Name: _____ Date: _____

BETA - Mr. Ott - Global History & Geography



Finding Main Ideas

TITLES OF ACTIVITIES

10-1 Learning about the READ Main Idea Strategy
10-2 Applying READ
10-3 Practice Using READ
10-4 Finding the Topic Sentence
10-5 Practice Finding the Topic Sentence
10-6 Writing Topic Sentences
10-7 Writing More Topic Sentences
10-8 Identifying a Passage Title
10-9 Writing a Passage Title
10-10 Mastery Assessment and Reflection

USING THE ACTIVITIES

It can be difficult to identify the main idea in a reading passage. This chapter will help you learn a strategy that will provide the necessary steps to identify main ideas more easily.

10-1 Learning about the READ Main Idea Strategy

In this activity, you'll begin by writing a statement that explains how you currently read for main ideas. Then, it's time to learn about the READ strategy.

1. Read the paragraph to get an idea of its meaning.
2. Evaluate each sentence, picking out the most important words.
3. Analyze these important words, paying attention to what they have in common.

4. Decide what the main idea of the paragraph is, paying particular attention to the important words. Supplement the description of each step with your own explanations and elaborations.

Conclude by writing a statement that tells which of the READ steps you included in your first written statement.

10-2 Applying READ

In this activity, you are asked to apply the READ strategy to a paragraph that is provided. The strategy will help you find and write down the main idea.

10-3 Practice Using READ

In this activity, you'll practice using READ to identify the main idea in a paragraph.

10-4 Finding the Topic Sentence
10-5 Practice Finding the Topic Sentence

A single sentence in a paragraph that tells the main idea is called a topic sentence. Read the paragraph in 10-4 and apply READ to identify and write down the topic sentence. In 10-5, you will get more practice using READ. Remember: topic sentences can be found in different parts of a paragraph.

10-6 Writing Topic Sentences
10-7 Writing More Topic Sentences

In both activities, use READ to find and write down the topic sentences for each of three paragraphs. Identify whether the three topic sentences were at the beginning, middle, or end of each paragraph.

10-8 Identifying a Passage Title

A passage consists of two or more paragraphs on a topic. In this activity, write down the topic sentence for each of the three paragraphs in the passage about Yellowstone Park. Then choose the best title from the three possible titles provided.

10-9 Writing a Passage Title

Read the three-paragraph selection about a treasure hunter. Use READ to find and underline the topic sentence for each paragraph. Use the topic sentences to write a title for the story. Remember: The title should reflect the ideas of the topic sentences. As a final part of this activity, you'll share your title suggestions with the rest of the class.

10-10 Mastery Assessment and Reflection

After you review the READ strategy, complete the assessment. As your teacher reviews appropriate responses with you, make sure you understand how to use the READ strategy. Ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Learning about the READ Main Idea Strategy



10-1

Write a paragraph that explains what you do when reading to find the main idea of a paragraph.

Learn how the **READ strategy** is used to find main ideas. As your teacher explains each step, add any notes that will help you remember what to do.

Read the paragraph to get an idea of what it is about.

Look for words that are repeated throughout the paragraph.

Evaluate each sentence to determine the important words.

In each sentence, underline the important words that tell what the sentence is about.

Analyze the important words to learn what they have in common.

Look at the words you underlined. Write a statement that tells what they have in common.

Decide upon the main idea of the paragraph.

Look for a sentence that tells what the words you underlined have in common.
If you find such a sentence, it is the topic sentence, and you should consider it the main idea.
If you do not find such a topic sentence, use the statement you wrote for the Analyze step as the main idea.

Which of these steps did you include in the paragraph you wrote?

Follow the steps in READ to complete this activity.

Read this paragraph to get an idea of what it is about. Look for the important words that are repeated.

Many stories are told about sharks. Some stories say that all sharks will attack people. Some stories say that sharks can smell blood from a mile away. Other stories tell us that sharks have no enemies in the deep. While these tales are not really true, many people believe them.

1. What is the paragraph about?

_____

_____

Evaluate each sentence and underline the important words.

2. Write the words you underlined in each sentence.

First sentence: _____

Second sentence: _____

Third sentence: _____

Fourth sentence: _____

Fifth sentence: _____

Analyze the words you underlined to determine what they have in common.

