

Using Explicit Instruction to Enhance Main Idea Comprehension for Struggling Adolescent Readers in EFL Classroom in Taiwan

高中英文補救教學：明示教學法在基礎閱讀理解策略的運用

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I. Introduction

Comprehension strategies are important procedures to assist readers to understand the text, and being able to determine the main idea helps readers to recall important information. Locating the main idea and significant details helps the reader understand the points the writer is attempting to express. Identifying the relationship between these will improve comprehension. However, many struggling EFL readers in senior high school are disconnected from reading without the capability to determine the main ideas. When most EFL teachers face these reluctant readers, we would agree that reading strategies are important in comprehending the text, but not everyone knows how to teach these strategies explicitly and directly. In fact, struggling readers are willing to learn essential reading strategies if they are taught through explicit instruction, which means that EFL teachers impart the comprehension strategy to students through clear statements about the teaching purpose, modeling, guided practice, and supported practice with positive feedback till students can master the skill independently. What these slow readers need to improve their reading includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, but this study is aimed at highlighting the effectiveness of explicit instruction on the fundamental base for reading comprehension, which is the main idea strategy.

The study provides a model of explicit instruction for teaching EFL students how to determine main ideas in a text, which is critical for students to grasp the meaning when reading. Thirty students, in two classes, were selected to participate in an eight-hour program. Through strategy training, these slow readers learned to classify words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs through explicit instruction in the EFL classroom. The result indicates that learners' scores in finding the main ideas improved as they read different genres of texts. In addition, these learners' attitudes

toward reading improved and their ability to learn to use different of strategies increased after receiving explicit strategy instruction. The primary implication of this study is that these reluctant readers could better their reading skills if they had such step-by-step explicit instruction in learning how to decode and comprehend in reading.

Key words: explicit instruction, reading strategy, comprehension, struggling readers, reading comprehension

II. Literature Review

1. Struggling Adolescent Readers in EFL Classroom

Struggling adolescent readers in EFL classroom mostly lack the skills of a fluent reader in English reading comprehension. They read at a lower level and struggle with phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and fluency in English. Feelings of being defeated have turned down their desire to read and comprehend. However, unlike younger struggling readers, these students already have a wide range of various subjects that they have developed and used quite well, such as the internet tools or different knowledge from authentic topics. “For middle and high school teachers, struggling readers may be viewed as the legacy of the unmet responsibility of previous teachers.” (Alvarez, M. C., Armstrong, S. L., Elish-Piper, L., Matthews, M. W., & Risko, V. J., 2009) Teaching adolescents to struggle successfully with a text involves understanding the three categories of problems students typically have when struggling with a text:

- cognitive challenges (word recognition, phonics, comprehension, and fluency)
- negative attitudes (lack of confidence in learning new skills in English)
- Lack of enjoyment and persistence with a text (very short-term concentration span).

Therefore, it is important that teachers help students start with a tiny but measurable learning task to make connections between academic texts and students' prior knowledge and home/community experiences in order to cultivate the comprehension strategy in EFL classroom.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a multifaceted process (Adams, 1990). For students to comprehend a text, they need to have the sensitivity to pronounce the words and use

different reading strategies to decode the printed texts into meaningful messages in order to understand and reflect what they have read (Carlisle and Rice, 2002). In addition to such decoding skills, students need vocabulary knowledge and meta-cognitive skills to monitor their understandings and effective readers learn these reading strategies fluently. Research shows that instruction of reading comprehension can help students become better at monitoring their comprehension. Such instruction would teach students to be aware of what they do understand, identify what they do not understand, and use appropriate strategies to resolve problems in reading.

3. Get the Gist/Main Idea Strategy (GIST) for Struggling Readers

Reading strategies in comprehension are a set of conscious plans for good readers to make sense of the text, which help the students become purposeful and active readers. There are plenty of reading strategies in comprehension, but the Get the Gist/Main Idea strategy is the fundamental and essential skill for struggling readers to learn to comprehend texts.

‘Get the Gist’ (Cunningham, 1982) is an acronym for Generating Interactions between Schemata and Texts. It is a summarizing strategy. The word gist is defined as "the main or essential part of a matter." The GIST strategy (Cunningham, 1982) helps students comprehend the reading text to get the main idea. It teaches students to determine the importance and meaning of individual words, sentences, paragraphs, and entire texts. Readers get the main ideas and supporting details by examining the topic, relevant illustrations or graphs, or keywords in the passage. As readers begin to grasp the main ideas, they will better understand the purpose of details and how the author further strengthens the understanding of main ideas. Later on, struggling readers will express their main idea statements in 10 words or less. With explicit instruction, teachers assist struggling readers comprehend how to apply the main idea strategy more effectively.

4. Explicit instruction in Comprehension

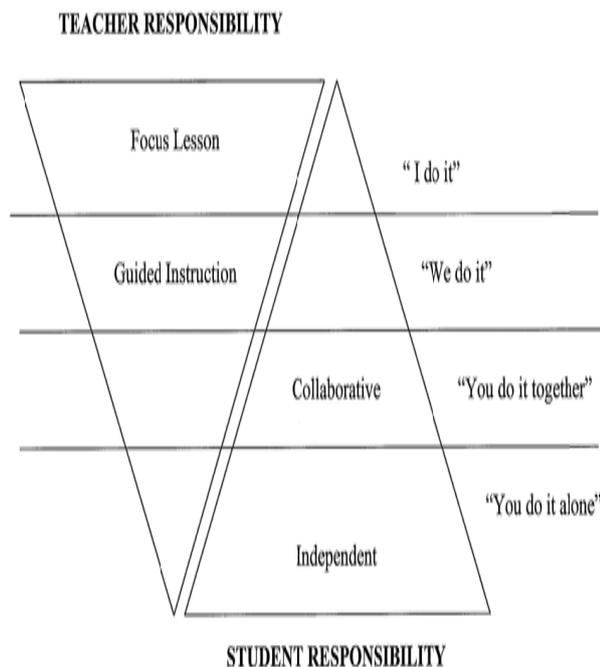
Comprehension strategies are procedures to help readers make sense of texts. Struggling EFL readers need direct, explicit instruction in comprehension strategies to improve their reading comprehensive abilities, (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Explicit instruction is a structured, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. The statement which follows explains the definition of explicit instruction clearly:

...It is called explicit because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to

teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures. Explicit instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved. Rosenshine (1987) described this form of instruction as “a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students” (Rosenshine, 1997, p.34)

Explicit teaching in this context implies the use of small steps in which students are guided through initial practice, lots of practice with reinforcement (Rosenshine, 1997), modeling (Duffy et al.1986), and corrective feedback and reinforcement (Morgan & Sideridis, 2006).

The following graph represents the teaching steps of the explicit instruction:



In explicit instruction, teachers take the responsibility for helping students to connect their prior knowledge, demonstrate the reading strategy, monitor the students working in a collaborative learning environment, and then make sure the individual student can apply what they have learned independently. The steps of explicit instruction typically include direct explanation, teacher modeling (thinking aloud), guided practice, and application.

- Direct Explanation:

The teacher pre-teaches pertinent vocabulary, explains to students why the reading strategy helps reading comprehension, and helps students connect to prior knowledge and experiences.

- Modeling ("I do"):

This is the act of using metacognitive strategies like thinking aloud to help explain the writer's thought process and actions. The teacher models, or demonstrates, how to apply the reading strategy by thinking aloud while the teacher and students are reading the text.

- Guided Practice ("We do")

The teacher guides and assists students to practice/ reinforce the reading strategy that was just modeled. During Guided Practice, the teacher monitors students' understanding by answering correctly or responding with accurate feedback.

