

## Main Idea

A main idea, main point or central point, is viewed as a general statement that is supported by other material in the paragraph.

### List words:

Several kinds	several causes of	some factors in
Three advantages	five steps	among the results
Various reasons	a number of effects	a series of

### Examples of Main Ideas using List Words:

- Emotional decisions can be divided into two main types.
- Pathologists identify four different stages of cancer in the body.
- Winners of presidential elections share various traits in common.

## Major and Minor Supporting Details

**Supporting details** are reasons, examples, facts, steps, or other kinds of evidence that explain the main idea. **Major details** explain and develop the main idea. **Minor details** help make the major details clear.

### Addition Words:

One	to begin with	also	further
First (of all)	for one thing	in addition	furthermore
Second (of all)	other	next	last (of all)
Third (of all)	another	moreover	final(ly)

### Examples of Major Details Using Addition Words:

- **One** study shows that frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.
- **In addition**, age is a biological factor to consider.
- Muscle mass is **another** factor affecting our body temperature.
- **Finally**, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole.

# Main Ideas, Topics, and Supporting Details

Identify the following sentences as Main Idea (MI), Topic (T), Supporting Detail (SD):

1. \_\_\_\_ Kinds of power.
2. \_\_\_\_ Influence, the ability to control or affect the behavior of others, is also a form of power.
3. \_\_\_\_ Force, which the Italian statesman Machiavelli called “the method of beasts,” is the use of physical coercion.
4. \_\_\_\_ Power, the ability to control or change the behavior of others, takes different forms.

Write the sentence number the corresponds with the Topic, Main Idea, Major Detail(s), and Minor Detail(s):

<sup>1</sup>Functional illiteracy – the inability to read and write well enough to carry out everyday activities – is a complex social problem that stems from several sources. <sup>2</sup>One source of the problem is our educational system. <sup>3</sup>Our schools are too quick to pass children from one grade to the next even when their learning is woefully deficient. <sup>4</sup>Even teachers who care may not want to “buck the system” by refusing to pass along students who have not yet learned important basic skills. <sup>5</sup>The community also contributes to functional illiteracy. <sup>6</sup>Local businesses and agencies, indifferent to education, do not work with schools towards improving children’s motivation and learning. <sup>7</sup>Another source is the home. <sup>8</sup>Millions of children grow up with illiterate parents who do not give them the opportunity or encouragement to learn language skills. <sup>9</sup>In all too many homes, a television is turned on much of the time, but there are few if any books to interest children in reading.

Pattern of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Detail(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Major Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Detail(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Major Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Detail(s): \_\_\_\_\_

# Transitions and Patterns of Organization

- **Time Order Words**

Before	immediately	when	until
Previously	next	whenever	often
First (of all)	then	while	frequently
Second (of all)	following	during	eventually
Third ( of all)	later	as (soon as)	final(ly)
Now	after	by	last (of all)

- **Definition and Example (Illustration words)**

(for) example	including	(as an) illustration	Once
(for) instance	specifically	to illustrate	
Such as	to be specific	on	

- **Compare and Contrast Words**

(just) as	both	in like fashion	in a similar fashion
(just) like	equal(ly)	in like manner	in a similar manner
Alike	resemble	similar(ly)	(in) the same way
Same	likewise	similarity	(in) common
But	instead (of)	even though	difference
Yet	in contrast	as opposed to	different(ly)
However	on the other hand	in spite of	differ (from)
Although	on the contrary	despite	unlike
Nevertheless	converse(ly)	rather than	while
Still	opposite		

- **Cause and Effect Words**

Therefore	so	owing to	because (of)
Thus	(as a) result	effect	reason
(as a) consequence	results in	cause	explanation
Consequently	leads to	if...then	accordingly
Due to	since	affect	

## Inferences

An **inference** is a discovered idea in writing that is not stated directly. You make inferences every day. In a text the correct inference will always be supported by the text.

