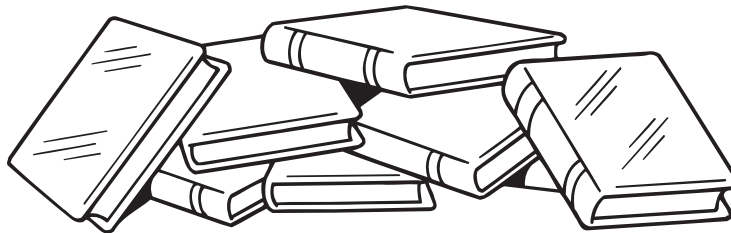


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Discovering the Main Idea

Discovering the main idea is a skill that is fundamental to basic reading comprehension. Using the activities and reproducibles in this section will help students find the main ideas and supporting details within any type of text.



Suggested Books for Teaching Main Idea

Houston, Gloria. *My Great-Aunt Arizona*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

As a child, Arizona loved to dream of faraway places. Although Arizona goes away to school, she returns to teach in the exact same schoolhouse where she herself learned.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.

To celebrate her family's Russian heritage, Anna's mother makes a quilt using old clothing. The quilt is used during many important events.

Shannon, David. *A Bad Case of Stripes*. New York: Blue Sky Press, 1998.

Camilla really wants to fit in, but two problems prevent her from doing so: 1) Her skin can suddenly turn red, white, and blue; and 2) She likes lima beans.

Silverstein, Shel. *The Giving Tree*. New York: HarperCollins, 1964.

The tree and the boy are happy companions until the boy demands too much of the tree. In the end, they become happy companions once more.

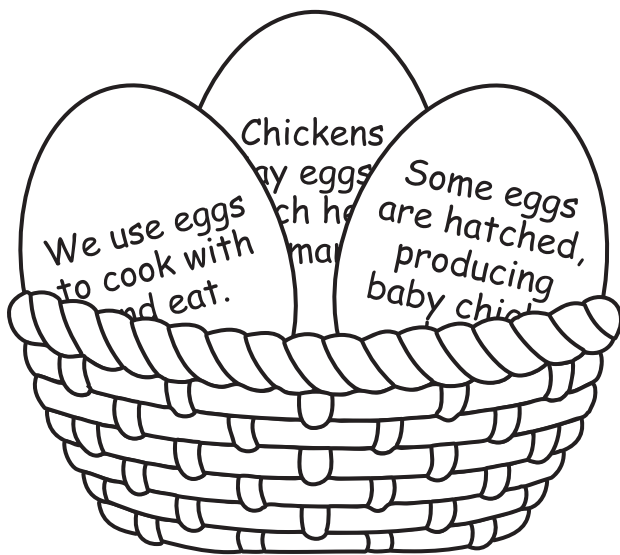
Williams, Vera. *A Chair for My Mother*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1982.

After a family loses their furniture in a fire, they save all of their change in a jar to buy a new chair.

Activities for Discovering the Main Idea

Main Idea Keyrings

This unique graphic organizer can be used with any book, fiction or nonfiction! Copy Main Idea Keyrings (page 62), one per student. To help students find the main idea and supporting details, select a book to read together. After reading the text and pointing out specific ideas, have students use the text to find the main idea of the book, or paragraph, and write down three supporting details. This is great main-idea practice!



"Egg"cellent Main Ideas

This activity will crack up your students as they read fun facts about eggs. Copy "Egg"cellent Main Ideas (pages 63–64) for each student. Have students read each of the three facts (from page 63) and cut out and glue the correct main-idea basket (from page 64) below the eggs. Your students will be "eggs"tremely aware of main ideas after doing this activity!

Main Ideas from Outer Space

This main-idea activity will have your students finding the difference between main ideas and supporting details. Copy Main Ideas from Outer Space (pages 65–66) for each student. Have students cut out each of the main ideas and supporting details. Students will match the main idea and its supporting details and then glue their results onto Main Ideas from Outer Space (page 66). This activity will help students identify the difference between these types of sentences.

The moon affects the tides in Earth's oceans.

The moon rotates around Earth about every 27 days.

The moon has many mountains and craters on its surface.

Main Idea Keyrings

Directions: Read a book, and then write the story's main idea and supporting details in the circles below.

Book Title: _____

