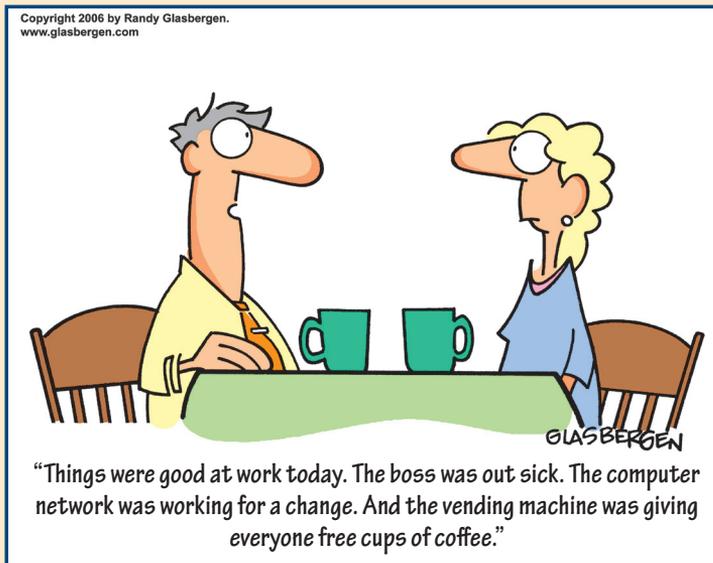


3 Main Ideas

This Chapter in a Nutshell

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

What Is the Main Idea?



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

Explanation

The main idea is that the speaker had a good day at work. He then supports his point with three specific reasons: the boss was out, the computer network was working, and the vending machine was dispensing free coffee.

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 instance, read the following paragraph, asking yourself as you do, “What is the author’s point?”

¹Poor grades in school can have various causes. ²For one thing, students may have financial problems. ³If they need to work long hours to make money, they will have little study time. ⁴Another cause of poor grades may be trouble with relationships. ⁵A student may be unhappy over family problems or a lack of friends. ⁶That unhappiness can harm schoolwork. ⁷A final cause of poor grades may be bad study habits. ⁸Some students have never learned how to take good notes in class, how to manage their time effectively, or how to study a textbook. ⁹Without such study skills, their grades are likely to suffer.

Here is a good two-step way to find an author’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 poor grades. 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. Poor grades in school can have various causes.
- B. For one thing, students may have financial problems.
- C. A final cause of poor grades may be bad study habits.
- D. Some students have never learned how to take good notes in class, how to manage their time effectively, or how to study a textbook.

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

Explanation

Sentence A: The phrase “various causes” in sentence A is a general one. It is broad enough to include all of the specific causes mentioned in the other sentences—financial problems, trouble with relationships, and bad study habits. Sentence A, then, is the sentence that expresses the main idea of the passage.

Sentence B: This sentence is about only one type of problem, financial problems. “Financial problems” is not general enough to include the other two listed causes of poor grades: trouble with relationships and bad study habits.

Sentence C: This sentence also mentions only one specific cause: bad study habits. “Bad study habits” is not general enough to include the other two causes presented in the paragraph.

Sentence D: This sentence lists three specific study problems. It does not cover the other material in the paragraph.

The Main Idea as an “Umbrella” Idea

Think of the main idea as an “umbrella” idea. The main idea is the author’s general point. The other material in the paragraph fits under it. That other material is made up of **supporting details**—specific 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.

How Do You Recognize a Main Idea?

To recognize the main idea of a passage, you must **become an active reader**. Active readers *think* as they read. Instead of merely taking in words, an active reader constantly asks, “What’s the point?” In addition, active readers use a variety of other strategies to determine an author’s main idea. Below are three active reading strategies you can use to help find the main idea in a passage.

- 1 Look for general versus specific ideas.
- 2 Use the topic to lead you to the main idea.
- 3 Use key words to lead you to the main idea.

Each strategy is explained on the following pages.

1 Look for General versus Specific Ideas

You saw in the paragraph on the causes of poor grades 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 explanations that follow.

1. You often use general and specific ideas without even realizing it. Consider the following:

- *Animal* is a general term. Write the names of three specific animals:

- *Vegetable* is a general term. Write the names of three specific vegetables:

- *Emotion* is a general term. Write the names of three specific emotions:

Explanation

In answering the above items, you might have chosen such specific animals as a dog, raccoon, or bear; such specific vegetables as carrots, onions, or celery; such specific emotions as anger, sadness, or happiness.

2. Let's say that a new year is starting, and you decide to make some New Year's resolutions. Your general idea might be as follows:

General idea: Starting in January, I want to make some changes in my life.

- Now write three *specific* ideas—three resolutions that you might make:

Explanation

Three examples of specific resolutions might be to get to bed earlier, to eat less junk food, and to spend at least a half hour reading each day.

3. In thinking about your teachers, you might decide that one of your high-school English teachers was your best teacher. Your general idea might be as follows:

General idea: _____ is the best teacher I ever had.

- Now write three *specific* reasons you thought so highly of this teacher:

Explanation

You might, for instance, have liked a given teacher because he or she gave clear explanations of ideas, had a friendly manner, and spent individual time with each student.

4. Finally, suppose you have found a good part-time job. Your general idea might be as follows:

General idea: _____ has been a good part-time job for me.

- Now write three *specific* supporting reasons for liking the job:

Explanation

Three particular reasons for liking a job might include pay of ten dollars an hour, convenient work hours after school each day, and a short travel time of only fifteen minutes to the job.

