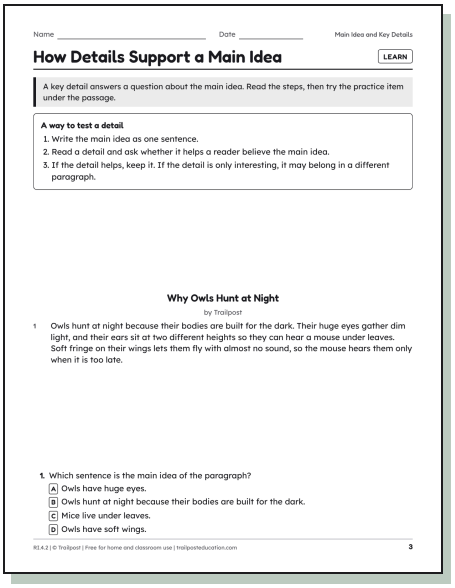
FREE TEACHER GUIDE AND INSTALL GUIDE

Main Idea and Key Details

Find the main idea of a paragraph, pick supporting details, and write a short summary

Grades 3 to 5 | **ELA** | **16 student pages** | **Full answer key**



Name _____ Date _____ Main Idea and Key Details

How Details Support a Main Idea LEARN

A key detail answers a question about the main idea. Read the steps, then try the practice item under the passage.

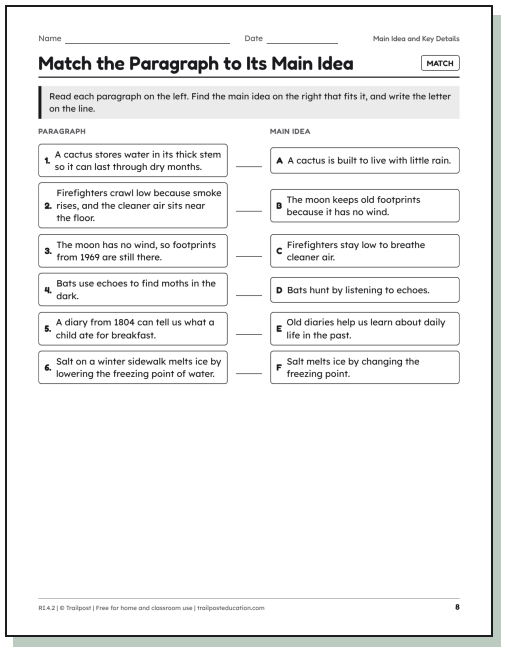
A way to test a detail
1. Write the main idea as one sentence.
2. Read a detail and ask whether it helps a reader believe the main idea.
3. If the detail helps, keep it. If the detail is only interesting, it may belong in a different paragraph.

Why Owls Hunt at Night
by Trailpost

1 Owls hunt at night because their bodies are built for the dark. Their huge eyes gather dim light, and their ears sit at two different heights so they can hear a mouse under leaves. Soft fringe on their wings lets them fly with almost no sound, so the mouse hears them only when it is too late.

1. Which sentence is the main idea of the paragraph?
   A Owls have huge eyes.
   B Owls hunt at night because their bodies are built for the dark.
   C Mice live under leaves.
   D Owls have soft wings.

RI.4.2 | © Trailpost | Free for home and classroom use | trailposteducation.com 3



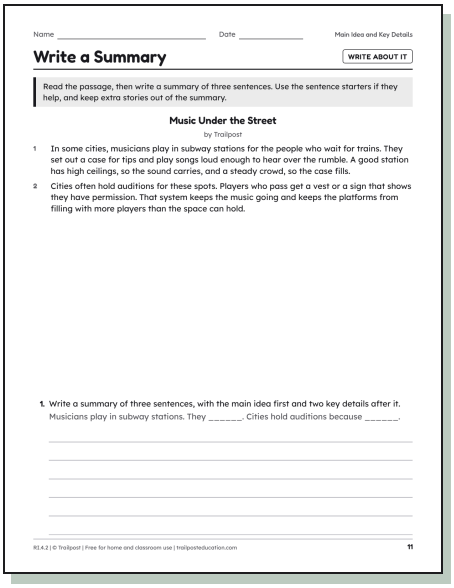
Name _____ Date _____ Main Idea and Key Details

Match the Paragraph to Its Main Idea MATCH

Read each paragraph on the left. Find the main idea on the right that fits it, and write the letter on the line.

PARAGRAPH		MAIN IDEA
1. A cactus stores water in its thick stem so it can last through dry months.		A A cactus is built to live with little rain.
2. Firefighters crawl low because smoke rises, and the cleaner air sits near the floor.		B The moon keeps old footprints because it has no wind.
3. The moon has no wind, so footprints from 1969 are still there.		C Firefighters stay low to breathe cleaner air.
4. Bats use echoes to find moths in the dark.		D Bats hunt by listening to echoes.
5. A diary from 1804 can tell us what a child ate for breakfast.		E Old diaries help us learn about daily life in the past.
6. Salt on a winter sidewalk melts ice by lowering the freezing point of water.		F Salt melts ice by changing the freezing point.

