

**S**trategies  
**T**o  
**A**chieve  
**R**eading  
**S**uccess

Name \_\_\_\_\_



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## PART ONE: Think About the Strategy

**What Is Main Idea?**

Stories and books all have a main idea. Movies and TV shows also have a main idea. The main idea is the most important idea. It tells what something is mostly about.

1 Write the name of your favorite book.

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2 Write one thing that happens in the book.

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3 Write what the book is mostly about.

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**Work with a Partner**

- Tell your partner about a TV show you have watched.
- Take turns telling each other what the TV show was mostly about.



## How Do You Find the Main Idea?

You can find the main idea of most stories in the first sentence or last sentence.

**Read the story below.**

**Think about the most important idea in the story.**

People wear different clothes in winter. I wear a coat and boots. Sometimes I wear a hat and a scarf. These clothes keep me warm.

1. Let's look at the boxes below.
2. The sentences in the top three boxes tell about the main idea of the story. But they do not tell the most important idea.
3. The first sentence in the story does tell the most important idea. This sentence tells what the story is mostly about.
4. Finish writing the main idea in the large box at the bottom.

I wear a coat and boots.

Sometimes I wear a hat and a scarf.

These clothes keep me warm.

People wear different clothes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### WHAT TO KNOW

The most important idea in a story is called the **main idea**. The main idea tells what a story is mostly or mainly about.

- The main idea is sometimes in the first sentence of a story.
- The main idea is sometimes in the last sentence of a story.

**Read this story about dogs. As you read, think about the most important idea in the story.**

A pet dog needs many things. A dog needs a soft bed. It also needs special food made for dogs and a dish for water. You might also want to give your dog a toy to play with. Dogs love to play.



The most important idea is in the first sentence of the story.

The most important idea in the story is:

**A pet dog needs many things.**





**Read this story about Meg. As you read, think about the main idea of the story. Then answer the questions.**

Today is the first day of school. Meg has been waiting for this day. She can't wait to begin first grade. But Meg cannot go to school today. She cannot meet her new teacher. She cannot be with all her friends. Meg is sick with the flu.



1. What is the main idea of the story?
  - (A) Meg cannot meet her teacher.
  - (B) Meg is sick with the flu.
  - (C) Today is the first day of school.
2. Where did you find the main idea?
  - (A) in the first sentence
  - (B) in the second sentence
  - (C) in the last sentence



### **Work with a Partner**

- Talk about your answers to the questions.
- Tell why you chose your answers.
- Then talk about what you have learned so far about finding main idea.



## REVIEW

The main idea tells what a story is mostly or mainly about.

- The main idea is sometimes in the first sentence of a story.
- The main idea is sometimes in the last sentence of a story.

**Read this story about cats. As you read, ask yourself, “What is the story mostly about?” Then answer the questions.**

Cats come in many shapes and sizes. Some cats are wild cats. Other cats are house cats. Lions and tigers are wild cats. Wild cats live outside. House cats live inside with people.

Some house cats are gray, and some are white. Some are dark and some are light. Many cats have stripes or patches.



3. What is the story mostly about?
  - Ⓐ Many cats have stripes or patches.
  - Ⓑ Cats come in many shapes and sizes.
  - Ⓒ Some cats are wild cats.
4. Where did you find the main idea?
  - Ⓐ in the first sentence
  - Ⓑ in the second sentence
  - Ⓒ in the last sentence



## Which Answer Is Correct and Why?

Look at the answer choices for each question.

Read why each answer choice is **correct** or **not correct**.

3. What is the story mostly about?

**A** Many cats have stripes or patches.

This answer is not correct. This answer tells about only one idea from the story. The story is not mostly about cats that have stripes or patches.

**B** Cats come in many shapes and sizes.

This answer is correct. The story is mostly about different kinds of cats. Cats come in many shapes and sizes.

**C** Some cats are wild cats.

This answer is not correct. This answer tells about only one idea from the story. The story is not mostly about wild cats.

4. Where did you find the main idea?

**A** in the first sentence

This answer is correct. The first sentence of the story says that “*Cats come in many shapes and sizes.*” This sentence tells what the story is mostly about.

**B** in the second sentence

This answer is not correct. The main idea is in the first sentence of this story. The second sentence says that “*Some cats are wild cats.*” This is just one idea in the story. The story is not mostly about wild cats.

**C** in the last sentence

This answer is not correct. The last sentence of the story says that “*Many cats have stripes or patches.*” The story is not mostly about cats that have stripes or patches. The story is mostly about all kinds of cats. Cats come in many shapes and sizes.




**MORE  
TO  
KNOW**

- The main idea is sometimes not in the story. You can figure out the main idea by thinking about what the story is mostly about. Ask yourself, “What is the story telling me?”
- Many stories have a title. A title usually tells something about the main idea of a story.

