

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Main Idea Strategy Student Folder

Goal(s):

1. I will improve my ability to figure out the main ideas and details in a text in order to better understand what I read.

My teacher's commitment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

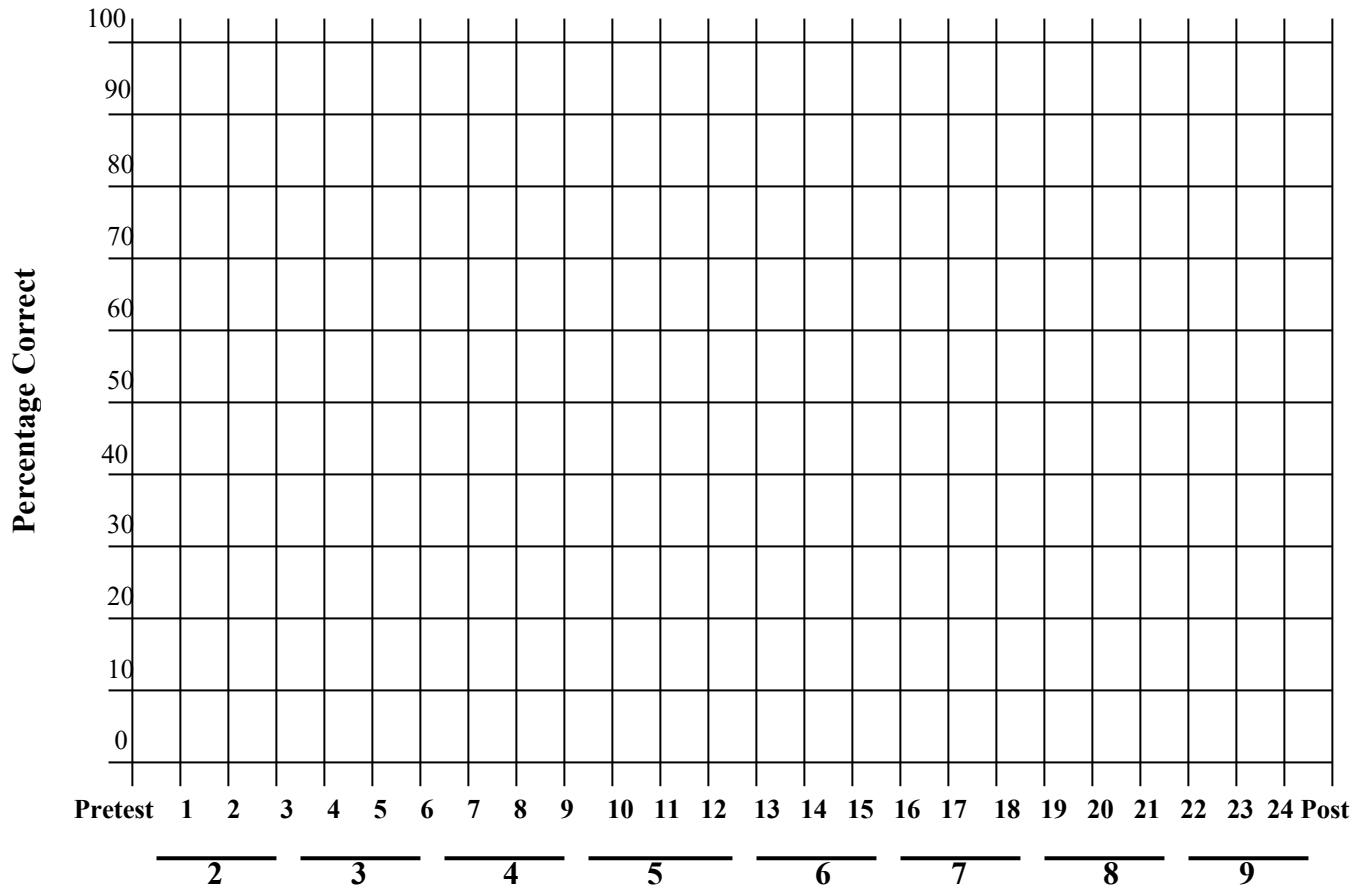
My commitment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Main Idea Strategy Progress Chart



