

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

◀ **GUIDED PRACTICE** (If you don't use a highlighter, you may underline the text with your pen.)  
 ② use a highlighter to highlight the text that supports your answer.

- ① Read the passage. Write your answers to the boxed questions as you read to check your understanding.

### The Mysterious Bone Bed

Work in eastern Africa has revealed one of the most amazing fossil sites in the world. The site contains a rich variety of animals, and the fossils are perfectly preserved. An international team of scientists has been studying the site for over ten years, but one of the deepest mysteries about the site remains to be solved.

1. What is the topic of this passage?

2. Is it possible to completely identify the main idea of this passage after reading only the first paragraph? Why or why not?

More than 20 years ago, a geological survey team was working in Kipsaramon, a very remote area of western Kenya. They found some fossils on a hillside that looked promising for a paleontological study—that is, a study related to fossils. They noted that the site deserved further research. However, the area was largely untouched for many years.

Researchers eventually returned to the site, and their work has revealed a bed of fossils that covers at least 2,000 meters. The site is more densely packed with fossils than any other site in Kenya. It is probably one of the most concentrated deposits of fossils in the world.

When an underground layer of sediment has a large number of fossil bones in it, scientists may refer to it as a bone bed. Bone beds are very exciting because a lot of data may be retrieved from just one site. In some cases, entire populations may be preserved there. This allows scientists to study the range of variation within a single



species, and it may give information on how members of the species grew and interacted. In other cases, several different species may be present. The Kipsaramon bone bed, which has been dated to about 15.5 million years, contains thousands of individual organisms. Dozens of different extinct species are present. These include rhinos, turtles, and apes, as well as crocodiles, antelopes, and squirrels. There are even some specimens of fossilized wood. By putting together all of the information from the site, scientists have been able to get a picture of an entire prehistoric ecosystem.

*3. The second, third, and fourth paragraphs present details. Using short phrases, name three general areas that the details are about.*

How did the Kipsaramon bone bed form? Even though scientists have developed several ideas about this question and tested them against the fossil evidence, they have not turned up an answer yet. A large number of animals may have died at once, such as in a flood. Or the bone bed may mark the location of a predator's favorite dining spot. For the time being, scientists are still seeking answers to this question as they investigate the incredible Kipsaramon bone bed.

*4. Now you can identify the main idea of this passage. What is it?*