RI.4.2 | © Trailpost | Free for home and classroom use | trailposteducation.com 8



Name _____ Date _____ Main Idea and Key Details

Write a Summary WRITE ABOUT IT

Read the passage, then write a summary of three sentences. Use the sentence starters if they help, and keep extra stories out of the summary.

Music Under the Street
by Trailpost

1 In some cities, musicians play in subway stations for the people who wait for trains. They set out a case for tips and play songs loud enough to hear over the rumble. A good station has high ceilings, so the sound carries, and a steady crowd, so the case fills.

2 Cities often hold auditions for these spots. Players who pass get a vest or a sign that shows they have permission. That system keeps the music going and keeps the platforms from filling with more players than the space can hold.

1. Write a summary of three sentences, with the main idea first and two key details after it.
   Musicians play in subway stations. They _____. Cities hold auditions because _____.

RI.4.2 | © Trailpost | Free for home and classroom use | trailposteducation.com 11

STUDENTS WILL LEARN TO

- ✓ Tell a topic from a main idea
- ✓ Find key details that support a main idea
- ✓ Write the main idea of a paragraph in your own words
- ✓ Write a short summary of a passage

A free resource from Trailpost

trailposteducation.com/free

Getting started

What is in your download

File	What it is
Student-Pages.pdf	The 16-page student packet, starting with a cover page that has a name line and a table of contents.
Answer-Key.pdf	The same pages with every answer filled in, so you can check work quickly or project a page to go over it together.
Teacher-Guide.pdf	This guide, which explains how to print the packet, how to pace it, and which standards it covers.

How to open the files

1. On a Chromebook, open the Files app, double-click the zip folder, and drag the three PDFs into Google Drive or onto the desktop.
2. On a Windows computer, right-click the zip folder and choose Extract All, then open the new folder that appears.
3. On a Mac, double-click the zip folder and a regular folder with the three PDFs will open next to it.
4. Open each PDF in your browser or in any PDF reader, and you are ready to print.

How to print

- Set the print scale to Actual Size or 100 percent so the boxes and lines stay the right size for student handwriting.
- Black and white printing works well, because every page uses black lines and light gray shading.
- Print pages 7 and 15 on one side only, because students cut those pages apart.
- The exit ticket page holds two copies of the same ticket, so one printed page covers two students.

One star and two stars

Pages marked with one star (5) give steady practice with friendly numbers and extra support. Pages marked with two stars (6, 12) ask for more steps and more explaining. Students who finish the one-star page with few mistakes can move straight to the two-star page, and students who need more time can do the one-star page twice with a partner.

Using the answer key

The answer key matches the student packet page for page, so page 6 of the key answers page 6 of the student packet. Written answers in the key are sample answers, and any answer that gives the same idea with good reasoning should earn credit.

© Trailpost | trailposteducation.com

What is inside

Students learn the difference between a topic, a main idea, and a detail, then practice with original passages. The packet includes a sort, a match, a riddle, a summary page, error analysis, a review, exit tickets, and a self-check.

Page	Title	What students do
1	**Cover**	Students write their name and see a list of every page in the packet.
2	**Topic, Main Idea, and Detail** Learn | RI.3.2	Students learn the words topic, main idea, and detail, and they see each one in a short example.
3	**How Details Support a Main Idea** Learn | RI.4.2	Students see how to test a detail by asking whether it proves the main idea.
4	**Find the Main Idea** Guided Practice | RI.3.2	Students read a short passage about sea otters and choose the main idea and two key details.
5	**Main Idea Practice** Practice ★ | RI.3.2	Students read two short paragraphs and write a main idea and one key detail for each.
6	**Two Main Ideas in One Text** Practice ★★ | RI.5.2	Students read a two-paragraph passage and name a main idea for each paragraph.
7	**Sort Main Ideas and Details** Cut and Paste | RI.3.2	Students sort twelve sentences into main ideas and details.
8	**Match the Paragraph to Its Main Idea** Match | RI.4.2	Students match six short paragraphs to the main idea that fits each one.
9	**Main Idea Riddle** Riddle | RI.3.2	Students name the topic of five tiny paragraphs and use the starting letters to answer a riddle.
10	**Read and Find Details** Apply | RI.4.2	Students read an original passage about snowflakes and answer main idea and detail questions.
11	**Write a Summary** Write About It | RI.4.2	Students write a three-sentence summary of a new passage about subway musicians.
12	**Find the Mistake** Error Analysis ★★ | RI.4.2	Students read a weak main idea a classmate wrote, explain the problem, and write a stronger sentence.
13	**Explain Your Thinking** Write About It | RI.5.2	Students explain how they tell a main idea from a detail, using a passage from the packet.
14	**Mixed Review** Review | RI.3.2, RI.4.2	Students review topic, main idea, details, and a short summary on a new passage.
15	**Exit Tickets** Check | RI.3.2	Two copies of a short exit ticket on each page so you can check understanding in about five minutes.
16	**How Did I Do?** Self-Check | RI.3.2, RI.4.2	Students rate their own progress on each skill and set one goal for practice.

