

Identifying main ideas and supporting details

- A **main idea** is THE most important idea in a paragraph or passage. The main idea may be directly stated, or it may be implied (meaning you have to use your brain and figure it out on your own).
**If you could tell another person only one idea about a passage to help them understand the content, what would that one idea be?
- A **topic sentence** directly states the main idea in a paragraph.
- **Supporting details** explain, describe, prove, or give examples about the main idea and topic sentence.
**Note-You are most likely to be asked about details that support the main idea. Keep in mind, if the answer choice doesn't give you more information about the main idea itself, it is probably not the answer.
- A **thesis statement** is a sentence that contains the main points of a nonfiction essay.
- Instead of having a true topic, a work of fiction may teach a **lesson** or a **moral**.

Determining sequence of events

- **Chronological order** is the sequence (or order) in which things happen. Chronological order tells which event happened first, next, and last. This type of order is used for narrating a story and in explaining a process step by step.
Look for words that **show sequence (ex. before, after, then, while, lastly, finally, in the end). Also look for words that **show time** (ex. now, today, soon, next week/month, a year later, over time).

Following directions

- Some **directions** are clear and tell you exactly what to do, and some will be **implicit or embedded** (not directly stated) in the material. If directions are implicit, use the context to determine what you are meant to do.
- If **specific directions** are given and stated **explicitly** (directly), make sure to read one step at a time and take note of (1) the order of the directions (2) the specific details of the directions.

Drawing conclusions

- An **inference** is a determination a reader makes based on the information provided in a passage. When you read, you draw conclusions by combining information from the text with what you already know. You have to think!
** You are not going to immediately know every answer on the grad exam (and that's ok). Take the time to think and figure out the best answer. You will not be able to find all the answers stated directly in the passages. Many of them will be implied. Use your brain!
- A **generalization** is a specific type of inference in which you apply knowledge in a passage to new situations that are related. Making a generalization requires you to come to a broad conclusion on specific information already given.