rains, a flower bed or tree bed might be bumpy and **craggy**, with clumps of dry soil."

The word **craggy** most nearly means

- A smooth
- B uneven
- C wet
- D soft

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ we might not be able to play outside when it rains, rain is a good thing.

- A Although
- B On the other hand
- C Finally
- D For example

8. Without rain, animals would not survive.

Use evidence from the passage to support this statement.

9. How can erosion change a landscape over time?

10. After a rainstorm we can see how water is important to the landscape and the animals that live there. Describe some ways the water left by the rain impacts the landscape and animals.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 660

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Use evidence from the passage to support this statement.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary but could include:

- Every living thing on the planet needs water to survive.
- Birds rely on the rain for their food and to make puddles for their drinking water.
- Frogs need the rainwater to grow.
- Many animals rely on the rain for their drinking water.

9. How can erosion change a landscape over time?

Suggested answer: Erosion can fill ravines with rocks and soil. It can also wear down mountains and break down rocks and soil of the Earth's surface and move them to other locations.

10. After a rainstorm we can see how water is important to the landscape and the animals that live there. Describe some ways the water left by the rain impacts the landscape and animals.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary but could include:

- Rainstorms can cause erosion, changing the landscape.
- Rain makes puddles for animals to drink from.
- Rain brings earthworms to the surface of the ground which birds can then eat.
- Frogs need water from the rain to live in.
- Birds need water from the rain to drink.