

# TOPICS AND MAIN IDEAS

A **topic** is a word or phrase that everything in a text refers to. The topic is usually expressed in a few words and is the general subject of a paragraph or essay.

## Example

*"Some people say that music helps them to relax and focus when they are studying or working.*

The topic of this statement is "music."

To find the topic of an article or essay, ask yourself two questions:

1. Who/what is the text about?
2. What is the author trying to show/teach to the reader?

The **main idea** of a text is the most important point that is being made by the author in reference to the topic at hand. Generally, the main idea needs to be a full sentence in order to be completely identified and defined.

## Example

*"Some people say that music helps them to relax and focus when they are studying or working.*

The main idea of this statement is that music helps some people relax.

To find the main idea of a statement or paragraph, first find the topic. Then, look for a sentence that states an important point about the topic.