3. Write a statement that tells what the words you selected have in common.

_____

_____

Decide upon the main idea. Is there a sentence that tells what the words you underlined have in common? If yes, it is the topic sentence, and consider it the main idea. If no, the statement you wrote for the Analyze step is the main idea.

4. Write the main idea.

_____

_____

Read this paragraph to get an idea of what it is about.

> Not all sharks are dangerous to people. Only about 25 kinds are dangerous to people. Some of the sharks that are really dangerous to people are the great white, tiger, bull, and the hammerhead. The great white shark is the most dangerous of all.

1. What is the paragraph about?

_____

_____

_____

Evaluate each sentence to determine the important words.

2. Write the words you underlined in each sentence.

First sentence: _____

Second sentence: _____

Third sentence: _____

Fourth sentence: _____

Analyze the words you underlined to determine what they have in common.

3. Write a statement that tells what the words you chose have in common.

_____

_____

_____

Decide upon the main idea:

4. Write the topic sentence or the main idea.

_____

_____

_____

Finding the Topic Sentence



10-4

Sometimes a single sentence in a paragraph tells the main idea. This is called the **topic sentence.**

Read this paragraph to get an idea of what it is about.

> Many of our English words have been borrowed from the languages of other countries. The word *idea* comes from the Greek word *idein,* which means "to see." It might be said that to have an idea is "to see" something new. The word *tea* comes from the Chinese word *t'e,* which sounds very much like our word. *Kayak,* a small, one-person boat, comes from the Eskimo word for a small, skin-covered boat.

1. What is the paragraph about?

_____

_____

_____

Evaluate each sentence to determine the important words.

2. Write the important words.

_____

_____

_____

Analyze to determine what the important words have in common.

3. Write a statement that tells what is in common.

_____

_____

_____

Decide upon the main idea.

4. Write the topic sentence.

_____

_____

_____

A topic sentence can be any sentence in a paragraph. It may be found at the beginning, middle, or end of a paragraph.

Read this paragraph to get an idea of what it is about.

> In order for you to speak, air must be pushed out from your lungs. Then it passes through your throat and the voice box and past your vocal cords. If these two bands of tissue are stretched tightly, the air causes them to vibrate and make a sound. Finally, you use your lips, tongue, and teeth to shape the sounds into words. Speaking, then, involves the lungs, throat, vocal cords, voice box, and mouth.

1. What is the paragraph about?

_____

_____

_____

Evaluate each sentence to determine the important words.

2. Write the important words.

_____

_____

Analyze to determine what the important words have in common.

3. Write a statement that tells what is in common.

_____

_____

Decide upon the main idea.

4. Write the topic sentence.

_____

_____

5. Was the topic sentence at the beginning, middle, or end of the paragraph?

_____

Use READ to find and write the topic sentence for each of the following paragraphs.

About 4,000 years ago the Egyptians used pictures for numbers. A single mark meant 1, an arch showed 10, a chain showed 100, and a flower was 1,000. Many years later, the Romans developed another way of counting. They still used a mark, *I*, for 1, but they used *V* for 5, *X* for 10, *L* for 50, and *C* for 100. The numbers we use today come from the Arabs. Many ways of counting have been used by people throughout the ages.

1. _____

_____

_____

Certain plants trap insects and other small animals for food. The Venus flytrap, for one, has leaves that work like a steel trap. Another plant of this kind is the bladderwort. It catches small water animals in the tiny traps on its leaves. Pitcher plants have pitcher-shaped leaves that hold rainwater in which insects drown.

2. _____

_____

_____

A homing pigeon is a kind of pigeon that can be trained to find its way home from a far-off place. No one knows exactly how a homing pigeon knows what direction to take or where to fly to reach home. Because it is able to do this, this pigeon has been used to carry messages in a holder on its back or leg. The homing pigeon can fly between fifty and sixty miles an hour. Some have been known to fly more than a thousand miles in two days.

3. _____

_____

_____

4. Circle the places where you found the topic sentences in these paragraphs.

Beginning Middle End

Read each paragraph to find and write the topic sentence. Tell where you found it in the paragraph.

When you ask the age of a small child, he or she will most likely answer by raising the correct number of fingers. When you are asked your height or weight, you answer in numbers. Numbers are a very important part of our lives. Calendars and clocks tell the date and time in numbers. Many of our favorite games use numbers also.

