

Main Idea and Details in Nonfiction Text



Second Grade

Reading

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Use this lesson to help your students learn how to find the main idea and details in a nonfiction text using a graphic organizer for support.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to identify the main idea and details of a grade level text.

Materials and Preparation

- A nonfiction picture book with a simple topic and main idea (e.g. spiders, bees, reptiles, whales). Place a sticky note on the page with the main idea, and sticky notes to mark the pages with three supporting details.
- Sticky notes (three per student)
- The [Learning About the Ocean](#) worksheet
- A variety of coloring materials (optional)
- Reading log or journal (optional)

Key Terms

- main idea
- topic
- key details
- nonfiction

Attachments

- PDF
Learning About the Ocean

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Show students the cover of a nonfiction book with a simple topic (e.g. a book about bees, spiders, reptiles, or whales). Make sure the cover of the book has a picture of the topic that will be covered in the book.
- Ask students to look at the cover of the book and then instruct them to close their eyes. Say, "I just showed you the cover of a nonfiction book. **Nonfiction** books are about real topics! Now, I'm going to say three words. I want you to raise your hand when I say the word that you think matches the topic of the book." Then, for example, if you chose a book about spiders, your three words could be: bees, spiders, cats.
- Record tally marks on the whiteboard that represent student responses. Clarify the correct answer and explain that the **topic** of a nonfiction book is a word or phrase. Explain that the topic of a nonfiction book can sometimes be found by searching for repeated words throughout the text or looking at the title of the book. Reinforce to students that they can also use pictures as clues to help them figure out the topic of a book.
- Explain that today students will be learning how to identify the topic, main idea, and key details of a nonfiction text or book.

EL

Beginning:

- Provide students with definitions in English and student's home language (L1), if literate in their home language.
- Allow students to share their answer in their L1.

Intermediate: Allow students to choose another nonfiction book from the library and make a prediction about the main topic based on the title and illustration on the cover of the book.

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling (20 minutes)

- Draw a large circle on the board with three smaller circles underneath. Connect the circles with straight lines. This visual will act as a large graphic organizer. Write "Main Idea" in the large circle and "Detail" in each of the smaller circles.
- Define main idea and details to the students by saying, "The **main idea** of a nonfiction text can sometimes appear in the first sentence of the text. Other times, the main idea is harder to find and might appear as a sentence in the center of a book. The **key details** support the main idea by helping the reader to understand the main idea better. The key details can be words, phrases, and sentences that help you understand what the author is trying to say!"
- Read aloud the simple nonfiction book you chose, and ask the students to think about what the main idea of the text is. Turn to the page in the book where you marked the sentence with the main idea and project it on the whiteboard. Reinforce that the main idea of the text is the main point the author is trying to tell the reader.
- Record the main idea on the graphic organizer on the board.
- Continue to explicitly model how to find the key details in the nonfiction book you selected, turning to the marked pages and showing students the specific sentences and phrases from the text. Record the key details on the graphic organizer on the board.

EL

Beginning: Provide students with a word bank containing the following words and connecting illustrations to paste in their reading log or journal: main idea, key details, nonfiction.

Intermediate: Provide students with a partially completed graphic organizer.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (15 minutes)

- Project the Learning About the Ocean worksheet on the whiteboard.
- Ask a volunteer to read the title of the text aloud. Ask the students to think about what the topic of the text will be, using the title for support. Explain that when a text doesn't have pictures, the title and repeated words throughout the text can usually be used to figure out the topic. Allow a couple of students to offer responses and explain that the topic of the text is the ocean.
- Read through the text together as a class, and ask the students to think about what the main idea of the text is, finding a specific sentence in the text to support their answer.
- Clarify any misunderstandings and have students highlight the main idea of the text, which is the first sentence of the text: "The ocean is important to all living things."
- Ask a student to come up to the whiteboard to highlight where the topic sentence appears later in the text.

EL

Beginning:

- Allow students to work in a small, teacher-led group with access to a simplified text, appropriate to their reading level.
- Offer students a simplified text in their home language.

Intermediate: Encourage students to help read the text aloud, supporting students with decoding words as needed.

Independent Working Time (15 minutes)

- Pass out three sticky notes to each student.
- Explain to students that they will go back and reread the Learning About the Ocean text, searching for three key details that support the main idea they highlighted.
- Tell students that they will write each key detail on one of the sticky notes and stick it in one of the key detail spaces on the bottom of their worksheet.
- Rotate around the classroom and provide support as necessary.

EL

Beginning:

- Allow students to read the text aloud to a teacher and provide support in finding the key details of the text.
- Provide sentence frames to help support students in finding the key details.

Intermediate: Allow students to work with a partner.

Differentiation

Support: Allow students to work with a partner during independent work time.

Enrichment: Ask students to draw illustrations to connect with the main idea and the key details from the story.

Assessment (10 minutes)

- Write the following questions on the board:
 - How is the main topic of a nonfiction book or text different than the main idea? Use ideas from today's lesson for support.
 - Explain one key detail you learned from the Learning About the Ocean text. Why do you think the author included the key detail? How does it support the main idea?
 - Name one strategy you can use to figure out the topic of a nonfiction text or book.
- Pass out a sticky note to each student and have them record their answer and stick it on the whiteboard.

EL

Beginning: Allow students to share the main idea and key details of the text orally.

Intermediate: Encourage students to read the main idea and details to a partner orally.

Review and Closing (5 minutes)

- Allow students to come up to the front of the classroom to share their answers.
- Write the following prompt on the whiteboard and ask students to share a few questions they still have about finding the main idea and details in a nonfiction text: "I'm still wondering ____."
- Record their answers on the whiteboard.

EL

Beginning: Provide students with the following questions in English and L1 and allow them to use the pictures to support their answer.

- What is a main idea?
- What is a topic?
- What are key details?

Intermediate: Allow students to share the answer to one of the questions and provide the following sentence

starters to help them share out:

- The main topic of a nonfiction text is different than the main idea because ____.
- One key detail about the ocean I learned was ____.
- One strategy I used was ____.