

# Extracting key ideas and details

Use the active reading strategy of **questioning** to find the author's main idea, supporting reasons, and details!

## Town Music Shop Blows the Horn on Needed Music Education

by Henry Schwinkle

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(March 3, 2016) The recent unfortunate incident in our town has created speculation about ways to keep our children out of trouble. The case of Tina Tully (also known as Tiny) remains fresh in the minds of all residents. Tina Tully, eight years old, was recently accused of a series of thefts of musical instruments. When local police eventually caught Tina in the act, she confessed, explaining that she was only “borrowing” one instrument at a time. It happens that she longed to play an instrument, but was not sure which one to choose. So, during a period of several days she sampled a number of musical possibilities, somehow avoiding detection by the staff. She eventually settled on the tuba. When questioned, Tina expressed sadness that her three older brothers had been given access to music lessons while in the local schools. Budget cuts forced the elimination of music programs, so Tina took matters into her own hands. What’s a music store owner and police chief to do? That’s easy: Tina was forgiven and will perform community service at Tooters weekly for the next three months. Best of all, the store has donated a tuba rental and music lessons to Tina. Happy ending? Not so fast.

**Ask yourself:** What is this all about? Is this really about Tina Tully wanting to play an instrument?

- Author is using Tina's story to interest readers and set up the main idea

**The day the music died—we have lost something.** It is not difficult to establish a connection between this incident and the loss of music programs in our schools. Prior to 2012, students enjoyed many opportunities to participate in music activities, including weekly music class from a certified teacher; optional, free lessons on an instrument of their choice; affordable rentals with an option to buy the instrument; and joining the chorus, a performance orchestra, the marching band, or small, select instrumental groups. Students also could receive counseling and advice offered by music professionals at all schools in our city. Few people are aware that when it was decided to cut a program, the choice was either drama or music. The music program took the hit for the team. We need to bring music back to the schools.

**Ask yourself:** The day the music died? What did we lose?

- We lost school music programs!

- Author wants to bring music back to schools

**Time on learning—deciding what's important.** All these programs have been cut or reduced due to policies that demand in a school day, and those in control of those six hours have dictated that academics rule. What about those students who thirst for music? As John Lennon said, "Music is everybody's possession." Let's return to sharing that valuable possession. Reinstatement of music programs in our city will bring countless benefits to the children in our community.

**Ask yourself:** "Time on learning" – What does that mean?

- means academics were considered more important

**Participation in an instrumental music program keeps kids busy and committed.** A well-run band program requires a time commitment of its participants. Students need time to take lessons, practice, perform, and compete. All these time commitments keep our youth busy and out of trouble. In the words of *The Music Man*, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." Kids with nothing to do are more likely to engage in negative behaviors than those who fill their after-school hours with music.


**Ask yourself:** How does music keep kids busy? Why is this a good idea?

- Practice, perform, compete-takes a lot of time!  
- Keeping kids busy keeps them out of trouble

**Making music is a team effort.** Some community members have suggested that sports and music are in competition in our community. They suggest that sports promote a team spirit and mentality. Music makers also participate in a team. A single musician discovers new possibilities when he or she joins an orchestra, band, or chorus, lending a solitary tune to a group production and creating a whole that is bigger than the sum of its parts.

**Ask yourself:** How is music a team effort?

- Joining a band or chorus is like being part of a team



**Music allows “healthy” failure.** Students who play instruments come to see learning as a process. They realize that the process is never finished, and they are always improving their skills and abilities. With positive instruction and support from those at home, young musicians can learn the value of playing a “sour note,” getting back on track, and continuing with the performance.

**Ask yourself:** How can failure be a good thing?

- When kids make a mistake they learn from it and keep trying

**Learning an instrument enhances learning in other areas.**

Children who participate in a music program cannot help but make connections to history, math, literature, science, and the other creative arts and subjects. Researchers have shown that kids who study music achieve higher grades in other subjects. Musicians themselves point out the connection between reading music and understanding math. Language and poetry have strong connections to music, using rhythm as a vehicle for communication.

**Ask yourself:** How could learning an instrument help kids learn other subjects?

- Many subjects are related to music.

**Music helps keep non-academic kids in school.** Kids have different interests and learning styles. Some young people do not respond to traditional math and reading instruction, but find a true connection with music. These students are more likely to stay in school if they can be doing something they love while attending school. For some, music might lead to a career.

**Ask yourself:** How does music help kids stay in school?

- Kids stay in school because they can study something they love

The curtain is closing on children’s music instruction in our town. Let’s reopen that curtain and bring back the sounds of beautiful instruments—yes, even the tuba. The show must go on, and all kids should be seen and heard on the stage! Join us at an information session next Friday night to learn more about how you can be involved.

**Ask yourself:** How can you tell that this is the conclusion?

- Author is restating his point  
- Tells us there will be an information session