

MAIN IDEA LEVEL ONE TUTORIAL

Level One is for any student who still thinks they don't understand how to identify the Main Idea.

Name _____

Teacher _____

Date _____

Read this paragraph and think about the main idea.

Buford really is one of the meanest kids I ever met. Every morning on the way to school I see him throw the newspaper at Mrs. Winston's little dog. Many times I have seen him tease and make fun of the little kids in our neighborhood. He even beat up Joe Parker's little brother and stole his lunch money. Once I saw him cheat on a social studies test and when he was caught, he blamed the boy sitting next to him.

1. Answer this question for yourself: Who is this about, what did he do, and what happened in this paragraph?

2. Does the first sentence agree with what you thought about in Number 1 above?

3. Do all the other sentences support the idea that Buford really is one of the meanest kids?

4. Write the sentence that states the main idea for this paragraph.

MAIN IDEA LEVEL ONE TUTORIAL

Name: _____

Read this paragraph and think about the main idea.

Every morning Melanie Miller visits old Mrs. Houston next door, takes out her trash, and washes her breakfast dishes before going to school. She stops by every afternoon after school to help Mrs. Houston take in her laundry from the clothes line and to help her prepare her small meager supper. On weekends Melanie helps Mrs. Houston by going to the grocery store to pick up her groceries and sometimes to the drug store to pick up Mrs. Houston's medicine. It is no wonder that Melanie deserved to receive the Good Neighbor award from the city.

5. Does the first sentence sound more like the main idea or a supporting detail?

6. Does the last sentence sound more like the main idea or a supporting detail?

7. Which sentence is the main idea of this paragraph? The first or the last sentence?

8. How many sentences have supporting details? _____

Read this paragraph and think about the main idea.

I love to collect stamps from all over the world. I have stamps from twelve countries on four continents. Most of the stamps I purchased at a hobby store for stamp collectors. Some of them are very old and some are new editions. I also like to collect old coins from different countries. But my favorite way to collect stamps is when someone sends me a letter from a country I do not yet have in my collection. I can then take the stamp off the letter and add it to my growing collection.

9. Write the sentence that does not belong in this paragraph.

10. Write the sentence that states the main idea of this paragraph.

MAIN IDEA LEVEL TWO TUTORIAL

Level Two is for any student who feels they understand how to identify the main idea and are ready to show that they now can do it.

Name _____

Teacher _____

Date _____

Read this paragraph and think about the main idea.

My neighbor Marlene's pet macaw screams at me. Beaker is a red and green macaw and he makes loud piercing shouts. Red and green macaws are like that. He gets very jealous if anyone even talks to Marlene. Beaker wants all the attention. Blue and yellow macaws are supposed to have sweeter personalities than the red and green variety, but we are stuck with this red and green macaw. Beaker can talk just a little. He will say hello to you as long as he doesn't think you are going to keep him from Marlene. If he does think that, you better watch out. Beaker likes to "clean" Marlene's hair with his beak and that is when you want to keep your distance. He even gets jealous if he thinks you are prettier than he is. I once walked by wearing a bright red shirt, and I thought Beaker was going to jump out and attack me! Beaker does not have a very pleasant personality.

Check the first sentence and the last sentence to see if either one of them is the main idea of the paragraph. The main idea must fit most of the paragraph. Which of these sentences is the main idea? Which is a supporting detail?

1. Which is the main idea? (First or Last?) _____

2. Which is a supporting detail? (First or Last?) _____

3. Name another detail from the paragraph that supports the main idea?

4. Name one more supporting detail.

MAIN IDEA LEVEL TWO TUTORIAL

Name: _____

Read this paragraph and think about the main idea.

Having a tropical fish tank at home is a hobby that can be both educational and entertaining. Not only can you learn a lot about how different tropical fish live, but also you can spend hours watching them in the tank. People who don't keep tropical fish just see many different kinds of fish swimming back and forth in the tank. The person who keeps and maintains a tropical tank sees that every fish has its own personality. Some prefer to swim near the bottom, middle or top of the tank. Some fish are friendly to others while some fish may be very aggressive and mean to the other fish.

