

Lesson 1 Find Main Ideas and Details in Pictures



A picture has a **main idea**. The main idea is what the picture is all about. Circle the sentence below that tells the main idea of this picture.

Fishing requires certain equipment.

Many fish are being caught.

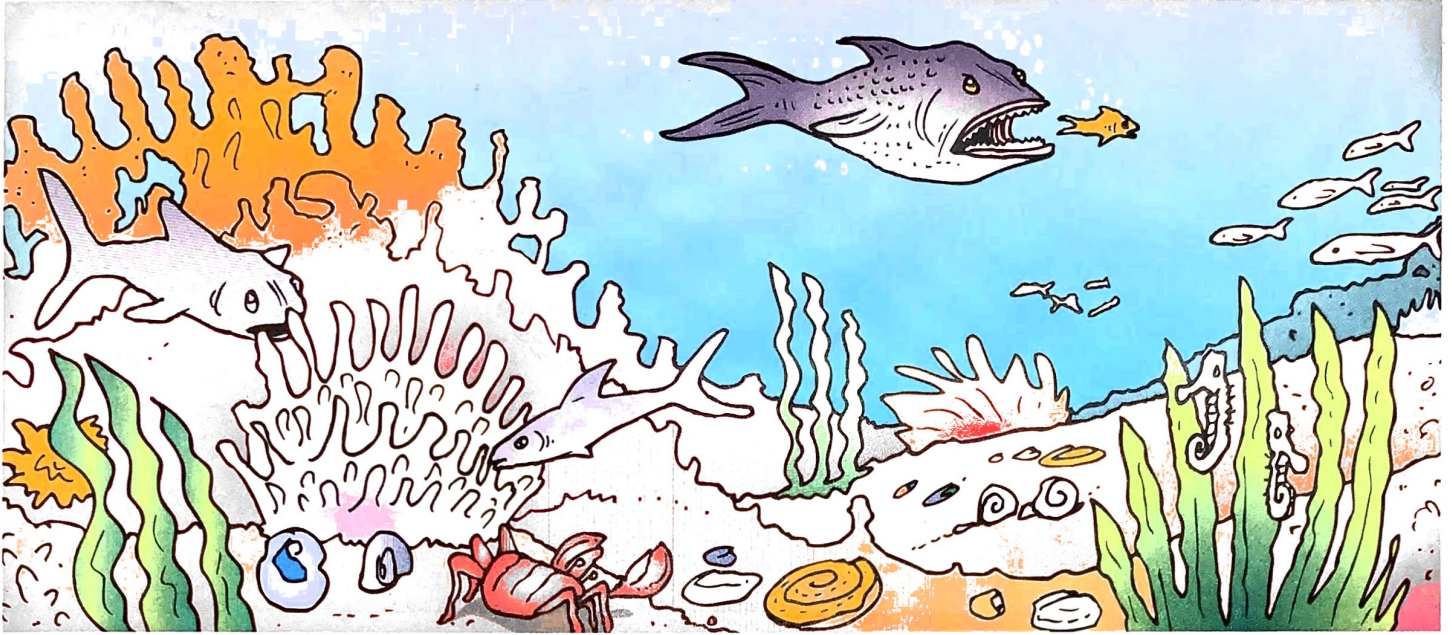
Fishing is a popular hobby.

A picture also has **details**. Details are the little parts that make up the whole. For example, one detail in this picture is that the man has a fishing net. Another detail is that the tackle box is open.

Write some more details from the picture.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Lesson 1 Find Main Ideas and Details in Pictures



What is this picture all about? Write the main idea here.

Write some of the details in the picture here.

Now that you have looked at the separate parts of the picture, put them together. Write a paragraph about what is happening in the picture. In your paragraph, use the main idea and some of the details you recorded.

Lesson 2 Find Main Ideas and Details in Text

My dad was always happy when he was fishing. At the lake, he was endlessly patient. I don't know how many times he taught us to cast. There were also all the times he had to wade out and un snag our hooks. He never complained.



Like a picture, a paragraph has a main idea. The main idea is what the paragraph is all about. In most paragraphs, the main idea is actually stated in the paragraph. That statement is called the **topic sentence**. A topic sentence may be anywhere in a paragraph, but it is usually either the first sentence or the last. In the paragraph above, the topic sentence is the first sentence. Underline it.

In the paragraph below, the writer did not include a topic sentence. Read the paragraph. Then, write a topic sentence below the paragraph.

The local fishermen have been trying to catch him for years. They've been telling stories about him for years, anyway. They have nicknamed him "Puss-in-Boots." They tell of a catfish so big that they fear their boats would tip if they ever did hook him. Their stories place him anywhere from two feet to 12 feet long. Everyone agrees on this, at least: a very large fish lives in Lantern Lake.

