

This lesson will help you practice determining the main ideas and supporting details in two types of texts. Use it with core lesson 1. 1 Determine the Main Idea to reinforce and apply your knowledge.

Key Concept

The main idea is the most important idea in a paragraph or passage. A main idea can be found in many different kinds of text

Core Skills

- Determine Main Ideas
- Identify Main Ideas in Various Texts

Main Idea in Informational Text

Informational texts explain, describe, instruct, or try to persuade. The main idea often states the purpose of the document. The supporting details of the text give facts, opinions, examples, and explanations that support the main idea.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

New Purchasing System

To All Employees,

As you should be aware, the Purchasing Tracker (PT) system has been rolled out and is now required to be used for your purchasing activities. This new system will allow our company to easily organize and track all orders in one system and to cut back on the number of steps required to process an order. As with any new system, it will take some time to perfect the operation. However, to ensure that we realize the full benefit of PT, I need you to immediately start following the guidelines below.

Use of PT

Use of PT is mandatory for all new service orders. If you feel you have a special situation that cannot be accommodated in the system, let the PT team know immediately so a discussion can take place without delaying the project.

Purchase orders to supplier prior to project start

Corporate policy mandates that suppliers are not allowed to start work on a project without a fully approved PT purchase order. There should be no exceptions to this policy. A contract does not replace this requirement. If a contract is required for the project, the executed contract must be attached to the PT order. Suppliers can only start projects after they have received approved purchase orders (with attached contract, if applicable).

Use of rates in PT

If a service category in PT has associated rates, then the PT order must be built using the applicable rate-based line items. This means that the order should include a line specific to each rate-based item. Lump sums, combined totals, or use of "miscellaneous" items are not acceptable. Proper breakout of the order ensures that the company has full visibility of what we are purchasing and that our reporting is meaningful.

(continued)

Change orders

Orders should be created based on your original estimate, and if the project specs or scope changes, then the order should be updated via the Change Order process prior to the supplier submitting an invoice. Suppliers are not allowed to begin work on additional scope items until they have received the updated purchase order. Do not pad your requisitions in an attempt to avoid change orders. Additional funds on a purchase order open the door for the supplier to invoice for them.

1. Which text feature best helps you identify the main idea of each section?
 - A. the passage title
 - B. the headings
 - C. the first sentence
 - D. the last sentence
2. Which detail supports the main idea that suppliers must have a purchase order before starting work?
 - A. "suppliers are not allowed to start work on a project without a fully approved PT purchase order"
 - B. "let the PT team know immediately so a discussion can take place without delaying the project"
 - C. "Lump sums, combined totals, or use of 'miscellaneous' items are not acceptable. "
 - D. "Additional funds on a purchase order open the door for the supplier to invoice for them. "
3. What is the main idea of the "Use of rates in PT" section?
 - A. PT must be used for all service requests.
 - B. Contracts do not replace purchase orders.
 - C. Rates must be listed for each rate-based item.
 - D. Orders should be based on estimates.
4. In which section would you expect to find a detail about additional work on a project?
 - A. Use of PT
 - B. Purchase orders to supplier prior to project start
 - C. Use of rates in PT
 - D. Change orders
5. The _____ of the passage is that employees must follow the guidelines for using the PT system.
6. Why might the writer of this informational text state the topic sentence at the beginning of the passage?
 - A. to make sure the reader knows what the passage is about
 - B. to provide information in least-important to most-important order
 - C. so that the reader does not have to read the entire passage to understand it
 - D. because the reader would not understand the passage without the topic sentence

Main Idea in Literary Text

Fiction writers invent a self-contained world where imaginary events unfold. The writers also create characters who play roles in these events. Main ideas are presented in paragraphs and longer passages. As you read, look for the main idea and details. The main idea may be stated in a topic sentence, but it is more likely to be implied in a longer passage.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then choose the best answer to each question.

- 1 But all this—the mysterious, far-reaching hair-line trail, the absence of sun from the sky, the tremendous cold, and the strangeness and weirdness of it all—made no impression on the man. It was not because he was long used to it. He was a newcomer in the land, a *chechaquo*, and this was his first winter. The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances.
- 2 Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear-flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks. Fifty degrees below zero was to him just precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head....
- 3 At the man's heels trotted a dog, a big native husky, the proper wolf-dog, gray-coated and without any visible or temperamental difference from its brother, the wild wolf.
- 4 The animal was depressed by the tremendous cold. It knew that it was no time for travelling. Its instinct told it a truer tale than was told to the man by the man's judgment. In reality, it was not merely colder than fifty below zero; it was colder than sixty below, than seventy below. It was seventy-five below zero. Since the freezing-point is thirty-two above zero, it meant that one hundred and seven degrees of frost obtained.
- 5 The dog did not know anything about thermometers. Possibly in its brain there was no sharp consciousness of a condition of very cold such as was in the man's brain. But the brute had its instinct. It experienced a vague but menacing apprehension that subdued it and made it slink along at the man's heels, and that made it question eagerly every unwonted movement of the man as if expecting him to go into camp or to seek shelter somewhere and build a fire. The dog had learned fire, and it wanted fire, or else to burrow under the snow and cuddle its warmth away from the air.

—Excerpted from "To Build a Fire" by Jack London, 1908

1. What is the main idea of this excerpt?
 - A. The dog has survival instincts that the man lacks.
 - B. The man has more knowledge than the dog.
 - C. The man and dog are dependent on each other.
 - D. The man and dog are experiencing the same things.
2. Which detail shows that the man is not prepared for the environment?
 - A. "he was long used to it"
 - B. "he was quick and alert in the things of life"
 - C. "he was without imagination"
 - D. "such a fact impressed him as being cold"
3. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?
 - A. The dog is like a wild wolf.
 - B. The dog can tolerate the cold.
 - C. The dog trusts the man's judgment.
 - D. The dog knows how cold it really is.
4. Which phrase would best express the main idea of the passage?
 - A. instinct or knowledge
 - B. experience or inexperience
 - C. mortality or immortality
 - D. happiness or sadness
5. Which of the following definitions best fits the meaning of the word tremendous as it is used in paragraphs 1 and 4?
 - A. large
 - B. extreme
 - C. excellent
 - D. vast
6. Which of the following statements is true about the main idea of the passage?
 - A. The writer does not include a main idea.
 - B. The writer wants the reader to provide the main idea.
 - C. The main idea is obvious and, therefore, does not need to be stated.
 - D. The reader can infer the main idea through details.



