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Introduction

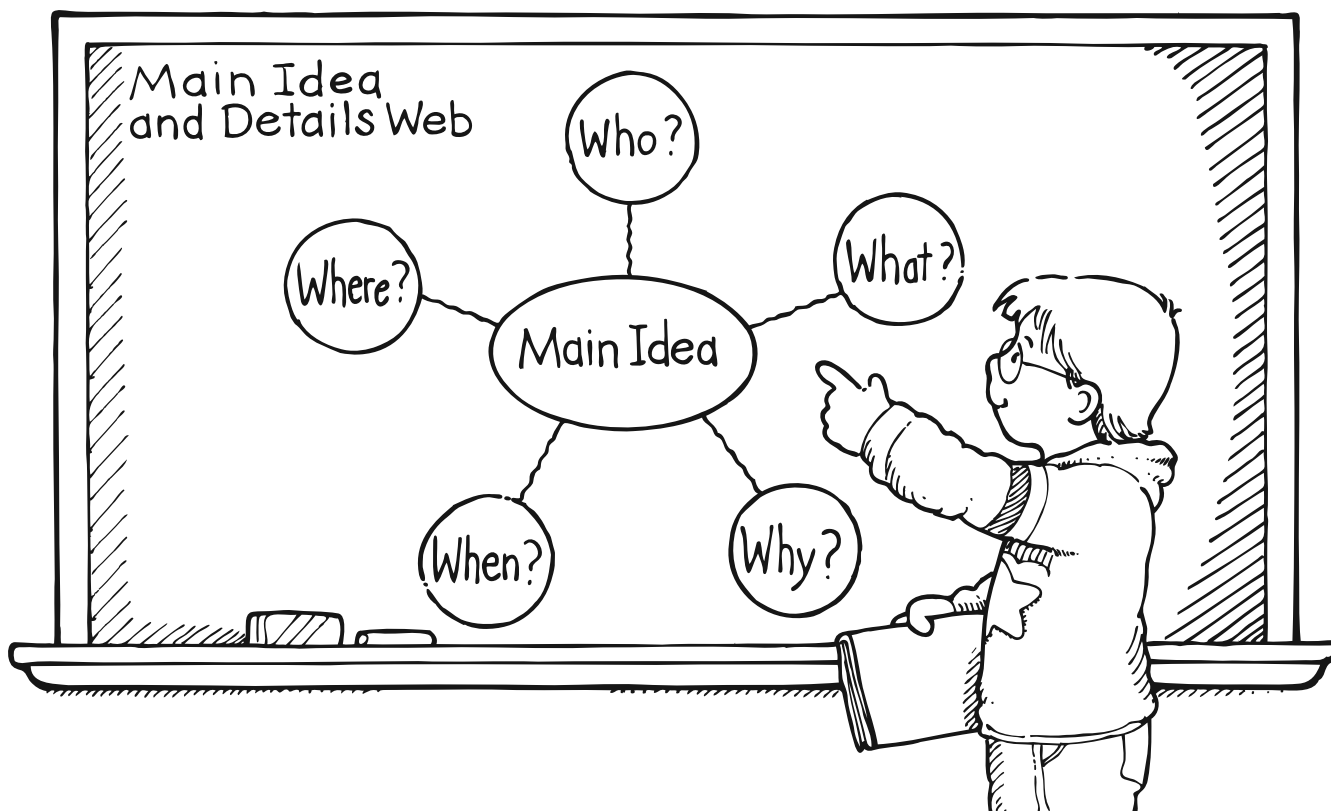
Main Idea and Details 3–4 contains ready-to-use activity pages to provide students with skill practice. The book helps children to understand the main idea, main idea sentences, and details. The activities give students practice in figuring out what the main idea and main idea sentences are in a variety of written works. It helps them realize how details provide the information that proves the main idea.

The activities can be used to supplement and enhance what you are already teaching in your classroom. Give an activity page to students as independent class work, or send the pages home as homework to reinforce skills taught in class. An answer key is included at the end of the book as a convenient reference.

This book provides activities that will directly assist students in practicing skills and concepts. Students will receive reinforcement in the following skills:

- ✍ Identifying the main idea
- ✍ Identifying details
- ✍ Writing details to support a main idea
- ✍ Writing a main idea to go with a list of details
- ✍ Creating webs

Use *Main Idea and Details 3–4* to reinforce or extend concepts and skills. “Recharge” skill review with the ready-to-go activities in this book, and give students the power to succeed!



Writing a Main Idea Sentence

The **main idea** is the central thought or message. The **main idea sentence** is one sentence in the paragraph that states the main idea of the paragraph. The main idea sentence can be found in the beginning, middle, or even at the end of a paragraph. The main idea sentence "introduces" the reader to what the paragraph is about.

Example:

Topic: soccer

Main Idea Sentence: There are many rules in the game of soccer.

(The paragraph will explain the rules of playing soccer.)



Now you try.

