

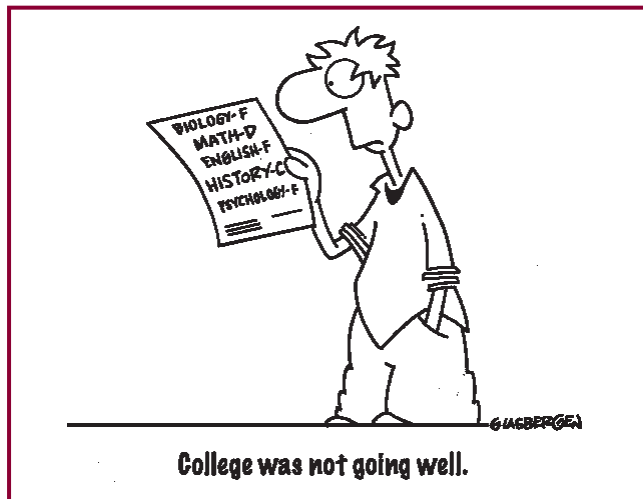
4

Main Ideas

THIS CHAPTER IN A NUTSHELL

- Recognizing a writer's **main idea**, or point, is the most important reading skill.
- Learn to think as you read by asking yourself, "What is the writer's point?"
- The main idea is a general idea supported by specific ideas and details.

WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA?



“What’s the point?” People ask this question when they want to know what idea is being presented. Sometimes a main idea is clear right away, as in the cartoon above. What is the point of the cartoon?

Explanation:

The main idea is that “College was not going well.” The support for the main idea is the list of specific grades showing on the student’s grade report.

When you read, get in the habit of asking “What is the main point the writer is trying to make?” Recognizing the **main idea**, or point, is the most important key to better reading.

☑ Check Your Understanding

For example, read the following paragraph, asking yourself as you do, “What is the writer’s point?”

¹Certain basic fears are part of our lives. ²For one thing, we fear being disrespected. ³Bullies play on this fear. ⁴They cruelly tease their victims and take away their self-respect. ⁵And we feel hurt and disrespected when someone doesn’t return our phone calls or walks past us without saying hello. ⁶Another of our deepest fears is being alone. ⁷No matter how tough we act, we know that the poet who wrote “No man is an island” was telling the truth. ⁸We need each other. ⁹Not having other people in our lives makes us feel empty inside. ¹⁰A third basic fear is of growing old. ¹¹Every year, Americans use plastic surgery to try to turn back the clock. ¹²And our magazines and TV shows and movies are full of beautiful young people. ¹³We do not want to be reminded that the clock keeps ticking.

Here is a good two-step way to find a writer’s point, or main idea:

- 1** Look for a general statement.
- 2** Decide if that statement is supported by most of the other material in the paragraph. If it is, you have found the main idea.

Below are four statements from the passage about basic fears. Pick out the general statement that is supported by the other material in the passage. Write the letter of that statement in the space provided. Then read the explanation that follows.

Four statements from the passage:

- A. We fear being disrespected.
- B. Another of our deepest fears is being alone.
- C. A third basic fear is of growing old.
- D. Certain basic fears are part of our lives.

The general statement that expresses the main idea of the passage is: _____

Explanation:

Sentences A, B, and C all refer to specific fears that we have in life: being disrespected, being alone, and growing old. Only sentence D is a general statement that covers all of the specific fears described in the paragraph. Sentence D, then, is the sentence that expresses the main idea of the passage.

The Main Idea as an “Umbrella” Idea

Think of the main idea as an “umbrella” idea. The main idea is the writer’s general point. The other material of the paragraph fits under the general point. That other material is made up of specific supporting details—evidence such as examples, reasons, or facts. The diagram below shows the relationship:



The explanations and activities on the following pages will deepen your understanding of the main idea.

GENERAL VERSUS SPECIFIC IDEAS

You saw in the paragraph on basic fears that the main idea is a *general* idea that is supported by *specific* ideas. To improve your skill at finding main ideas, then, it will be helpful to practice separating general from specific ideas.

