ELearning 3rd Grade Science DAY 3 *NOTE: This assignment is 3 pages long.

Why are Barrier Islands Important?



An island is a piece of land surrounded by water. Islands are located all over the world in oceans, rivers, and lakes. Barrier islands are special. They are located in the ocean, near the mainland. One area where barrier islands can be found is in the Gulf of Mexico.

Barrier islands can form in different ways, depending on the area. In the Gulf of Mexico, ocean waves push dirt and sand toward land. Some of the dirt and sand gets pulled back as waves pull back from the beach. When enough dirt and sand get pushed to the same spot, a barrier island forms. Through this process, barrier islands can change and even move.

Barrier islands are important to wildlife. Marine animals like oysters, crabs, and shrimp may live along the islands. Birds like pelicans, terns, and gulls live on the islands and raise chicks. Migrating birds depend on the islands too. Barrier islands are also important to people. The islands help protect the mainland from big storms. The islands actually **absorb** energy from storms. When the storms arrive on the mainland, they have less power and do less harm. But sometimes, big storms such as hurricanes **destroy** barrier islands. That can be bad news for animals and for people.

Along the **coast** of Louisiana, some barrier islands are in trouble. These islands were first formed partly by dirt and sand that came from the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River flows into the Gulf of Mexico. It used to push dirt into the ocean, also. But after big storms caused flooding in the city of New Orleans, engineers worked to change the flow of the water. The changes they made have helped stop some flooding. But the changes also keep dirt from flowing from the river into the ocean. Now, there's less dirt for the ocean waves to move. As a result, some of the barrier islands are disappearing. This worries the people who live along the **coast**. These people understand that barrier islands protect the mainland. If the islands all disappear, the **coast** will be in more danger when big storms happen.

People are working to add dirt and sand to some of the islands in the area. The ocean will keep moving dirt and sand along the barrier islands, too. With the people's help, the ocean will have more dirt to move. The islands will **remain** in place, doing their important work. The birds and marine animals will continue to have homes. And barrier islands will keep protecting the **coast**.

Comprehension Questions

1. What is a barrier island made of?

A. mud and rocks

B. wood and steel

C. coral and kelp

D. dirt and sand

2. What is one example the author gives for why barrier islands are important to people?

A. They help protect people on the mainland from storms.

B. They give people on the mainland a fun place to hang out.

C. They help people on the mainland build more houses.

D. They protect people on the mainland from sharks and other animals.

3. Read the following sentences from the text.

Answer

"These islands were first formed partly by dirt and sand that came from the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River flows into the Gulf of Mexico. It used to push dirt into the ocean, also. But after big storms caused flooding in the city of New Orleans, engineers worked to change the flow of the water. The changes they made have helped stop some flooding. But the changes also keep dirt from flowing from the river into the ocean. Now, there's less dirt for the ocean waves to move. As a result, some of the barrier islands are disappearing."

What do you know about barrier islands from this information?

A. Because barrier islands are formed in the ocean, they need a lot of salt water to stay in place.

B. Even though barrier islands are formed in the ocean, changes to rivers can hurt them.

C. Barrier islands can be dangerous for ships that are sailing at night or in bad storms.

D. Barrier islands usually disappear a few months after they are formed in the ocean.

4. What might happen if a barrier island disappears?

Answer

A. The people living on the mainland could be hurt more easily by storms.

B. The people living on the mainland might be happier and healthier.

C. The people living on the mainland would have to move somewhere else.

D. The people living on the mainland would have to build new homes.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

Answer

A. Barrier islands are important sometimes, but most people are not worried about them and think they should disappear.

B. Barrier islands are formed when dirt and sand gets pushed towards shore by the ocean, forming an island near the coast that can move.

C. Barrier islands are important to the people and animals that live near them, so people are working to protect them from disappearing.

D. The best way to protect barrier islands is to change the flow of water in rivers so that less dirt is coming onto the island.