Test-Taking Tip

The more you practice reading different types of texts of different lengths, the better prepared you will be to read and understand passages presented in reading tests. A good way to practice is to read as much as you can about subjects that interest you. Not only will you become a better reader when taking a test, you will also increase your enjoyment of reading.

Language Practice

Commas are used in a number of situations, such as to separate items in a series, to separate introductory information, to separate independent ideas, and to separate text that provides additional details.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then choose the option that correctly punctuates each sentence.

Reality television is not a new phenomenon. ¹ Select... such as *Candid Camera* and *What's My Line* were hits in television's earliest days. PBS broke new ground in 1973 with *An American Family* by following the Loud family as they went about ² Select... Loads decided on camera to divorce, millions of viewers were shocked.

By the 2000s, reality television shows were common on nearly every network. The shows were clearly ³ Select... were also cheaper to make than scripted shows. A typical reality show uses a smaller crew, hires fewer performers, needs fewer sets, and requires very few writers. These less-expensive shows give networks a ⁴ Select... shows mean big money.

1 Select...

- A. In fact reality shows
- B. in fact, reality shows
- C. In fact reality shows,
- D. In fact reality, shows

2 Select...

- A. entertaining to viewers but they
- B. entertaining to viewers, but they
- C. entertaining to viewers but, they
- D. entertaining to viewers, but, they

2 Select...

- A. their everyday life and when the
- B. their everyday life, and, when the
- C. their everyday life, and when the
- D. their everyday life. And, when the

3 Select...

- A. larger profit margin so hit reality
- B. larger profit margin. So, hit reality
- C. larger profit margin so, hit reality
- D. larger profit margin, so hit reality



Test-Taking Tip

Some tests may have several drop-down items on a page. When there is a lot of text on the page or when the drop-down list is small, it can be easy to miss items. Carefully review the page to make sure you have selected answers for all the drop-down items before moving on.

Writing Practice

Some people have nicknames that describe their appearance or abilities. For instance, Hall of Fame basketball player Hakeem “The Dream” Olajuwon earned his nickname through his amazing talents on the court. He was considered a “dream” athlete because he was such a talented player in all aspects of the game.

Directions: Write a brief paragraph in which you explain how someone received a nickname. You may write about yourself, a friend, a relative, or a famous person. Think about the main idea. You may state the main idea in a topic sentence or imply the main idea through the details. Make sure the key details all support the main idea sentence.

This lesson will help you practice identifying supporting details in two informational texts. Use it with core lesson 1. 2 Identify Supporting Details to reinforce and apply your knowledge.

Key Concept

Supporting details are concrete ideas that develop the main idea in a passage. There are many types of supporting details.

Core Skills

- Identify Supporting Details
- Cite Details

Identifying Supporting Details

The main idea of a passage is its most important idea. Supporting details are ideas in sentences and paragraphs that support this main idea. The supporting details in a text may include facts, examples, reasons, and descriptions.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

Civilizations Begin to Interact

The Fertile Crescent

- 1 The Middle East and the coastal regions of the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the Nile Delta, were the locations for the beginning of many early civilizations, including Egyptian, Babylonian, Sumerian, Phoenician, Persian, and Greek. The close proximity of these civilizations allowed for trade and also created competition for land and resources. The interaction among various cultures created changes in and exchanges of traditions and technology.
- 2 The classical civilizations that had the largest impact on the world's cultural development are the Greek and Roman Empires. Greek civilization continued the Egyptian priorities of art, literature, music, theater, architecture, and the sciences. The first major citizen participation in government occurred in ancient Athens, a powerful Greek city-state. All male citizens participated in the assembly, which determined laws and policies.
- 3 During the golden age of ancient Greece (500 BCE to 300 BCE, before the common era), many great philosophers and educators such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle shared their wisdom with the world. For the first time, the improvement of the mind and the body was viewed as an important priority for society. The challenge of improved physical fitness was the reason why the Olympic Games began in ancient Greece.
- 4 Eventually the Romans conquered the Greeks, copying their architecture, art forms, and poetry, and even some of their mythological gods. The Greeks and the Romans had maintained early people's practice of using myth to explain natural phenomena such as seasonal changes, flooding and severe weather, and success in agriculture. To make the myths easier to understand and appreciate, the Greeks and Romans had gods with human attributes. Greek and Roman mythology has continued to exist even after our understanding of the universe had outgrown the need for storylike explanations. Many of the planets, including Jupiter, Neptune, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, were named for Roman gods.

- 5 The Romans were interested in military strength and acquiring land for the empire. Thus, athletic competition and training for combat as a form of entertainment developed in Rome. The Roman government differed from the Athenian model. One, two, or sometimes three consuls were chosen by the Roman senate, a group of the wealthiest landholders, or patricians. The vast majority of the citizens were plebeians—the small farmers, tradesmen, artisans, and merchants.
- 6 Wealth and connections among family members thus determined position in the social classes within Roman culture. This status determined whether a member of the society was considered to be worthy of having a vote. The Roman system of government was called a republic. The lower class of slaves and the common class of farmers and tradesmen were limited in their rights of marriage partners and land ownership.
- 7 One lasting contribution of the Romans was the calendar introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE. Caesar made the months of unequal days and added leap years to make the reckoning more equal to an actual year. This Julian calendar, with some modifications, is still in use today.

