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# Lesson

## FINDING MAIN IDEA

### PART ONE: Think About the Strategy



#### What Is Main Idea?

Everything you read has a topic – reports, newspaper articles, encyclopedia entries and so on. Many TV shows, such as science programs or history documentaries, also have a topic. The main idea of a newspaper article or a documentary tells the most important idea about the topic.

- 1 Write the name of a science program, documentary or similar show you watched recently.

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- 2 Write three important things that happened in the show.

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- 3 Write a sentence that tells what the show was mostly about.

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#### Work with a Partner

- Take turns telling each other about newspaper or magazine articles you have read.
- Tell the topic of each article, then state the main idea of the article. State 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 or last sentence of the passage.

**Read this passage about some things our ancestors did. Think about the topic of the passage.**

When we think about advances in technology, we often think about high-speed computers or mobile phones. We sometimes forget that ancient people made important advances as well. They discovered fire, invented the wheel and created the first calendars. The advances of our ancestors laid the foundation for the innovations to come.

1. The topic of the passage is advances in technology.
2. Now let's think about the most important idea about the topic. Look at the chart below. The sentences in the small boxes on top tell about the topic, but they do not tell the most important idea in the passage.
3. Look again at the passage. The last sentence in the passage does tell the most important idea.
4. Write this main idea in the empty box in the chart.

When we think about advances in technology, we often think about high-speed computers or mobile phones.

We sometimes forget that ancient people made important advances as well.

They discovered fire, invented the wheel and created the first calendars.

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## PART FOUR: Build on What You Have Learned

### MORE TO KNOW

Facts and details give additional meaning to the main idea of a reading passage. When you read, look for sentences that

- describe a person, place or thing.
- tell the order in which things happen.
- explain how to do something.
- share an experience, idea or opinion.
- help you picture where a story takes place.
- understand what characters are like.

Read this article about a special kind of name. Then answer the questions.

You probably know that a group of fish is called “a school” and that a bunch of bees is referred to as “a swarm”. But do you know what to call a group of toads or a group of finches?

Almost every group of animals has a group name. Some animals get their group name from the sounds they make, like “a gaggle of geese” or “a crash of rhinoceroses”. Toads, however, are called a “knot of toads” because of how they look. Other group names for animals are based on human opinion, such as “a charm of finches”.

Animals are not the only ones with group names. Certain groups of people have their own group name too. For example, “a rout of knights” refers to a group of medieval soldiers. Think about names that you could make up for particular groups of people. Perhaps a convention of dentists could be “a drill” or a roomful of drummers could be “a beat”. What might you call a group of students or a group of fast-food workers?

5. A group of toads is called a
- Ⓐ bunch.
  - Ⓑ swarm.
  - Ⓒ charm.
  - Ⓓ knot.
6. Which detail would best fit in paragraph 2?
- Ⓐ A group of geese flying in a V formation is called “a wedge of geese”.
  - Ⓑ A litter of cats usually has from two to seven kittens.
  - Ⓒ Many mathematicians together can be called “a number”.
  - Ⓓ A group of lawyers is sometimes referred to as “a huddle”.
7. Which idea is supported by the article?
- Ⓐ Solitary animals do not have group names.
  - Ⓑ Group names for people are based on the sounds they make.
  - Ⓒ Group names for animals can be based on sound, appearance or opinion.
  - Ⓓ Some group names for animals come from Latin words and phrases.
8. Study the web below.



What belongs in the empty box?

- Ⓐ dentist
- Ⓑ route
- Ⓒ convention
- Ⓓ school

Read this article about one kind of bat. Then answer the questions.

Many horror movies have at least one scene in which a few bats fly around in a dark sky. Although most bats actually fail to live up to their horror-movie image, there is one species that is sure to bring a chill to your bones. That bat is the appropriately named “vampire bat”.

Unlike most other bats, which are relatively harmless, the vampire bat really does drink the blood of other animals. In fact, animal blood is the vampire bat’s only food. Vampire bats favour the blood of farm animals, such as cows, pigs and horses. Most animals will survive an attack by a vampire bat. But if an animal is attacked by more than one bat, it may be seriously weakened by the loss of blood.