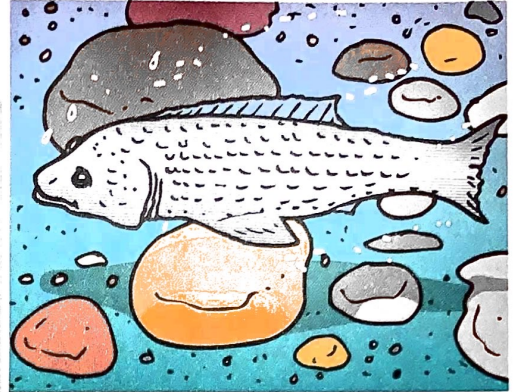
You already know that the details in a picture are the little parts that make up the whole. In a paragraph, details tell about, or support, the main idea, which is stated in the topic sentence.

Look back at the paragraph at the top of this page. Remember, the first sentence is the topic sentence. Each sentence that follows is a detail that supports the idea that dad was always happy when he was fishing. List several details from that paragraph here.

Lesson 2 Find Main Ideas and Details in Text

Read the paragraph below. In it, the writer shares her memories of fishing. Find the topic sentence and underline it. Then, list some details that support the main idea.

My uncle went out in his rowboat almost every morning. When he had guests, he enjoyed the company in his boat. He was also glad to be alone again after they left. My aunt and uncle enjoyed the fresh fish he caught. He never seemed disappointed when he didn't catch anything, though. His pleasure came from fishing, not from catching fish.



Details:

Now, read this paragraph about water safety. Underline the main idea. Hint: It is stated in one part of a sentence. Then, list some details that support the main idea.

Most people are glad to spend a day at the beach. What some people forget is that water safety takes some extra thought. Boaters must check weather reports ahead of time. They must also make sure their equipment is in good repair. They also must have life preservers for all passengers. Swimmers should always swim with a buddy. Even strong swimmers should never swim directly away from shore. They should also rest for 15 minutes for every hour in they are in the water.

Details:

Lesson 2 Find Main Ideas and Details in Text

What do you know about fishing? Choose one of these sentences as a topic sentence for a paragraph:

I don't know much about fishing.

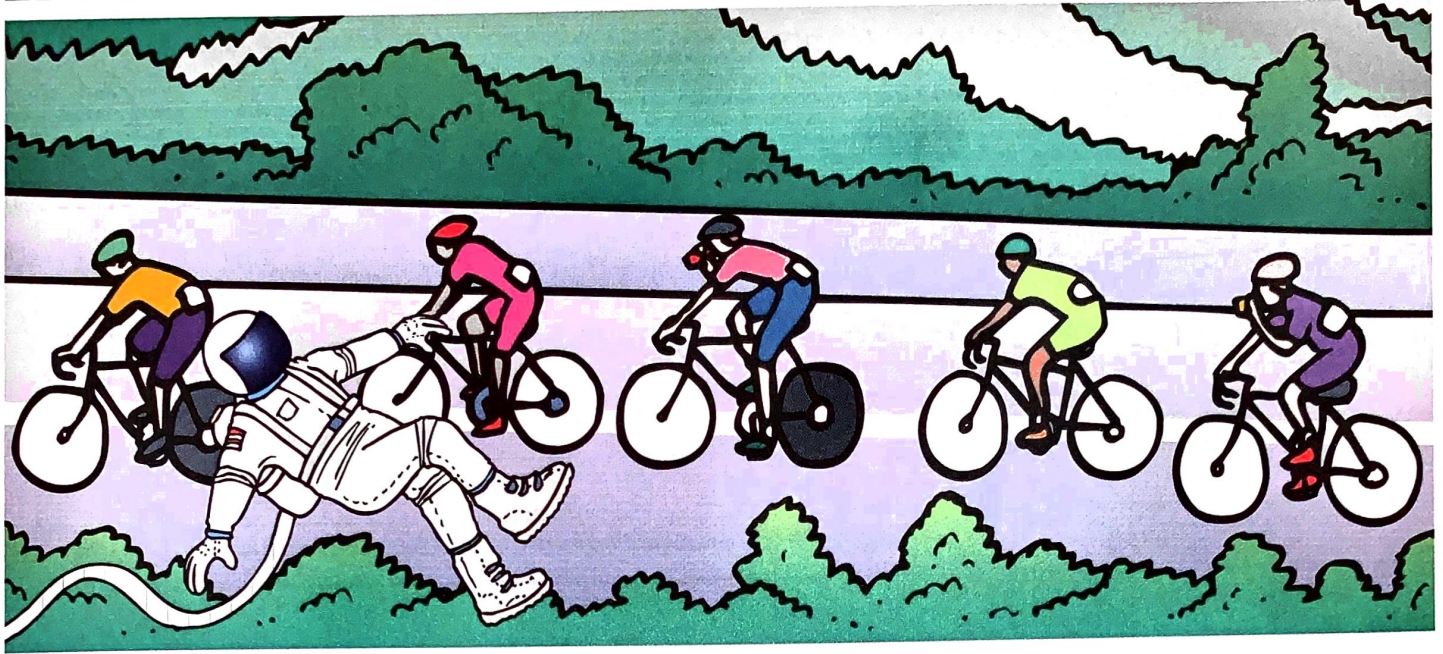
I know a lot about fishing.