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 three 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

- ___ frying
- ___ baking
- ___ cooking
- ___ steaming

(*Cooking* is the general idea. It includes three specific types of cooking: frying, baking, and steaming.)

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ___ soup | 4. ___ entertainment |
| ___ water | ___ movies |
| ___ liquid | ___ concerts |
| ___ coffee | ___ card games |
| 2. ___ potato chips | 5. ___ cans |
| ___ pretzels | ___ boxes |
| ___ salted nuts | ___ bags |
| ___ snacks | ___ containers |
| 3. ___ cotton | 6. ___ rock |
| ___ fabric | ___ classical |
| ___ silk | ___ country |
| ___ wool | ___ music |

7. ___ necklace
 ___ jewelry
 ___ ring
 ___ bracelet

8. ___ fish
 ___ tuna
 ___ salmon
 ___ flounder

9. ___ coughing
 ___ sneezing
 ___ symptom
 ___ sore throat

10. ___ speaking
 ___ listening
 ___ writing
 ___ communicating



PRACTICE 2

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

Example *General:* school subjects
 Specific: biology, Spanish, _____, _____

(*School subjects* is the general idea; *biology* and *Spanish* are specific subjects, as are *history* and *math*.)

1. *General:* beverages
 Specific: iced tea, water, _____, _____
2. *General:* sport
 Specific: baseball, soccer, _____, _____
3. *General:* relatives
 Specific: cousin, mother, _____, _____
4. *General:* sandwich
 Specific: ham, grilled cheese, _____, _____
5. *General:* reading material
 Specific: textbook, comic book, _____, _____
6. *General:* seafood
 Specific: clams, lobster, _____, _____
7. *General:* tone of voice
 Specific: excited, surprised, _____, _____

8. *General:* negative personal quality
Specific: greed, cowardice, _____, _____
9. *General:* positive personal quality
Specific: reliability, determination, _____, _____
10. *General:* greeting
Specific: “How are you,” “Hello,” _____, _____



PRACTICE 3

In the following groups, one statement is the general point (and main idea), and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify each point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

1. ___ A. A mosquito can find you in the dark.
 ___ B. A mosquito can keep you awake all night.
 ___ C. Though a mosquito is small, it has a lot of power.
 ___ D. A mosquito can make you scratch yourself until you bleed.

2. ___ A. The bread the waiter brought us is stale.
 ___ B. We've been waiting for our main course for over an hour.
 ___ C. The people at the next table are awfully loud.
 ___ D. It is time to speak to the restaurant manager.

3. ___ A. The apartment has no closets.
 ___ B. The kitchen is so small only one person can be there.
 ___ C. Each morning the apartment fills with exhaust fumes from a nearby bus station.
 ___ D. The apartment has some real drawbacks.

4. ___ A. That teacher is very demanding.
 ___ B. She calls on students who don't make eye contact with her.
 ___ C. Students must e-mail her if they intend to miss a class.
 ___ D. A paper handed in late is reduced a whole grade for each day it's late.

**PRACTICE 4**

In the following groups—all based on textbook selections—one statement is the general point (and main idea), and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify each point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

1. A. Only one in three adults engages in regular physical activity.
 B. The percentage of obese adults has more than doubled in the past 40 years.
 C. About one in five adults still smokes cigarettes.
 D. Americans are not as healthy as they should be.

2. A. Couples committed to each other gain strength from their mutual support.
 B. Committed couples are financially more successful than singles.
 C. Committed relationships offer many benefits.
 D. Happily married adults live longer and have fewer emotional problems.

3. A. Finding safety in numbers, bats live in large colonies numbering from several thousand to a million or more.
 B. Bats are creatures with a strong instinct to protect their own kind.
 C. Mother bats, who usually have one offspring per year, leave their young only to get food.
 D. When colonies containing mother bats are disturbed, the mothers will try to move their young to a safer location.

4. A. In 17th-century Europe, people went through a lot of trouble to wear makeup.
 B. To wear makeup at that time, men and women had to put an unpleasant mixture of lead, egg whites, and vinegar on their faces.
 C. Once a person's makeup was applied, he or she had to be careful not to laugh, or the new "face" would crack.
 D. The lead in the makeup caused scars and blemishes, which had to be covered with patches of cloth.

2 Use the Topic to Lead You to the Main Idea

You already know that to find the main idea of a selection, you look first for a general statement. You then check to see if that statement is supported by all or most of the other material in the paragraph. If it is, you've found the main idea. Another approach that can help you find the main idea of a selection is to look for its topic.

The **topic** is the general subject of a selection. It is not a complete sentence, but can be simply expressed in several words. Knowing the topic can help you find a writer's main point about that topic.

Textbook authors use the title of each chapter to state the overall topic of that chapter. They also provide many topics and subtopics in boldface headings within the chapter. For example, here is the title of a section in a psychology textbook:

Why We Communicate

And here are the subtopics:

Physical Needs

Identity Needs

Social Needs

Practical Goals

If you were studying the above chapter, you could use the topics to help find the main ideas. (Pages 5–9 explain just how to do so, as well as providing other textbook study tips.)

But there are many times when you are not given topics—with standardized reading tests, for example, or with individual paragraphs in articles or textbooks. To find the topic of a selection when the topic is not given, ask this simple question:

Who or what is the selection about?

For example, look again at the beginning of the paragraph that started this chapter:

Poor grades in school can have various causes.