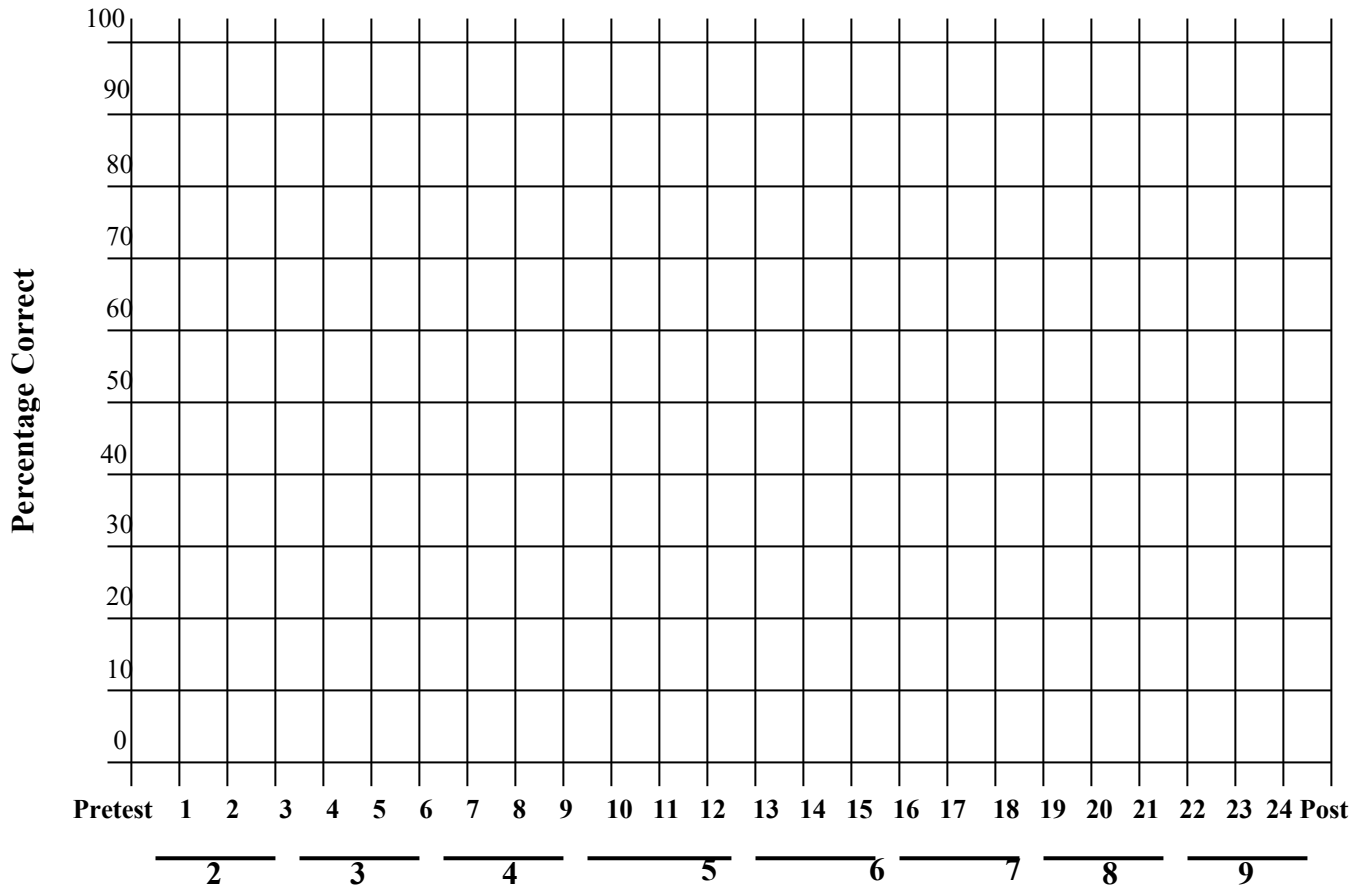
Key	
●	= Essential Details
○	= Main Ideas
★	= Comprehension