I went fishing once, and the memory of it is a (good/bad) one.

Now, write a paragraph in which you support your main idea with details. Remember to choose just one topic sentence.

Now, make up a fishing story about "the one that got away." In a paragraph, tell about that fish that you saw but never hooked, or that you almost caught. When you are finished, underline your topic sentence.

Lesson 3 Staying on Topic



Most of the details in this picture fit the main idea, but one does not. What is it? Describe the detail that does not fit.

Now, write a sentence that states the main idea of the picture. Remember to ignore the detail that doesn't fit.

Normally, all of the details in a picture fit the main idea. The same should be true of a paragraph. All of the details should fit the main idea. That means that each sentence must stay on topic.

Here is a good paragraph. It starts out with a topic sentence. Then, each sentence gives details about, or supports, the topic sentence.

On my way to school, every block is different. First, there is the house block. Each house has a driveway and a grassy front yard. Then, there is the office block. Each doorway has a sign on it, and I always wonder what is behind the doors. The third block is the store block. The stores have big glass windows, and I can see myself as I walk by. Finally, there is the playground block. It is the school's playground, and I look through the fence to see which of my friends are already there waiting for me.

Lesson 3 Staying on Topic

Each of the following paragraphs contains a sentence that is not on topic. Read each paragraph. Underline the topic sentence. Draw a line through the sentence that does not support the topic sentence. Then, list four details that support the topic sentence.

The courthouse in our city is made of great big limestone blocks. Those blocks came from a quarry just outside of town. Beside the old quarry is where the first mayor lived. When the courthouse was built in the 1870s, limestone was chosen as the building material because it was nearby. Teams of horses pulled carts from the quarry to the building site. Each cart had just one big limestone block on it.



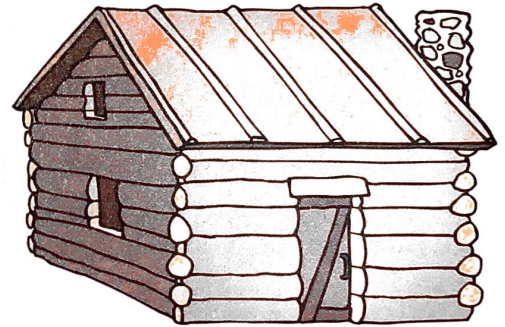
Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Long ago, people built their homes with whatever was handy. People who lived in forests built shelters out of sticks, limbs from trees, or logs cut from tree trunks. I was in a log cabin once, and it was made out of huge logs. People who lived in hot places where there were few trees made the walls of their homes out of mud. On the Plains, people cut blocks of sod and stacked them up to make the walls of their houses. People who lived in cold, snowy lands learned to dig into a snow bank or to build a house out of blocks of snow.



Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Lesson 4 The Writing Process

Good writers follow a plan when they write. They take certain steps that make up the writing process. Following these five steps leads to better writing.

Step 1: Prewrite

This is the time to discover and plan. Writers might choose a topic, or they might list everything they know about a topic already chosen. They might write down what they need to learn about a topic. Writers might make lists that contain complete sentences or just words. Some writers might begin to put their ideas in order by making a chart or diagram.

Step 2: Draft

Writers put their ideas on paper. This first draft should contain ideas that are written in sentences and organized in paragraphs. Good writers keep their prewriting ideas nearby. There will be mistakes in this draft, and that's okay.

Step 3: Revise

Writers change or fix their first draft. They move ideas around, put them in a different order, or add information. They make sure they used clear words that really show what they mean. This is also the time to take out ideas that are not on topic.

Step 4: Proofread

Writers usually write a neat, new copy. Then, they look again to make sure everything is correct. They look especially for capital letters, end marks, and words that are not spelled correctly.

