

What Happens When It Rains

By Vinnie Rotondaro



The next time you see 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 wait till the rain stops, then 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 might not be there too long. It might fill up with water and 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 are moved to other locations after having been broken into smaller and smaller pieces by wind or water flow.

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. 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. In fact, they wouldn't come up to the surface when it's not raining because the soil near the surface is too dry for them. But when it rains, earthworms wiggle their way up, through the mud and water. They move around on the surface to another location. And that's precisely when the birds swoop down to feast.

Rain benefits many animals, and it plays a role in changing the surface of the earth. Maybe during the next rainstorm, you can spot a bird swooping down to get some earthworms; or maybe after years of rainstorms, you can see a change in the landscape from the rain.

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 that are then moved to another location.
 - D) Soil may be dry before a rainfall.

3. Rain is important to birds, earthworms, 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) Birds would be scared of bursts of thunder.
 - B) Birds would stop flying altogether.
 - C) Birds would likely be thirsty and hungry.
 - D) Earthworms would start eating birds.

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.