- Application ("You do"):

As noted earlier, explicit instruction can be regarded as providing a series of scaffolds based on students' cognitive capabilities (e.g., working memory capacity, attention, and prior knowledge). The teacher helps students to practice the reading strategy through explicit instruction until students can apply it independently. (Explicit Instruction in the PK-12 Classroom)

III. Course Design

1. Setting Short-Term Goals

Setting short-term goals with slow-skilled readers is the key element in designing this course with the purpose that both the teacher and students can monitor the learning progress through tiny and manageable steps. With a series of task analyses, the teacher will be able to cultivate students' reading skill. Since the goal is to help students identify main ideas in the reading, the teacher breaks this into manageable steps:

- Direct explanation: Defining main ideas
- Modeling: Identifying topic and main ideas
- Guided practice: Guessing the Title/ Newspaper Headlines
- Application: Defining main ideas in an expository text, a narrative, song titles, and poems

2. Organizing Diverse EFL Reading Materials

2.1 Factors to Consider When Selecting a Text for Students

Exposing students to texts above their reading level is important so that students come in contact with challenging vocabulary and sentence structures; however, it is important to keep in mind that reading frustratingly difficult texts with no support will decrease motivation to read. The following factors should be considered when the teacher selects a text for students.

Figure 1: Factors to consider when selecting a text for students

Student-related	Text-related
<p>Word-recognition ability: Students can read the words in the text accurately.</p>	<p>Text format: The best materials for struggling readers are carefully written, edited, and designed to provide support for EFL struggling readers.</p>
<p>Fluency: Students can read the text fluently enough to understand and remember what they are reading, and also to enjoy reading it.</p>	<p>Vocabulary: Vocabulary words should not be too difficult for students to comprehend the text. For the instruction of the main idea strategy, the vocabulary should be simple for the students in order not to confuse their reading comprehension. Also, the length of the text should be restricted to 100-200 words.</p>
<p>Comprehension strategies: With explicit instruction, students will be strategic readers, able to monitor themselves and self-correct errors.</p>	<p>Genre: (1) Narrative: The text should contain straightforward plot development, a compelling and clear storyline and credible characters. (Rog, L., Kropp, P., 210) (2) Expository: Simple sentence structures must be used in the text, and the main ideas and supporting details must be clearly set out.</p>
<p>Interest and motivation: Students are interested in the reading material and will remain attentive.</p>	<p>Content and concepts: The topic/ title of the text should arouse readers' personal or emotional connection. Too complicated or vague a title is unsuitable for the slow-skilled readers.</p>
<p>Background and vocabulary knowledge: As students read the text, they need to have enough background knowledge to support their reading comprehension.</p>	<p>Illustration/ Graphs: It is essential to include graphics or illustrations to support the text, and the quality of the illustrations should be clear to readers.</p>

(Denton, C., Bryan, D., Wexler, J., Reed D., & Vaughn, S., 2007)

2.2 Selecting High Interest/ Low Reading Level Reading materials

Teachers could offer high interest/ low reading level texts to encourage reading. These texts are written at lower reading levels, but attract the reader's interest level. Struggling EFL readers, who are reading below their grade level, are more likely to read a book if it is not only at their reading level but also at their interest level. The following websites contain two kinds of reading materials, narratives and expository texts, as the teachers' resources.

2.2.1 Narrative:

- International Children's Digital Library: <http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>
The International Children's Digital Library offers abundant children's literature in a variety of languages. Readers can search for high interest/ low reading level books story books by language, genre, or appropriate age level.
- Project Intersect's Digital Library: <http://intersect.uoregon.edu/>
The website contains various digital stories and textbook chapters which were created by the University of Oregon to assist young adults to build up their study strategies and learn more from what they read.
- Choosing and Using Kids' Books:
<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/aboutkids#hilo>
This website offers plenty of high interest/ low reading level books to motivate struggling readers by providing books on attractive topics but targeted to their reading level.

2.2.2 Expository:

- K12 Reader Reading Instruction Resources: (Textbooks, Magazine Articles, Brochures, Catalogues)
<http://www.k12reader.com/subject/reading-skills/main-idea-worksheets/>
This website contains abundant worksheets on identifying main ideas and details for EFL readers.
- Internet4Classroom 5th Grade-Identify Main Idea: (Textbooks, Magazine Articles, Brochures)
http://www.internet4classrooms.com/grade_level_help/informational_text_main_language_arts_fifth_5th_grade.htm
This website contains abundant worksheets on identifying main ideas and details with teachers' lesson plans. It also provides self-learning questions for readers to do self-study.

- **Breaking News English:** (Newspapers)
<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>
The Breaking News English site is designed to help EFL learners become familiar with free news at different levels, with reading and listening texts. Readers can search for all kinds of mini-lessons at their own learning level.
- **FCAT Sample Test Archive:** (Textbooks, Magazine Articles, Brochures, Catalogues) <http://fcats.fldoe.org/fcatit07.asp>
The **FCAT Sample Test Books** are designed to help students become familiar with the FCAT by providing helpful hints and offering practice answering questions in different formats. It contains abundant reading comprehension examples for self-learning.

3. Sample Lesson Plan for Main Idea Strategy

The following is a sample lesson of teaching practice for main idea strategy that fosters engagement in reading for remedial readers. Explicit instruction is taken as the main strategy to teach students how to find the main ideas in a short passage. The teacher provides students with step-by-step instruction, only presents a few ideas once, and connects new material to prior knowledge.

3.1 Objective

The students will determine the topic, main ideas, and important details of a passage.

3.2 Terms to Know

- **Title is:**
— a word or phrase that describes the subject or the gist of the text
- **Topic is:**
— the subject of the main idea statement
— regarded as the title of a passage most of the time
- **Gist/Main Idea is:**
— what the text is mainly about
— the most important thought of a passage/reading
— the most important information about who/ what
— addressed in 10 words or less, eliminating nonessential details
- **Details are:**
— A specific, minor piece of information related to the topic
— examples or illustrations mostly including where/ when/ why/ how
— examples or illustrations containing cause& effect, problem/ solution, compare/ contrast, chronological ordering/ sequencing, description/

categorization, or position/ reasoning in an expository text

3.3 Materials

- Copies of a short passage, paper, and pencils
- Animations or picture books presenting simple actions
- Computer, projector, blackboard

3.4 Lesson Agenda (Mini-Lesson Delivery for Main Idea Strategy)

The Get the Gist/Main idea strategy(GIST) in this teaching plan is designed as a series of mini-lessons featuring explicit instruction so that it can either be conducted as a complete lesson or be included as a part of a regular lesson.

Figure 2: Sequencing of the teaching process

Reading Tasks	Sequencing	Time Range (in mins.)	Grouping
Before-reading	General and Specific Words Review Generalizing topic sentences	3-5 min	Partners → Whole class
During-reading (Explicit Instruction)	Direct explanation	10 min	Whole class
	Modeling	25 min	Whole class
	Guided practice	25 min	Groups → Partners
	Application	20 min	Partners → Individual
After-reading	Reading fluency activity Reading and writing connection	15 min	Groups → Individual

3.4.1 Before-reading:

The teacher spends 3-5 minutes on vocabulary review. Students review the previous day's words by reading aloud each word to the partner. The teacher asks individuals to repeat the words, briefly review the meaning, and share the definitions with the whole class. Then, the teacher reviews the general and specific words in sentences to make sure that students understand how to distinguish a phrase that is the general topic of a group of sentences (see Appendix).

3.4.2 During-reading:

A. Direct Explanation:

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Grouping: Whole Class

Teacher:

Today I am going to show you a strategy that will help you identify the main idea/gist of the passage as you read. The main idea of the passage is what the text is

mainly about; the big idea. Details are the part of the text that support the main idea and make the text interesting. It is important for you to determine the main idea so that you can get the big idea when reading.