What, in just a few words, is the above paragraph about? On the line below, write what you think is the topic.

Topic: _____

You probably answered that the topic is “poor grades in school.” As you reread the paragraph, you saw that, in fact, every sentence in it is about poor grades.

The next step after finding the topic is to decide what main point the author is making about the topic. Authors often present their main idea in a single sentence. (This sentence is also known as the **main idea sentence** or the **topic sentence**.) As we have already seen, the main point about poor grades is “Poor grades in school can have various causes.”



Check Your Understanding

Let's look now at another paragraph. Read it and then see if you can answer the questions that follow.

¹Phobias are continuing fears of things that are not likely to be harmful. ²For example, some people have a phobia about elevators. ³They worry that if they enter an elevator, the cable will break and they will fall hundreds of feet to their death. ⁴While such an accident can happen, it is extremely rare. ⁵Another instance of a phobia is a fear of medical needles. ⁶Some people will refuse to receive an injection, even if they are seriously ill. ⁷They may faint if given a needle; so great is their fear that they are about to die. ⁸Perhaps the most common phobia is fear of public speaking. ⁹Some people will not go to school or take jobs if they have to speak before a group. ¹⁰Their fear—that they will embarrass themselves and that people will pity or reject them—has little basis in reality. ¹¹These and other phobias can usually be overcome, often fairly quickly, with the right direction and treatment.

- _____ 1. Write the letter of the *topic* of the paragraph. To find the topic, ask yourself what the paragraph is about. (It often helps as you read to look for and even circle a word, term, or idea that is repeated in the paragraph.)
- A. Dangers
 - B. Phobias
 - C. Worry about elevators
- _____ 2. Write the number of the sentence that states the *main idea* of the paragraph. In other words, what point is the author 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 “phobias.” Continuing to read the paragraph, you see that, in fact, everything in it is about phobias. And the main idea is clearly sentence 1: “Phobias are continuing fears of things that are not likely to be harmful.” This idea is a general one that sums up what the entire paragraph is about. It is an “umbrella” statement under which all the other material in the paragraph fits. The parts of the paragraph could be shown as follows:

Topic: Phobias

Main idea: Phobias are continuing fears of things that are not likely to be harmful.

Supporting details:

1. Fear that an elevator ride will end in a fall to death.
2. Fear that an injection will cause death.
3. Fear that speaking in public will lead to pity or rejection.

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 5**

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. One pitcher smoothes the dirt on the pitcher's mound before he throws each pitch.
- _____ B. One infielder sits in the same spot on the dugout bench during every game.
- _____ C. Some baseball players think that certain superstitious habits help them win games.
- _____ D. Superstitious baseball players.

Explanation

All of the statements in Group 1 involve superstitious baseball players, so item D 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 specific superstitious habits of individual baseball players. Statement C, however, is more general—it states that some players think certain superstitious habits help them win games. Statement C thus gives the main idea, and statements A and B are supporting details that explain that main idea.

Group 2

- _____ A. Houdini learned to pop his shoulder out of its socket in order to escape from straitjackets.
- _____ B. Harry Houdini, the famous escape artist, worked hard at his career.
- _____ C. Harry Houdini.
- _____ D. Houdini trained to hold his breath for over five minutes in order to pull off underwater escapes.

Group 3

- _____ A. At dinnertime, instead of cooking, many people simply go to a fast-food restaurant or order take-out.
- _____ B. More and more families rely on prepared meals from the frozen-foods section or the deli counter.
- _____ C. Home cooking is becoming a lost art.
- _____ D. Home cooking.

Group 4

- _____ A. Some cultures permit women to be denied an education or abused by men.
- _____ B. Some male religious leaders teach that “women are inferior before God.”
- _____ C. The mistreatment of many women.
- _____ D. Many women are mistreated in the world today.

**PRACTICE 6**

Following are four paragraphs. Read each paragraph and write the letter of the item you think is the topic of the paragraph. Then write the number of the sentence you think states the main idea of the 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

¹Some students use avoidance tactics when faced with college work. ²They tell themselves, “I’m not bright enough,” and so never make an honest effort to do the work. ³Or they may say to themselves, “I’m too busy,” and then they deliberately find an endless number of things to do other than study. ⁴A third excuse that students use is to say, “I’m too tired.” ⁵As a result, they decide to take naps or to sleep late rather than try to study. ⁶Finally, students may say, “I’ll do it later.” ⁷In other words, they procrastinate and keep putting study off so they can spend more time watching TV or texting friends or playing games.

- _____ 1. The topic of the paragraph is
 - A. college work.
 - B. avoidance tactics.
 - C. procrastination.
- _____ 2. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 2

¹The female black widow spider is not as terrible a killer as is generally believed. ²While the creature is certainly poisonous, she is also very shy and will bite humans only when she feels cornered. ³Also, the idea that the black widow always kills the male after mating is untrue. ⁴The male is often spared—if he remembers to tap out a special signal as he ventures onto his mate’s web. ⁵The vibrations on the web let her know he is one of her own kind, not an insect to be rushed at and killed.

- _____ 3. The topic of the paragraph is
 - A. the female black widow spider.
 - B. poisonous spiders.
 - C. the unlucky male black widow spider.
- _____ 4. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 3

¹Potato chips got their start because of a hard-to-please restaurant customer in 1853. ²In that year, George Crum was working as a chef at an elegant resort in Saratoga Springs, New York. ³He prepared thick-cut French-fried potatoes for diners there. ⁴But one diner kept sending his potatoes back to the kitchen, complaining that they were too thick for his taste. ⁵Crum cut the potatoes thinner and thinner and finally, very annoyed, made a serving of potatoes too thin and crisp to eat with a fork. ⁶To his surprise, the guest loved them. ⁷Other guests demanded a taste. ⁸Soon “Saratoga Chips” were the most popular item on the menu.

