

The Main Idea

Definition: The main idea of a paragraph, essay, story or article is what the author is mainly writing about.

How to identify the main idea:

- 1- Look at the title of the text.
- 2- Look at the first and last sentences of the paragraphs or paragraphs.
- 3- Look for supporting details. These details will reinforce the topic and the main idea.

Supporting Details:

The supporting details of a text are specific information that the writer provides. These details will answer questions such as who, what, where, when, why and how (SW's + H).

For example:

Expulsion

By Floyd Brooks

Tom was expelled from school in the worst possible time of the year. Finals were coming up, and everyone was super excited that they will be able to go and frolic on the beautiful, white sand beaches of Miami, Florida. He had spent the last couple of weeks making flashcards and investing a lot of time into his schoolwork. He was on the brink of making all A's. He was very excited. His parents were ultra-proud of him. However, on this day, his showmanship got the better of him. Truth or Dare was a game that he should never have fallen for.

| Main idea | Supporting details |
|--|--|
| He was about to be suspended at the worst possible time. | -will miss out on the beach excursions - He will miss finals due to suspension. |

You can see from the paragraph that the main idea appeared at the beginning of the paragraph and the supporting details came after that.