Check Your Understanding

See if you can do the following brief exercises. Then read the explanation that follows.

1. *Fish* is a general term. Write the names of three specific kinds of fish.

2. *Countries* is a general term. Write the names of three specific countries.

3. *Household chores* is a general term. Write three specific chores you sometimes have to do in your house or apartment.

4. Finally, *a bad day* is a general term. Write three specific reasons why you might say, "Today was a really bad day for me."

Explanation:

Three specific kinds of fish might be flounder, salmon, and tuna. Three specific countries might be the United States, Mexico, and Korea. Three specific chores might be preparing a meal, washing dishes, and taking out the trash. Finally, three specific reasons for a bad day might be "My cat died," "I came down with a cold," and "I missed the bus and was late for class."

Now do the practices that follow, which will give you more experience in telling the difference between general and specific ideas.

➤ Practice 1

Each cluster of words below consists of one general idea and four specific ideas. The general idea includes all the specific ideas. Identify each general idea with a **G** and the specific ideas with an **S**. Look first at the example.

Example **S** anger
 S love
 S fear
 G emotion
 S envy

(*Emotion* is the general idea because it includes anger, love, fear, and envy, which are specific kinds of emotions.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. ___ goldfish
___ parakeet
___ pet
___ dog
___ cat | 6. ___ sleeping bag
___ sheet
___ pillow
___ blanket
___ bedding |
| 2. ___ square
___ circle
___ triangle
___ shape
___ diamond | 7. ___ “hello”
___ greeting
___ a wave
___ “hi”
___ open arms |
| 3. ___ up
___ down
___ direction
___ sideways
___ north | 8. ___ screech
___ noise
___ crash
___ off-key music
___ sirens |
| 4. ___ soda
___ beer
___ orange juice
___ beverage
___ water | 9. ___ jump
___ command
___ stop
___ move
___ sit down |
| 5. ___ high-risk job
___ astronaut
___ firefighter
___ policeman
___ miner | 10. ___ jail
___ hanging
___ suspension
___ fine
___ punishment |

➤ Practice 2

In each item below, one idea is general and one is specific. The general idea includes the specific idea. In the spaces provided, write two more specific ideas that are covered by the general idea.

Example *General idea:* containers
 Specific ideas: box, can , bottle

(*Containers* is the general idea; *box* is a specific kind of container. *Can* and *bottle* are also specific kinds of containers.)

1. *General idea:* movie stars
 Specific ideas: Denzel Washington, _____, _____
2. *General idea:* wild animals
 Specific ideas: gorilla, _____, _____
3. *General idea:* furniture
 Specific ideas: rocking chair, _____, _____
4. *General idea:* desserts
 Specific ideas: ice cream, _____, _____
5. *General idea:* U.S. cities
 Specific ideas: Los Angeles, _____, _____
6. *General idea:* holidays
 Specific ideas: Thanksgiving, _____, _____
7. *General idea:* ball games
 Specific ideas: baseball, _____, _____
8. *General idea:* birds
 Specific ideas: hawk, _____, _____
9. *General idea:* vegetables
 Specific ideas: spinach, _____, _____
10. *General idea:* planets
 Specific ideas: Earth, _____, _____

Note: You will have more practice with general and specific ideas in “The Basics of Argument” on pages 303–320.

THE TOPIC AND MAIN IDEA

To find the main idea of a selection, you can look first for a general statement. If that statement is supported by most of the other material in the selection, you've found the main idea. Another approach to finding the main idea is to look for the topic of the selection.

The **topic** is the general subject of a selection. It can often be expressed in several words. Recognizing the topic can lead you to the writer's main point about that topic. To find the topic of a selection, ask this simple question:

Who or what is the selection about?

Then, to find the main idea, ask:

What is the main point being made about the topic?

Check Your Understanding

For example, read the paragraph below and see if you can answer the questions that follow.