- _____ 5. The topic of the paragraph is
- A. a hard-to-please customer.
 - B. the origins of foods.
 - C. potato chips.
- _____ 6. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 4

¹People have always loved bike riding. ²Biking, however, can be a dangerous activity. ³One danger is “getting doored”—having a car driver open his or her door directly into the path of an oncoming bike. ⁴Another risk is aggressive drivers who feel they have more right to the roads than bikes do. ⁵Such drivers will scream, honk, or gesture wildly. ⁶They may block off bikers without a signal or a look, giving the biker no time to avoid running off the road or into the car. ⁷An added source of danger for bikers is poor road design, which in many cases allows just enough room for a car on either side of the road, but no extra room for a biker to be on the same road. ⁸Recently, the U.S. Department of Transportation noted that bicycling is now more dangerous than flying in planes or riding in buses, boats, or trains.

- _____ 7. The topic of the paragraph is
- A. biking.
 - B. transportation.
 - C. getting “doored.”
- _____ 8. Write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

3 Find and Use Key Words to Lead You to the Main Idea

Sometimes authors make it fairly easy to find their main idea. They announce it by using **key words**—words or phrases that are easy to recognize. These key words are clues to the main idea.

One type of key word is a **list word** or words, which tell you a list of items is to follow. For example, the main idea in the paragraph about poor grades was stated like this: *Poor grades in school can have various causes*. The expression *various causes* helps you zero in on the main idea. You realize that the paragraph will be about the causes of poor grades. As you read on and see the series of causes, you know your guess about the main idea was correct.

Below are some common words that often announce a main idea. Note that nearly all of them contain a word that ends in *s*—a plural that suggests the supporting details will be a list of items.

List Words

several kinds of
a number of
four steps

various causes
a series of
among the results

a few reasons
three factors
several advantages

When expressions like these appear in a sentence, look carefully to see if that sentence might be the main idea. Chances are a sentence with these words will be followed by a list of major supporting details.



Check Your Understanding: List Words

Underline the list words in the following sentences.

Hint: Remember that list words usually end in *s*.

Example Being a middle child in a large family has several drawbacks.

1. The rising rate of obesity among young people seems to have three causes.
2. Several symptoms may indicate that a person is having a heart attack.
3. The Pilgrims faced a number of challenges during their first winter in America.
4. Community colleges have some real advantages over four-year colleges.
5. Students offer a variety of excuses for their homework being late.

Explanation

In the first sentence, you should have underlined the phrase *three causes*. Those words suggest that a list of the three causes of the rising rate of obesity among young people may follow. In sentences 2–5, you should have underlined these groups of words: *Several symptoms*, *a number of challenges*, *some real advantages*, and *a variety of excuses*. Each of those phrases also tells you that a list of supporting details may follow.

There is another type of key word that can alert you to the main idea. This type of key word, called an **addition word**, is generally used right before a supporting detail. Below is a box of words that often introduce major supporting details and help you discover the main idea.

Addition Words

one	to begin with	in addition	last
first	another	next	last of all
first of all	second	moreover	final
for one thing	also	furthermore	finally



Check Your Understanding: Addition Words

Reread the paragraph about causes of poor grades and underline the addition words that alert you to supporting details. Also, see if you can circle the list words that suggest the main idea.

¹Poor grades in school can have various causes. ²For one thing, students may have financial problems. ³If they need to work long hours to make money, they will have little study time. ⁴Another cause of poor grades may be trouble with relationships. ⁵A student may be unhappy over family problems or a lack of friends. ⁶That unhappiness can harm schoolwork. ⁷A final cause of poor grades may be bad study habits. ⁸Some students have never learned how to take good notes in class, how to manage their time effectively, or how to study a textbook. ⁹Without such study skills, their grades are likely to suffer.

Explanation

The words that introduce each new supporting detail for the main idea are *For one thing*, *Another*, and *final*. These addition words help you realize that all the details

in the paragraph are supporting the idea that poor grades in school can have various causes. You should have underlined these three words.

Since *various causes* are list words, you should have circled them. Even before you saw the addition words, those list words could have suggested to you that the paragraph may list the different causes of poor grades. As you can see, in this paragraph (as in many others), list words and addition words work hand in hand.



PRACTICE 7

The chapters that follow will offer a good deal of practice in key words. For now, do the activity below.

A. Underline the list words in each of the following sentences.

1. Living alone has a number of advantages.
2. Physical punishment can be harmful to a child in several ways.
3. The Industrial Revolution came about quickly because of three major inventions.
4. A series of mistakes led to the arrest and imprisonment of the wrong person.
5. To memorize materials effectively, there are two important steps to follow.
6. The National Board of Medical Examiners has released some alarming facts about doctors.

B. (7–10.) Underline the four addition words or phrases in the following passage.

¹Women don't hold more political power in the United States for several reasons. ²First of all, women are still a minority in law and business. ³Those are the fields from which most politicians come. ⁴In addition, political careers usually require a great deal of time spent away from home, and such hours don't tie in well with motherhood. ⁵Also, women are less likely to have a supportive spouse at home, ready to help out with child care, housework, and the like. ⁶Finally, men have not been eager to open up the "boys' club" of political power to women. ⁷They tend to support and encourage upcoming male candidates, not female ones.

