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Lesson

Finding Main Idea

PART ONE: Think About the Strategy



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.

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

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

3 Tell what the book is mostly about.

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Work with a Partner

- 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 this passage about beavers. Think about the most important idea in the passage.

Beavers have special body parts that help them when they work underwater. Their ears and nose close to keep water out. Their webbed toes help them to swim. And their eyes have clear lids that allow them to see underwater.

1. Let's look at the chart below.

The sentences in the top three boxes tell about the main idea of the passage. But they do not tell the most important idea.

2. Look again at the passage. The first sentence in the passage does tell the most important idea. This sentence tells what the passage is mostly about.
3. Write this main idea in the empty box below.



PART FOUR: Build on What You Have Learned

MORE TO KNOW

Facts and details help writers tell a story. Facts and details make a story more interesting. 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.

Read this article about metals. Then answer the questions.

Metals

There are many different kinds of metals. Most metals are bright and shiny. Iron is a metal used to make steel. Steel is important because it is needed to build cars, buildings and bridges.

Gold and silver are also metals. They have been used to make jewellery and coins for thousands of years.

Most metals change when they are heated. When they are heated, they can be stretched or pressed. Wire is made by stretching and pulling metal. Aluminium foil is made by pressing metal into a thin sheet. Gold can also be made into a foil. But don't wrap your sandwich in it! Gold foil is expensive.

5. Steel is important because it is used to make
- Ⓐ jewellery.
 - Ⓑ wire.
 - Ⓒ bridges.
 - Ⓓ gold foil.
6. Which detail tells more about the main idea of the last paragraph?
- Ⓐ Gold and silver are also metals.
 - Ⓑ When they are heated, metals can be stretched or pressed.
 - Ⓒ Gold foil is expensive.
 - Ⓓ There are many different kinds of metals.
7. Most metals are
- Ⓐ bright and shiny.
 - Ⓑ rough and dull.
 - Ⓒ long and thin.
 - Ⓓ hard and thick.
8. How is aluminium foil made?
- Ⓐ by stretching metal
 - Ⓑ by pressing metal
 - Ⓒ by pulling metal
 - Ⓓ by tearing metal

Read this journal entry written by Kate. Then answer the questions.

○ Saturday 5 May

Today, Jack and I went to the school fête. There were lots of rides and games. There was also lots of food – hot dogs, popcorn and doughnuts. Jack and I had fun. He spent all of his money on food. I spent most of my money on games.

○ My favourite game was Dunk the Teacher. Ms Brown, my favourite teacher, sat in a booth. Below her was a tank of water. I had three chances to hit a target. Any ball that hit the target would send Ms Brown into the water. I couldn't help smiling as I threw each ball. Each one I threw hit the target!

○ I hope Ms Brown still likes me on Monday.



9. Which detail tells about Jack?

- Ⓐ There were lots of rides and games.
- Ⓑ I hope Ms Brown still likes me on Monday.
- Ⓒ I spent most of my money on games.
- Ⓓ He spent all of his money on food.

10. What is a detail that tells about the main idea of the last paragraph?

- Ⓐ Each one I threw hit the target!
- Ⓑ There was also lots of food – hot dogs, popcorn and doughnuts.
- Ⓒ I spent most of my money on games.
- Ⓓ Today, Jack and I went to the school fête.

11. Ms Brown is

- Ⓐ Jack's teacher.
- Ⓑ the school principal.
- Ⓒ Kate's favourite teacher.
- Ⓓ Kate's neighbour.

12. Which of these is a fact from the journal entry?

- Ⓐ Kate spent most of her money on games.
- Ⓑ Kate missed her target three times.
- Ⓒ Jack is Kate's brother.
- Ⓓ Jack's favourite game was Dunk the Teacher.

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*.

1 Write what happens when you pour too much water into a glass.

2 Write why this happens.

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Work with a Partner

- Take turns giving each other examples of cause and effect. You might say, “I got wet in the rain because I forgot my umbrella.”
- In each example, tell which part is the cause and which part is the effect.

**PART ONE: Read a Biography**

Read this short biography. Then answer questions about the biography. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 to 6.



Andrew Fisher was born in Scotland in 1862. He was one of seven children. His father was a coalminer. Fisher only finished primary school. At ten he became a coalminer himself. The rest of his education came from reading books and night school. Coalminers faced prejudice and terrible conditions. Fisher felt this wasn't right. It was here that Fisher first started to fight for worker's rights. He was still a coalminer when he moved to Queensland at the age of twenty-three.

Fisher would be Prime Minister three times. He was also Treasurer each time. This meant he was leader of the country while also being in charge of its money. These are big jobs even for two people!

Australia was still a new country. Fisher set up the Navy, planned the capital city and laid the way for a train line from one side of Australia to the other. These are just a few of the many things he did while in office. Along with Alfred Deakin, Andrew Fisher is the Prime Minister who most helped to create the Australian nation. In his third and final term he took office just after the First World War had broken out.