¹Spanking is a bad idea. ²First of all, think about the lesson that a child learns when he is spanked. ³He learns that physical violence is a way to deal with a problem. ⁴Spanking tells him that bigger, stronger people are allowed to hit smaller, weaker people. ⁵Secondly, a spanking often has more to do with a parent's emotions than with the child's behavior. ⁶Parents under stress may spank a child to ease their own problems and frustrations. ⁷And finally, spanking is just not effective discipline. ⁸Children should be taught through careful and consistent explanations to behave in a certain way. ⁹They will develop better self-control than children who behave only to avoid getting hit.

- _____ 1. Write the letter of the *topic* of the paragraph. To find the topic, ask yourself what the paragraph is about.
 - A. Spanking
 - B. Lessons
 - C. Children's behavior

- _____ 2. Write the number of the sentence that states the *main idea* of the paragraph. In other words, what point is the writer making about the topic? (Remember that the main idea will be supported by the other material in the paragraph.)

Explanation:

As the first sentence of the paragraph suggests, the topic is “spanking.” Continuing to read the paragraph, you see that, in fact, everything in it is about spanking. And the main idea is clearly sentence 1: “Spanking is a bad idea.” This is a general idea that sums up what the entire paragraph is about. It is the “umbrella” statement under which all the other material in the paragraph fits. The parts of the paragraph could be shown as follows:

Topic: Spanking

Main idea: Spanking is a bad idea.

Supporting details:

1. Spanking teaches physical violence.
2. Spanking often has more to do with the parent than with the child.
3. Spanking is not effective discipline.

The following practices will sharpen your sense of the difference between a topic, the point about the topic (the main idea), and the supporting details.

➤ Practice 3

Below are groups of four items. In each case, one item is the topic, one is the main idea, and two are details that support and develop the main idea. Label each item with one of the following:

T — for the **topic** of the paragraph

MI — for the **main idea**

SD — for the **supporting details**

Note that an explanation is provided for the first group; reading it will help you do this practice.

Group 1

- _____ A. Binge buyers go shopping on a regular basis to buy huge numbers of things.
- _____ B. Daily shoppers cannot miss a single day at the stores or on online shopping sites.
- _____ C. Shopping addicts.
- _____ D. There are two types of shopping addicts.

Explanation:

All of the statements in Group 1 involve shopping addicts, so item C must be the topic. (A topic is expressed in a single word or short phrase and is not a complete sentence.) Statements A and B each describe one specific type of shopping addict. Statement D is a general statement: that there are two types of shopping addicts. Therefore, it is the main idea.

Group 2

- _____ A. Headaches can be caused by changes in the supply of blood to the head.
- _____ B. Headaches can result from muscle tension.
- _____ C. Headaches can have two main causes.
- _____ D. Causes of headaches.

Group 3

- _____ A. Remedies for too much sun.
- _____ B. You can soothe a case of sunburn by spreading plain yogurt over the burnt area for ten minutes.
- _____ C. Several remedies for too much sun can be found in your kitchen.
- _____ D. If your eyes have been irritated by the sun, cover them for five minutes with chilled tea bags or a paper towel soaked in milk.

Group 4

- _____ A. Drinking excessively can lead to problems other than alcoholism.
- _____ B. Excessive drinking.
- _____ C. People who drink too much often develop liver disease.
- _____ D. Damage to brain cells results from heavy drinking.

➤ Practice 4

Following are four paragraphs. Read each paragraph and then choose what you think are the correct topic and main idea for that paragraph.

Here is how to proceed:

- 1 Ask yourself, “What seems to be the topic of the paragraph?” (It often helps to look for and even circle a word or idea that is repeated in the paragraph.)

Hint: When looking for the topic, make sure you do not pick one that is either **too broad** (covering a great deal more than is in the selection) or **too narrow** (covering only part of the selection). The topic and the main idea of a selection must include everything in that selection—no more and no less.

- 2 Next, ask yourself, “What point is the writer making about this topic?” This will be the main idea. In this practice, it is stated in one of the sentences in the paragraph.
- 3 Then test what you think is the main idea by asking, “Is this statement supported by all or most of the other material in the paragraph?”