A Note on the Central Point

In selections made up of many paragraphs, the overall main idea is called the **central point**, also known as the **central idea** or **thesis**. 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.

The following chapter, “Supporting Details,” provides more information about (and practice in) the list and addition words that help signal main ideas and the details that support them.

CHAPTER REVIEW

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- Recognizing the main idea is the most important key to good comprehension. The main idea is a general “umbrella” idea. The specific supporting material of the paragraph fits under it.
- Three strategies that will help you find the main idea are to (1) look for general versus specific ideas; (2) use the topic (the general subject of a selection) to lead you to the main idea; (3) use key words to lead you to the main idea.

The next chapter—Chapter 4—will increase your understanding of the specific details that authors 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 “Learning Center.”



REVIEW TEST 1

To review what you've learned in this chapter, answer each of the following questions by filling in the blank.

1. The umbrella statement that covers the material in a paragraph is the (*topic or main idea?*)_____.
2. The supporting details are always more (*general or specific?*) _____ than the 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. To help you decide if a certain sentence is the main idea of a paragraph, ask yourself, "Is this sentence _____ by all or most of the other material in the paragraph?"
5. One way to help find the main idea is to look for **addition words** like *first, second, also, and finally*. Such words often introduce the supporting _____s for a main idea.



REVIEW TEST 2

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

- | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1. kneeling | position | standing | sitting |
| 2. water | electricity | gas | utility |
| 3. housing | condominium | palace | apartment |
| 4. hearing | touch | sense | sight |
| 5. nicotine | alcohol | drug | aspirin |
| 6. flour | ingredient | yeast | eggs |
| 7. tinsel | colored lights | decoration | wreath |
| 8. car payment | credit-card bill | personal loan | debt |

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

9–10. *General:* pet
Specific: parakeet, hamster, _____, _____

11–12. *General:* sharp object
Specific: razor, broken glass, _____, _____

13–14. *General:* footwear
Specific: boots, slippers, _____, _____

15–16. *General:* breakfast item
Specific: orange juice, oatmeal, _____, _____

- C.** (17–20.) In the following group, one statement is the general point, and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify the point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

- _____ A. When you're speaking to Doug, he is often looking around the room.
 _____ B. He never asks questions of the other person.
 _____ C. Doug is not skilled at conversation.
 _____ D. He interrupts when he thinks of something he wants to say.



REVIEW TEST 3

- A.** (1–12.) Each group of four items includes one topic, one main idea, and two supporting details. In the space provided, 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. The human skeleton has certain important functions.
 _____ B. The skeleton gives the body support and shape.
 _____ C. The skeleton protects internal organs.
 _____ D. The human skeleton.

Group 2

- _____ A. Americans and exercise.
- _____ B. Americans tend to ride everywhere instead of walking.
- _____ C. Most Americans don't get enough exercise.
- _____ D. Americans tend to watch sports instead of playing them.

Group 3

- _____ A. The Egyptian pyramids.
- _____ B. More than 100,000 laborers worked to build Egypt's Great Pyramid.
- _____ C. The Egyptian pyramids were built with manpower and skill, not secret engineering.
- _____ D. Pyramid builders used ropes, wooden levers, and muscle power to move giant stones.

- B.** Read each paragraph below and write the letter of the item you think is the topic of the paragraph. Then write the number of the sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph.

Paragraph 1

¹A dangerous mistake that students can make in life is not to take charge of their own lives. ²If they do not sail their own ship but choose to drift with the tides and be part of the crowd, their ship may drift onto the rocks! ³Their friends and peers may just be interested in smoking, drinking, socializing, playing games, and getting by. ⁴They might not be interested in doing the hard work needed to succeed in life. ⁵Studies have shown that countless students go through high school trying to be one of the gang. ⁶Only later, sometime after high school, do some of them realize they must take responsibility for their lives. ⁷Doing what other people in one's social group are doing may help make one popular, but it does not help one get a diploma that can lead to a job.

- _____ 13. The topic is
 - A. a dangerous mistake students can make.
 - B. being part of the crowd.
 - C. getting a diploma.
- _____ 14. What is the number of the sentence that states the main idea?

Paragraph 2

¹Almost every week you're likely to see a TV commercial or an ad for a new health product. ²It might promise better sleep, more energy, clearer skin, firmer muscles, lower weight, brighter moods, longer life—or all of these combined. ³The product is often endorsed by ordinary-looking people who have been carefully rehearsed. ⁴However, if a health product sounds too good to be true, it probably is. ⁵If, for example, a magic pill really *could* trim off excess pounds or remove wrinkles, the world would be filled with thin people with unlined skin. ⁶Look around, and you'll realize that's not the case.

- _____ 15. The topic is
- A. TV commercials and ads.
 - B. new health products.
 - C. magic pills.

- _____ 16. What is the number of the sentence that states the main idea?