Topic: dogs

Main Idea Sentence: (What do you want to say about dogs?) _____

(The paragraph will _____)

Topic: chocolate

Main Idea Sentence: (What do you want to say about chocolate?) _____

(The paragraph will _____)

Stars and Stripes Forever

These three paragraphs tell different things about the American flag. Read each paragraph. Write one sentence that states the main idea of that paragraph. Write your sentence on the line above the paragraph.

1 Main Idea: _____

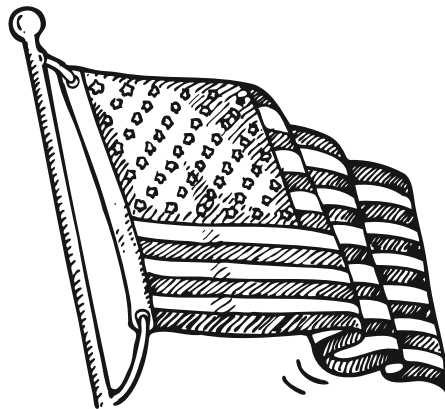
The flag is an important symbol for U.S. citizens. It is often called the Stars and Stripes. Every day, students all over America begin each school day with the flag salute. When the president of the United States gives a speech on television, the flag stands proudly behind him. Every two years, the best athletes in the nation go to the Olympics. The Stars and Stripes lets the world know that these athletes are from America, the land of the free.

2 Main Idea: _____

The American flag has 50 white stars. Each star represents a state from the United States. In 1959, the fiftieth star was added when Hawaii became a state. There are 13 stripes on the flag. Seven are red, and six are white. These stripes represent the original 13 colonies of America. The first flag had 13 stars that formed a circle on the blue rectangle, which also represented the 13 original colonies.

3 Main Idea: _____

It is said that Betsy Ross, a seamstress in the upholstery business with her husband, John, made the first American flag after a visit from George Washington. She convinced George Washington to use a five-pointed star, rather than a six-pointed star, because she could make one with just one snip of her scissors on the folded fabric. This story has become an American legend because scholars cannot prove that she actually made the very *first* flag.



The Bald Eagle

- 1 Think about the details in the paragraph. Underline the main idea sentence for this paragraph.

The American bald eagle is the national bird. It was chosen as a national emblem because the bird is the only eagle unique to North America. It has a long life, great strength, and majestic looks. It lives on the mountaintops, along the coast, or near lakes and rivers. It has unlimited freedom. It sweeps into the valleys or soars upward into the boundless space of the sky.

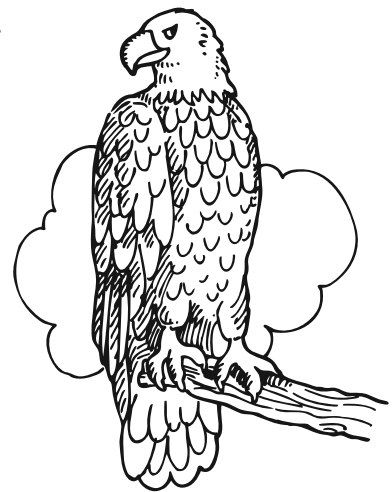
- 2 Think about the details in the paragraph. Underline the main idea sentence for this paragraph.

In the 1780s there was much discussion between the forefathers about which bird to choose to represent the country. Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national bird. He thought the turkey was a much more “respectable animal.” Mr. Franklin thought the eagle was a bird of “bad moral character” because it would steal the fish from a fishing-hawk after the hawk had worked hard to catch its dinner. But, in 1787, Congress officially adopted the eagle as the emblem of the United States.

- 3 The main idea sentence is missing in the paragraph below. Think about what the details are describing. Write a main idea sentence.

Main Idea _____

Its back and breast are covered with blackish-brown feathers. Its head, neck, and tail are covered with white feathers. The bald eagle’s head is not actually “bald.” It refers to the word *piebald*, which means “two colored, usually black and white.” The male bald eagle has a body length from 30 to 34 inches. It weighs between 10 and 14 pounds. Its wingspan ranges from 72 to 85 inches (that’s about 6 to 7 feet across!). Its beak is hooked at the tip for tearing its food, which is mainly fish. The edges of the beak are sharp, creating a cutting, scissorlike effect. Yet, even though the beak can be a strong weapon, an eagle can also use it to feed its baby chick, or groom its mate’s feathers.



Extra! Extra!

The headlines of newspaper articles often tell the reader the main idea of the article. Read the newspaper articles. Write a headline for each article.

1

Most people know that dolphins are intelligent creatures, but new research shows that bottlenose dolphins also use “names” to recognize one another. Scientists have shown that each dolphin develops its own signature whistle in the first few weeks of life that helps others to identify it. A dolphin will call out its own name to let others know that it is near.

2

J. K. Rowling, author of the well-known Harry Potter series of novels, is doing what she loves most. Writing is her passion. Although she has won many awards and achieved great fame, she was not always successful. She sent her books to several publishers before any of them showed interest. Even so, she didn’t give up. Now, she enjoys seeing everyone’s enthusiasm for the characters she created as she receives fan mail from children and adults alike.

