

## Main Idea

- The main idea tells you what the story is about or the central thought of a paragraph or complete text.
- Complete stories have main ideas.
- Individual paragraphs within stories also have main ideas
- The main idea may be the lesson learned or moral of a story.
- The main idea is what you'll learn further about the topic.

### Identifying Main Idea

- Often, the reader can find the main idea just by looking at the title or first sentence of the paragraph.
- For example, a passage titled: "Why Students Should Have Less Homework" will be about why students should have less homework.

### Stated and Implied Main Idea

- Sometimes, a paragraph has a "stated" main idea usually in the topic sentence. This means the paragraph "says" what the main idea is. It can also appear at the end of a passage.
- Sometimes, a paragraph doesn't have a stated main idea, but has an "implied" main idea.
- When the main idea is implied, you must analyze supporting details to make an inference, or educated guess, about the main idea.

### Supporting Details

- The supporting details are the things that prove the main idea to be true. (IMPORTANT!)
- These supporting details make the main idea stronger.
- Use the chart in your notes in order to collect supporting details.
- Analyze the details that have something in common in order to find the implied main idea.

### Identify the Main Idea:

- Read the Passage and Choose the Main Idea and Supporting Details:

*Homeless people have many problems. In winter, it's hard to stay warm and it gets too hot in summer. It's also hard to keep things safe without a home. Worst is the lack of privacy.*

**\*\*Main Idea:** *Homeless people have many problems.* (This is what the author wants you to learn about the topic: homeless people. The remaining details are supporting details because they all PROVE the main idea to be true.)

### Implied Main Idea

- Determine the IMPLIED main idea based from the supporting details (look for all the details that have something in common and think of what you learn from them.)

*"Hailey offered to help her mother clean the house. Hailey loves burritos from Pico De Gallo. She vacuumed the living room and dusted the furniture. She picked up the toys in the playroom. Then, she mopped the kitchen floor."*

## Supporting details:

- *She vacuumed the living room and dusted the furniture.*
- *She picked up the toys in the playroom.*
- *Then, she mopped the kitchen floor.*

\* The detail, "Hailey loves burritos from Pico De Gallo." is irrelevant and does not prove the main idea to be true, so it is NOT a supporting detail.

\*\*You have to analyze all the relevant details and figure out what you can learn from them.

\*\***Implied Main Idea:** *Hailey is a helpful daughter.*

## Review

- **The main idea** - is like the heart of the text or a paragraph, either stated or implied.
- It is the controlling idea.
- All the other supporting details in the text or within a paragraph should tell us more about the main idea.

## Too Broad, Too Narrow, or Main Idea

### What Is The Main Idea?

#### The Main Idea Can Be:

- \* The summary or the overall idea of the story.
  - Just enough information to get what the story is about.
- \* What the author wants the reader to know about the subject.
- \* It *could* be used as a topic sentence or thesis statement.
- \* The focus of the story.
- \* The main idea is NOT too broad & NOT too narrow.

#### Identify the Main Idea:

*Native Americans have a rich and extensive history. The Native Americans used the trees to build their houses. They hunted and trapped animals in the forest for food. They found roots and berries that they could eat. Red berries were their favorite. Some plants found in the forest were used for medicine.*

**Example (Implied) Main Idea:** *Native Americans used every resource they could find in nature in order to live.* (the topic is "Native Americans" and this main idea helps you learn more about them.)

#### A Statement That Is Too Narrow:

- Gives details about the main idea.
- Gives descriptive information from the story.
- Helps us visualize a part of the story.
- Not enough information to get the whole story.
- It *could* be a fact from the story.
- Makes you want to know more.
- A single part of the overall subject.
- A specific idea or concept in the story.
- Describes something that happened or what someone did.
- **All supporting details are statements too narrow, BUT NOT all narrow statements are supporting details. (IMPORTANT!)**

### Look for a Statement Too Narrow:

*Native Americans have a rich and extensive history. The Native Americans used the trees to build their houses. They hunted and trapped animals in the forest for food. They found roots and berries that they could eat. Red berries were their favorite. Some plants found in the forest were used for medicine.*

**Example Narrow Statement:** *Some plants found in the forest were used for medicine.*

### A Statement That Is Too Broad

- Lacks details.
- Is too general.
- Doesn't really describe very much.
- Covers many possible topics.
- Too big to be main idea.
- Doesn't help visualize much in the story.
- Wide, variety of topics can fit within the statement.

### Look for a Statement Too Broad:

*Native Americans have a rich and extensive history. The Native Americans used the trees to build their houses. They hunted and trapped animals in the forest for food. They found roots and berries that they could eat. Red berries were their favorite. Some plants found in the forest were used for medicine.*

**Example Broad Statement:** *Native Americans have a rich and extensive history.*

\*\*There's a lot that can be applied to this and we don't necessarily know the direction of the author is taking.