B. Modeled Instruction:

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Grouping: Whole class

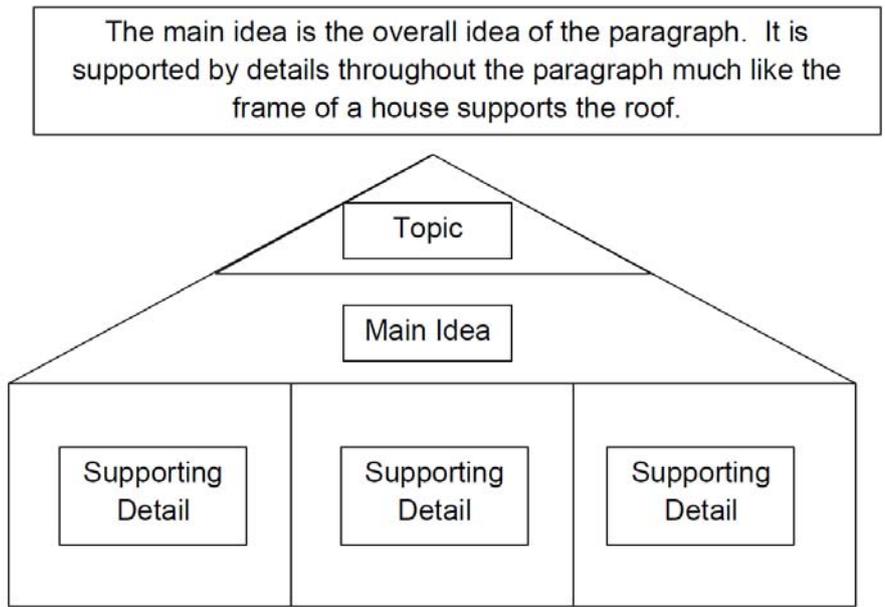
Instructional Material: Narrative, Expository

Steps to Teach:

The teacher defines the main idea through “Get the Gist/Main Idea” strategy

Teacher:

The name of the strategy we will be learning today is “Getting the Main Idea.” If you get the main idea of something when you read or watch TV, you will understand the most important information in the text. Usually, the reading structure is shown as the following, which looks like a house.



The author has a main idea to tell the readers, which is like the frame of a house. Main ideas usually include “who” or “what.” Then, he/she will come up with a clear topic with an interesting title, usually shown as a word or phrase. Later on, the author uses the supporting details to expand his ideas about “where,” “when,” “how,” or “why.”

Therefore, being a reader, when you look for the main ideas in a text, you need to ask yourself three questions as follows.

“Who or what is the passage about?”

“What is the most important information about “who” or “what?””

“How do I express the main idea with ten words or less?”

Now, I will demonstrate two movie examples to tell you the differences between main ideas and details.

For example:

(a) Title (Topic): Jurassic World

Main idea: Two kids (who) survived the dinosaurs' killing of humans (what).

Supporting details: Jurassic World took place on one island where the dinosaurs broke loose and caused a disaster for humans. Some dinosaurs ate the tourists in the Jurassic park (where) because they were angry about the humans' behaviors (why).

(b) Title: The Day After Tomorrow

Topic: The day after the tsunami

Main idea: Jack (who) worked hard to survive after the tsunami (what).

Supporting details: Jack advises the President to move everyone from the northern part of the continent to the south (where) until the end of the tsunami (why) .

After the explanation of the definition of the main idea in a text, the teacher projects an animation, The Spanish Christmas Lottery Advert, of an old man doing something. No words are necessary, just the character involved in some actions. Then, the teacher asks students to watch the animation, and tell what the main idea is.

Teacher:

After watching this animation, please tell me who and what the animation is about.

Students:

An old man

Teacher:

What is the most important thing the old man doing?

Students:

The old man helps others on Christmas. (8 words)

Now that the students have identified “who” and “what” the animation is about, the teacher asks them to come up with a main idea with 10 words or less.

Students:

Someone sends Christmas gifts to others. (6 words)

The old man is sending love on Christmas and winning the lottery. (12 words)

The man sends gifts on Christmas and wins the lottery. (10 words)

Teacher:

As you can see, the second sentence includes a mention of the lottery, which is a detail and therefore unnecessary. On the contrary, the third sentence contains “who” and “what” clearly in only ten words, without details, so it is a better main idea statement.

Teacher:

Now, come up with a topic in your own words.

Students:

Sending Love on Christmas

Pay Love Forward on Christmas

People Send love on Christmas

Teacher:

Please notice that when we talk about the topic, it is shown as a word or a phrase, so it won't be presented as a complete sentence. So, the second one would be a better topic.

1. The teacher repeats the exercise with the cartoon, “Simon’s Cat- Crazy Time,” to model the Get the Gist/Main Idea strategy until students clearly understand the concept of the topic and the main idea in reading.
2. The teacher gives students a copy of a short passage. The example shown as follows is a narrative..

Saturday at the Carnival

James and his sister, Anna, went to the carnival on Saturday. They rode the merry-go-round, the roller coaster and the Ferris wheel. James ate popcorn and a hot dog. Anna drank lemonade and ate an apple. They saw many exciting shows. They were tired when they went home, but had much fun at the carnival.

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Teacher’s instruction:

- Project a worksheet on the overhead (See Appendix 1).
- Preview the passage: Look at illustrations, title, headings, and bold words.
- Guide students to write the title of the passage in the blank.
- Review prior knowledge: Ask students to think about what they

already know about the topic.

- Accept responses and discuss what would happen in the text.
 - Read the passage aloud with the students and teach unfamiliar words.
 - **Think Aloud:** Reread the passage one or two sentences at a time. Think aloud to determine “who” or “what” the main idea is about.
 - Who → James and Anna
 - What → James and his sister, Anna, went to the carnival on Saturday. (what?)
 - They rode the merry-go-round, the roller coaster and the Ferris wheel. James ate popcorn and a hot dog. Anna drank lemonade and ate an apple. They saw many exciting shows. (what: rode, ate, drank, saw → James and Anna did many interesting things at the carnival.)
- (Be sure to include the process of “think aloud” to model what is the most important thing who/what and *why you think so.*)
- Define important details in the passage by modeling the “Think Aloud” strategy.

Ask students the question “Is this an important detail or less important message? Why? Why not?” “This detail is (not) important because...”

Then generate the supporting details and write them in 10-15 words in the worksheet.
 - Think aloud about how you make sure that all of the important details are related to the main idea.

Think-Aloud (Adapted from Readance, Bean, & Baldwin, 1989)

1. Locate the evidence (stated facts) in the text from which one can reason.
2. Think out loud, showing students how to put together prior knowledge and the facts from the text to answer the question.
3. Model the Main Idea Strategy procedure until the students can begin to take over the necessary steps, finally reasoning successfully on their own.

3. Read the next passage, an expository text, and show students sample main idea statements. Discuss why some are correct and some are incorrect regarding the main idea.

The Storm

The rain began early in the morning. It fell as hard drops, one after another. The sky was full of dark purple clouds. Thunder began as a soft rumble and began louder and louder. Lightening crashed every few minutes, making the sky a brilliant white. In brief, the storm was very strong.

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Question: What is the main idea in this passage?

- A. The rain began early in the morning when the storm began. (The description is too narrow.)
- B. The storm was strong with loud rumbles and white lightening. (clear ideas with 10 words)
- C. The storm. (It is the topic, not the main idea.)
- D. The storm began in the morning. (The description is too broad with little information.)

C. Guided Practice:

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Grouping: Group to partners

Instructional Material: Recipe, Newspaper

Steps to Teach: (TEA PARTY activity)

- **Group work:**

 Use a different article; pre-teach important proper nouns and verbs.

Directions: Put the correct ingredients into the bag based on the instructions of cooking the omelet.



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 Take phrases from the text about to be read, and write one on each index card to hand out to each student. Several students can have the same phrase.

📄👉 When students receive their cards, they walk around the classroom, share their cards, listen to others, and discuss how the cards might be connected and make inferences as to what the text might be about.

📄👉 After this, they gather in groups of four to discuss what they've learned from the cards and what they think are possibilities for what the content is mainly about, the necessary ingredients, or the instructions in the text.

Omelet Recipe

1. Cut the **potatoes** into thin slices, place in a pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, and cook for 10 minutes.
2. Peel the **onions** and slice thinly.
3. Beat the **eggs** with a little **milk**.
4. Fry the onions slightly in a large frying pan. Drain the potatoes and add



Ask students to read the passage “Omelet Recipe,” work with their cards, and complete the main idea form.

📄👉 Get the supporting details: Give students several picture selections on the worksheet. Have students drag the correct ingredients into the bag to identify important supporting details in the passage.