Paragraph 1

¹Male and female children are sometimes treated and viewed differently from birth on. ²First, boys get a blue blanket and girls get pink. ³Also, although more male than female babies fall ill, studies say a number of parents are more likely to consider a baby strong if it is male. ⁴Similarly, such parents urge boys to take part in rough-and-tumble play. ⁵But these parents prefer that girls watch and talk rather than be physically active. ⁶When questioned, the parents say they want their sons to be successful and independent, and they want their daughters to be loving and well-behaved.

- _____ 1. The topic of the paragraph is
 - A. males and females.
 - B. male and female children.
 - C. childhood illness.
- _____ 2. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 2

¹An enlarged heart can be a sign that the heart is having trouble pumping blood. ²This condition could be caused by a bad heart valve or by high blood pressure. ³An enlarged heart could also be caused by a high level of exercise. ⁴Athletes such as long-distance runners frequently have larger than average hearts. ⁵However, their hearts operate at a high rate of efficiency. ⁶An enlarged heart, then, can be a sign of bad health or good health.

- _____ 3. The topic of the paragraph is
- A. pumping blood.
 - B. athletes and their hearts.
 - C. an enlarged heart.
- _____ 4. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 3

¹Researchers who do surveys depend on what people tell them. ²People who are surveyed, however, sometimes lie. ³In one survey, for instance, people were asked if they used seat belts. ⁴Later, researchers checked to see how many people really did use their seat belts. ⁵It turned out that almost 40 percent of those who said they buckled up did not. ⁶Also, researchers once asked people about their smoking habits. ⁷Then they tested the people's saliva to find a chemical that is found in the mouths of smokers. ⁸The tests showed that 6 percent of the women and 8 percent of the men had lied about smoking.

- _____ 5. The topic of the paragraph is
- A. researchers.
 - B. people who are surveyed.
 - C. people who are surveyed about smoking.
- _____ 6. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 4

¹As you speak with someone, you can gather clues as to whether he or she understands you. ²Then you can adjust what you say accordingly. ³But when you write, you must try to predict the reader's reactions without such clues. ⁴You also have to give stronger evidence in writing than in conversation. ⁵A friend may accept an unsupported statement such as "My boss is awful." ⁶But in most writing, the reader would expect you to back up such a statement with proof. ⁷Obviously, effective writing requires more attention to detail than everyday conversation does.

- _____ 7. The topic is
- A. proof.
 - B. conversation.
 - C. effective writing versus conversation.
- _____ 8. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

A Note on the Central Point

In selections made up of many paragraphs, the overall main idea is called the **central point**. You can find a central point in the same way that you find a main idea. First, identify the topic (which is often suggested by the title of the selection). Then look at the supporting material. The paragraphs within the longer reading will provide supporting details for the central point.

CHAPTER REVIEW

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- The main idea is the key to good comprehension. The main idea is a general "umbrella" idea. The specific details of a passage fit under it.
- To find the main idea, look for a general statement that is supported by specific details in a passage.
- The topic—the general subject of a selection—can also help lead you to the main idea. Ask yourself, "What point is being made about the topic?"

The next chapter—Chapter 5—will increase your understanding of the specific details that writers use to support and develop their main ideas.



On the Web: If you are using this book in class, you can visit our website for additional practice in recognizing main ideas. Go to www.townsendpress.com and click on “Online Exercises.”

► Review Test 1

To review what you’ve learned in this chapter, answer each of the following questions by filling in the blank or writing the letter of the correct answer.

1. The supporting details are always more (*general or specific?*) _____ than the main idea.
2. The umbrella statement that covers all of the material in a paragraph is the (*topic or main idea?*) _____.
3. To help yourself find the (*topic or main idea*) _____ of a paragraph, ask yourself, “Who or what is this paragraph about?”
- _____ 4. TRUE OR FALSE? To help you decide if a certain sentence is the main idea of a paragraph, ask yourself, “Is this sentence supported by all or most of the other material in the paragraph?”