1. Information about mythology and the calendar are _____ details that develop the main idea.
 - C. Although Roman gods shared similar stories, they had different names and personalities.
 - D. The Romans made many contributions to culture, including a series of roadways and aqueducts.
2. Which detail supports the main idea that Greek and Roman empires contributed to the culture of the surrounding area?
 - A. "For the first time, the improvement of the mind and the body was viewed as an important priority for society. "
 - B. "The vast majority of the citizens were plebeians—the small farmers, tradesmen, artisans, and merchants. "
 - C. "The challenge of improved physical fitness was the reason why the Olympic Games began in ancient Greece. "
 - D. "The interaction among various cultures created changes in and exchanges of traditions and technology. "
3. Which detail could be added to paragraph 4 to support the main idea of the paragraph?
 - A. When the Romans conquered the Greeks, much of Greek culture was destroyed.
 - B. The Romans' astronomical discoveries included the discovery of several planets and constellations.
 4. You would expect to find a supporting detail about the Greek government in paragraph _____.
 5. Which detail could you cite to support an idea about the structure of Roman society?
 - A. "To make the myths easier to understand and appreciate, the Greeks and Romans had gods with human attributes. "
 - B. "One, two, or sometimes three consuls were chosen by the Roman senate, a group of the wealthiest landholders, or patricians. "
 - C. "Thus, athletic competition and training for combat as a form of entertainment developed in Rome. "
 - D. "One lasting contribution of the Romans was the calendar introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE. "

Using Details to Make Generalizations

Writers use many types of detail to help the reader understand a passage. By thinking carefully about these details, the reader can make generalizations, or broad statements about the text.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then choose the best answer to each question.

Marshes

- 1 Marshes are defined as wetlands frequently or continually inundated with water, characterized by emergent soft-stemmed vegetation adapted to saturated soil conditions. There are many different kinds of marshes, ranging from the prairie potholes to the Everglades, coastal to inland, freshwater to saltwater. All types receive most of their water from surface water, and many marshes are also fed by groundwater. Nutrients are plentiful and the pH is usually neutral leading to an abundance of plant and animal life. [W]e have divided marshes into two primary categories: non-tidal and tidal.
- 2 Marshes recharge groundwater supplies and moderate streamflow by providing water to streams. This is an especially important function during periods of drought. The presence of marshes in a watershed helps to reduce damage caused by floods by slowing and storing flood water. As water moves slowly through a marsh, sediment and other pollutants settle to the substrate, or floor of the marsh. Marsh vegetation and microorganisms also use excess nutrients for growth that can otherwise pollute surface water. This wetland type is very important to preserving the quality of surface waters. In fact, marshes are so good at cleaning polluted waters that people are now building replicas of this wetland type to treat wastewater from farms, parking lots, and small sewage plants.
- 3 Non-tidal marshes are the most prevalent and widely distributed wetlands in North America. They are mostly freshwater marshes, although some are brackish or alkaline. They frequently occur along streams in poorly drained depressions, and in the shallow water along the boundaries of lakes, ponds, and rivers. Water levels in these wetlands generally vary from a few inches to two or three feet. [S]ome marshes, like prairie potholes, may periodically dry out completely.
- 4 It is easy to recognize a non-tidal marsh by its characteristic soils, vegetation, and wildlife. Highly organic, mineral rich soils of sand, silt, and clay underlie these wetlands.... [L]ily pads, cat tails... , reeds, and bulrushes provide excellent habitat for waterfowl and other small mammals.... Prairie potholes, playa lakes, vernal pools, and wet meadows are all examples of non-tidal marshes.
- 5 Due to their high levels of nutrients, freshwater marshes are one of the most productive ecosystems on earth. They can sustain a vast array of plant communities that in turn support a wide variety of wildlife within this vital wetland ecosystem. As a result, marshes sustain a diversity of life that is way out of proportion with its size. In addition... , non-tidal marshes serve to mitigate flood damage and filter excess nutrients from surface runoff.
- 6 Unfortunately, like many other wetland ecosystems, freshwater marshes have suffered major acreage losses to human development. Some have been degraded by excessive deposits of nutrients and sediment from construction and farming. Severe flooding and nutrient deposition to downstream waters have often followed marsh destruction and degradation. Such environmental problems prove the vital roles these wetlands play. This realization has spurred enhanced protection and restoration of marsh ecosystems....

- 7 Tidal marshes can be found along protected coastlines in middle and high latitudes worldwide. They are most prevalent in the United States on the eastern coast from Maine to Florida and continuing on to Louisiana and Texas along the Gulf of Mexico. Some are freshwater marshes, others are brackish (somewhat salty), and still others are saline (salty).... [T]hey are all influenced by the motion of ocean tides. Tidal marshes are normally categorized into two distinct zones, the lower or intertidal marsh and the upper or high marsh.
- 8 In saline tidal marshes, the lower marsh is normally covered and exposed daily by the tide. It is predominantly covered by the tall form of Smooth Cordgrass.... The saline marsh is covered by water only sporadically, and is characterized by Short Smooth Cordgrass, Spike Grass, and Saltmeadow Rush.... Saline marshes support a highly specialized set of life adapted for saline conditions....
- 9 Tidal marshes serve many important functions. They buffer stormy seas, slow shoreline erosion, and are able to absorb excess nutrients before they reach the oceans and estuaries. High concentrations of nutrients can cause oxygen levels low enough to harm wildlife.... Tidal marshes also provide vital food and habitat for clams, crabs, and juvenile fish, as well as offering shelter and nesting sites for several species of migratory waterfowl.
- 10 Pressure to fill in these wetlands for coastal development has led to significant and continuing losses of tidal marshes, especially along the Atlantic coast. Pollution... also remains a serious threat to these ecosystems. Fortunately, most states have enacted special laws to protect tidal marshes, but much diligence is needed to assure that these protective measures are actively enforced.