🕒👉 Circulate and provide feedback and scaffolding as needed.

📄👉 Be prepared to model again as needed. If several students are confused, stop the independent practice and return to model and give additional guided practice.

🗣️👉 Ask groups to share their answers and explain how they use information in the text as well as background information to answer each question.

🗣️👉 Think aloud with the whole class to modify the inaccurate or incomplete answers. Emphasize that all of the accurate main idea statements/ supporting details do not have to be exactly the same.

● Partner work

1. Get students into pairs, read a different passage, in this case a news item.
2. Have students write the main idea form individually and then switch the form in pairs. The partner reads the sentences and indicates which answer is accurate.

3. Have students work in pairs to guess the headline of the news based on the main idea of the text, and write down the answer.
4. Ask students to share their answers and explain how they used information in the text to answer each question.

There is a new chocolate to help you look young. It is too good to be true. It keeps away wrinkles. The name is 'Esthechoc,' from the words 'esthetic' (meaning all things beautiful) and 'chocolate'. We can buy it next month. It will be expensive. The maker wants young, rich business people to buy it.

The chocolate has the same chemical that makes flamingos pink. A 50 to 60-year-old can look 20 years younger. People can see changes in just three weeks. It took over ten years to make. We can only buy boxes of 21 bars. This is one a day for three weeks. Other scientists want more research on Esthechoc.

BreakingNewsEnglish: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1502/150224-anti-ageing-chocolate-0.ht>

Actual Headline: Scientists Invent Anti-aging Chocolate (24th February, 2015)

5. Use a short fiction, Frankenstein, as an example for students to practice finding out the main ideas of a more complicated piece of content with a story map. (See Appendix1)

Special Note: It is important that students are able to determine the main idea in any text piece. This is a skill that should be taught continuously throughout the year and embedded in all content areas. Thus, if time is available, the teacher can offer different types of instructional materials for the groups to practice in order to apply such skill into the individual work.

D. Application/ Generalization

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Grouping: Individual

Instructional Material: Short Stories, Fables, Legend, Newspapers Textbooks
 Magazine Articles Brochures Catalogues

Steps to Teach:

The skill of Application/ Generation is to apply a rule or strategy in reading class to a new context in students' daily life. Thus, students will be expected to complete a series of reading texts to find out the main ideas on their own in the stage of application. Before these pupils are ready for such independent practice, they will need several opportunities for guided practice. Students must be given opportunities to practice often so that the strategy or skill will become a habit later on. One way to conduct independent practice for this strategy is below:

1. Provide each student with a paragraph of text. Students should use the Main Idea form to identify the main idea and supporting details.
2. Use the checklist of Main Idea Strategy to review the skill. Read the passage to the class while the students follow along. Remind the students to think aloud as they follow along.
3. Have students write the main idea statement in the Main Idea Form individually.
4. Have students share the answers and explain the reasons.

Special Note: Reluctant readers are usually reluctant writers. It's better for the teacher to set a timer for an exact time, usually 2-3 minutes for each step. The teacher can ask students to circle keywords, categorize the most important information and less important details, and generate the main ideas before they write the main idea statement until the timer rings and then promptly stop. Gradually, the teacher can decrease the amount of time as students become familiar with the new strategy.

3.4.3 Post Reading activity:

3.4.3.1 Reading Fluency

The purpose of teaching students how to read fluently in the post reading activity is to help low-skilled EFL readers connect fluency and comprehension skills in reading. Indeed, fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression, and it is an important skill to provide a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. (Torgesen, J.K. & Hudson, R. 2006). On the contrary, low-skilled readers have the difficulty in reading fluency as well. Thus, the teacher works hard to cultivate these reluctant readers to have the chance to open their mouths to practice the fluency skill in reading after they have more confidence in comprehending the text.

There are three key elements to fluency, which include Accuracy, Rate, and Prosody(with expression). (Hudson, Mercer, & Lane, 2000). Accuracy means that a fluent reader can read the passage accurately. Rate means that a fluent reader can read correctly at a fast/slow rate. Prosody means that the fluent reader can express the text with accurate stress, intonation, and rhyme, just like the music of oral language. The following are some activities for students to polish their fluency skill.

(1) Partner Reading :

- Step 1: Read the reader for the first time to have the students chorally “echo” the fluency.

- Step 2: Three-minute timed reading: Assign students into pairs, has partners select a passage and read aloud to their partner for three minutes each. As the reader reads aloud the text, the listener helps to decode any unfamiliar words. Then, students share the notes with each other.
- Step 3: one-minute timed reading: Have the students reread the same passage for one minute each. The partner who is not reading times the other student and keeps track of the words read incorrectly.
- Step 4: Each student graphs on his or her graph paper the number of words read correctly during the one-minute timed reading.

(2) Choral Reading:

- Step 1: Group students in lines and have them read a passage together in unison.
- Step 2: Select a paragraph from the reading and read a sentence out loud and ask students to take turns echoing your reading.
- Step 3: Prompt students to mimic the text as you read and listen for how you phrase, stress, and emphasize words with intonation.

(3) Echo Reading

Echo reading is a wonderful way for students to practice their phrasing and expression while instilling confidence in their reading.

- Step 1: Students mimic the reading while the teacher reads a short sentence or passage.
- Step 2: Once the teacher stops, the students echo back what they just heard and read.

(4) Speed Reading

Speed reading is when an individual student uses a stopwatch to keep track of their reading. The student tracks the progress on a chart to see how his/ her speed improved over the course of reading the passage several times. The teacher would find that students would be able to focus on his/ her reading on an appropriate rate.

- Step 1: Select a paragraph.
- Step 2: Model to students how to read the paragraph slowly one time, get gradually faster the second time through, and then read at the perfect rate the third time through.
- Step 3: students read aloud the text with a timer and track the progress on a chart.
- Step 4: Students can also test the fluency with the link, *Speed Reading Test Online*: <http://www.readingsoft.com/>.

3.4.3.2 After-Reading Strategy

(1) Somebody Wanted But So (SWBS)

For reluctant readers, summarizing what they have read is really challenging, but the teacher can give a more concrete framework as follows, “Somebody Wanted But So,” to help them develop the basic skill of summarizing. Students follow four columns to fill in the important information in the texts. SWBS might be one of the most powerful summarizing tools for teachers to guide students to write summary.

Somebody (Who/What)	Wanted	But	So
Mrs. Loisel	wanted to be rich and wanted to go to the dance...	but she didn't have the right clothes and jewelry...	so bought a dress and borrowed a necklace.

(2) Running Race/ Dictation

Running Race is a good scanning and review activity in reading comprehension tasks.

- Step 1: Prepare 5-10 questions about the details of a text. Cut the questions in strips of paper.
- Step 2: Put students into groups.
- Step 3: Have a copy of the text in front of each group with a distance.
- Step 4: When students are told to start, give each student question number one only, and then the partner should race to find the correct answer to the question.
- Step 5: If the student's answer is correct, give them question number two, and so one until a group finish all of the questions correctly.

(3) Retelling

Without proper guidance, students often response what they have learned lack of organization or details. Thus, the teacher can use the rubric below to help students respond with systematic progress.

Retellings Rubric Directions:

Rate each item from 0 (didn't include the item) to 3 (completely and successfully included the item).

Retellings Rubric	Rate 0-3
Does this retelling:	
1. have an introduction that includes the story's title and setting?	
2. give characters' names and how they're related?	
3. identify the antagonists and protagonists?	
4. include the main events? in the correct sequence?	
5. provide supporting details?	
6. make sense and sound organized?	
7. include connections to other stories or the reader's life?	
8. discuss the main conflict and how it was resolved?	

● **Variation**

The teacher could use technology related to connecting reading and writing ability to increase struggling reader's learning motivation and interests. The following are the links for the teacher's reference.

(1) Primary Resources : <http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/english/englishD9.htm>

This website contains abundant worksheets of newspapers and magazines, and assists students to compose their own newspaper.