► Review Test 2

- A.** Each group of words below consists of one general idea and four specific ideas. The general idea includes all the specific ideas. Underline the general idea in each group.

- | | | | | |
|------------|----------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. uncle | sister | relative | cousin | grandmother |
| 2. vanilla | flavor | chocolate | strawberry | butterscotch |
| 3. poker | baseball | hide and seek | game | Monopoly |
| 4. sandals | boots | sneakers | footwear | high heels |

- B.** In each item below, one idea is general and one is specific. In the spaces provided, write two more specific ideas that are covered by the general idea.

5–6. *General idea:* means of transportation

Specific ideas: train, _____, _____

7–8. *General idea:* musical instruments

Specific ideas: guitar, _____, _____

- C. (9–16.) Below are groups of four items. In each case, one item is the topic, one is the main idea, and two are details that support and develop the main idea. Label each item with one of the following:

T — for the **topic** of the paragraph

MI — for the **main idea**

SD — for the **supporting details**

Group 1

- _____ A. Single children have their problems.
 _____ B. Single children have little privacy from their parents.
 _____ C. Single children.
 _____ D. Single children can be lonely without the companionship of brothers and sisters.

Group 2

- _____ A. Television can be educational, with news programs and nature shows.
 _____ B. Television is relaxing and entertaining after a stressful day.
 _____ C. Television has its good points.
 _____ D. Television.

- D. Following are two paragraphs. Read each paragraph, and then choose what you think are the correct topic and main idea for that paragraph.

Paragraph 1

¹The crocodile and a small bird called the plover have a surprisingly friendly relationship. ²A crocodile's jaws are strong, and its teeth are razor sharp. ³Yet the plover dares to step inside the croc's mouth. ⁴You see, after eating, the crocodile opens his mouth. ⁵This allows his "living toothbrush" to step in and clean uneaten food from his teeth. ⁶In return for his service, the plover gets a free meal.

- _____ 17. The topic is
 A. the crocodile's habits.
 B. the crocodile and the plover.
 C. friendly relationships between animals.
- _____ 18. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 2

¹It's well known that trees provide shade, beauty, and wind protection. ²However, there are also two lesser-known benefits of trees. ³First, trees clean the air. ⁴Their leaves actually filter out pollution in the air. ⁵One large sugar maple, for example, can remove as much pollution as is put in the air by cars burning a thousand gallons of gas. ⁶The second lesser-known benefit of trees is that they reduce stress. ⁷Experiments show that people relax more when they are shown scenes with trees than when they are shown city scenes without natural greenery.

- _____ 19. The topic is
- A. nature.
 - B. lesser-known benefits of trees.
 - C. anti-stress benefits of trees.
- _____ 20. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

► Review Test 3

Here is a chance to apply your understanding of main ideas to a full-length reading. This selection tells you about a study skill that can mean the difference between success and failure in college. Read it and then answer the questions that follow.

Words to Watch

Below are some words in the reading that do not have strong context support. Each word is followed by the number of the paragraph in which it appears and its meaning there. These words are indicated in the selection by a small circle (°).

concepts (4): ideas

vividly (4): in a clear and lively way

legible (8): easily read

global warming (11): an increase in the world's temperatures

CLASSROOM NOTETAKING

Robin White

1 How would you feel if you were forced to spend 1800 hours—the equivalent of 75 days in a row—sitting in a hard-backed chair, eyes wide open, listening to the sound of someone else’s voice? You wouldn’t be allowed to sleep, eat, or smoke. You couldn’t leave the room. To make matters worse, you’d be expected to remember every important point the speaker made, and you’d be punished for forgetting. And, to top it off, you’d have to pay many thousands of dollars for the experience.

2 Sound like a torture scene from a spy movie? Actually, it’s nothing of the kind. It’s what all college students do who take a full load of five courses for four years. Those 1800 hours are the time they’ll spend listening in class.

