

Read the passage. Underline important details and circle any words you don't know.

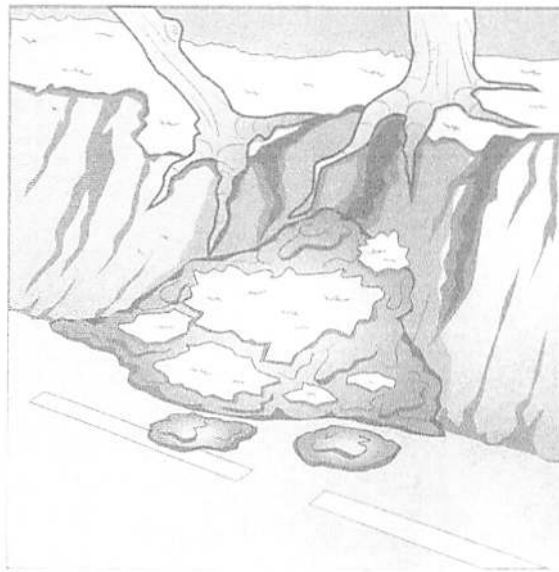
Rainfall—Little Drops, Big Effects

Rain is more than just drops of water that make you carry an umbrella. It is one of the most powerful forces of change on Earth!

Rainfall is all the water that falls in an area. It can include rain, hail, snow, and even dew! The wettest places on Earth get more than 400 inches of rainfall every year! Most people and crops thrive in climates that get at least 20 inches of rain per year. Not many people live in deserts, which usually get less than 10 inches of rain. We cannot survive without freshwater!

When rain falls slowly, most of the water soaks into the ground. During a heavy rain, some of the water runs downhill in streams and joins rivers. Rainwater may get caught in a lake or flow all the way to the ocean. Along the way, water can **weather**, or break down, the land. Water can also **erode** the land, or move it from one place to another. It carries bits of soil and rock as it moves. Tall mountains can be worn flat over time!

Erosion can happen over a long period of time or all at once. Rainfall on a steep slope can cause a sudden **mudslide**. Water turns dirt into mud that suddenly slides down the mountain in huge chunks. Heavy rain can also cause **floods**. When too much rain joins a river, the river can overflow its banks and pour onto the land. Floods can wash away huge amounts of soil and even carry away trees!



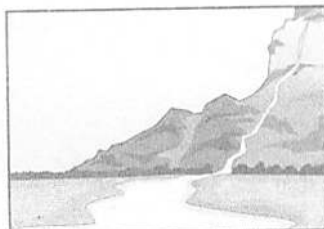
A mudslide is an example of erosion.

Tuesday

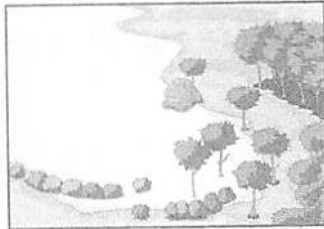
Match each word to its definition or description.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. rainfall _____ | A. to move land from one place to another |
| 2. flood _____ | B. to break down the land |
| 3. weather _____ | C. the overflowing of water caused by heavy rain |
| 4. erode _____ | D. the sudden sliding of mud down a mountain |
| 5. mudslide _____ | E. all the water that falls in an area |

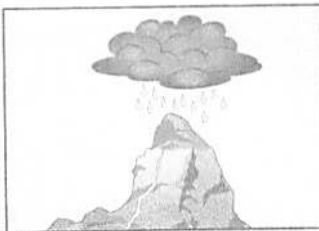
Number the events in order 1-4 to show how rainfall causes floods.



Water runs downhill into a river.



The river grows and floods its banks.



Heavy rain falls.



Water spreads out over the surrounding land.

Thursday

Complete the chart to show the different effects rainfall can have on the land.

CAUSE	EFFECT
Very little rain falls in the desert.	
Rain falls slowly.	
Rain falls on a steep slope.	
Large amounts of rain join a river.	

Friday

Why do you think most people and crops thrive in areas that get at least 20 inches of rain each year? Use details from the passage to explain your answer.