—From “Marshes” by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

1. What generalization could be drawn from the details in the first paragraph?
 - A. Marshes are inhospitable to many animal and plant species.
 - B. Marshes are very fragile and highly susceptible to droughts and flooding.
 - C. Marshes, because of their plentiful water, provide an excellent location for the development of new housing.
 - D. Marshes can be found in many geographic locations across the United States.
2. Which of the following details supports the generalization that marshes are important to water quality?
 - A. “We have divided marshes into two primary categories: non-tidal and tidal. ”
 - B. “As water moves slowly through a marsh, sediment and other pollutants settle to the substrate, or floor of the marsh. ”
 - C. “Tidal marshes can be found along protected coastlines in middle and high latitudes worldwide. ”
 - D. “Pressure to fill in these wetlands for coastal development has led to significant and continuing losses of tidal marshes, especially along the Atlantic coast. ”

3. Which detail provides an example to support the generalization that marshes have diversity in their ecosystems?
- A. "Lily pads, cattails. . . , reeds, and bulrushes provide excellent habitat for waterfowl and other small mammals. "
- B. "They frequently occur along streams in poorly drained depressions, and in the shallow water along the boundaries of lakes, ponds, and rivers."
- C. "Water levels in these wetlands generally vary from a few inches to two or three feet.. "
- D. "Unfortunately, like many other wetland ecosystems, freshwater marshes have suffered major acreage losses to human development. "
4. Which of the following definitions best fits the meaning of the word **absorb** as it is used in paragraph 9?
- A. to capture someone's attention
- B. to occupy completely
- C. to take in or soak up
- D. to spread across a large area

Language Practice

A complete sentence must have a subject and predicate. It must be able to stand alone. When you write, check your text for sentence fragments. Change fragments into complete sentences.

Directions: The passage below is incomplete. Choose the option that correctly completes each sentence.

As a scuba diver, I enjoy looking at the amazing underwater animals. One of my favorites

- 1 Select... What makes it so special? A gigantic head attached to eight wiggly arms
- Select... However, what fascinates me most is its behavior. Using specialized pigment cells,
- Select... I, as well as its predators, have often swum by the octopus without noticing it. When it is discovered, Select... This startles the predator, allowing the octopus a chance to escape.

Select...

- A. among the thousands of creatures I have seen.
- B. although it is hard to choose.
- C. is the distinctive octopus.
- D. the incredibly flexible octopus.

Select...

- A. large eyes, spotted skin, and incredible flexibility.
- B. makes the octopus different from many animals.
- C. not to mention its squishy, flexible body.
- D. and the fact that it is found in oceans around the world.

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- A. changing the color of its skin to match its environment.
- B. located in the muscles of its skin.
- C. creating a variety of colors and patterns.
- D. it can blend in with almost any environment.

- A. the octopus can release a puff of black ink.
- B. by a predator or even a diver like myself.
- C. great, thick clouds of black ink.
- D. which does not occur frequently.



Test-Taking Tip

When taking a paper test, you can highlight important details. This is often not possible on a computer-based exam. Therefore, when reading a passage, you might want to use a dry-erase board to take notes on important details. later you can use your notes to determine a main idea or to make generalizations.

Writing Practice

There are many kinds of natural disasters, including hurricanes, tornados, forest fires, and earthquakes. Reporters who cover these events write to inform people about what happened. They must be able to give facts, descriptions, explanations, and reasons to help their readers understand the main idea.

Directions: Write a brief paragraph about a real or imagined natural disaster. Include a generalization that accurately describes the type of disaster. Use at least three types of supporting details in your paragraph to help the reader experience and understand what happened.

This lesson will help you practice identifying directly stated main ideas and determining implied main ideas from supporting details. Use it with core lesson 1. 3 Identify Direct and Implied Main Ideas to reinforce and apply your knowledge.

Key Concept

The main idea may be stated directly in a topic sentence or sentences, or it may be implied. An implied main idea must be inferred from supporting details.

Core Skills

- Determine Implied Main Ideas
- Use Details to Deduce Central and Supporting Ideas

Direct and Implied Main Ideas

In some texts, the main idea is directly stated. In others, the main idea is implied, or expressed indirectly, through the details in the text. To figure out the implied main idea, you need to think about what the details are about and how they are related to each other.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

Early Domestic and Foreign Policy

The years between 1791 and 1803 saw the United States expand geographically. Between 1791 and 1796, Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee were admitted to the Union under the administration of George Washington, the first US president. In 1803, under President Thomas Jefferson, Ohio was admitted to the Union, and the largest acquisition of land for the United States occurred with the Louisiana Purchase. By paying France \$15 million for the territory, Jefferson doubled the size of the country. He subsequently appointed Lewis and Clark to explore the acquired territory.

The Monroe Doctrine

A strong sense of nationalism developed after the War of 1812. For the first time the United States could afford to look inward and pay less attention to European affairs. As a result, US westward expansion continued, with victories over several Native American tribes.

In 1823 President James Monroe proclaimed to the world that European powers would no longer be allowed to colonize the Americas. He indicated that the United States would remain neutral in European conflicts as long as the European powers left the emerging republics in North and South America alone. Known as the Monroe Doctrine, this foreign policy statement marked the appearance of the United States on the world political stage.

Jacksonian Democracy and the Mexican War

After Monroe left office, sectionalism became a problem for the United States. Sectionalism refers to the political, cultural, and economic differences among regions of the country—in this case the agricultural South and West and the industrial Northeast. The conflicting demands that each section put upon the government caused great political turmoil.

The first US president elected to office as a result of these factional differences was Andrew Jackson in 1828. A Southerner and hero in the War of 1812, Jackson was considered to be a populist, a man who represented the interests of the common people. He believed that *all* people, not just the propertied few, should have a voice in deciding how the government should be run.

As the champion of the common people, Jackson opposed the establishment of a national bank because he believed that it would only benefit the wealthy and because he feared the Eastern merchants and industrialists would control it. Under Jacksonian democracy, farmers and craftspeople gained a louder voice in government than they had had under previous administrations. Despite pressure to annex Texas during his second term, Jackson refused, fearing a war with Mexico.