Just like their horror-movie counterpart, vampire bats attack only at the darkest period of night. Although considered pests because they can transmit rabies and other diseases, vampire bats rarely bother humans. But we don’t have to worry about Vampire bats here in Australia. Vampire bats are found primarily in Central and South America.



9. Which detail from the article explains how the vampire bat got its name?
- (A) Vampire bats attack only at night.
  - (B) Vampire bats looks like vampires in horror movies.
  - (C) Vampire bats need the blood of other animals for food.
  - (D) Vampire bats hide from humans during the day.
10. Which detail would best fit in the article?
- (A) Bats are the only mammals that can fly.
  - (B) An adult vampire bat drinks about 5 teaspoons of blood each day.
  - (C) Other animals that live in Central and South America are the jaguar, the llama and the dart frog.
  - (D) Horror movies rarely depict real-life situations.
11. Vampire bats prefer the blood of
- (A) other bats.
  - (B) humans.
  - (C) wild animals.
  - (D) farm animals.
12. Vampire bats are considered pests because they
- (A) are a threat to humans.
  - (B) seriously weaken other animals.
  - (C) give diseases to other animals.
  - (D) are found in Central and South America.

# Lesson

# 4

## RECOGNISING CAUSE AND EFFECT

### PART ONE: Think About the Strategy



#### What Is Cause and Effect?

There is a reason for everything that happens. What happens is called the *effect*. Why it happens is called the *cause*. You can find examples of causes and their effects almost anywhere.

1 Write what would probably happen if a plant didn't get enough sunlight.

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2 Tell why this might happen.

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#### Work with a Partner

- Take turns giving each other examples of cause and effect.
- You might say, "I couldn't play soccer on Saturday because it rained." In each example, tell which part is the cause and which part is the effect.

# Lesson

# 6

## MAKING PREDICTIONS

### PART ONE: Think About the Strategy



#### What Is a Prediction?

A prediction is a good guess about something that will happen at a later time. A prediction is based partly on information that you already know from your own experiences. When you are making a prediction, it is important to think about the clues that help you make your prediction, as well as what you already know.

1 Write the name of a book you chose to read for pleasure.

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2 Write the clues you used to predict that you would like the book, before you even read it.

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3 Was your prediction about the book correct? Why or why not?

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#### Work with a Partner

- Take turns telling each other about something you thought would happen that actually did happen. You might tell about the end of a mystery movie that turned out just as you had guessed, or the outcome of a competition that you had predicted.
- Explain what made you think this thing would happen.

## How Do You Make a Prediction?

You can make a prediction about a reading passage before you begin reading. Sometimes the title of the passage gives you a clue about what you will be reading.

**Read this passage about Ann and Isabella. See if you can figure out what will probably happen next.**

### How Ann Got Free Movie Tickets

Ann and Isabella read an announcement on the school's notice board. It said students could earn free movie tickets by doing community service work on weekends. "Look," said Ann to Isabella, "there are projects for students in all year levels." Isabella looked at the list of projects.

"I don't want to spend my Saturdays weeding gardens or working at the recycling centre," said Isabella.

"But it'll be fun," coaxed Ann. "We could work together." Isabella made a face. Ann wasn't going to be able to convince her friend to join her.

1. This title tells about events in the passage. You could figure out from the title that the story would tell something about Ann and some free movie tickets.
2. Now let's think about what you read in the passage and make a prediction.
3. Look at the magnifying glass below. It shows the last sentence of the passage. See if you can predict what will happen next.



#### Predictions:

1. Ann will decide to do community service work on her own.
2. Ann will decide that she doesn't want to work without her friend.

4. The box next to the magnifying glass shows two predictions about what might happen next. The two predictions are very different. Only one is a good prediction, based on the passage.
5. Read the title and the whole passage again. Also think about what you already know.
6. Which prediction do you think is best? Write it on the lines below.

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## PART FOUR: Build on What You Have Learned

### MORE TO KNOW

- Look at the sentences near an idiom. Use context clues to help you figure out its meaning.
- Hyperbole is another form of figurative language. Hyperbole is exaggeration used to make a point. *Margaret looked with fear at the mountain of mashed turnip that completely covered her plate.*

Read this article about the ninth prime minister of Australia. Then answer the questions.

If you studied the childhood of James Scullin, you might never guess that he would one day rise to the highest office in Australia. Like a few of our Prime Ministers, James Scullin shows that even people from humble origins could lead the country. Unfortunately, James Scullin probably wished that he hadn't.