C. In the space provided, write the letter of the list words in each sentence.

- _____ 17. A teenager in serious emotional trouble is likely to display certain kinds of behavior.
- A. *serious emotional trouble*
 - B. *likely to display*
 - C. *certain kinds of behavior*

- _____ 18. The widespread pollution of the lakes in the region has a number of causes.
- A. *widespread pollution*
 - B. *lakes in the region*
 - C. *a number of causes*

D. In the space provided, write the letter of the addition word in each sentence.

- _____ 19. The best single way to become a better student is to attend every class; another important step is to take good notes in class.
- A. *another*
 - B. *important*
 - C. *better*

- _____ 20. Extreme stress can lead some people to escape through drug abuse; stress may also lead to such severe depression that a person attempts suicide.
- A. *stress*
 B. *also*
 C. *depression*



REVIEW TEST 4

Here is a chance to apply your understanding of main ideas to a full-length reading. First read the following selection from the college textbook *Sociology, Third Edition*, by Rodney Stark—it will give you a fascinating view of the type of behavior we all witness every day. Then answer the questions that follow about topics, main ideas, and the central point. There are also vocabulary questions to help you continue practicing the skill of understanding vocabulary in context.

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 (°).

- conformity* (2): behavior in accordance with group ideas and customs
confirming (2): proving true
perception (3): observation
at odds (8): in disagreement
stakes (10): something to be gained or lost

GROUP PRESSURE

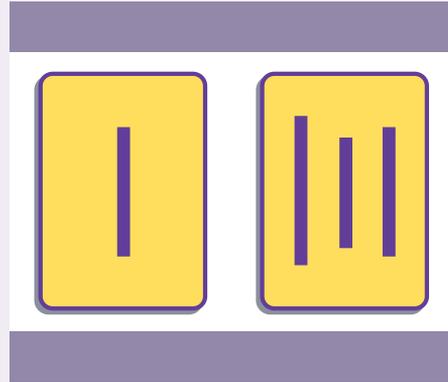
Rodney Stark

- 1 It is self-evident that people tend to conform to the expectations and reactions of others around them. But what are the limits of group pressure? Can group pressure cause us to deny the obvious, even physical evidence?
- 2 Over thirty-five years ago, Solomon Asch performed the most famous experimental test of the power of group pressure to produce conformity°. Since then his study has been repeated many times, with many variations confirming° his original results. Perhaps the best way to understand what Asch discovered is to pretend that you are a subject in his experiment.

3 You have agreed to take part in an experiment on visual perception°. Upon arriving at the laboratory, you are given the seventh in a line of eight chairs. Other students taking part in the experiment sit in each of the other chairs. At the front of the room the experimenter stands by a covered easel. He explains that he wants you to judge the length of lines in a series of comparisons. He will place two decks of large cards upon the easel. One card will display a single vertical line. The other card will display three vertical lines, each of a different length. He wants each of you to decide which of the three lines on one card is the same length as the single line on the other card. To prepare you for the task, he displays a practice card. You see the correct line easily, for the other lines are noticeably different from the comparison line.

4 The experiment begins. The first comparison is just as easy as the practice comparison. One of the three lines is obviously the same length as the comparison line, while the other two are very different. Each of the eight persons answers in turn, with you answering seventh. Everyone answers correctly. On the second pair of cards, the right answer is just as easy to spot, and again all eight subjects are correct. You begin to suspect that the experiment is going to be a big bore.

5 Then comes the third pair. The judgment is just as easy as before. But the first person somehow picks a line that is obviously wrong. You smile. Then



the second person also picks the same obviously wrong line. What's going on? Then the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth subjects answer the same way. It's your turn. You know without doubt that you are right, yet six people have confidently given the wrong answer. You are no longer bored. Instead, you are a bit confused, but you go ahead and choose the line you are sure is right. Then the last person picks the same wrong line everyone else has chosen.

6 A new pair is unveiled, and the same thing happens again. All the others pick an obviously wrong line. The experimenter remains matter-of-fact, not commenting on right or wrong answers but just marking down what people pick. Should you stick it out? Should you go along? Maybe something's wrong with the light or with your angle of vision. Your difficulty lasts for eighteen pairs of cards. On twelve of them, all the others picked a line you knew was incorrect.

7 When the experiment is over, the experimenter turns to you with a smile

and begins to explain. You were the only subject in the experiment. The other seven people were stooges paid by Professor Asch to answer exactly the way they did. The aim of the experiment was to see if social pressure could cause you to reject the evidence of your own eyes and conform.

8 In his first experiment, Asch tested fifty people in this situation. Almost a third of them went along with the group and gave the wrong answer at least half of the time. Another 40 percent yielded to the group some of the time, but less than half of the time. Only 25 percent refused to yield at all. Those who yielded to group pressure were more likely to do so as the experiment progressed. Nearly everyone withstood the group the first several times, but as they continued to find themselves at odds^o with the group, most subjects began to weaken. Many shifted in their chairs, trying to get a different line of vision. Some blushed. Finally, 75 percent of them began to go along at least a few times.

9 The effects of group pressure were also revealed in the behavior of those who steadfastly refused to accept the group's misjudgments. Some of these

people became increasingly uneasy and apologetic. One subject began to whisper to his neighbor, "Can't help it, that's the one," and later, "I always disagree—darn it!" Other subjects who refused to yield dealt with the stress of the situation by giving each nonconforming response in a progressively louder voice and by casting challenging looks at the others. In a recent replication of the Asch study, one subject loudly insulted the other seven students whenever they made a wrong choice. One retort was "What funny farm did you turkeys grow up on, huh?"

10 The Asch experiment shows that a high number of people will conform even in a weak group situation. They were required merely to disagree with strangers, not with their friends, and the costs of deviance were limited to about half an hour of disapproval from people they hardly knew. Furthermore, subjects were not faced with a difficult judgment—they could easily see the correct response. Little wonder, then, that we are inclined to go along with our friends when the stakes^o are much higher and we cannot even be certain that we are right.

