

Main idea and details

The **main idea** is what a story or article is all about. Often, one sentence tells you what the main idea is. The other sentences have **details** that give you more information about the main idea.

Read the paragraph about balloons.
Think about the main idea.

What's inside a balloon?

by Deborah Kekewich

Most balloons are filled with gas. The air around us is made up of gases. The air that you blow into a balloon is also made of gases.



Which sentence is the main idea of the paragraph?

- Most balloons are filled with gas.
- The air that you blow into a balloon is also made of gases.

Tick the sentences that give details about the main idea.

- Most balloons are filled with gas.
- The air around us is made up of gases.
- The air that you blow into a balloon is also made of gases.

Tip

The main idea is often in the first sentence of a paragraph.



Read these paragraphs about science balloons. Think about the main idea in each paragraph.

★ SCIENCE BALLOONS ★

by Deborah Kekewich

Balloons can help scientists find out more about the world around us. Some scientists use balloons to study the weather. Others use them to study space.

Science balloons can float very high. Some have travelled more than 30 kilometres up into the Earth's atmosphere. That's higher than most aeroplanes fly.

Weather balloons help scientists predict the weather. They carry instruments that collect facts about temperature and other weather information. Throughout the world, about 900 weather centres send up these kinds of balloons each day. Most weather balloons are filled with a gas called *helium*.



This science balloon is being sent up near Alice Springs in central Australia.

Understanding the text

- 1 Use your own words to explain how balloons help scientists.

- 2 What are most weather balloons filled with?

Developing comprehension skills

- 3 What is the main idea of the first paragraph?

- Some scientists use balloons to study the weather.
- Others use them to study space.
- Balloons can help scientists find out more about the world around us.

- 4 What is the main idea of the second paragraph?

- Some have travelled more than 30 kilometres up into the Earth's atmosphere.
- Science balloons can float very high.
- That's higher than most aeroplanes fly.

5 Look at the third paragraph. In each box, write a detail that gives more information about the main idea of the paragraph.

Main idea

Weather balloons help scientists predict the weather.

Detail

Detail


Working with words

Write the word from the box that matches each clue.

carry Earth higher most scientist

- 6 nearly all of something _____
- 7 someone who studies the world _____
- 8 where we all live _____
- 9 opposite of *lower* _____
- 10 to pick up and move _____

Making the reading and writing connection

 **Writing a paragraph that describes**
Write a paragraph about something you do to help you learn new things. The first sentence should give the main idea. The other sentences should give details about the main idea.

Drawing conclusions

Authors don't always tell you everything in a story or an article. Sometimes you have to use clues to work things out by yourself. The clues might be in the pictures or the words.

Read about beekeepers. Use the word and picture clues and think about what you already know.

Beekeepers

by Jane Manners

Beekeepers wear special clothes when they work near bees. They wear a bee suit, a hood and gloves. The clothes help keep them safe from bee stings.



Beekeepers stop bees getting up their trouser legs by

- wearing thick socks.
- wearing special shoes.
- putting bands around their legs.

Tip

You can also work things out by thinking about what you already know.

Which clues helped you work out the answer to this question?

- the words
- the pictures



Read more about beekeepers.
Think about what the author tells
you and what you already know.

The beekeeper



by Jane Manners

Eva is busy all year. In the winter she feeds the bees sugar-water and honey.

In the spring Eva checks the hives. She makes sure each hive is clean.

In the summer Eva makes sure the bees are near water. Water cools the bees.

In the summer Eva's bees are busy, too. They bring nectar and pollen back to the hive. There they turn the nectar into honey.

In the autumn Eva collects the honey.

Eva sells the honey the bees make. She also uses the honey to bake bread.



Meet Eva Prieto



Understanding the text

1 When do you think Eva is busiest?

2 Would you like to be a beekeeper? Why or why not?

Developing comprehension skills

3 What is Eva's job?

cleaner

beekeeper

teacher

4 When does Eva clean the hives?

winter

spring

summer

5 When do the bees make honey?

winter

spring

summer

6 Eva moves the bees close to the water when

it is hot.

she is busy.

it is cold.

7 How many hives does Eva have?

- one two more than two

8 How did you work out the answer to question 7?

- I used the words.
 I used the picture.
 I thought about what I already know.

Working with words

Write a word from the box to answer each question.

clean

gloves

honey

sting

summer

- 9 Which season comes after spring? _____
- 10 What do bees make? _____
- 11 What do you wear on your hands? _____
- 12 What is the opposite of *dirty*? _____
- 13 What is a bite from a bee called? _____

Making
the reading
and writing
connection



Writing a list

Make a list of five things that you do in the summertime.



Sequence: order of events

Things that happen in a story follow a certain **order**. As you read, think about what happens first, next and last. Knowing the order helps you understand and remember the story. Words such as *first*, *next*, *last* and *then* can give you clues about the order that things happen.

Read about Cindy's day. Think about what happens first, next and last.

Today I had a very bad day! First, I was late for school. Then, during recess, I fell off the monkey bars. I didn't really hurt myself but Mrs King made me sit quietly on a bench until the bell. After lunch we had art, which is always fun, but I glued my fingers together. Now my fingers smell of the horrible stuff Mr Henry used to get them apart.



Write **1**, **2**, **3** and **4** on the lines to show the order that things happened.

Cindy had to sit quietly on the bench. _____

Cindy was late for school. _____

Cindy's fingers smell awful! _____

Cindy had art. _____

Tip

When you read a story, think about the order that things happen in. Look for clue words that can help you.



Read the story. Think about the order that things happen in.



The birthday cake!



by Cheryl Chapman

Matt was making a birthday cake for a special friend. Dad helped him take the cake out of the oven. They put it on the table to cool.

'Now that the cake is done, I need your help raking leaves,' Dad said.

Matt and his dad went outside. They raked the leaves into piles. Then they put the piles into big black bags. They worked for a long time.

When Matt came back inside, the cake was gone. He could see the pan. It had crumbs in it. Where was the cake? He looked all around.

At last he saw Dusty. Dusty's nose had crumbs on it, too.

Matt laughed. 'Happy birthday, you silly puppy!' he said. 'You ate up all your cake, but you are still my special friend.'



Understanding the text

1 How did Matt know that Dusty had eaten the cake?

2 How would you celebrate a puppy's birthday?

Developing comprehension skills

3 Write **1**, **2**, **3**, **4** and **5** on the lines to show the order in which things happened.

Matt saw crumbs on Dusty's nose. _____

Matt and his dad made a birthday cake. _____

Matt realised that Dusty had eaten the cake. _____

Matt saw that the cake had gone. _____

Matt and his dad raked leaves. _____

4 What happened before Matt and his dad went into the garden?

They put the cake in the oven.

They saw that the cake was gone.

They put the cake on the table to cool.

5 What happened at the end of the story?

- Matt gave Dusty a hug.
- Matt made another cake.
- Dusty got into trouble for eating the cake.

Working with words

Write the word from the box that matches each clue.

crumbs

friend

important

inside

quietly

6 opposite of *outside* _____

7 small pieces of cake or bread _____

8 not making any noise _____

9 favourite, special _____

10 a person you like _____

Making
the reading
and writing
connection



Writing an all-about-me story

Write a story about something funny that happened to you. Use words such as *first*, *next* and *last* to show the order that things happened.