Andrew Fisher did not just look at a problem. He always worked hard to find a solution. This remarkable man was someone to be admired.

<p>Finding Word Meaning in Context</p> <p>1. In paragraph 1, the word <i>prejudice</i> means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ “unfair treatment”. Ⓑ “kind actions”. Ⓒ “curious behaviour”. Ⓓ “strange ideas”. 	<p>Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences</p> <p>4. The biography suggests that Andrew Fisher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ never worried about his lack of education. Ⓑ believed that education was important. Ⓒ loved being a miner. Ⓓ was mainly worried about making Australia a great place to be a coalminer.
<p>Finding Word Meaning in Context</p> <p>2. In the last paragraph, which group of words hints at the meaning of the word <i>solution</i>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ He always worked hard ... Ⓑ ... did not just look at a problem. Ⓒ This remarkable man ... Ⓓ ... was someone to be admired. 	<p>Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion</p> <p>5. Which clue word in the biography signals an <i>opinion</i> of Fisher’s about what he saw as a miner?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ faced Ⓑ first Ⓒ started Ⓓ felt
<p>Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences</p> <p>3. From this biography, you can tell that Andrew Fisher was</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ troubled about world peace. Ⓑ interested mostly in himself. Ⓒ concerned about people. Ⓓ mainly worried about money. 	<p>Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion</p> <p>6. Which of these is a <i>fact</i>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ⓐ Everyone should have voted for Andrew Fisher for Prime Minister. Ⓑ Andrew Fisher’s government set up the Navy. Ⓒ Helping other Australians is important work. Ⓓ This remarkable man was someone to be admired.



Read this article about a national park called Kakadu (*cac-ab-doo*). Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 13 to 24.

Most people enjoy spending time at parks. But a national park is something different. A national park is a special place in nature. It is an area set aside for all people to enjoy.

Kakadu is the biggest national park in Australia. It covers nearly 20,000 square kilometres. This is the size of a small country! Kakadu was created as a national park in three stages starting in 1979. Stage three was finished in 1991. The whole of Kakadu has been a world heritage site since 1992. This means it is very important to the whole world.

Kakadu is in the Northern Territory. It is a few hours away from Darwin. Kakadu is far from most Australians. But it still gets more than 170,000 visitors each year. The visitor numbers are highest during the dry season. This is from June to September.

Why do so many people visit? They want to see the beauty of Kakadu. And they want to see wild animals. Saltwater and freshwater crocodiles live in the park. So do wallabies and frill-necked lizards. There are over 280 species of birds and about 10,000 species of insects. These are just some of the amazing animals at Kakadu. Right off the bat, they were a major tourist attraction.

Kakadu is home to thousands of different and amazing animals. Others are not so welcome. Some are dangerous to the native animals. These include wild pigs, water buffaloes and cane toads. Looking after Kakadu is a big job. This means protecting the animals and the park.

There are also many Aboriginal rock art sites. Some of the art is thousands of years old. Today the park is run with the traditional Aboriginal owners. They have always used fire to shape the land. If you visit Kakadu it is normal to see small fires burning. Visitors might worry. But this is a way of gardening that has been used for 40,000 years!



Read this fiction story about a young boy named Nick. Then answer questions about the story. Choose the best answer for Numbers 25 to 36.

And So Great-Grandfather Came

In school we learned about immigrants. Immigrants are people who leave one country to live in another. A large number of immigrants came to live in Australia from the 1950s.

When I got home from school, I asked my mum if anyone from our family was an immigrant. She reached up high on a bookshelf and took out a photo album. It was filled with black-and-white pictures of people in her family. She showed me a picture of her grandfather. She told me how her grandfather had to escape from the country where he was born. A war was going on, and there was a lot of fighting.

“Is he my great-grandfather?” I asked.

“Yes, he is,” Mum answered.

My great-grandfather boarded a ship and travelled to Australia. He eventually ended up at the Bonegilla migrant camp in Victoria. Doctors there made sure my great-grandfather was healthy. If he wasn't, he might have to go back to his country. Bonegilla was previously an army camp. It was used from 1947 until 1971. In this time it received over 300,000 migrants like my great-grandfather. They had all come to Australia hoping for a better life.

My great-grandfather came here alone. He didn't know one person. Other people came as families. Some family members weren't allowed to stay. They were sick. The family had to decide then and there if they were going to split up or go back to their homeland together. All these people lived in Bonegilla for a time before entering Australia.

My great-grandfather was given the okay to stay in Australia. He stayed in Melbourne for the rest of his life. He worked in a bakery for a while. Then he married my great-grandmother. She worked in a factory. She was a seamstress who made dresses. Later my great-grandfather became a police officer. He died before I was born. I wish I had known my great-grandfather. He must have been very brave. I would have enjoyed hearing him tell me about his life.