President James Polk, Jackson's successor, had no such fear. Congress, agreeing to the demands of the Texans, annexed the Texas Republic in 1845. Thus, the expansionist fervor in the United States was renewed. Manifest Destiny—the drive to extend the US borders to the Pacific Ocean—became a rallying cry. When President Polk was unable to purchase the territory that included New Mexico and California, the United States declared war on Mexico in 1846 as a result of a territorial dispute between the two countries.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the war in 1848 resulted in the United States gain of the land that would later become California, Utah, Nevada, and parts of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Wyoming. Thus, the United States had set its continental boundaries.

1. The overall main idea of this passage is expressed _____ .
2. Which sentence best expresses the main idea of the entire passage?
 - A. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the country.
 - B. US domestic and foreign policy changed throughout the years.
 - C. Exploration of new lands was a main priority to early Americans.
 - D. Relationships between the United States and Mexico were strained.
3. Which sentence best expresses the main idea of the first paragraph?
 - A. "The years between 1791 and 1803 saw the United States expand geographically. "
 - B. "In 1803, under President Thomas Jefferson, Ohio was admitted to the Union, and the largest acquisition of land for the United States occurred with the Louisiana Purchase. "
 - C. "By paying France \$15 million for the territory, Jefferson doubled the size of the country. "
 - D. "He subsequently appointed Lewis and Clark to explore the acquired territory. "
4. Which part of the passage best implies a main idea that the United States expanded through territorial wars with other countries?
 - A. "Early Domestic and Foreign Policy"
 - B. "The Monroe Doctrine"
 - C. paragraph 6
 - D. paragraph 7

Implied Main Ideas and Supporting Details

The main idea of a text may be directly stated, but it is often implied. To identify an implied main idea, look for sentences that contain key phrases and details. Think about how these details are related.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

The Golden Windows

- 1 All day long the little boy worked hard, in field and barn and shed, for his people were poor farmers, and could not pay a workman; but at sunset there came an hour that was all his own, for his father had given it to him. Then the boy would go up to the top of a hill and look across at another hill that rose some miles away. On this far hill stood a house with windows of clear gold and diamonds. They shone and blazed so that it made the boy wink to look at them; but after a while the people in the house put up shutters, as it seemed, and then it looked like any common farmhouse.
- 2 The boy supposed they did this because it was supper-time; and then he would go into the house and have his supper of bread and milk, and [go] to bed.
- 3 One day the boy's father called him and said: "You have been a good boy, and have earned a holiday. Take this day for your own; but remember that God gave it, and try to learn some good thing. "
- 4 The boy thanked his father and kissed his mother; then he put a piece of bread in his pocket, and started off to find the house with the golden windows.
- 5 It was pleasant walking[, for h]is bare feet made marks in the white dust, and when he looked back, the footprints seemed to be following him, and making company for him. His shadow, too, kept beside him, and would dance or run with him as he pleased; so it was very cheerful....
- 6 After a long time he came to a high green hill; and when he had climbed the hill, there was the house on the top; but it seemed that the shutters were up, for he could not see the golden windows. He came up to the house, and then he could well have wept, for the windows were of clear glass, like any others, and there was no gold anywhere about them.
- 7 A woman came to the door, and looked kindly at the boy, and asked him what he wanted.
- 8 "I saw the golden windows from our hilltop, " he said, "and I came to see them, but now they are only glass. "...
- 9 "We are poor farming people, " she said, "and are not likely to have gold about our windows; but glass is better to see through. "
- 10 She bade the boy sit down on the broad stone step at the door, and brought him a cup of milk and a cake, and bade him rest; then she called her daughter, a child of his own age, and nodded kindly at the two, and went back to her work.

(continued)

- 11 The little girl was barefooted like himself, and wore a brown cotton gown, but her hair was golden like the windows he had seen, and her eyes were blue like the sky at noon. She led the boy about the farm, and showed him her black calf with the white star on its forehead, and he told her about his own at home, which was red like a chestnut, with four white feet. Then when they had eaten an apple together, and so had become friends, the boy asked her about the golden windows. The little girl nodded, and said she knew all about them, only he had mistaken the house....
- 12 “Come with me, and I will show you the house with the golden windows, and then you will see for yourself.”
- 13 They went to a knoll that rose behind the farmhouse, and as they went the little girl told him that the golden windows could only be seen at a certain hour, about sunset....
- 14 When they reached the top of the knoll, the girl turned and pointed; and there on a hill far away stood a house with windows of clear gold and diamond, just as he had seen them. And when they looked again, the boy saw that it was his own home.
- 15 Then he told the little girl that he must go; and he gave her his best pebble, the white one with the red band, that he had carried for a year in his pocket; and she gave him three horse-chestnuts, one red like satin, one spotted, and one white like milk. He kissed her, and promised to come again, but he did not tell her what he had learned; and so he went back down the hill, and the little girl stood in the sunset light and watched him.
- 16 The way home was long, and it was dark before the boy reached his father’s house; but the lamplight and firelight shone through the windows, making them almost as bright as he had seen them from the hilltop; and when he opened the door, his mother came to kiss him, and his little sister ran to throw her arms about his neck, and his father looked up and smiled from his seat by the fire....
- 17 “[H]ave you learned anything?” asked his father.
- 18 “Yes!” said the boy. “I have learned that our house has windows of gold and diamond.”

— From *The Pig Brother and Other Fables and Stories* by Laura E. Richards

1. To identify the _____ of “The Golden Windows,” look for details in the boy’s dialogue and actions at the top of both hills that tell what the passage is about.
2. Which of the following sentences best describes how the main idea is presented in this passage?
 - A. The main idea is stated as a topic sentence.
 - B. The writer wants the reader to provide the main idea.
 - C. The main idea is stated at the end of the story.
 - D. The reader can infer the main idea through the details.