**Read the first part of a story about Max.  
Then answer the questions.**

### Getting Ready to Paint

Max held a paintbrush in one hand. He held a cup of water in his other hand. Paper and paint lay in front of him. Max was about to paint a picture when his friend stopped by.

“Do you need help painting?” Tim asked.

“I helped my mother paint our house last year.”

“This kind of painting is different,” Max said.

“You have to do it by yourself.”



- What is the story mostly about?
  - Max likes to paint.
  - Max does not want any help.
  - Max is going to paint a picture.
- Where or how did you find the main idea?
  - in the first sentence
  - in the last sentence
  - by thinking about the most important idea in the story
- The title of the story gives you a clue about
  - the ending of the story.
  - the most important idea in the story.
  - all the things that will happen in the story.
- What is another good title for this part of the story?
  - “How to Paint”
  - “Pretty Pictures”
  - “Max Is a Painter”



**Read the next part of the story about Max.  
Then answer the questions.**

"You don't want my help?" Tim said, sadly.

"No," Max said. He dipped his brush into some red paint.

"But if you want, you can paint a picture of your own."

"Really?" said Tim. He was much happier now.

"Sure," said Max. "I have lots of paper and extra brushes."

"This sounds like fun," said Tim. He sat down next to Max.

"It's a lot more fun than painting a house," said Max.

9. What is this part of the story mostly about?
- Ⓐ Tim feels sad.
  - Ⓑ Max wants to be alone.
  - Ⓒ Max shares his things with Tim.
10. What is the story telling you?
- Ⓐ Max is kind to his friend.
  - Ⓑ Max does not need any help.
  - Ⓒ Max is not painting a house.
11. What is the main idea of this part of the story?
- Ⓐ Tim asks if he can help Max paint.
  - Ⓑ Max asks if Tim wants to paint.
  - Ⓒ Tim feels sad that his friend does not need his help.
12. What is a good title for this part of the story?
- Ⓐ "Left Out"
  - Ⓑ "Helping a Friend"
  - Ⓒ "Let's Paint Together"




**TEST  
TIPS**

- A test question about the main idea may ask you what a story is *mostly* or *mainly* about.
- A test question about the main idea may ask you to choose the best name or the best title for a story. A good title tells something about the main idea of a story.

**Read this story about feathers.**

**Then answer questions about the story.**

**Choose the best answer for Numbers 13 and 14.**

Feathers are important for birds. Feathers are warmer than fur. Birds fluff up their feathers on cold days. This keeps them warm.

About once a year, birds get new feathers. The old feathers fall out. New ones grow in their place.



13. The story tells mainly about
- Ⓐ how birds keep warm.
  - Ⓑ why feathers are important.
  - Ⓒ what kind of animals have fur.
14. What is the best title for the story?
- Ⓐ “All About Birds”
  - Ⓑ “Feathers and Fur”
  - Ⓒ “Birds and Their Feathers”



**Read this story about a fish.**  
**Then answer questions about the story.**  
**Choose the best answer for Numbers 15 and 16.**

### Mia's Fish

Mia held a bowl filled with water. A small orange fish was inside.

"This is my new fish," she told her brother.

"Where did you catch it?" Jim asked.

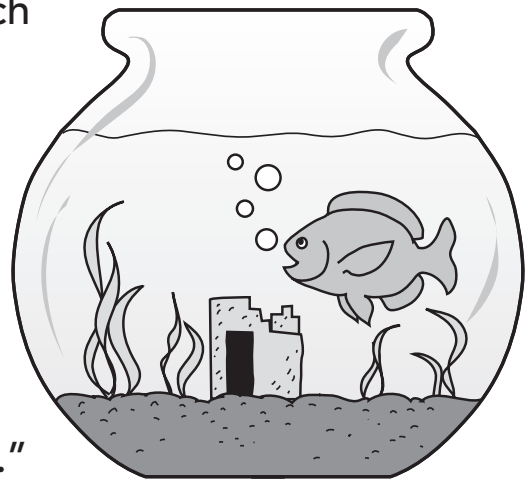
"I didn't catch it," Mia said. "I bought it at a store."

"I didn't know you could buy a fish," Jim said. "I thought you could only catch them in a lake."

Mia laughed. "Fish from a lake are for eating."

"Are we going to eat this fish?" Jim asked.

Mia smiled. "No. This fish is a pet. Besides, it would make a very small meal."



15. What is the main idea of the story?
- Ⓐ Not all fish come from a lake.
  - Ⓑ New pets need a lot of care.
  - Ⓒ A girl gets a fish for a pet.
16. What is another good name for the story?
- Ⓐ "The New Pet"
  - Ⓑ "The Silly Question"
  - Ⓒ "The Fish from the Lake"