

Bright Horizons Academy

Grade 4: Language Arts

Identifying the Main Idea and Supporting Details

Objective:

Students will learn to *identify* the *main idea* of a text and find *details* that support it, helping them better *understand* what they read.

Core Content:

The **main idea** is the most important point that a writer wants you to understand. **Supporting details** are facts, examples, or descriptions that help explain and strengthen the main idea.

By finding the main idea and its supporting details, you can understand what the writer wants you to learn or know.

If you read a passage about why recycling is good for the environment, think about what the whole paragraph is trying to tell you. The main idea might be **'Recycling helps protect the environment,'** and supporting details could include facts like **'it reduces waste in landfills'** or **'it saves natural resources.'**

Examples:

1. If a paragraph is about why rainforests are important, the main idea might be *"Rainforests are important because they help our planet stay*

healthy.” Supporting details could include: “*They provide oxygen*” and “*They are home to many plants and animals.*”

2. In a story about a shy character becoming brave, the main idea could be “*It takes courage and practice to overcome fear.*” Supporting details might show how the character *tries new things, makes friends, and learns to speak up.*
3. If a passage tells you that healthy eating gives you energy, the main idea could be “*Eating nutritious foods helps you feel strong and energetic,*” and supporting details might list *fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.*

Practice Questions:

1. What is the main idea if a paragraph talks about how bees help plants grow by spreading pollen?
2. If an article states that recycling saves resources, name one possible supporting detail.
3. True or False: The main idea is often supported by details that give examples or facts.
4. Identify a main idea: “Exercise can improve your mood.” Give one possible supporting detail for this main idea.
5. If the main idea is “Reading every day can help you become a better reader,” name one supporting detail.

Answers to Practice Questions:

1. Bees help plants grow by spreading pollen.
2. Recycling paper reduces the number of trees that need to be cut down.

3. True

4. Main idea: Exercise can improve your mood. Supporting detail: It releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel happier.

5. Reading every day helps you learn new words, which makes you a better reader.