3. Which statement best describes the main idea of this passage?
- A. Things are not always as they seem.
 - B. Hard work always pays off in the end.
 - C. Sometimes friends are the best kind of family.
 - D. Sometimes home is not the easiest place to stay.
4. Identify the excerpt from the passage that best supports the main idea.
- A. "The way home was long, and it was dark before the boy reached his father's house; but the lamplight and firelight shone through the windows, making them almost as bright as he had seen them from the hilltop..."
 - B. "The little girl nodded, and said she knew all about them, only he had mistaken the house..."
 - C. "She bade the boy sit down on the broad stone step at the door, and brought him a cup of milk and a cake, and bade him rest; then she called her daughter, a child of his own age, and nodded kindly at the two, and went back to her work."
 - D. "The boy thanked his father and kissed his mother; then he put a piece of bread in his pocket, and started off to find the house with the golden windows."
5. Which of the following definitions best fits the meaning of the word **holiday** as it is used in this passage?
- A. celebration
 - B. religious feast day
 - C. time of relaxation
 - D. date on a calendar



Test-Taking Tip

Note how much time you are given to complete a test. Keep an eye on the time as you are taking the test. Stop periodically to make sure that you are on target to finish. Plan ahead so you have time at the end of the exam to review your answers. Make sure that you have answered all the questions and have not made any errors.

Writing Practice

You walk into a dark room. What is the first thing you do? Do you turn on a light? We use lights to help us work, play, drive, and stay safe. A standard light bulb is relatively simple—it's just a filament and a glass covering—yet it's hard to imagine our lives without this amazing invention.

Directions: Write a brief paragraph in which you tell about a real or imagined invention. Before beginning to write, determine your main idea. You may directly state the main idea in a topic sentence or imply the main idea through the details. Make sure the key details are related and support the main idea.

This lesson will help you practice summarizing details in two passages. Use it with core lesson 1. 4 Summarize Details to reinforce and apply your knowledge.

Key Concept

Explaining the most important ideas in a passage in a concise way is called summarizing. A summary includes the main idea and the key supporting details.

Core Skills

- Summarize Key Information
- Summarize a Text

Summarizing Key Information

To write a concise and effective summary, you must first identify the most important points. Begin by identifying the main idea. Then identify the most important supporting details. When these details are identified, paraphrase by restating the main idea and important supporting details in your own words.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

Excerpt from *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography*

The first pair of shoes that I recall wearing were wooden ones. They had rough leather on the top, but the bottoms, which were about an inch thick, were of wood. When I walked they made a fearful noise, and besides this they were very inconvenient, since there was no yielding to the natural pressure of the foot. In wearing them one presented [an] exceedingly awkward appearance. The most trying ordeal that I was forced to endure as a slave boy, however, was the wearing of a flax shirt. In the portion of Virginia where I lived it was common to use flax as part of the clothing for the slaves. That part of the flax from which our clothing was made was largely the refuse, which of course was the cheapest and roughest part. I can scarcely imagine any torture, except, perhaps, the pulling of a tooth, that is equal to that caused by putting on a new flax shirt for the first time. It is almost equal to the feeling that one would experience if he had a dozen or more chestnut burrs, or a hundred small pin-points, in contact with his flesh. Even to this day I can recall accurately the tortures that I underwent when putting on one of these garments. The fact that my flesh was soft and tender added to the pain. But I had no choice. I had to wear the flax shirt or none; and had it been left to me to choose, I should have chosen to wear no covering. In connection with the flax shirt, my brother John, who is several years older than I am, performed one of the most generous acts that I ever heard of one slave relative doing for another. On several occasions when I was being forced to wear a new flax shirt, he generously agreed to put it on in my stead and wear it for several days, till it was "broken in. " Until I had grown to be quite a youth this single garment was all that I wore.

—From *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography* by Booker T. Washington

1. One major _____ of the passage is the pain and discomfort of clothing made for slaves.
2. Which of the following best paraphrases the main idea of the passage?
 - A. New clothing was a luxury and reward for slaves.
 - B. The comfort of slaves was not a factor in clothing choice.
 - C. Clothing for slaves was simple, practical, and durable.
 - D. The life of a slave was determined by which clothes he was given.
3. Which supporting detail about the wooden shoes should be included in a summary of the passage?
 - A. They made a fearful noise when the narrator walked.
 - B. The leather from which the top was made was very rough.
 - C. Someone wearing the shoes looked awkward and strange.
 - D. The wood sole did not give when the foot pressed against it.
4. Choose the detail that you should paraphrase and include in a summary of the passage.
 - A. "When I walked, they made a fearful noise... "
 - B. "In the portion of Virginia where I lived it was common to use flax. . . "
 - C. "That part of the flax from which our clothing was made was largely the refuse... "
 - D. "I can scarcely imagine any torture... equal to... putting on a new flax shirt... "
5. Which of the following definitions best fits the meaning of the word refuse as it is used in this passage?
 - A. waste
 - B. decline
 - C. recycle
 - D. fabric



Test-Taking Tip

Passage-based questions take more time than questions without a passage. One helpful strategy for planning your time is to take the total time allotted and divide it by the number of passages. This will let you know how much time to spend per section.

Summarizing a Text

To create an effective summary, identify the main idea and most important supporting details. Paraphrase these in concise statements to tell what the passage is about. One way to summarize is to group related details to make one statement.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

Travel Alert

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Bureau of Consular Affairs

Hurricane Season

May 30, 2013

- 1 The Department of State alerts US citizens to the upcoming Hurricane Season in the Atlantic, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricane season in the Atlantic begins June 1 and ends November 30.
- 2 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center... expects to see an active or extremely active season in the Atlantic Basin this year[. There's] a 70 percent chance of 13 to 20 named storms, of which seven to eleven are predicted to strengthen to a hurricane.... Of those, three to six are expected to become major hurricanes... NOAA recommends that those in hurricane-prone regions begin preparations for the upcoming season now.
- 3 During and after some previous storms, US citizens traveling abroad encountered dangerous and often uncomfortable conditions[. These conditions] lasted for several days while awaiting transportation back to the United States. In the past, many US citizens were forced to delay travel... due to infrastructure damage to airports and limited flight availability. Roads were also washed out or obstructed by debris. [This damage adversely affected] access to airports and land routes out of affected areas. Reports of looting and sporadic violence in the aftermath of natural disasters have occurred. Security personnel may not always be readily available to assist. In the event of a hurricane, travelers should be aware that they may not be able to depart the area for 24-48 hours or longer.