© Trailpost | trailposteducation.com

Pacing and standards

A suggested plan

Day	Pages	What to do
Day 1	2 to 4	Read the two Learn pages together, then have partners finish the guided page while you check in.
Day 2	5 to 6	Students start with the one-star page and move to the two-star page when they finish with few mistakes.
Day 3	7 to 10	Use the sort, the match, the riddle, and the extra passage as centers.
Day 4	11 to 13	Students write a summary, fix a weak main idea, and explain their thinking.
Day 5	14 to 16	Give the review page as a quiz, use the exit ticket the next morning, and finish with the self-check.

Standards

Code	Standard
RI.3.2	Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
RI.4.2	Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
RI.5.2	Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

Teaching tips

- Ask students to cover the title of a passage and still name the main idea, because a title can name a topic without stating the point.
- The sort and the riddle check themselves, because a detail that lands in the main idea column will look out of place.
- Model one summary out loud before the writing page, and keep it to three sentences so students see the length you expect.

© Trailpost | trailposteducation.com

Thank you for downloading this packet

I made this packet for families and teachers who need solid practice pages that are ready to print tonight, and I hope it saves you some planning time this week.

Hear about the next free packet

I give away free resources from time to time, and people on the Trailpost email list hear about each one first.

To join the list, open trailposteducation.com/free and enter your email address at the bottom of the page.

Something look wrong?

If you find a mistake on a page or in the answer key, please email support@trailposteducation.com. I read every message, and I will fix the file and post the new version for everyone.

Terms of use

You may print and copy these pages for your own students at home or in class, and you may post the PDFs inside a password-protected class page such as Google Classroom. Please send friends and colleagues to trailposteducation.com/free so they can download their own free copy, and keep the files off public websites.

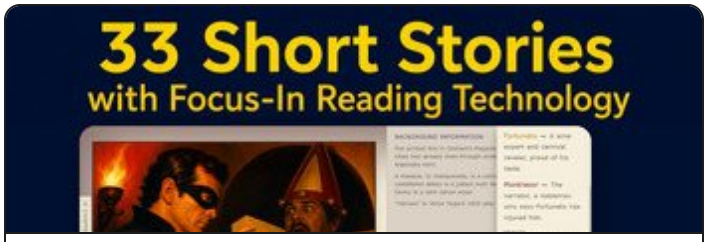
More free Trailpost packets

These packets are also free on the Trailpost website, and each one comes with an answer key and a teacher guide like this one.

- **Addition and Subtraction Within 20** | Math, grades 1 to 2
- **Claim, Evidence, Reasoning with Data** | Science, grades 6 to 9
- **CVC Words and Short Vowels** | ELA, grades K to 1
- **Ecosystems and Food Webs** | Science, grades 4 to 6
- **One-Step and Two-Step Equations** | Math, grades 6 to 8
- **Figurative Language** | ELA, grades 4 to 6
- **Equivalent Fractions and Number Lines** | Math, grades 3 to 5
- **Map Skills** | Social Studies, grades 3 to 5
- **Multiplication Fact Strategies** | Math, grades 3 to 4
- **Citing Text Evidence** | ELA, grades 5 to 8
- **Telling Time and Counting Money** | Math, grades 2 to 3

More from Trailpost

If your students liked this packet, these Trailpost resources practice related skills. Click any card to open its page in the Trailpost shop.



33 Classic Short Stories

GRADES 6 TO 10 | DIGITAL LESSON

Students read 33 classic short stories with reading supports they can turn on and off.

See it in the shop



The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

GRADES 3 TO 6 | DIGITAL LESSON

Students read and listen to the whole novel in a self-contained digital novel study.

See it in the shop

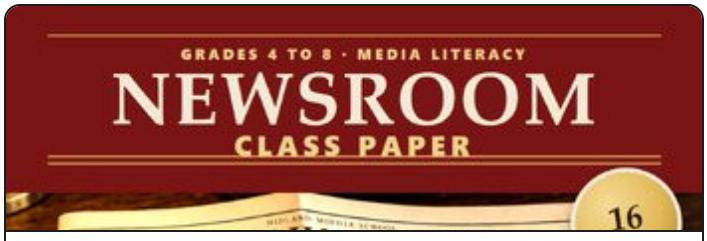


A Game of Hearts

GRADES 4 TO 7 | DIGITAL GAME

Students read a branching Wonderland adventure and build vocabulary as they choose a path.

See it in the shop



The Daily Gazette

GRADES 6 TO 12 | CLASSROOM SIMULATION

Students run a classroom newsroom where they rate sources and write articles for a dated edition.

See it in the shop



Morphology Monsters

GRADES 4 TO 8 | DIGITAL GAME

Students build words from prefixes, roots, and suffixes in a monster-themed word game.

See it in the shop



Potion Lab

GRADES 2 TO 6 | DIGITAL GAME

Students practice spelling with your own word lists or with the lists that come with the game.

See it in the shop

See everything at shop.trailposteducation.com