(2). ISSUU: <https://issuu.com/>

The ISSUU website contains the largest collection of free-to-read publications from incredible publishers around the world, and offers the free space for those who would like to publish their own magazines. It is a great site for students to design their digital magazine after reading.

(3) Book Builder: <http://www.bookbuilderonline.com/>

Students can use the online tool, BookBuilder, to develop simple e-books with strategic comprehension prompts. It is an interesting and effective approach to encourage struggling readers turn their reading skills into writing production.

3.5 Ongoing Formative Assessment

It is essential for teachers to understand students' learning development, and ongoing formative assessment is the best approach, including the teacher's observations, student's reflection journals, Think-a-loud checklists, student's retelling rubric, an oral summary rubric, or written homework.

IV. Reflection and Suggestion

If struggling readers are to comprehend a text, they must effectively use the main idea strategy to recall important information. With the step-by-step instruction of the explicit teaching, students will develop the main idea strategy based on the following information. 1. Who or what the paragraph is about. 2. The most important information about who/what. 3. Students are taught to combine the above elements into a main idea statement with ten words or less. Also, students improve the most and have the greatest confidence in situations where the reading text has a high interest level combined with a relatively low reading level. As for the implementation of the explicit instruction for main idea strategy, the points as follows are listed in my suggestions:

- 1. Time on task and quick pacing of lessons:** Setting intensive but short-term teaching goals is the priority for instructing struggling readers so that both teachers and students can monitor the learning process in manageable steps in a short period of time. Also, short-term instruction for each task is the key element for reluctant readers to arouse their learning motivation in reading.
- 2. Direct, simple, and explicit comprehension instruction:** Step-by-step guided instruction with specific modeling will successfully scaffold students' reading comprehensive skills.
- 3. High interest/low reading level texts:** Selecting diverse and high interest/low reading level reading texts is important for young adolescent EFL readers to arouse their interest in learning to apply the skill in an authentic learning environment. In addition, the diverse texts online benefit the teacher with different genres of reading materials.
- 4. Effective instruction embedded in content areas:** Teachers must focus on content teaching and thinking that will students think powerfully and think about the text more effectively.
- 5. Collaborative learning with diverse tasks:** Collaborative learning with diverse tasks can successfully reduce the stress and anxiety of the explicit instruction while the teacher scaffolds the Get the Gist/Main Idea strategy repetitively.
- 6. Ongoing assessment:** It is not easy to see slow readers' learning progress through standard scores or summative assessment, yet both teachers and students can examine their learning progress with the retelling rubric, reflection journals, or relevant ongoing assessments.
- 7. Positive and Corrective feedback:** Reluctant readers need both positive and

corrective feedback more often than those in regular classes.

8. **Technology Component:** The Internet provides rich resources that can support struggling readers in ways that are fun and appealing. Struggling readers could use the Internet at home for independent practice after they get clear guidance in how to navigate the English websites for educational purposes. (Retrieved from Biancarosa, G., & Snow, C. E. 2006)

In brief, by keeping in mind that all students struggle in different ways with reading, what the teacher needs is to start small in language teaching, and continue to find ways to motivate and instruct students in reading. Just as Pat Cross mentions, “If it weren’t for students impeding our progress in the race to the end of the term, we certainly could be sure of covering all the content ... However, the question should not be whether we are covering the content, but whether students are with us on the journey.” Even though it is a difficult task for educators to cultivate struggling readers without knowing when they will start to soar high, our duty is to with them on their journey for a while. As for the challenge of teachers to teach these kids, it is as Michelangelo said: “The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

Appendix 1

Getting the Main Idea Strategy

Name:

No.

Part I: Recognize General and Specific Words

- Students learn to circle the general term that could be considered the subject of the list.

The following list of words contains three specific ideas with a related general topic. Circle the word that could be considered to be the general subject of a topic.

Example 1:

- (1) Hot-air balloons, jets, bi-planes, things that fly
- (2) Iron, gold, metals, copper
- (3) potatoes, vegetables, carrots, asparagus
- (4) Insects, mosquito, cricket, ant
- (5) Yellow, color words, green, black

   Climate change, air pollution, carbon dioxide, global warming

→The teacher discusses the answers with the whole class.

Example 2:

1. The teacher illustrates that the topics of passages are often stated as phrases rather than words, in other words, students need to learn to distinguish which phrase is the general topic.

The following list of phrase contains three specific ideas with a related general topic. Circle the phrase that could be considered to be the **general subject of a topic**.

- (1) Turn on the ignition (發動裝置).
Press the accelerator(啟動器) .
Insert the key.
Start the car.
- (2) Talk to others on the phone
Check emails
Depend on the cell phone
Download applications
- (3) paying fees
buying books
starting high school
going to class

- (4) pushing paper under sticks
 - piling the logs
 - building a fire
 - striking a match

● Read the lists of specific details and write a general phrase that could be the subject or topic for each group.

- (1) Set your posture
 - Set your hands
 - Look at your audience
 - Begin with a loud voice
 - General topic: (A) steps to set your posture
 - (B) steps to make a speech

- (2) Open the lid of the washing machine
 - Put your dirty clothes into the machine
 - Pour the laundry detergent into the machine
 - General topic: (A) Your clothes are washed at the Laundromat
 - (B) Your clothes are washed by hand

- (3) Salsa, the popular blend of Latin American music, is also the word for sauce.

The expression, Salsa, was contributed to the music world by a Cuban orchestra conductor.

While practicing Salsa, the orchestra leader told his musicians to “echale salsita” or “throw in the sauce.”

- General topic: (A) Latin American Salsa Music
- (B) The Naming of Salsa Music
 - (C) Contribution(貢獻) of Salsa

- 2. The teacher illustrates that the topics of passages are often stated as phrases rather than words; in other words, students need to learn to distinguish which phrase is the general topic.

Task 2: Differentiate Topic, Main Idea, and Details

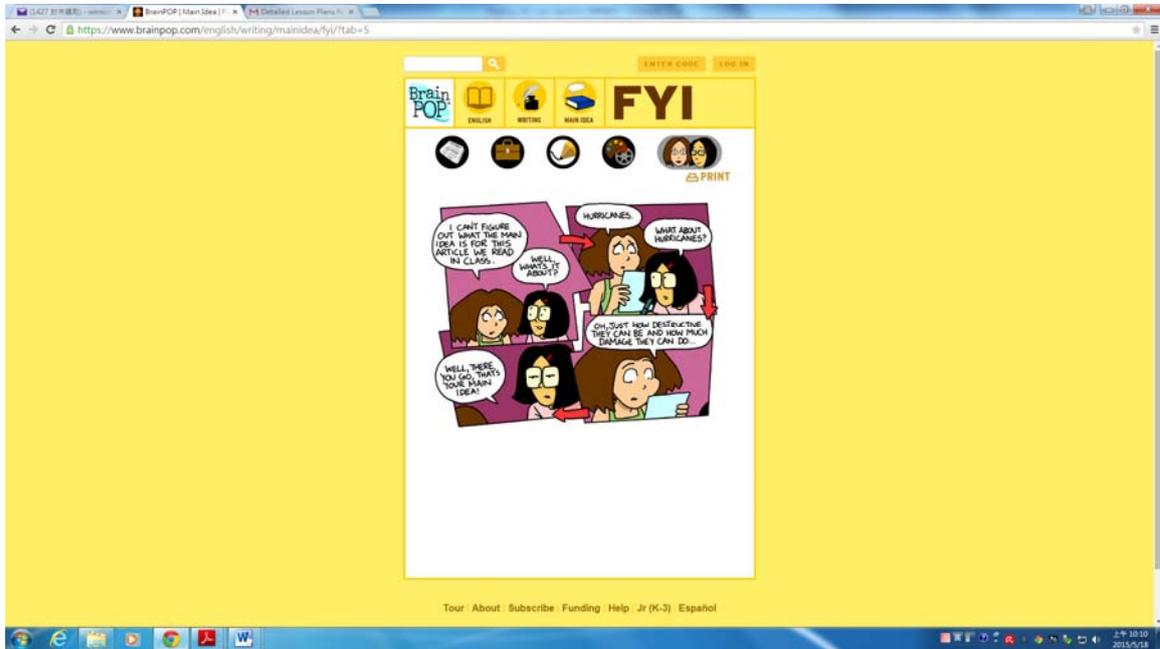
We have said that a topic is a word or phrase that describes the subject or general category of a group of specific ideas. Frequently, the topic is stated as the title of a passage. The main idea, in contrast, is a complete sentence that states the topic and adds the writer’s position or focus on the topic. The supporting details are the specifics that develop the topic and main idea.