(continued)

- 4 If you travel to these areas during hurricane season, we recommend you obtain travel insurance to cover unexpected expenses during an emergency. (You might be in a situation that] requires an evacuation from an overseas location. [If this occurs,] the US Department of State will work with commercial airlines to ensure that US citizens are repatriated as safely and efficiently as possible. Commercial airlines are the Department's primary source of transportation in an evacuation[. O]ther means of transport are utilized only as a last resort. The US Department of State will not provide no-cost transportation, but [it] does have the authority to provide repatriation loans to those in financial need.
- 5 If you live in or are traveling to storm prone regions, prepare for hurricanes and tropical storms by organizing a kit in a waterproof container that includes a supply of bottled water, non-perishable food items, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, any medications taken regularly, and vital documents... Emergency shelters often provide only very basic resources and may have limited medical and food supplies. NOAA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have additional tips on their websites.

—From "Travel Alert" by the US Department of State

1. Hurricane season in the Atlantic runs through the summer and part of the fall. The area affected includes the Atlantic, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. US citizens should read the following advice from the Department of State.

The statement above is a _____ of paragraph 1.
2. Which of the following best paraphrases the main idea of the passage?
 - A. People should use caution when they are traveling to other countries.
 - B. The upcoming hurricane season will be active and destructive.
 - C. As hurricane season approaches, people should make preparations.
 - D. NOAA and FEMA are good sources of hurricane information.
3. Which supporting detail is most important to include in the summary?
 - A. "There's a 70 percent chance of 13 to 20 storms. . . "
 - B. "Of those, three to six are expected to become major hurricanes. . . "
 - C. "These conditions lasted for several days while awaiting transportation back to the United States. "
 - D. "[W]e recommend you obtain travel insurance to cover unexpected expenses during an emergency. "

4. Choose the sentence that best paraphrases and summarizes the details in paragraph 3.

A. Risks to travelers include delays, unsafe travel conditions, and risks to personal safety.

B. US citizens often experience hardships such as looting and violence when they travel to other countries.

C. Drivers should be cautious during hurricane season as roadways might be washed away or have obstacles.

D. Security personnel might be too busy with other issues to help US citizens traveling in hurricane-prone areas.

5. Which text features identify important information that should be included in a summary of this passage?

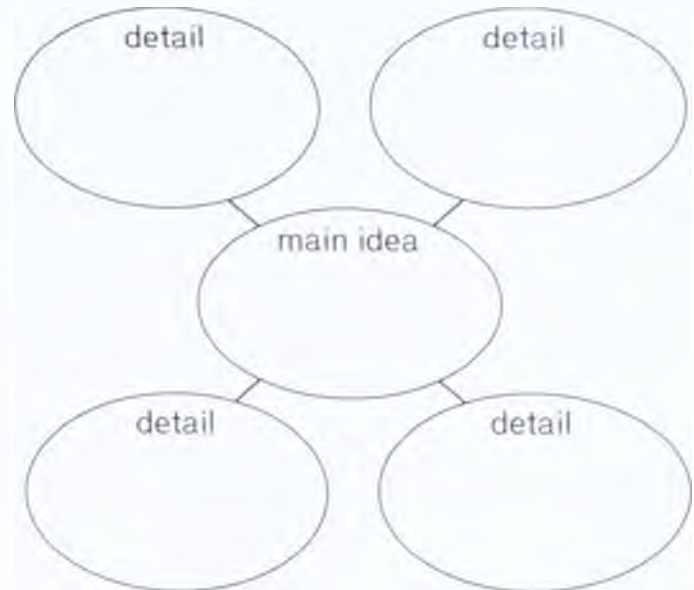
A. boldfaced headings

B. italicized text

C. section headings

D. paragraph breaks

6. Choose and write the best paraphrases of the main idea and supporting details that could be used to write a summary of the travel alert in the concept web.



During hurricane season, travelers should be prepared for emergencies.

The NOAA does not recommend travel to other countries during hurricane season.

Purchasing traveler's insurance can help travelers with the unexpected expense of emergency evacuation.

Hurricane season affects certain regions from June through November.

Travelers should consider bringing a well-stocked emergency kit.

There is a 70 percent chance of 13 to 20 named storms this season.

Travelers should be prepared for unsafe and uncomfortable conditions after a hurricane.

Roads may be washed out or obstructed by debris.



Test-Taking Tip

When reading test passages, it is tempting to read the questions and then skim the passage to find the answers. Unfortunately, when you do not read the entire passage, you can miss important themes or details. The gaps can cause confusion, especially with questions that ask you to perform higher-level thinking such as summarizing or synthesizing information. Take the time to read the passage thoroughly, and then skim the passage to find the details needed to answer the questions.

Writing Practice

When you tell a friend about a favorite book or movie, you are providing a summary. You might explain the characters, the problem faced, how the problem was solved, and the major events. Paraphrasing and including only the important details make a precise and effective summary.

Directions: Write a summary of a movie you have seen or a book you have read. As you write, summarize the main idea. Then paraphrase the key details in concise statements.

This lesson will help you practice identifying a theme in two different passages. Use it with core lesson 1. 5 Identify a Theme to reinforce and apply your knowledge.

Key Concept

The theme is the underlying meaning of a story. An author reveals the theme in a work of fiction through characters, setting, language, and other literary elements.