**Controlled Practice Attempts**

**Readability Level**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Main Idea Strategy Progress Chart



**Key**

- = Essential Details
- = Main Ideas
- ★ = Comprehension

**Grade-Level Practice Attempts**

**Readability Level**

## Teaching Resource 1: Student copy

## Critical Definitions

- **The Topic**
  - ✓ Is what the paragraph or passage is about
  - ✓ Is the subject of the paragraph or passage
  - ✓ Typically is made up of only one or two words
  
- **The Details**
  - ✓ Are specific or particular pieces of information about the Topic
  - ✓ Make points about the Topic
  - ✓ Explain or elaborate on the Topic
  - ✓ Include two types: *Essential* and *Clarifying* Details
  
- **The Essential Details**
  - ✓ Provide critical, key, or fundamental information about the Topic
  - ✓ Are needed for understanding the Main Idea
  - ✓ Represent the most important “stuff” in a paragraph or passage
  
- **The Clarifying Details**
  - ✓ Provide further elaboration or explanation of Essential Details
  - ✓ Are not necessary for understanding the Main Idea
  - ✓ Represent the “fluff” in a paragraph or passage
  
- **The Main Idea**
  - ✓ Summarizes the Essential Details
  - ✓ Mentions the topic
  - ✓ Is a “gist” statement about the Topic
  - ✓ Answers the question: “What is the big idea or point being made about the Topic?”
  - ✓ Could be used as a title or heading of a paragraph or passage
  - ✓ May be literal or inferred

## Teaching Resource 2a

**What is This All About?**

Lion  
 Orange  
 Fish  
 Cherry  
 Chevrolet  
 Horse  
 Ford  
 GMC  
 Banana  
 Zebra  
 Apple  
 Volkswagen  
 Lemon  
 Dodge  
 Frog

## Teaching Resource 2b

## What's the Topic?

## What's the Main Idea?

Lions are large animals.

Lions have big teeth.

Lions are predators.

## Teaching Resource 2b

- What subject is mentioned more than once?
- What's this all about?
- What's the **topic**?
  
- How do these sentences go together?
- What is the author saying about the topic *between the lines*?
- Do these sentences give us *examples* or *characteristics* of an important point about the topic?
- What is the *big idea* or point made in these sentences?
- What's the **main idea**?

## Teaching Resource 2c

## Which Sentences are Essential Details?

## Which Sentences are Clarifying Details?

Lions are large animals. They often weigh over 800 pounds. Lions also have large teeth. They use them effectively to kill and eat other large animals for survival. Lions are often called predators. They typically will stalk and find live prey.

Teaching Resource 3

# **The Main Idea Strategy**

**M**ake the Topic known

**A**ccent at least two Essential Details

**I**nk out the Clarifying Details

**N**otice how the Essential Details are related

**I**nfer the Main Idea

## Teaching Resource 4a

## **What Makes a Good Paraphrase? (Characteristics)**

- 1. Must be totally accurate and include all the important information (must be complete)**
- 2. Must have differently worded information (yours!)**
  - uses synonyms**
  - may take more words to say something differently**
- 3. Must contain useful and relevant information**
- 4. Must be specific and clear**
- 5. Is NOT a definition or a statement about the Topic**

Teaching Resource 4b

## Paraphrasing Practice

### Example statement:

*Teenagers visit the mall almost every Saturday.*

### Sample student paraphrases:

- ✓ Kids go to the mall.
- ✓ Went to the mall on Saturday.
- ✓ This is about teenagers.
- ✓ Adolescents often roam around the mall on the weekend.
- ✓ Teenagers went to the mall on Saturday.
- ✓ Malls are fun.
- ✓ Teenagers have visited the mall almost every single Saturday.
- ✓ I don't know.
- ✓ Most Saturdays, adolescents can be found at the mall.
- ✓ Teenagers buy stuff at the mall all the time.