3 Unfortunately, many students *do* regard these hours as torture. Many of them will let their attention wander. They’ll spend a lot of time daydreaming or scribbling on the edges of their notebooks. Maybe they’ll sit in the back of the room and prepare for some other class or jot a note to a friend. Some students will reduce the pain to a minimum by not even coming to class. These students do not realize that if they don’t listen in class—and take notes—they’re putting their college life in danger.

WHY TAKE CLASS NOTES?

4 One reason you should take class notes is that the information in the classroom adds to what you might find in

textbooks. Good teachers keep up to date with their subjects and can include the latest facts and ideas in their presentations. They needn’t wait for the next edition of the book to come out. They can provide additional examples or simplify difficult concepts°, making it easier for you to master hard material. And the best teachers combine knowledge with showmanship. They can make any subject, from world history to computers, leap vividly° to life.

5 True, you say, but isn’t it good enough just to listen to these wonderful people without writing down what they say? Actually, it isn’t, which leads us to another reason for taking lecture notes. Studies have shown that after two weeks, you’ll forget 80 percent of what you heard. And you didn’t come to the lecture room just to be entertained. You came to learn. The only way to keep the material in your head is to get it down in permanent form—in the form of class notes.

HOW TO TAKE CLASS NOTES

6 There are three steps to mastering the art of taking good lecture notes: getting yourself to the classroom, taking good notes, and reviewing those notes.

Getting to Class

7 Your attitude should be, “Here I am in college. So I’ve got to go to class and learn all I can.” Remember, you’re not going to class to be bored, tortured, or entertained; you’re going there to learn. Get to class on time and get a good seat

near the front of the room. You'll hear better there and be less tempted to let your mind wander.

Taking Good Notes

- 8 When you take class notes, always use 8½" × 11" paper, preferably in a loose-leaf notebook so you can insert handouts. Write on only one side of the paper. Later, you might want to spread all your notes out in front of you. Have a pen to write with rather than a pencil, which moves more slowly across a page and is not as legible°.
- 9 Be prepared to do a good deal of writing in class. A good rule of thumb for taking notes is "When in doubt, write it down." After class, you will have time to go over your notes and make decisions about what is important enough to study and what is not. But during a lecture, you don't always have time to decide what is really important and what is not. You don't want to miss getting down a valuable idea that the instructor might not repeat later.
- 10 Be sure to *always* write down what the instructor puts on the board. If he or she takes the time to write something on the board, the material is probably important. And don't fall into the trap that some students fall into. They write down what is on the board, but nothing more. They just sit and listen while the instructor explains all the connections between those words that have been chalked on the board. Everything may be perfectly clear to a student at that moment. However, several days later, chances are that all the connecting material will be forgotten. If you write down the explanations in class, it will be much easier for you to make sense of the

material and to study it later.

As much as possible, organize your notes by starting main points at the margin. Indent secondary points under the main points, and indent examples even further. Skip lines between main sections. Wherever possible, number the points. If the instructor explains three reasons for poverty, or four results of global warming°, make sure you number each of those reasons or results. The numbers help organize the material and make it easier for you to study and remember it.

Here are some other hints for taking good classroom notes:

- **If you miss something, don't panic.** Leave space for it in your notes and keep going. Later, get the missing information from a classmate or your textbook.
- **Be alert for signals of importance.** If you get a definition with an example, that is important. If you get a numbered list of items, it is probably important. If your instructor says, "The point I am trying to make is . . . ," that point is important. Get all such things down in your notes.
- **Use abbreviations in order to save time.** Put a key for abbreviated words in the top margin of your notes. For instance, in a business class, *com* could stand for *communication*; *info* for *information*. In a psychology class, *beh* could stand for *behavior*; *mot* for *motivation*. You can also abbreviate certain common words, using a "+" for *and*, a "w/" for *with*, and an "ex" for *example*.
- **Finally, don't ignore the very beginning and end of class.** Often, instructors spend the first five minutes of a class either

reviewing material they've already covered or giving a preview of the day's lecture. The last five minutes of a class may be a summary of the important ideas covered that day. Don't spend the first five minutes of class getting your materials out and the last five minutes putting them away. If you do, you'll probably miss something important.