Reading Comprehension Questions

Vocabulary in Context

- _____ 1. In the sentence below, the word *stooges* (stōōj's) means
- A. comedians.
 - B. people who played a role.
 - C. true subjects in an experiment.
 - D. educators.

"The other seven people were stooges paid by Professor Asch to answer exactly the way they did." (Paragraph 7)

- _____ 2. In the sentence below, the word *withstood* (wĭth-stōōd') means
- A. recognized.
 - B. agreed with.
 - C. resisted.
 - D. understood.

"Nearly everyone withstood the group the first several times, but as they continued to find themselves at odds with the group, most subjects began to weaken." (Paragraph 8)

- _____ 3. In the excerpt below, the word *steadfastly* (stĕd'făst'lĕ) means
- A. constantly.
 - B. wrongly.
 - C. helpfully.
 - D. comfortably.

"The effects of group pressure were also revealed in the behavior of those who steadfastly refused to accept the group's misjudgments. Some of these people became increasingly uneasy and apologetic." (Paragraph 9)

- _____ 4. In the excerpt below, the word *replication* (rĕp'lĭ-kā'shən) means
- A. memory.
 - B. repeat.
 - C. image.
 - D. prediction.

"In a recent replication of the Asch study, one subject loudly insulted the other seven students . . ." (Paragraph 9)

- _____ 5. In the excerpt below, the word *retort* (rĭ-tôrt') means
- A. genuine question.
 - B. form of praise.
 - C. choice.
 - D. quick, sharp reply.

"... one subject loudly insulted the other seven students whenever they made a wrong choice. One retort was 'What funny farm did you turkeys grow up on, huh?'" (Paragraph 9)

- _____ 6. In the sentence below, the word *deviance* (dĕ'vĕ-əns) means
- A. going along with the crowd.
 - B. an experimental test.
 - C. differing from the normal group behavior.
 - D. being a stranger.

"They were required merely to disagree with strangers, not with their friends, and the costs of deviance were limited to about half an hour of disapproval from people they hardly knew." (Paragraph 10)

Central Point

- _____ 7. Which of the following is the topic of the whole selection?
- A. Visual perception
 - B. Solomon Asch
 - C. Asch's experiment on group pressure
 - D. Stooges in an experiment
- _____ 8. Which sentence from the reading comes closest to expressing the central point of the whole selection?
- A. "Upon arriving at the laboratory, you are given the seventh in a line of eight chairs."
 - B. "The experimenter remains matter-of-fact, not commenting on right or wrong answers but just marking down what people pick."
 - C. "In his first experiment, Asch tested fifty people in this situation."
 - D. "The Asch experiment shows that a high number of people will conform even in a weak group situation."

Main Ideas

- _____ 9. The topic of paragraph 9 is
- A. the behavior of subjects who refused to accept the group’s misjudgments.
 - B. subjects who became uneasy and apologetic.
 - C. a duplication of the Asch study.
 - D. subjects who insulted others.
- _____ 10. The main idea of paragraph 9 is expressed in its
- A. first sentence.
 - B. second sentence.
 - C. next-to-the-last sentence.
 - D. last sentence.

Discussion Questions

1. Were you at all surprised by the results of Solomon Asch’s experiment? If you had been one of the subjects, do you think you would have stuck to your answers, or would you have gone along with the group? Why?
2. What reasons might the subjects in the Asch experiment have had for eventually giving in and accepting the group’s wrong answers?
3. Stark refers to the Asch experiment as a “weak group situation,” one in which the group is made up of strangers and the stakes are not very high. What might a “strong group situation” be? Give examples.
4. Have you ever been in a situation when you wanted to resist group pressure? What was the situation, and why did you want to resist? What could you have done to resist?

Note: Writing assignments for this selection appear on pages 605–606.

Check Your Performance**MAIN IDEAS**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Number Right</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Score</i>
Review Test 1 (5 items)	_____	× 2 =	_____
Review Test 2 (20 items)	_____	× 1.5 =	_____
Review Test 3 (20 items)	_____	× 1.5 =	_____
Review Test 4 (10 items)	_____	× 3 =	_____
		TOTAL SCORE =	_____ %

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

MAIN IDEAS: Mastery Test 1

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

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------|--------|----------|
| 1. oak | tree | maple | pine |
| 2. iron | tin | metal | aluminum |
| 3. insect | ant | roach | fly |
| 4. basketball | hockey | tennis | sport |

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

5–6. *General:* fruit

Specific: orange, pineapple, _____, _____

7–8. *General:* country

Specific: Canada, Greece, _____, _____

9–10. *General:* holiday

Specific: Independence Day,
Labor Day, _____, _____

11–12. *General:* criminal

Specific: kidnapper, arsonist, _____, _____

- C.** (13–20.) In each group below, one statement is the general point, and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify the point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

Group 1

- ___ A. Pet owners survive longer after a major illness than people who don't own pets.
- ___ B. Daily time with pets aids relaxation and decreases stress.
- ___ C. Pet ownership has positive effects on people's health.
- ___ D. Petting an animal lowers blood pressure in humans.

(Continues on next page)

Group 2

- ___ A. Certain harmless snakes eat poisonous ones.
- ___ B. Snakes help control the rodent population by eating mice and rats.
- ___ C. Medicines for humans have been developed from snake venom.
- ___ D. Despite their poor public image, snakes have their good points.