**Demonstration Passage****The Director**

**Lights, camera, action! Have you ever wanted to be behind the scenes of a movie? The director of a movie is the talented person who runs the making of a film. Her/his job is to turn the words of a script into pictures on the screen. The director is often not seen, but s/he plays a very important role in the filming of a movie. The director has a team of actors, photographers, writers, and editors.**

**Make believe you're being considered to direct a Hollywood film. As you read through a script, you must think about how it might look on screen. You should try to see the characters come to life. You picture the lighting and hear the sound. The director must feel strongly about a soon-to-be film. Feeling in touch with and loyal to the story will help her/him do her/his best work. There's a very large amount of work ahead.**

**Do you have any idea of how many people are involved in making a movie? The set designer makes sure that the visual details are correct and that the style and time of the film reflect the director's wishes. The director of photography helps to bring the director's ideas to film, scene by scene. Her/his job is to come up with and catch the images that best tell the story. In the end, a director must pick actors that are able to bring the story to life.**

**Once filming begins, the director needs to communicate a vision of the film to the actors and crew. The director must be able to solve problems that come up. Usually, s/he will be able to finish filming three minutes of screen time per day. Once the shoot is over, hundreds of thousands of feet of film need to be assembled into a clear story. The "director's cut" of the film may not be the final one the audience sees. Editing is then needed to bring a director's ideas to life.**

**The most exciting part of filming a movie is seeing it on the big screen. The director is not the only one who can enjoy it. This is his time to share his work with the public. Will it make people laugh, cry, hide their eyes, or do all three? Only time will tell, and there is no way to predict an audience's reaction. In the end, a director is able to sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.**

409/6.3

Adapted from: Annenberg/CBP. <http://www.learner.org/exhibits/cinema/directing.html> Used with permission.

# Verbal Practice Checklist

Student Names

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## I. Critical Definitions

1. What is a TOPIC?					
2. What is the difference between an ESSENTIAL Detail and a CLARIFYING Detail?					
3. What is a MAIN IDEA?					
4. What is the difference between a LITERAL Main Idea and an INFERRED Main Idea?					

## II. Steps to Find an Inferred Main Idea

1. Make the Topic known					
2. Accent at least two Essential Details					
3. Ink out the Clarifying Details					
4. Notice how the Essential Details are related					
5. Infer the Main Idea					

## III. Characteristics of a Good Paraphrase

1. Must be totally accurate and include all the important information (complete)					
2. Must have differently worded information (uses synonyms or takes more words)					
3. Must contain useful and relevant information					
4. Must be specific and clear					
5. Is NOT a definition or topic statement					

# Main Ideas and Essential Details Score Sheet

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pretest \_\_\_\_\_ Posttest \_\_\_\_\_ Practice # \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Practice \_\_\_\_\_

## Highlighted Essential Details

	Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3	Paragraph 4	Paragraph 5
Essential Detail 1					
Essential Detail 2					

Total Essential Details Points = \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Total Possible Points = 10

## Paraphrased Main Ideas

	Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3	Paragraph 4	Paragraph 5
Correct					
<b>Incorrect because:</b>					
Not accurate or complete					
Not in own words					
Not useful or relevant					
Too general or unclear					
Too much information					

Total Main Idea Points = \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Total Possible Points = 5

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Passage #1

## Mr. Plain

John Plain woke up every morning at six. He'd wake up, get his wife up, and check on the dog. Everyday, they'd eat plain cereal with skim milk. Monday through Friday, Mr. Plain wore clean white shirts without a speck. He'd wear the same type of pants too. Mr. Plain brushed his teeth for exactly two minutes. On the way to work, he'd pick up some coffee. Mr. Plain had a good life.

One day, John Plain started to think. He thought of what he could do. He thought about what he should not do. He thought about getting a tattoo. His wife said, "It's not for you." Should he quit his job? No, he couldn't be a slob. Long hair in the back? Not unless he wanted to live alone in a shack? What could he do?

Then an idea came to his mind. This was an idea that nobody would mind! He decided not to shave. That was like his friend Dave. But John wanted more. Simple hair would be a bore! He didn't shave the next night. He didn't shave for many a night! The hair grew and it grew. It covered his lip, and it would not quit.

Weeks went by. Mr. Plain did not trim the hair above his lip. It curled down his chest. Some people thought he was lazy. Some thought he was a little crazy! His wife started to frown. "Good Grief," his wife said. "Please cut that mustache. It will be a relief." She said that very, very loud.

A year went by. Mr. Plain had more friends at work. He was pretty funny. It wasn't all about the mustache. He was just pretty funny! The mustache was four feet long. Mr. Plain said it was long enough! He decided to get it cut. His life was less boring. He had learned a lot. He could be interesting on his own. He did not need a device.