

Active Reading

Section: Marine Ecosystems

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Estuaries support many marine organisms because estuaries receive plenty of light for photosynthesis and plenty of nutrients for plants and animals. Rivers supply nutrients that have been washed from the land, and because the water is shallow, sunlight can reach all the way to the bottom of the estuary. The light and nutrients support large populations of rooted plants as well as plankton. The plankton in turn provides food for larger animals, such as fish. Dolphins, manatees, seals, and other mammals often feed on fish and plants in estuaries. Oysters, barnacles, and clams live anchored to marsh grass or rocks and feed by filtering plankton out of the water. Organisms that live in estuaries are able to tolerate variations in salinity because the salt content of the water varies as fresh water and salt water mix when tides go in and out.

Estuaries provide protected harbors, access to the ocean, and connection to a river. As a result, many of the world's major ports are built on estuaries. Of the 10 largest urban areas in the world, 6 were built on estuaries. These 6 cities are Tokyo, New York, Shanghai, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Bombay.

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS

One reading skill is the ability to identify the main idea of a passage. The main idea is the main focus or key idea. Frequently, a main idea is accompanied by supporting information that offers detailed facts about main ideas.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

1. What types of organisms do estuaries support?

2. How do oysters, barnacles, and clams feed?

3. What do dolphins, seals, and other mammals eat?

4. What two ingredients make estuaries suitable for plants and animals?

5. How many of the world's 10 largest urban areas are built on estuaries? List them.

Active Reading *continued*

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

6. Write a title for the first paragraph of the reading selection.

7. Write a title for the second paragraph of the reading selection.

RECOGNIZING CAUSE AND EFFECT

One reading skill is the ability to recognize cause and effect.

Read each question and write the answer in the space provided.

8. Because water in an estuary is shallow,

9. Because rivers carry water from places inland to an estuary,

10. Because estuaries receive plenty of light and nutrients,

11. Because the light and nutrients support plankton,

12. Because estuaries provide a connection to rivers, ocean access, and protected harbors,

13. Because the salt content of the water in an estuary varies as fresh and salt water mix with the changing tides,