## Implied Main Ideas

The **main idea is implied** when it is only suggested by the supporting details and not clearly stated in one sentence.

### Example Paragraph:

The work homemakers do is essential to the economy. The estimated value of the cleaning, cooking, nursing, shopping, child care, home maintenance, money management, errands, entertaining, and other services homemakers perform has been estimated at equal to roughly one-fourth of the gross national product. In fact, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis has proposed a revision of the gross national product that would take into account the value of money or prestige. No financial compensation is associated with this position, and the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* places mothering and homemaking skills in the lowest category of skills, lower than the occupation of "dog trainer."

Which statement best expresses the unstated main idea of the paragraph?

- a. We no longer value the work, done by homemakers
- b. Homemakers should receive salaries for their work.
- c. Although homemaking is essential to the economy, it brings no money or prestige.
- d. It's better to be a dog trainer than a homemaker.

## Fact and Opinion

A **fact** is information that can be proved true through objective evidence. An **opinion** is a belief, judgement, or conclusion that cannot be proved objectively true.

Identify the following sentences as **Fact (F)**, **Opinion (O)**, or **both Fact and Opinion (F+O)**.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Salt, which is now common, was once so rare that Roman soldiers were paid with it.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The discovery that germs cause disease was the greatest scientific breakthrough ever.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Nevada and Rhode Island are the only two states in the United States that have legalized prostitution.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ With all our wealth, America's infant mortality rate, which is one of the highest in the world, should be the lowest in the world.

# Author's Purpose and Tone

The **author's purpose** is the reason why he or she writes. The **tone** is the expression of the author's attitude and feeling about a subject.

## Purpose:

- To inform: To give information about a subject.
- To entertain: To amuse and delight; to appeal to the reader's senses and imagination.
- To persuade: to convince the reader to agree with the author's point of view on a subject.

## Example Purpose Sentences:

Identify the following as inform(i), persuade(p), or entertain(e).

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Professional athletes do not deserve their inflated salaries, nor does their behavior merit so much media attention.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ It's easy to quit smoking; I've done it hundreds of times.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ On average, women dream more than men, and children dream more than adults.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ More women should get involved in local politics and support the growing number of female candidates for public office.

## Tone:

- **Examples of Tone words:** accepting, cheerful, admiring, affectionate, alarmed, amused, cruel, disapproving, doubtful, determined, loving, joyous, serious, fearful, humorous, sarcastic, warm, worried, optimistic, solemn, tolerant, hypocritical, ambivalent

## Example Tone Sentences:

**A. Bitter      B. Humorous      C. Optimistic      D. Sentimental      E. Tolerant**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ This place may be shabby, but since both of my children were born while we lived here, it has a special place in my heart.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ If only there were some decent jobs out there, I wouldn't be reduced to living in this miserable dump.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ This isn't the greatest apartment in the world, but it's not really that bad.

## Summary and Response Paragraphs:

All the reading courses have the same format for summary and responses. Each professor will give the students an outline/expectation sheet for each S&R. The summary follows the pattern that they have been learning in class with main idea, major details, and minor details.

**Main Idea should include:** Author's Name, Title of Article, and main idea of the entire article in their own words.

**Point #1-3 should include:** Each point should be in their own words and reflect 3 important points brought up in the article.

**Support Quotes #1-3 should include:** An introduction to the quote, a direct quote from the article that matches with the corresponding point, and end with the correct in-text citation.

**Main Idea:** The article, "How to Write a Summary and Response" by John Smith discusses \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Point #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Support Quote #1:** Smith states, " \_\_\_\_\_ " (Smith 15).

\_\_\_\_\_

**Point #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Support Quote #2:** The author mentions, " \_\_\_\_\_ " (Smith 25).

\_\_\_\_\_

**Point #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Support Quote #3:** Smith says, " \_\_\_\_\_ " (Smith 43).

### **Response Paragraph:**

These can vary, but typically a response needs to be 5-7 sentences making a personal connection to the article and discusses how it was relates to their lives.