Read the following example from a textbook paragraph and label the topic, the main idea, and a supporting detail.

Reading skill: **Main idea in sentences**

The main idea is the most important idea, or main point, in a sentence, paragraph, or a story.

<https://www.brainpop.com/english/writing/mainidea/fyi/?tab=5>



Task 3: Differentiate Title, Main Idea, and Details

➔ **Title** is a word or phrase that describes the subject or general category of a group of specific ideas. Most of the time, the topic is regarded as the title of a passage.

➔ **The main idea** is a sentence that summarizes the most important points, states the topic, and adds the writer's position or focus on the topic.

➔ **Details** are the specifics that develop the topic and main idea.

Signal words to describe details: Furthermore, in addition, thus, later on, for example, for instance.

Directions: Read the following example from a textbook paragraph, compare the items within each group, and indicate which is the title (T), the main idea (MI), and the detail (D).

Examples:

Group 1

_____ Animal imagery in different languages

_____ In many languages, certain animals have specific characteristics.

_____ A coward is often called a chicken in English expressions.

Group 2

- _____ Some people who get too involved with their cell phones may suffer from “disconnect anxiety.”
- _____ In love with a cell phone
- _____ When the suffers are not using their cell phones, they start to feel uneasy.

Group 3

- _____ In addition, the characters in Miyazaki’s films are often neither totally good nor wicked, which is something that is very true to life.
- _____ Hayao Miyazaki’s films include three marked characteristics that can be easily noted in his movies.
- _____ The wonderful world of Hayao Miyazaki

Group 4

- _____ For example, if a person feels bad, we say he or she is in a black mood.
- _____ A colorful life
- _____ Colors influence our life in many ways, and we use symbolic meanings of colors to talk about people and things.

Part II: Getting the Main Idea Strategy

Title is a word or phrase that describes the subject or general category of a group of specific ideas. Most of the time, the topic is regarded as the title of a passage.

The main idea is a sentence that summarizes the most important points, states the topic, and adds the writer's position or focus on the topic.

Supporting Details are the specifics that develop the topic and main idea.

For example:

(1) Title (Topic): Jurassic World

Main idea: Jurassic World took place on one island where the dinosaurs broke loose and caused a disaster for humans.

Supporting details: Some dinosaurs ate the tourists.

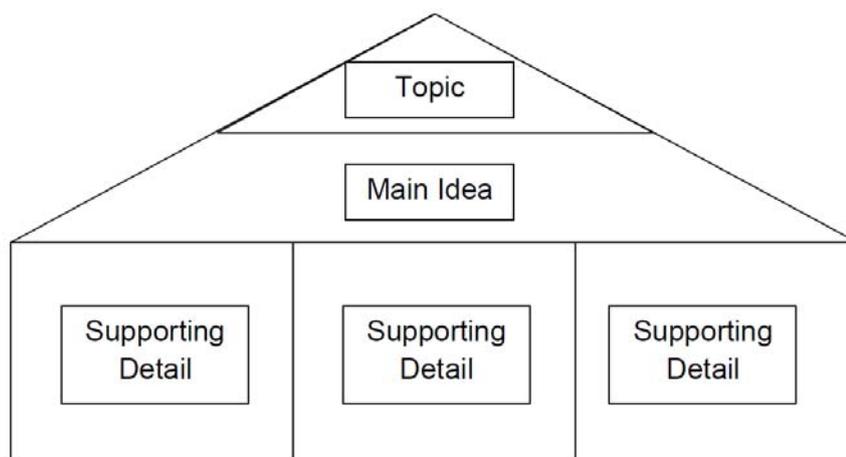
(2) Title: The Day after Tomorrow

Topic: The day after the tsunami

Main idea: The story is about a group of people who work hard to survive after the tsunami in the US.

Supporting details: Jack Hall advises the President to move everyone from the northern part of the continent to the south till the weather improves.

The main idea is the overall idea of the paragraph. It is supported by details throughout the paragraph much like the frame of a house supports the roof.



Example 1

Saturday at the Carnival

James and his sister, Anna, went to the carnival on Saturday. They rode the merry-go-round, the roller coaster and the Ferris wheel. James ate popcorn and a hot dog. Anna drank lemonade and ate an apple. They saw many exciting shows. They were tired when they went home, but they had much fun at the carnival.

www.k12reader.com



Questions:

1. What is the title of the passage?

2. Who are the characters and what is the main information in the passage?

Who : _____

What: _____

3. What is the main idea of the entire passage? Circle the correct answer.

A. James and Anna were hungry when they saw exciting shows.

B. James and Anna did many interesting things at the carnival.

C. The merry-go-round was crowded with people.

D. Many people went to the carnival on Saturday.

4. Where/ when did James and Anna go to the carnival?

5. What kind of activities did they do/eat/ see?

6. A. _____ B. _____ C. _____

7. How did they feel at the end of the day?

8. Generate the supporting details and write in 10-15 words.

9. Create one question about the passage that might be on a test:

* Checklist for getting the main idea

	Steps	V
1	Read the topic.	
2	Examine clues from the illustrations, graphs, or charts to guess the main idea.	
3	Get the most important idea from the keywords of the entire passage. (Who/ What, repeated verbs, nouns, or adjectives...)	
4	Define the supporting details. (When/ Where/ How, for instance, such as, furthermore...)	
5	Generate the main idea statement into one sentence within 10 words or less.	

Example2:

The Storm

The rain began early in the morning. It fell as hard drops, one after another. The sky was full of dark purple clouds. Thunder began as a soft rumble and began louder and louder. Lightening crashed every few minutes, making the sky a brilliant white. In brief, the storm was very strong. www.k12reader.com

Questions:

1. What is the topic about? Which is the title?

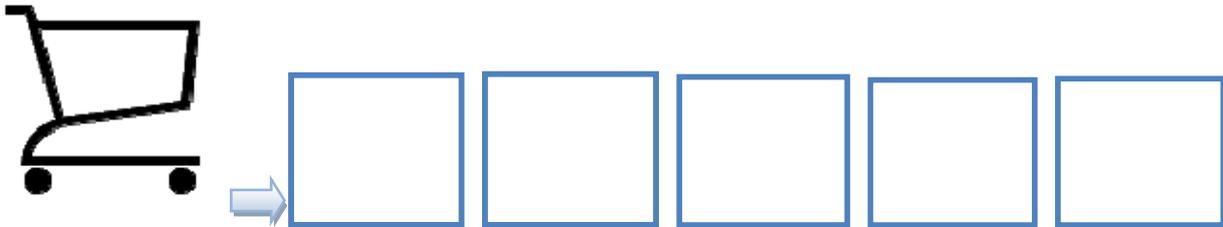
2. What are the key words in the text?
noun : _____
verb: _____
3. What is the main idea? Circle the correct answer.
A. The farms needed the rain.
B. The thunder hurt the people’s ears.
C. Lightning made the sky bright.
D. The storm was very strong.
4. State your reason for choosing your answer: _____
5. Write three details in the story.
A. _____ B. _____ C. _____

Example 3:

Omelet Recipe

1. Cut the **potatoes** into thin slices, place in a pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, and cook for 10 minutes.
2. Peel the **onions** and slice thinly.
3. Beat the **eggs** with a little **milk**.
4. Fry the onions slightly in a large frying pan. Drain the potatoes and add them to the frying pan.
5. Pour the beaten eggs and milk over the potatoes and onions. Cover and

Directions: Put the correct ingredients into the bag based on the instructions of cooking the omelet.