Core Skills

- Synthesize Details That Relate to the Theme
- Understand the Relationships among Ideas

Using Fictional Elements to Determine Theme

The theme is the central message of a text, and it may express a belief or an opinion about life. The theme, however, is not always stated; it may be implied. The author may reveal the theme through narrators' or characters' comments or actions.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

Legend of Tu-Tok-A-Nu'-La (El Capitan)

- 1 Here were once two little boys living in the valley who went down to the river to swim. After paddling and splashing about to their hearts' content, they went on shore and crept up on a huge boulder which stood beside the water. They lay down in the warm sunshine to dry themselves, but fell asleep. They slept so soundly that they knew nothing, though the great boulder grew day by day, and rose night by night, until it lifted them up beyond the sight of their tribe, who looked for them everywhere.
- 2 The rock grew until the boys were lifted high into the heaven, even far up above the blue sky, until they scraped their faces against the moon. And still, year after year, among the clouds they slept.
- 3 Then there was held a great council of all the animals to bring the boys down from the top of the great rock. Every animal leaped as high as he could up the face of the rocky wall. Mouse could only jump as high as one's hand; Rat, twice as high. Then Raccoon tried; he could jump a little farther. One after another of the animals tried, and Grizzly Bear made a great leap far up the wall, but fell back. Last of all Lion tried, and he jumped farther than any other animal, but fell down upon his back. Then came tiny Measuring-Worm, and began to creep up the rock. Soon he reached as high as Raccoon had jumped, then as high as Bear, then as high as Lion's leap, and by and by he was out of sight, climbing up the face of the rock. For one whole snow, Measuring-Worm climbed the rock, and at last he reached the top. Then he wakened the boys, and came down the same way he went up, and brought them down safely to the ground. Therefore the rock is called Tutokanula, the measuring worm. But white men call it El Capitan.

—From *Myths and Legends of California and the Old Southwest*, edited by Katherine Berry Judson

1. The actions of the Measuring-Worm express the story's _____, or central message.
2. Which sentence below *best* states the theme of the passage?
 - A. When you work together, you can solve a problem.
 - B. Never judge someone by the way he or she looks.
 - C. By making a continued effort, you will finish the job.
 - D. The strongest person will survive in the end.
3. Which detail from the passage helps you understand the theme?
 - A. "For one whole snow, Measuring-Worm climbed the rock, and at last he reached the top. "
 - B. "Every animal leaped as high as he could up the face of the rocky wall. "
 - C. "Then there was held a great council of all the animals to bring the boys down from the top of the great rock. "
 - D. "And still, year after year, among the clouds they slept. "
4. Which of the following definitions best fits the meaning of the word creep as it is used in paragraph 3?
 - A. a hateful, mean, or unpleasant person
 - B. a feeling of things crawling on your body
 - C. spreading out or growing on a surface
 - D. moving slowly, low to the ground

Synthesizing Multiple Main Ideas to Determine Theme

Sometimes you have to synthesize information from fictional elements such as setting, plot, characterization, point of view, language, and conflict to determine the theme. As you read, also think about the main idea of each paragraph and synthesize these to state the theme.

Directions: Read the passage below. Then complete the activities.

The Ingenious Patriot

- 1 Having obtained an audience of the King an Ingenious Patriot pulled a paper from his pocket, saying:
- 2 "May it please your Majesty, I have here a formula for constructing armour-plating which no gun can pierce. If these plates are adopted in the Royal Navy our warships will be invulnerable, and therefore invincible. Here, also, are reports of your Majesty's Ministers, attesting the value of the invention. I will part with my right in it for a million tumtums. "
- 3 After examining the papers, the King put them away and promised him an order on the Lord High Treasurer of the Extortion Department for a million tumtums.
- 4 "And here, " said the Ingenious Patriot, pulling another paper from another pocket, "are the working plans of a gun that I have invented, which will pierce that armour. Your Majesty's Royal Brother, the Emperor of Bang, is anxious to purchase it, but loyalty to your Majesty's throne and person constrains me to offer it first to your Majesty. The price is one million tumtums. "

(continued)

- 5 Having received the promise of another check, he thrust his hand into still another pocket, remarking: "The price of the irresistible gun would have been much greater, your Majesty, but for the fact that its missiles can be so effectively averted by my peculiar method of treating the armour plates with a new—"
- 6 "The King signed to the Great Head Factotum to approach.
- 7 "Search this man," he said, "and report how many pockets he has. "
- 8 "Forty-three, Sire," said the Great Head Factotum, completing the scrutiny
- 9 "May it please your Majesty," cried the Ingenious Patriot, in terror, "one of them contains tobacco. "
- 10 "Hold him up by the ankles and shake him," said the King; "then give him a check for forty two million tumtums and put him to death. Let a decree issue declaring ingenuity a capital offence. "

—From *Fantastic Fables* by Ambrose Bierce

1. How can determining the point of view help you understand the theme?
 - A. Looking from the king's perspective, you understand how difficult it is to protect one's kingdom.
 - B. Looking from the patriot's perspective, you learn the dangers of greed with those in authority.
 - C. Looking from the perspective of the Great Head Factotum, you learn a lesson about money.
 - D. Looking from the narrator's perspective, you understand what the king and the patriot learn about loyalty.
2. How is the author's characterization of the main character as a patriot helpful in understanding the theme?
 - A. The character presents himself as a trusted and wise adviser to the king.
 - B. The character calls himself loyal, but his actions show otherwise.
 - C. The character acts with cunning, and enriches himself by doing so.
 - D. The character is penalized for his ingenuity and sales tactics.
3. Which sentence below is the best statement of the theme of the passage?
 - A. Rulers are not always fair.
 - B. Weapons are dangerous.
 - C. You can't always trust what a person says.
 - D. You should always listen to wise advice.
4. The theme can be determined by _____ information from the characterization of the king and the patriot, the language used in the dialog, and the outcome of the interaction between the characters.



Test-Taking Tip

Some test answers can be found directly in a passage. For others, such as identifying theme and implied main ideas, you might need to synthesize information from several places. When you synthesize, make a list of important ideas. Mark out any that are not relevant. Then look for ways that the ideas are connected.

Writing Practice

There are many different types of short stories. Satires, such as “The Ingenious Patriot, ” reveal problems in society in a humorous way. Fables, such as “Legend of Tu-Tok-A-Nu’-La (El Capitan), ” are another type of short story. Fables sometimes explain how something was created and often have a moral. Topics for short stories range from solving a mystery to going on a magical adventure to explaining how bluebonnets came to Texas.

Directions: Write a short story. You may invent your own or retell in your own words a story you have read. Your short story should have a beginning, middle, and end. It should have a theme that is stated or implied, with details to support the theme.