1. Topic sentence:

_____

Location:

_____

The ancient Romans held a festival called Lupercalia on February 15. Some people think that this was the beginning of our Valentine's Day. But no one is sure. In fact, there are at least three stories to explain how Valentine's Day started. Some people think that the holiday began because the birds in England chose their mates on February 14. Others connect the holiday with two saints, both named Valentine, who lived long ago.

2. Topic sentence:

_____

Location:

_____

Deserts are hot, dry, and sandy. They do not get enough rain for growing crops. But people have brought water to the desert and have made it good farmland in many places. They have built dams on rivers to hold back the water. Canals have been dug to carry the water through the desert. And wells have been dug to give more water.

3. Topic sentence:

_____

Location:

_____

A passage is made up of two or more paragraphs on a topic. The title of a passage tells what it is about. Read the passage and follow the directions to identify a title for the passage.

Read the story below. Then follow the directions.

Yellowstone Park is the oldest and largest of the parks owned by the United States government. In 1872, it was named the country's first national park. It is made up of desert, forest, meadows, lakes, rivers, and canyons. It has more than 300 miles of roads and a thousand miles of trails for horseback riding and walking. Yellowstone has more than two million acres of land. Some of this land has been seen only by birds and other animals.

Yellowstone Park's Old Faithful is the best-known geyser in the world. It sends a tower of boiling water into the air about every sixty-five minutes. First a little water and steam come forth from the cone and then drop back. Soon more water shoots up—a little higher, then higher, until it reaches over 150 feet in the air. This beautiful show lasts about four minutes.

As the country's largest wildlife preserve, Yellowstone is home for two hundred kinds of birds and forty other kinds of animals. Bears, elk, and buffalo roam freely. Fish swim in its lakes and rivers. The park protects all animals; no hunting is allowed.

Write the topic sentence for each paragraph.

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

Read the topic sentences you wrote to decide what the passage is mainly about. Then underline the best title for the passage:

4. National Parks Yellowstone Park Wildlife of Yellowstone Park

Read the passage. Find and underline the topic sentence in each paragraph. Think about what the topic sentences have in common. Then write a title at the top of the passage.

1. A simple walk once led to a treasure hunt. Several years ago, a man was walking along the water's edge near Vero Beach, Florida. High winds had changed the sand path where he often walked. Suddenly he noticed something too bright to be a shell shining through the sand. He had found a Spanish gold coin called a piece of eight! He believed that the coin was part of a huge treasure that came from Spanish ships that had sunk 250 years earlier.

2. This find changed the man's life, turning him into a treasure hunter. Armed with a shovel, he returned to the beach and found more old coins and other clues that led him to think that a wreck had taken place nearby. He studied old maps and charts to learn the routes the Spanish ships took. He read the stories of the handful of people who had lived through the wreck. He hired a pilot to fly a small airplane over the area to look for signs of a sunken ship. Finally, he got a boat and a crew of divers.

3. He and the other divers searched the ocean floor, where they discovered a wealth of valuable and interesting things. They turned up gold and silver bars and coins, beautiful gold chains and rings, a diamond ring, silverware, silver cups, and copper pots. They found rich silks and lovely china from the Orient. Jars once filled with oil, water, wine, and other supplies were also dug out of the ship's remains. The divers even came upon a ship's bell and sailors' tools—not that different from those used today.

4. Write a title for this passage.

_____

_____

_____

Read this passage from a tourist guidebook. Then follow the directions.

The Branton Home is the oldest building standing at the harbor of Middletown. It has been a well-known sight on Second Street for over 200 years. Repairs have been made many times, but the outside face of the building has changed very little.

Cyrus Branton, a well-to-do merchant, had the beautiful home built in 1760. It was a gift to his new wife, Abigail. A porch was built on an upper story of the building's east side. This allowed family members and servants to watch the harbor for ships that were coming in.

Today the Branton Home is owned by the City Department of History. It is open to the public Monday through Saturday. Tours are offered daily. To find out more about the Branton Home, phone the Department of History at 555-9792.

1. Write the topic sentence for each paragraph:

Paragraph 1:

_____

_____

Paragraph 2:

_____

_____

Paragraph 3:

_____

_____

2. Write a title for the passage.

_____

Reflection  How has learning to use READ made you a better student?

_____

_____

_____