Reviewing Class Notes

- 17 If you have taken good notes, you're ready to really learn the material back at home.
- 18 As soon as you have time, sit down and reread your notes. Fill in anything

unclear or missing while it's still fresh in your mind. Then, in the left-hand column of each page, write a few key words and phrases from the day's notes. Cover your notes, and, using only these key words, try to recall as much of the material as you can. This review will help you remember the material and prepare for exams.

To sum all this up, be prepared to go into class and be an active notetaker. Going to class and taking good notes while you are there are keys to success in college.

Questions about the Reading

For each question, write the letter of your answer in the space provided.

- _____ 1. In the sentences below, the word *showmanship* (shō'mən-shīp) means
- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| A. dramatic skill. | C. research ability. |
| B. handwriting. | D. popularity. |
- “And the best lecturers combine knowledge with showmanship. They can make any subject, from world history to computers, leap vividly to life.” (Paragraph 4)
- _____ 2. Which subject is the topic of the entire selection?
- | |
|-------------------------|
| A. Students |
| B. Success in school |
| C. College lectures |
| D. Taking lecture notes |
- _____ 3. Which sentence expresses the selection's central point (the main idea of the entire reading)?
- | |
|---|
| A. Students can learn more from lectures than from reading textbooks. |
| B. Taking lecture notes is an important skill involving three main steps. |
| C. College lectures are more than just entertainment. |
| D. There are various ways to achieve success in school. |

- _____ 4. The main idea of paragraph 4 is stated in its
A. first sentence. C. third sentence.
B. second sentence. D. last sentence.
- _____ 5. Which sentence expresses the main idea of paragraph 18?
A. Notetaking allows you to bring a copy of the lecture home with you.
B. Always fill in the blanks in your notes as soon as class ends.
C. Completing and reviewing lecture notes soon after class will help you remember the material.
D. Reread your notes soon after class.
- _____ 6. According to the author, good teachers
A. include material in their lectures that is not found in the textbook.
B. organize their lectures so clearly that notetaking is not necessary.
C. write everything on the blackboard.
D. are careful not to say anything important at the beginning or end of class.
- _____ 7. A good general rule for taking notes is:
A. Write down only what is written on the board.
B. Listening carefully is more important than taking notes.
C. Write your notes in one big paragraph.
D. When in doubt, write it down.
- _____ 8. Which of the following is **not** recommended by the author?
A. Take notes with a pen, not a pencil.
B. Take notes on only one side of the paper.
C. Tape record your instructor's lectures.
D. Use abbreviations in your notes.
- _____ 9. From reading this selection, you can guess that
A. many students can do well in a class without taking notes.
B. even if you listen carefully, it is almost impossible to remember everything you hear in a lecture.
C. students who sit in the back row are less distracted by activity in the classroom.
D. students who take good notes do not need to read their textbooks.

- _____ 10. Which of the following statements might the author agree with?
- Good notetaking can make the difference between low and high grades.
 - Taking notes in class is not as important as listening to the lecture.
 - It is the instructor's responsibility to make sure that each student learns.
 - If you've done a good enough job taking notes, you should not have to ever review them.

Discussion Questions

- How would you rate yourself as a classroom notetaker? Would you give yourself an A, a B, a C, or a failing grade? Explain why.
- According to the reading, part of a student's preparation for classroom notetaking should be to examine his or her attitude (paragraph 7). Why do you think the author feels examining one's attitude is so important?
- Of all the advice in this selection, which three points will probably be the most helpful for you to use?

Note: Writing assignments for this selection appear on page 477.

Check Your Performance

MAIN IDEAS

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Number Right</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Score</i>
Review Test 1 (4 items)	_____	× 5 =	_____
Review Test 2 (20 items)	_____	× 2 =	_____
Review Test 3 (10 items)	_____	× 4 =	_____
TOTAL SCORE			= _____%

Enter your total score into the **Reading Performance Chart: Review Tests** on the inside back cover.