5. Find the sentence that states the main idea of this paragraph. Write that sentence here.

Read this paragraph and think about the main idea.

Jasper Honeybear spends two hours everyday practicing his French horn. Then he goes for private lessons once a week for an hour. Much of Jasper's time is spent playing exercises and scales that will strengthen his lips so that he can play all the notes perfectly. Orchestra meets two evenings each week and he must put in extra practice on the musical pieces the orchestra will play at their next concert. The orchestra holds a new concert every month. Being a musician in an orchestra takes a lot of time and hard work.

6. Find the sentence that states the main idea of this paragraph. Write that sentence here.

MAIN IDEA LEVEL THREE ENRICHMENT

Level Three is for any student who feels they not only understand how to identify the Main Idea in a paragraph, but also have done so correctly before and feel they are nearly experts at this skill. This is considered an enrichment activity for any such student.

Name _____

Teacher _____

Date _____

Read these paragraphs and think about the main ideas for each one.

(1) People who own cell phones (wireless telephones) need to learn proper behavior when using their phones. Although proper behavior could be related to safety and manners, safety is the most important reason people should learn how to use their cell phones. There have been many traffic accidents caused by people talking on their cell phones while trying to drive at the same time. Anything that takes attention away from the road makes driving dangerous. Some states are even passing new laws making it against the law talking on the phone while driving. Also there have been many instances where people talking on their phones and walking at the same time have caused the talker to trip and break an arm or a leg.

(2) Cell phone users also need to learn good manners when using their portable phones. Some restaurants and clubs have decided not to allow cell phones to be used in their places of business. The constant sound of cell phones ringing and people having phone conversations is annoying to many customers. People tend to talk louder to their telephones than when they have a conversation with another person. Even people having animated loud conversations with their phones in shopping malls is a distraction to others. Cell phone users also should turn their phones off when they attend a movie, concert, or play.

The main idea can sometimes be found in the first sentence, the last sentence, **or any other sentence in the paragraph**. Rewrite the sentence that gives the main idea for the paragraph for each of the above two paragraphs.

(1) _____

(2) _____

MAIN IDEA LEVEL THREE ENRICHMENT

Name: _____

Read these paragraphs and think about the main idea for each.

(1) Laptop computers used to be as big and thick as a volume from a library encyclopedia and weighed as much or more. Nowadays they can be about as thin as a thick magazine and they weigh very little. Even the first computers filled whole rooms with many refrigerator size cabinets. These early computers did not have but a fraction of the computing power of the average desktop computer today. The latest computer products are palm top hand held devices such as the Palm Pilot. They can fit true computing power into a device barely the size of your hand. One day they will have a fully functional computer the size of a wrist watch.

(2) Telephones not only have gotten smaller, but also they can do more than anyone would have guessed over 100 years ago. The first generation of telephones back in the 19th Century were big boxes with the transmitter to talk into placed on the phone box itself. The receiver for hearing some one else was held to the ear. These early phones had no dials because the operator had to place all the calls. Later in the 20th Century telephones developed dials for making calls without the operator and eventually the handset contained both the transmitter and the receiver. By the early years of the 21st Century many telephones are wireless. Some telephones have a small screen like a computer and can upload and download information like news and messages. Some new TV telephones now have a camera and viewer so that you can see the person with whom you are talking.

Sometimes the main idea is not stated in a topic sentence at all. It is implied, meaning that you have to come to the right conclusion about what the main idea is by yourself. One of the above two paragraphs has an implied main idea; the other has a well stated main idea found in one of the common places.

3) Which of the above two paragraphs has a stated main idea? _____

4) Write the sentence that states that main idea on the lines below.

5) Which of the above two paragraphs has an unstated, implied main idea? _____

6) In your own words, what is the main idea for that paragraph that all the other statements support with details and examples?
