Informational Vocabulary

Grade 3 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

How Rivers Shape the Land

A river may look calm, but it is always at work. Day after day, moving water scrapes away tiny bits of soil and rock. Over time, this changes the shape of the land. Scientists call this process erosion.

Erosion begins with the current. In a river, all the water moves in one direction, from higher land to lower land. A fast current pushes harder than a slow one. After a big storm, the current can even roll stones along the bottom.

As the water rushes past, it scrapes against the river's banks. Bits of dirt and rock break loose from the sides. Over many years, the river slowly grows wider.

The water carries off these loose bits of dirt and rock. This material is called sediment. It can be as fine as mud or as large as pebbles. A fast river can carry a heavy load of it. That is why some rivers look brown instead of clear.

Where does all that sediment go? When the river slows down, it can no longer hold its load. The sand and mud sink and settle on the bottom. Scientists say the river deposits the sediment there. Over time, these piles build up into new land. At the mouth of a large river, where it meets the sea, the new land can spread out like a fan. It is called a delta.

Most of these changes are gradual. You could watch a river all day and never notice them. Yet after thousands of years, the results are huge. The Colorado River cut down through layer after layer of rock. Little by little, it carved the Grand Canyon, more than a mile deep.

People who live near rivers watch for erosion. They plant trees and grasses along the banks. The roots hold the soil in place, so less of it washes away.

1. Using clues in paragraph 1, what does 'erosion' mean?
   - the drying of land in hot weather
   - the quick building up of land
   - the slow wearing away of land
   - the flooding of land after storms

2. In paragraph 2, what does 'current' mean?
   - happening right now
   - the stones on a river bottom
   - the rain from a big storm
   - water flowing in one direction

3. In paragraph 3, what are a river's 'banks'?
   - places where people keep money
   - piles of sand in the middle
   - the land on each side of a river
   - deep holes in the river bottom

4. Which phrase from the text is the best clue for 'sediment'?
   - pushes harder than a slow one
   - where it meets the sea
   - as fine as mud or as large as pebbles
   - the river slowly grows wider

5. In paragraph 5, what does 'deposits' mean?
picks up and carries cuts deep into rock drops and leaves behind puts money into a bank

6. In paragraph 5, what is the 'mouth' of a river?
the place where the river begins
the part of a face used to talk
the deepest part of the river
the place where it meets the sea

7. Using clues in paragraph 6, what does 'gradual' mean?
too small to matter happening little by little easy to see in one day happening all at once

8. Which word from the text names new land shaped like a fan where a river meets the sea?
delta bank current canyon

9. In paragraph 4, a fast river carries a heavy 'load.' What is the load?
the width of the river the sediment it carries the speed of the water a box on a truck

10. In paragraph 6, the river 'carved' the Grand Canyon. What does carved mean here?
painted in layers filled with water built with bricks cut and shaped slowly

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Answer Key - Grade 3 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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