Step 5: Publish

Finally, writers make a final copy that has no mistakes. They are now ready to share their writing. There are many ways for writers to publish their work.

Lesson 4 The Writing Process

Pam used the writing process to write a paragraph about a fantastic vacation. Her writing steps, below, are out of order. Label each step with a number and the name of the step.

Step ____: _____

The most exiting vacation spot I can think of is the South pole. I think it would be very cool to learn how to make an igloo. Then, of course, I would sleep in it. I would use lots of blankets. I would wake up cook pancakes over a little fire right there in the igloo. Just to stay in touch, I would take along my own person satellite and laptop so I could send daily reports by e-mail.

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Step ____: _____

South Pole vacation

igloo

lots of blankets

fire for cooking

satellite

Step ____: _____

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Lesson 5 Purposes for Writing

When you are in school, many of the things you write are school assignments. You write them because your teacher has asked you to do so. Beyond completing a school assignment, though, there are several basic purposes, or reasons, for writing. Generally, they are:

- to entertain
- to persuade
- to explain
- to inform

Writers use many **forms** of writing, such as friendly letters, reports, news articles, book reviews, and poems. Here are the purposes for writing, along with the forms of writing that writers can use.

Purpose for Writing	Forms of Writing
To entertain	stories, poems, plays, personal accounts or narratives, humorous articles or essays, friendly letters
To persuade	letters to the editor, business letters
To explain	how-to instructions, eyewitness accounts
To inform	reports, news articles, book reviews, friendly or business letters

Writers may combine purposes in one form of writing. For example, a writer may both inform and persuade in an article about the importance of saving the rainforests.

Below is a list of written products. Write what you think the purpose of each item was—to entertain, persuade, explain, or inform.

Written Product

Purpose for Writing

instructions for planting seeds

a letter to the editor about an upcoming election

a retold fairy tale

an article about the school play

Lesson 6 Audience

When a band performs a concert, an audience listens. The band director chooses music that the audience will enjoy. For example, the band would not play very serious music for an audience of children. Likewise, they would not play "Mary Had a Little Lamb" for a group of college students.



After a writer writes, the audience reads. A writer needs to think just like a band director does. Consider these questions:

What will my audience enjoy?
 What are they interested in?
 What will make them want to keep on reading (or listening)?
 What do they already know?
 What will they understand?

In addition to thinking about why you are writing, you must think about your audience. Like the band director, you do not want to present something that's too serious for your audience. You also do not want to present something that is too simple.

Here is a paragraph about planting trees. A man who owns a tree nursery wrote it for a group of young children. He forgot to think about his audience. Read the paragraph. Then, ask yourself the five questions above and write how the paragraph should be changed to meet the needs of the audience. Suggest specific changes.

Dig a hole twice the width of the tree's root ball. The depth should be about the same as the root ball. Put in the appropriate fertilizer or soil supplements. Set the tree in the hole. Have someone support the tree while another person backfills the hole. Mulch to within two inches of the trunk. Water thoroughly.

Lesson 7 Write a Paragraph

Here is what you know about paragraphs.

- A paragraph is a group of sentences that are all about the same topic.
- Each sentence in a paragraph tells about, or supports, the paragraph's topic. In other words, each sentence stays on topic.
- The main idea of a paragraph is what the paragraph is all about.
- A paragraph's main idea is usually stated in a topic sentence. The topic sentence may fall anywhere in the paragraph, but is often the first or last sentence.
- The first line of a paragraph is indented.
- Writers must consider the audience for which they are writing.

Your teachers want to hear your opinion about the best part of school. Maybe you think it is the kids, teachers, computer lab, or the new football field. Complete the topic sentence below. Then, list some reasons for your choice.

The best thing about my school is _____

Reasons:

Review your list. Think about the order in which you want to present your reasons in a paragraph. Then, draft a paragraph about what you think is the best part of your school.

Lesson 7 Write a Paragraph

Read through your paragraph. Ask yourself the questions below. Make changes to your paragraph and rewrite it below.

Questions to Ask About a Paragraph

- Does the topic sentence express the main idea?**
- Does each sentence support the topic sentence?**
- Does each sentence express a complete thought?**
- Are the ideas, words, and language appropriate for the audience?**
- Is the first line indented?**

Now that you have thought about the content, or meaning, of your paragraph, proofread it for errors. Read the sentences several times, looking for a certain kind of error each time. Use this checklist.

- Each sentence begins with a capital letter.
- Each sentence ends with the correct punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point).
- Each sentence states a complete thought.
- All words are spelled correctly. (If you're not sure, check a dictionary.)

Now, rewrite your paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Use your neatest handwriting and make sure there are no errors in the final copy.