Example 4:

There is a new chocolate to help you look young. It is too good to be true. It keeps away wrinkles. The name is 'Esthechoc,' from the words 'esthetic' (meaning all things beautiful) and 'chocolate'. We can buy it next month. It will be expensive. The maker wants young, rich business people to buy it.

The chocolate has the same chemical that makes flamingos pink. A 50 to 60-year-old can look 20 years younger. People can see changes in just three weeks. It took over ten years to make. We can only buy boxes of 21 bars. This is one a day for three weeks. Other scientists want more research on Esthechoc.

BreakingNewsEnglish: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1502/150224-anti-ageing-chocolate-0.ht>

Example 5:

Dolphins

Dolphins are mammals that live in the ocean. Mammals are different than fish, reptiles or birds. As a mammal, dolphins breathe oxygen, even though they live in water. Because they are mammals, a dolphin mother gives birth to a live baby, unlike reptiles and birds who lay eggs. A dolphin mother also feeds her baby milk like other mammals.

www.k12reader.com

Questions:

1. What is the topic about? Which is the title?

2. What are the **key words** that are repeated quite often?

noun : _____

verb: _____

3. Summarize this paragraph in one sentence :

State your reason for choosing your answer: _____

4. Write Two details in the story.

A. _____ B. _____

Example 6:

The Wonderful City of Oz

Even with eyes protected by the green spectacles, Dorothy and her friends were at first dazzled by the brilliancy of the wonderful City. The streets were lined with beautiful houses all built of green marble and studded everywhere with sparkling emeralds. www.k12reader.com



Questions:

1. What is the topic about? Which is the title?

2. What are the **key words** that repeat quite often?

noun : _____

verb: _____

3. Summarize this paragraph in one sentence :

4. Make prediction about the happening of the story:

A. _____ Evidence:

B. _____ Evidence:

C. _____ Evidence:

* Checklist for making predictions

	Lists	V
1	Look at the title, the images, and identify the topic	
2	Think about who the main characters were and what the key events were.	
3	Identify what has already occurred.	
4	Decide what you think will happen based on what has already occurred in the story.	
5	Confirm your answer: look back and check to make sure your prediction is accurate!	

...They walked over a pavement of the same green marble, and where the blocks were joined together were rows of emeralds, set closely, and glittering in the brightness of the sun. The window panes were of green glass; even the sky above the City had a green tint, and the rays of the sun were green. www.k12reader.com

Confirm my answer:

Example 7:

Body Gestures

The meaning of the same gesture can vary widely from culture to culture even though people throughout the world use body language to communicate without speaking. In India, for example, people use the head bobble to express their approval. Indians tilt their heads from side to side when they agree with others.

1. Underline the key terms.
2. What is the topic of this passage?

3. What is the main idea?

4. What are the supporting details?

...In Greece, the gesture of showing one's palm toward someone is very insulting and may bring trouble on those people who make it. In brief, a positive gesture in one country can mean something quite different in another.

Confirm my answer:

Example 8:

Beaver

Has anyone ever told you that you are as busy as a beaver? If they have, then they mean that you are very busy. Beavers swim easily in streams, picking up rocks and sticks to build their dams. They gnaw at trees with their big front teeth to cut them down. Then they use parts of the trees to build their houses. (Comprehensive curriculum, grade 4, P.71)

1. Underline the key terms.
2. What is the topic of this passage?

3. What is the main idea?

4. What are the supporting details?

Example 9:

Inventing a Better World

Many times, people come up with ideas to meet their own needs. Teng hung-chi, who is known as "Taiwan's Edison," created the automatic faucet to put his idea into practice. When he was sixteen in the vocational high school, he noticed that it was inconvenient for him to wash his hands without touching the faucet, so he decided to invent a special faucet which could run automatically without being touched. Later on, he invented a faucet that was controlled by a built-in sensing device. Thus, as you can see, excellent inventors get ideas from their own experiences.

1. Underline the key terms.
2. What is the topic of this passage?

3. What is the main idea?

4. What are the supporting details?

Example 10

The meaning of the same gesture can vary widely from culture to culture even though people throughout the world use body language to communicate without

speaking. In India, for example, people use the head bobble to express their approval. Indians tilt their heads from side to side when they agree with others. In Greece, the gesture of showing one's palm toward someone is very insulting and may bring trouble on those people who make it. In brief, a positive gesture in one country can mean something quite different in another.

1. Who or what is the topic of this passage?
2. Underline the key terms.
3. What point is the author trying to make?

Example 11:

Has anyone ever told you that you are as busy as a beaver? If they have, then they mean that you are very busy. Beavers swim easily in streams, picking up rocks and sticks to build their dams. They gnaw at trees with their big front teeth to cut them down. Then they use parts of the trees to build their houses. (Comprehensive curriculum, grade 4, P.71)

1. Who or what is the topic of this passage?
2. Underline the key terms.
3. What point is the author trying to make?

Example 12:

Many times, people come up with ideas to meet their own needs. Teng hung-chi, who is known as "Taiwan's Edison," created the automatic faucet to put his idea into practice. When he was sixteen in the vocational high school, he noticed that it was inconvenient for him to wash his hands without touching the faucet, so he decided to invent a special faucet which could run automatically without being touched. Later on, he invented a faucet that was controlled by a built-in sensing device. Thus, as you can see, excellent inventors get ideas from their own experiences.

1. Who or what is the topic of this passage?
2. Underline the key terms.
3. What point is the author trying to make?

Note: Textbook authors do not always state the main idea in the first sentence. Stated main ideas may be the beginning, middle, or concluding sentence of a passage. Therefore, do not think of stating the main idea only as a search for a particular sentence. Instead, rely on your own skill in answering the three questions about topic,

details, and focus. Connect the details to form your own concept of the main idea, and, if a specific sentence in the paragraph restates it, you will recognize it as the main idea.

Part III: Getting the Main Idea of Longer Selections

Because of the great quantity of material included in a book, understanding the main idea of longer selections such as chapters and articles seems more difficult than understanding a single paragraph. Longer selections have several major ideas contributing to the main point and many paragraphs of supporting details. To pull the ideas together under one central theme, an additional step is necessary: simplifying the material by organizing paragraphs or pages into manageable subsections and then deciding how each subsection contributes to the whole.

Directions to students: The following questions will help you determine the central idea for a longer section of a reading.

Questions:

1. What is the significant part of the title (who/what)? What does the title want to express about the topic (what does the author try to say)?
2. How does the first paragraph suggest the topic or thesis?
3. Under what details can the paragraphs or ideas be grouped?
4. How do these details support the whole?
5. What is the overall topic?
6. What point is the author trying to convey?

Example 1

A Hungry Mouse

A mouse was having a very bad time. She could find no food at all. She looked here and there, but there was no food, and she grew very thin. At last the mouse found a basket, full of corn. There was a small hole in the basket, and she crept in. She could just get through the hole. Then she began to eat the corn. Being very hungry, she ate a great deal, and went on eating and eating. She had grown very fat before she felt that she had had enough.

When the mouse tried to climb out of the basket, she could not. She was too fat to pass through the hole.

"How shall I climb out?" said the mouse. "oh, how shall I climb out?"

Just then a rat came along, and he heard the mouse.

"Mouse," said the rat, "if you want to climb out of the basket, you must wait till you have grown as thin as you were when you went in."

Read more at

http://www.kidsgen.com/short_stories/the_hungry_mouse.htm#j1TtcfWDfZbR1jHf.99

Example 2 (SanMin B1L6)

When in Bulgaria, Do as the Bulgarians Do

On the first day of Mike's trip to Bulgaria, he had his lunch in a local restaurant. After Mike finished his delicious meal, a friendly waitress asked him about his food. Mike spoke very little Bulgarian, so he nodded his head to tell her that he had enjoyed the meal. To his surprise, Mike noticed the waitress frown after his reply. Was there something wrong with the waitress—or with Mike?

The story above shows that even though people throughout the world use body language to communicate without speaking, the meanings of the same gesture can vary widely. A positive gesture in one country can mean something quite different in another. Therefore, it is better for travelers to get to know a country's culture before they visit it.

