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Strategy One FINDING MAIN IDEA

PART ONE: Think About Main Idea

WHAT IS MAIN IDEA?

Stories, poems and articles all have a main idea. A movie or television show also has a main idea. The main idea tells what something is mostly about.

★ Write the name of a book you have read in school or at home.

★ Write some of the things that happen in the book.

★ Tell what the book is mostly about.

You just wrote about main idea!



Tell your partner about a movie you have seen or a TV show you have watched. Then take turns telling the main idea of the movie or TV show. Try to tell your main idea in one sentence.



HOW DO YOU FIND THE MAIN IDEA?

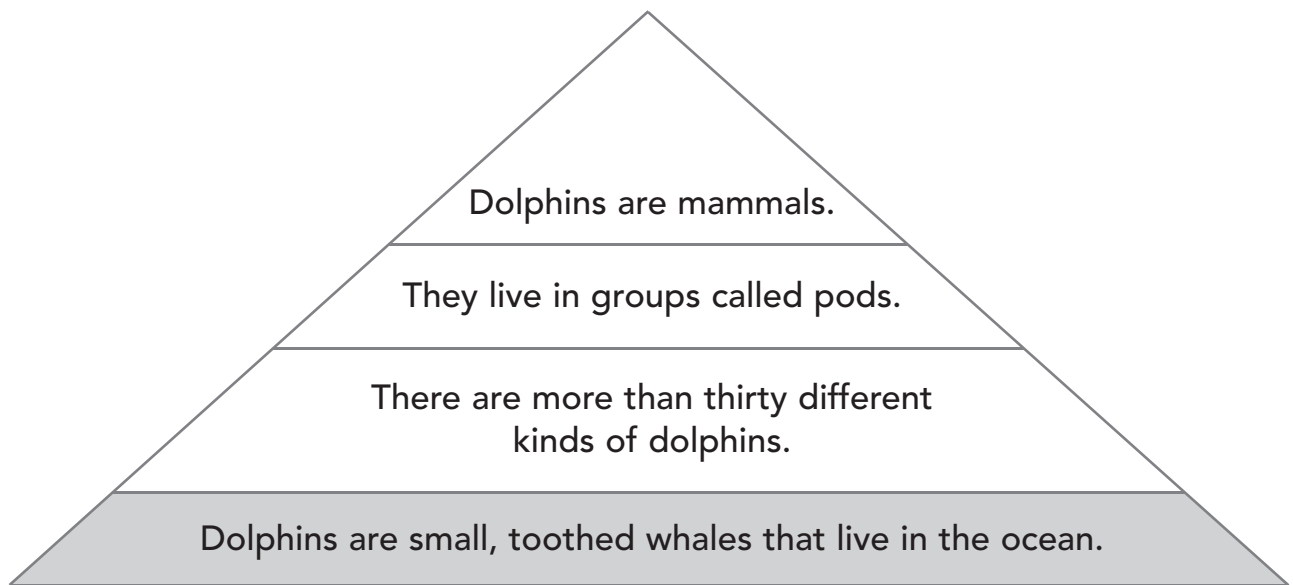
You can find the main idea of most reading passages in the first sentence or in the last sentence of the passage. Read the passage below.

Dolphins are small, toothed whales that live in the ocean.
Dolphins are mammals. They live in groups called pods.
There are more than thirty different kinds of dolphins.

Think about the most important idea in the passage.

Let's find the main idea.

Look at the triangle below. The first three sentences tell about the main idea, but they do not tell the most important idea.



The sentence at the bottom of the triangle is the most important idea. This sentence tells what the passage is mostly about. The main idea is found in the first sentence of the passage.

You just found the main idea!

Look at the answer choices for each question. Read why each answer choice is correct or not correct.

3. What is the article mostly about?

- Ⓐ countries that celebrate the new year on 1 January

This answer is not correct because the article tells about many countries that celebrate the new year on different days.

- Ⓑ why the new year begins on a different day each year

This answer is not correct because the new year is not on a different day each year. Different people celebrate the new year on different days.

- different times that the new year is celebrated

This answer is correct because it is the most important idea. It tells what the article is mostly about.

- Ⓓ people who begin the new year in spring

This answer is not correct because it is not the most important idea of the article. This answer does not tell what the article is mostly about.

4. Where or how did you find the main idea?

- Ⓐ in the first sentence of the paragraph

This answer is not correct because the first sentence is ‘When do you celebrate the new year?’ This is not the most important idea in the article.

- Ⓑ in the last sentence of the paragraph

This answer is not correct because the last sentence is ‘In Iran, the new year begins on the first day of spring’. This is not the most important idea in the article.

- Ⓒ in the middle of the paragraph

This answer is not correct because the middle of the paragraph tells about when people in China celebrate the new year. Also, the main idea is more often found in the first or last sentence of a paragraph, not in the middle of a paragraph.

- by thinking about the most important idea in the paragraph

This answer is correct because the main idea is not found in the first sentence, the last sentence or in the middle of a paragraph. The main idea is found by thinking about the most important idea in the article. This answer tells about all the other ideas in the article.

<p>Finding Main Idea</p> <p>1. The main idea of the first paragraph is found</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ in the first sentence. Ⓑ in the last sentence. Ⓒ in the middle of the paragraph. Ⓓ by thinking about the most important idea in the paragraph. 	<p>Recalling Facts and Details</p> <p>4. Who helped Gordon when he forgot his lines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ his uncle Ⓑ his teacher Ⓒ his mother Ⓓ his friend
<p>Finding Main Idea</p> <p>2. What is the letter mainly about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ a nervous nephew Ⓑ a favourite uncle Ⓒ a school play Ⓓ a silly mistake 	<p>Understanding Sequence</p> <p>5. Which of these happened last?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ The curtain rose. Ⓑ Everyone clapped. Ⓒ Gordon’s heart raced. Ⓓ Gordon tripped.
<p>Recalling Facts and Details</p> <p>3. Which detail tells that Gordon was nervous?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ I could feel my hands sweating. Ⓑ I tripped over the cows. Ⓒ This was the first time I’ve ever performed in a play. Ⓓ Thank you for coming to my play. 	<p>Understanding Sequence</p> <p>6. You can tell the order of events described in the letter by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ thinking about the beginning, the middle and the ending. Ⓑ looking for clue words. Ⓒ thinking about the main idea. Ⓓ finding the facts and details.