Table of Contents

Introduction 2

Finding the Main Idea 5

Keeping Questions in Mind 11

Recognizing Details 18

Locating Topic Sentences 24

Determining the Main Idea (Unstated) 32

Choosing the Best Title 37

Assessment 44

Answer Key 47

Introduction

The old adage "practice makes perfect" can apply to your child and his or her education. The more practice and exposure your child has with concepts being taught in school, the more success he or she is likely to find. For many parents, knowing how to help their children may be frustrating because the resources may not be readily available. As a parent, it is also hard to know where to focus your efforts so that the extra practice your child receives at home supports what he or she is learning in school.

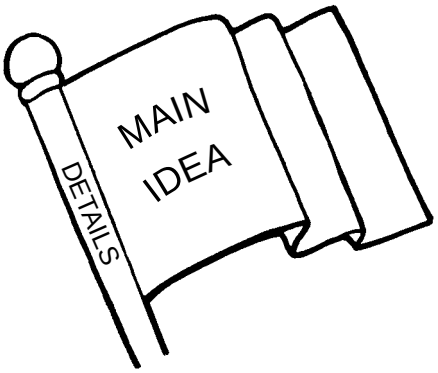
A child's ability to understand what he or she reads depends largely upon the ability to locate the main idea of a passage and identify the details that support it. *Practice Makes Perfect: Main Idea* covers identifying the main idea and supporting details in both fiction and nonfiction text. To allow for the greatest variety of practice, the passages are not complete stories. The exercises included in this book meet or reinforce educational standards and objectives similar to the ones required by your state and school district for third-graders:

- ☞ The student will identify the main idea in fiction and nonfiction text.
- ☞ The student will locate supporting details in fiction and nonfiction text.
- ☞ The student will identify topic sentences in paragraphs.
- ☞ The student will choose the best title for a passage.

 ©Teacher Created Resources, Inc.

Picture a flag flying at the top of a flag pole. What do you notice first? The flag! The flag is like the main idea.

The flag pole holds up the flag. The flag pole is like the details. They hold up, or support, the main idea by:



- ☞ **telling more facts**
- ☞ **providing reasons**
- ☞ **giving examples**

Passage 1

Redwood trees are one of the longest-living plants on Earth. Many have already lived more than 2,000 years. Almost nothing can kill them. They do not die from disease. Bugs and fungi do not kill them. During a forest fire, the tree's bark may burn, but it will still survive. The same happens with lightning strikes. Over many years, the tree will slowly re-grow the bark and heal the scars. Those trees blown down by strong winds send up shoots from their roots. After a redwood tree is cut down, its stump will send up shoots.

What is the main idea?

ⓐ Redwood trees live longer than any other plant or animal on Earth.

ⓑ Redwood trees do not die easily.

ⓒ After a redwood tree is cut down, its stump will send up shoots.

Name 5 details that support the main idea:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

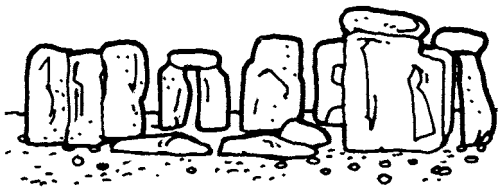
4. _____

5. _____

 ©Teacher Created Resources, Inc.

Passage 7

In Britain, an odd monument stands in the midst of farm fields. Its name is Stonehenge. It is a set of giant stone slabs. These slabs are grouped in circles. Scientists believe that it is thousands of years old. No one knows who built Stonehenge or why. Some think it served as a calendar. Others think that people used the stones to watch the sky. They could track the movement of the sun, stars, and moon. Still others think that people held religious rites there.



Stonehenge

Over time, the huge stones fell over. People took some away for other uses. The British government decided to restore Stonehenge in 1922. Workers found some of the missing stones. They put them back in their places. Now Stonehenge is one of the nation's most popular places to visit. Over one million people go there each year.

What is the main idea?

ⓐ People are fascinated by Stonehenge and wonder who built it and why.

ⓑ Workers found some of the missing stones when the British government decided to restore Stonehenge.

ⓒ Stonehenge, a set of giant stone slabs in Britain, was used as an ancient calendar.

What would be the best title for this passage?

ⓐ Giant Stone Slabs

ⓑ A Popular British Monument

ⓒ The Mysterious Place Called Stonehenge

What is the topic sentence?

ⓐ The British government decided to restore Stonehenge in 1922.

ⓑ In Britain, an odd monument stands in the midst of farm fields.

ⓒ Now Stonehenge is one of the nation's most popular places to visit.

Check one of the boxes to complete this sentence: The topic sentence comes at the ❑ beginning ❑ middle ❑ end of the passage.