In India, for example, people use the head bobble to express their approval. Indians tilt their heads from side to side when they agree with others. This can confuse people who shake their heads from left to right to show disagreement. Some people say that the Indian head bobble grew out of watching snake charming. The snakes move from side to side when they are not going to bite, which means "I am of no threat to you." This may offer an explanation for Indians' use of the head bobble to express a positive answer.

From time to time, using the wrong gesture in the wrong place can bring about a lot of trouble. In Greece, the gesture of showing one's palm toward someone is called the "moutza." This gesture is very insulting and may bring trouble on those people who make it. That's because Greek criminals' faces were covered in ashes ("moutzos" in Greek) as a punishment in earlier times. The ashes were placed on a criminal's face with an open palm, so the gesture itself became insulting. As a result of this tradition, it would be impolite of you to let your palm face outward when you wave goodbye in Greece.

Luckily for Mike, an English-speaking couple who were sitting next to him in the restaurant came to his rescue. They explained that nodding one's head is a negative answer in Bulgaria, while shaking one's head from left to right is a positive one. Mike, thus, realized that he had made a mistake. He called the waitress over, pointed to his plate, and shook his head. By doing so, he hoped that she would bring him some dessert.

—Jules Crowell. Revised by Jason Crockett.

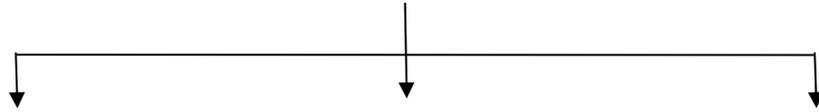
Story Board of “When in Bulgaria, Do as the Bulgarians Do”

Name:

No.

Fill in the following blanks to get a better understanding of the reading.

<p>The main idea:</p> <p>The meaning of the same gesture</p> <p>_____</p>



<p>Example I:</p> <p>A Bulgarian</p> <p>gesture:</p> <p>2 _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>meaning:</p> <p>a negative answer</p>	<p>Example II:</p> <p>3 _____</p> <p>gesture:</p> <p>bobbling one’s head</p> <p>meaning:</p> <p>4 _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Example III:</p> <p>A Greek</p> <p>gesture:</p> <p>5 _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>meaning:</p> <p>insulting others</p>
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● **Determining the main idea**

1. Describe the theme or main idea of this article and write describe your reasons

Title: _____ Theme or main idea

(What point is the anther trying to make?): _____

Reasons: _____

2. What words are typically used to name the main idea?

3. How do you get the main idea of an article?

● **Facts and Opinions**

Facts are statement or events that have happened and can be proven to be true.

Example: George Washington was the first president of the United States.

This statement is a fact. It can be proven to be true by researching the history of USA.

Example: George Washington was the greatest president the United States has ever had. →

This statement is an opinion. Many people agree that George Washington was a great president, but not everyone agrees he was the greatest president. In some people’s opinion, Abraham Lincoln was the greatest president.

Directions: Read each sentence. Write F for fact or O for opinion.

- _____ 1. There is three feet of snow on the ground.
- _____ 2. A lot of snow makes the winter enjoyable.
- _____ 3. Chris has a better swing set than Mary.
- _____ 4. Both Chris and Mary have swing sets.
- _____ 5. California is a state.
- _____ 6. California is the best state in the west.

Directions: Write facts and opinions in the reading “When in Bulgaria, Do as the Bulgarians Do.”

Facts:

1	
2	
3	

Opinions:

1	
2	
3	

Example 3

A “Hero” Called Frankenstein

The title of this novel comes from the name of its “hero,” Victor Frankenstein, an enthusiastic scientist who found the incredible secret about the creation of life. Excited by this discovery, Frankenstein kept exploring more deeply into the secret to creating a human being. Often in the dead of night, he stole and collected dead bodies from graves. Fascinated by his project, Frankenstein buried himself in his work. At last, his creature was completed and finally came to life.

Contrary to Frankenstein’s expectations, however, the creature that he had made turned out to be a giant, frightening monster. Frankenstein was so alarmed that he fled in horror. The following day, he returned but found that the monster was gone.

When wandering the world alone, the monster was not welcome anywhere because of his terrible appearance. Hatred for his creator gradually grew in the monster’s mind, and this drove him to murder Frankenstein’s brother. Frankenstein blamed himself as he learned of his brother’s death. He thought that he should never have created such a horrible being. Just as Frankenstein fell into a deep depression, the monster turned up in front of him.

Upon meeting Frankenstein again, the monster poured out his heart. In tears, he asked Frankenstein to create a female monster for him, since it was impossible for humans to love a monster. Otherwise, the monster told Frankenstein that he would make Frankenstein’s life more miserable.

Although agreeing to the monster’s request at first, Frankenstein soon had second thoughts. The thought that the two might bear children frightened him, so he destroyed the half-finished creature. “I should not have made such a promise,” he thought to himself. Upon learning what Frankenstein had done, the monster became so angry that he killed Frankenstein’s wife and his best friend in revenge. To prevent more misfortunes, Frankenstein followed the monster to the North Pole to hunt him down. Nevertheless, he never succeeded—in the end he died from the cold. After learning of Frankenstein’s death, the monster disappeared and was nowhere to be seen again.

Perhaps it never occurred to Frankenstein that he had to be responsible for the monster he created. He had probably never expected that his enthusiasm for science would lead to so many tragedies. Interestingly, many people have often mistaken the creature’s name for “Frankenstein.” For them, maybe the scientist is the real monster.

Main Idea Form

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Title or Topic of the Selection _____

Passage/ story/ text	Who or What is the Paragraph About?	Most Important Information About the “Who” or “What”	Key Details
<i>Ex.</i>	<i>Hurricanes</i>	<i>are large tropical storms with heavy winds.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Large areas of rain</i> • <i>Produce tornadoes</i> • <i>Cause flooding</i>

Adapted from Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., Dimino, J., Schumm, J. S., & Bryant, D. (2001).

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The complete main idea statement is formed by combining the “Who or What” column with the “Most Important Information” column. Denton, C., Bryan, D., Wexler, J., Reed, D. Vaughn, S. (2007) p.107

Appendix 2: Class Photos



The teacher explains the definition of Get the Gist/ Main Idea strategy



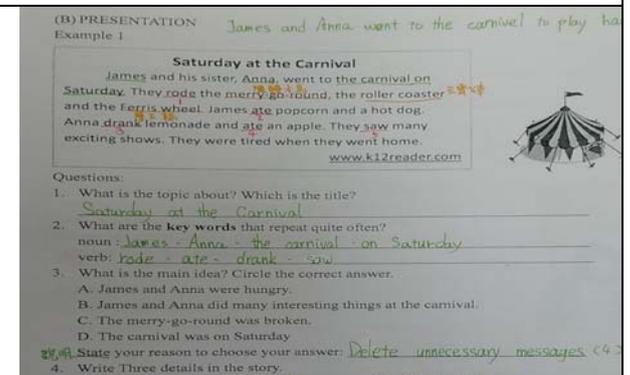
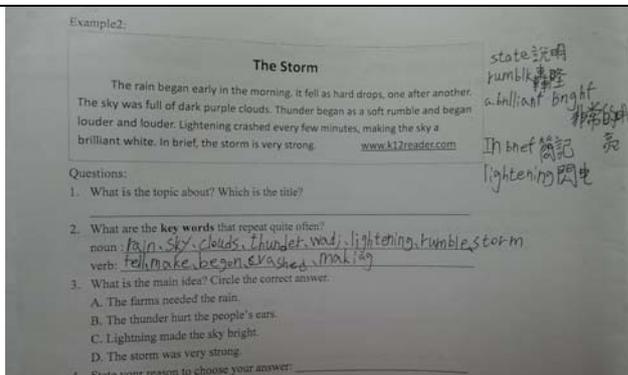
Students discuss the answers within the guided instruction

Students share the answer within collaborative group work



Each group writes keywords on the board to have a whole class discussion

The volunteer shares the reason to write down the main idea statement.



Student's work

Student's work

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