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Grade 5 Reading Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

Glaciers: Rivers of Ice

A glacier is a huge mass of ice that moves slowly over land. Glaciers cover about one tenth of Earth's land today. They hold most of the world's fresh water. Some glaciers are as small as a city park. Others are bigger than whole countries.

How a Glacier Forms

A glacier begins as snow. In very cold places, more snow falls each winter than melts each summer. Year after year, the snow piles up. The weight of the new layers presses down on the old ones. Over time, the buried snow turns into thick, solid ice.

How Glaciers Move

When a glacier becomes heavy enough, it starts to flow downhill. Its own weight pushes it forward. Most glaciers move only a few inches or feet each day. A few fast glaciers in Greenland can travel more than 100 feet in a single day. As the ice bends and stretches, deep cracks called crevasses can open on its surface.

Photo caption: Long dark stripes run down the Kaskawulsh Glacier in Canada. The stripes are rocks and dirt that the ice picked up along the way.

Shaping the Land

As glaciers move, they scrape the ground beneath them. They carry rocks of every size, from grains of sand to boulders as big as houses. Over thousands of years, glaciers carve deep valleys shaped like the letter U. When glaciers melt, they leave piles of rock called moraines.

Sidebar: A Glacier Park
Glacier National Park in Montana was named for its many glaciers. In 1850, the park had about 150 glaciers. Today, only about 25 remain. Scientists measure them every year to track how fast they are shrinking.

Glaciers Today

Many glaciers are melting faster than new snow can replace them. As they shrink, they add water to the oceans. In some mountain regions, people depend on glacier meltwater for drinking and farming. Scientists study glaciers to learn how Earth's climate is changing.

Table: Three Famous Glaciers
Lambert Glacier, Antarctica: about 250 miles long
Kaskawulsh Glacier, Canada: about 44 miles long
Perito Moreno Glacier, Argentina: about 19 miles long

Glossary
boulder: a very large rock
moraine: a pile of rock and soil left behind by a glacier

1. Under which heading would you learn how snow turns into ice?
   How Glaciers Move How a Glacier Forms Glaciers Today Shaping the Land

2. According to the photo caption, what are the dark stripes on the Kaskawulsh Glacier?
   rocks and dirt the ice picked up
   paths made by visiting scientists
   cracks where the ice is melting
   streams of water on top of the ice

3. Use the table. Where is the Perito Moreno Glacier?
   Antarctica Canada Argentina Montana

4. What information does the sidebar add to the text?
   how snow is pressed into solid ice
   how many glaciers one park has lost since 1850
   how glaciers carve deep valleys
   how fast some glaciers in Greenland move

5. Use the glossary. What is a moraine?
   a pile of rock and soil left by a glacier
   a very large rock
   a glacier that moves quickly
   a valley shaped like a U

6. Which section would best help a reader learn why scientists study glaciers?
   How a Glacier Forms Shaping the Land Glaciers Today How Glaciers Move

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet

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