Scullin was born in 1876. He was the fifth of nine children born to Irish immigrants. By the time he was fourteen he'd had to leave school and start work, first in a grocer's and then later, during the depression of the 1890s, wherever he could find it. He worked down mines and on farms. At night and on weekends he studied at evening classes and read as much as he could in the public library. In this way, Scullin tried to make up for his lack of a formal education. The young Scullin soaked up knowledge like a sponge.

Through hard work and dedication Scullin became a successful businessman and eventually entered politics. He won a seat in parliament when he was 34. It seemed like he had quickly climbed the ladder of political success. But he would lose this seat three years later and end up out of parliament for ten years. Scullin was clever, but he was always unlucky. In 1923 he won another seat and five years later he was a shoo-in for the position of new leader of the Australian Labor Party. Scullin had worked hard and proved he was a capable and dedicated politician. In October 1929, Scullin led Labor to a landslide election victory and became Prime Minister.

Two days after Scullin took office, the New York stock market crashed and Australia, like the rest of the world, was plunged into the Great Depression. This huge recession hit Australia very hard because many of our industries relied on exporting goods to the rest of the world. Suddenly the rest of the world could not afford our goods. There was mass unemployment and the new government was thrown into chaos. Political enemies of Scullin, both outside his own party and within it, began to make life even harder for the new Prime Minister. Though he succeeded with some reforms, and appointed Australia's first Australian-born Governor-General, Isaac Isaacs, Scullin could not always manage to give them the slip. Two years later, after his government was beaten in a snap election, Scullin would describe his time as Prime Minister as being "like a nightmare".

5. In paragraph 4, what is the meaning of *give them the slip*?
  - Ⓐ "taunt"
  - Ⓑ "escape"
  - Ⓒ "irritate"
  - Ⓓ "provoke"
6. Which of these is a simile?
  - Ⓐ a successful businessman and eventually entered politics
  - Ⓑ read as much as he could
  - Ⓒ through hard work and dedication
  - Ⓓ soaked up knowledge like a sponge
7. The phrase *climbed the ladder of political success* is an example of
  - Ⓐ an idiom.
  - Ⓑ a simile.
  - Ⓒ a metaphor.
  - Ⓓ hyperbole.
8. A *shoo-in* is someone who
  - Ⓐ is best suited for a position.
  - Ⓑ shows strong support for others.
  - Ⓒ is the likely choice.
  - Ⓓ displays the qualities of a leader.

## PART TWO: Learn About the Strategy



### WHAT TO KNOW

A summary is a short statement that tells the main points or important ideas of a reading passage. When you use a short statement to restate the important ideas, you are **summarising**.

- A summary is not stated in a reading passage. You must think about and restate the most important ideas to create a summary.
- A good summary of fiction tells about the main character's problem and its solution.
- A good summary of nonfiction tells about the main idea of the reading selection, as well as the main idea of each paragraph.

**Read this article about an Australian landmark. As you read, think about the most important ideas in the article. Then think about what you might tell someone who asks what the article is about.**

After the Blue Mountains had been crossed, settlers found that many large streams flowed westward through open, fertile plains. The streams always flowed toward the interior of the continent. This made people think that there must be a huge inland sea in the middle of Australia.

In 1828, Governor Darling decided to send out an expedition to find out where these rivers flowed. The leader of this expedition was a man named Charles Sturt. After crossing the Blue Mountains, he began following streams. Sturt was able to prove that the Macquarie, Castlereagh and Bogan Rivers did not empty into an inland sea. Instead he saw that they flowed into the Darling River. He named this river after the governor himself.

The most important ideas in the article are:

**Settlers found that many large streams flowed westward through open, fertile plains.**

**In 1828, Governor Darling decided to send out an expedition to find out where these rivers flowed.**

**Charles Sturt led this expedition and found that the streams flowed into the Darling River, which he named after the governor.**

Here is what you might tell someone who asks what the article is about:

**After settlers found that many large streams seemed to flow toward the interior of Australia, people started to think that there was large inland sea in the middle of Australia. Governor Darling organised an exhibition to investigate this idea, led by Charles Sturt. He discovered they flowed into a large river that he named after the governor.**