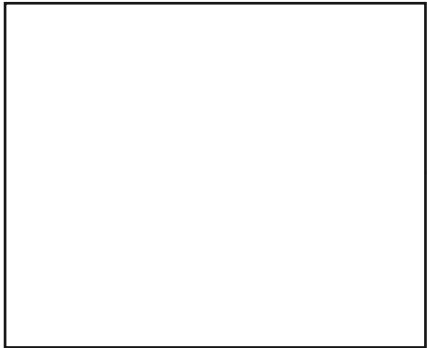
3

Bald eagles have been on the endangered species list for many years. However, with the help of people who have passed laws to protect the birds and their natural habitats, the population of this splendid bird has rebounded. Thousands now soar over the blue skies close to coastlines. There is even talk about whether the bald eagle should be removed from the endangered species list. Some people argue that if the species is removed from the list, people will lose interest in the bird, and the population will decline again.

Main Idea Tree Diagram

Read each detail in the tree diagrams. Fill in the main idea (the big picture) that comes to mind after reading all of the details.

1



- Penguins are playful animals that sometimes slide down hills into the water.
- These birds eat fish, krill, and squid.
- Penguins are members of the bird family, but the only "flying" they do is in the water.

2



- A thick layer of blubber keeps the harbor seal warm in its cold environment.
- Penguins have a layer of blubber, a fluffy layer of down feathers, and a thicker layer of feathers on top of that to keep them warm.
- Polar bears' fur traps the sun's warmth and directs it straight to the skin.

3



- Sometimes a whale pokes its head out of the water and spins around. This is called *spyhopping*.
- Lobtailing* is when the whale slaps the surface of the water with its tail.
- If you ever see a whale jump out of the water and slap back down again, that is called *breaching*.

The Main Idea of the Maxims

Benjamin Franklin pretended he was a poor man named Richard writing to the public in *Poor Richard's Almanack*. In the almanac, he gave advice in little sayings called **maxims**. These little sayings are filled with meaning and are like main ideas. Match the story with the maxim that best describes its meaning.



- A. Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
- B. He who lies down with dogs, shall rise up with fleas.
- C. Hunger never saw bad bread.

- 1 _____ Donny went with some new friends to a video arcade. When they ran out of money, his new friends started to plan how to take other people's money so they could keep playing games. Donny usually followed the rules, but not that day. When he was caught stealing, a police officer took him home and told his mother what he had done. The owner of the video arcade banned Donny from the arcade, and his mother grounded him for a month.
- 2 _____ Michael looked forward to the start of each day. He always wanted to see how much he could get done before the sun went down. He worked very hard, and it paid off. He was able to provide a good home and healthy food for his family. His neighbors admired him and often asked him for advice.
- 3 _____ Charlie was a very picky eater. She would only eat one kind of cereal, one kind of fruit, and one kind of vegetable. She would say, "That one is too sweet," or "That one is too sour." She disliked wheat bread more than anything. One day, she ran out of money and could not buy anything to eat at all. Finally, when a man offered her the wheat bread he did not use, she took it and said, "Thank you." And she gobbled it up.

The Most Important Meal of the Day

After picking out and eating the soggy marshmallows from your Lucky Charms, you crunch on the oat cereal. But did you ever wonder where that box of Lucky Charms came from? It was made in the great state of Minnesota, by the General Mills Company. General Mills was created in 1928, and it is still going strong today. One reason for its success is that wheat, corn, and rice are some of the natural resources in Minnesota. So the next time you sit down to a bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios, Trix, or Lucky Charms, give a salute to the General Mills Company for providing you with a delicious breakfast!

Write **who** the paragraph was about, **what** happened that was important, **where** it happened, **when** it happened, and **why** it was important. Then write the main idea.

Who? _____

What? _____

Where? _____

When? _____

Why? _____

Main Idea _____

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Arnold Schwarzenegger is a very successful American. He was born in Austria in 1947. His father wanted him to be a policeman, like himself, but Arnold discovered he loved bodybuilding. He trained hard and entered many bodybuilding contests. He won his first Mr. Universe title in 1967. When he was 21, he immigrated to the United States. He had very little money and knew little English. However, he kept training and winning bodybuilding contests. He won the title of Mr. Olympia seven times! He then tried acting in films. He became very famous as an action hero. He also earned his degree from the University of Wisconsin-Superior. His degrees were in international marketing

of fitness and business administration. In 1983, Arnold Schwarzenegger became a U.S. citizen.

Schwarzenegger entered politics when he was appointed chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports for President George H. W. Bush. He later was chairman for California's Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports for Governor Pete Wilson. Californians voted for his After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002. This act made state money available for after-school programs. In 2003, the people of California elected him governor. Even if a person does not agree with Arnold Schwarzenegger's politics, one can't help but admire what he has accomplished!

Use the "Five Ws" to write the details from the passage.

Who? _____

Did What? _____
(Think: "major accomplishments")

Where? _____
(Think: "Where did he start? Where did he go?")

When? _____
(Think: "What is the range of years [from when to when] that he became newsworthy?")

Why? _____
(Think: "Why is what he did important and meaningful?")