MAIN IDEAS: Mastery Test 2

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

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1. rose | daisy | tulip | flower |
| 2. sofa | furniture | table | chair |
| 3. illness | flu | measles | pneumonia |
| 4. socks | jacket | clothes | shirt |

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

5–6. *General:* beverages

Specific: water, milk, _____, _____

7–8. *General:* bird

Specific: parrot, turkey, _____, _____

9–10. *General:* natural disaster

Specific: earthquake, hurricane, _____, _____

11–12. *General:* happy event

Specific: birth of a child,
getting an A, _____, _____

- C.** (13–20.) In each group below, one statement is the general point, and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify the point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

Group 1

- ___ A. Bringing homemade popcorn to the movies is cheaper than buying expensive theater popcorn.
- ___ B. Buying candy at a grocery store, not a theater, cuts candy costs in half.
- ___ C. Moviegoers can take several simple steps to save money at the movie theater.
- ___ D. Going to movies early in the day can reduce ticket prices by several dollars.

(Continues on next page)

Group 2

- ___ A. Naps improve people's moods and alertness.
- ___ B. Taking a nap boosts energy and increases work productivity.
- ___ C. After a nap, it is easier to concentrate and make decisions.
- ___ D. People should take a nap every day.

MAIN IDEAS: Mastery Test 3

- A.** (1–12.) In each group below, one statement is the general point, and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify each point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

Group 1

- ___ A. Tall buildings in the United States often have twelfth and fourteenth floors—but not a thirteenth floor.
- ___ B. Houses in France are never numbered thirteen.
- ___ C. Throughout the world, the number thirteen is viewed as unlucky.
- ___ D. Many global airlines have removed row number thirteen from airplane seating charts.

Group 2

- ___ A. Restaurant ratings are based on more than just food.
- ___ B. A restaurant's service can be almost as significant as the meal itself.
- ___ C. For many restaurant critics, the comfort of the surroundings will be a part of their evaluation.
- ___ D. Menu prices are always taken into consideration.

Group 3

- ___ A. The average American child is exposed to 12,000 violent acts—including rape and murder—on TV each year.
- ___ B. Adults who watch TV two hours a day increase their chances of obesity by 25 percent and Type 2 diabetes by 14 percent.
- ___ C. Toddlers who watch TV for an hour each day increase their risk of having attention problems by 10 percent.
- ___ D. TV watching can be an unhealthy activity.

- B.** (13–20.) Each group of four items includes one topic, one main idea, and two supporting details. In the space provided, 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. Researchers believe one quarter of “mysterious” fires in dwellings in the United States are caused by rats.
- _____ B. Problems caused by rats.
- _____ C. Studies show that rats are to blame for 26 percent of electrical cable failures in houses and apartments.
- _____ D. Rats cause serious problems to homeowners and apartment dwellers.

Group 2

- _____ A. Young Americans are more likely to eat fast food, avoid exercise, be obese, or smoke cigarettes.
- _____ B. Many do not have health insurance or get regular physical or dental exams and do not receive health care when they need it.
- _____ C. Young Americans moving into adulthood face significant health risks.
- _____ D. Health risks for young Americans.

MAIN IDEAS: Mastery Test 4

- A.** (1–12.) In each group below, one statement is the general point, and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify each point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

Group 1

- ___ A. Some people find it difficult to live without technology.
- ___ B. You never see them sitting quietly reading a book.
- ___ C. When they are out during the day, they are constantly interacting with their phones.
- ___ D. At home they watch TV, read e-mail, and spend time on Facebook and other social media.

Group 2

- ___ A. Most teens who work do so to develop responsibility and gain independence from their parents.
- ___ B. Almost all teens who work are motivated by a desire to earn spending money.
- ___ C. For a majority of teens, work offers an opportunity to spend time with peers.
- ___ D. Teenagers choose to work during the school year for a variety of reasons.

Group 3

- ___ A. Panic disorder, a type of anxiety in which people experience feelings of panic, affects eight out of every thousand people.
- ___ B. Anxiety is a widespread disorder that many people deal with each day.
- ___ C. Five to 10 percent of Americans suffer from phobias, a type of anxiety in which people experience intense fear of things such as spiders, dogs, or bridges.
- ___ D. About 12 million Americans experience strong fear in social situations—social anxiety—each year.

(Continues on next page)

- B.** (13–20.) Each group of four items includes one topic, one main idea, and two supporting details. In the space provided, 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. Women have 15–20 percent more “gray matter” in their brains than men.
- _____ B. A man’s brain is larger and has more “white matter” than a woman’s.
- _____ C. When it comes to their brains, men and women are not equal.
- _____ D. Men’s and women’s brains.

Group 2

- _____ A. Crocodiles have shown a remarkable ability to survive.
- _____ B. Crocodile-like creatures have existed for around 200 million years.
- _____ C. The survival of crocodiles.
- _____ D. Crocodiles have been known to survive an entire year without food.

MAIN IDEAS: Mastery Test 5

- A.** (1–4.) In the group below, one statement is the general point, and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify the point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

- ___ A. On each square inch of your skin, there are millions of live bacteria.
- ___ B. Your mouth is home to the “tooth amoeba,” a tiny organism that feeds on food and dead cells.
- ___ C. Your body, like those of all humans, is home to many organisms.
- ___ D. Tiny mites live in the roots of your eyelashes and feed on dead tissue.

- B.** (5–12.) Each group of four items includes one topic, one main idea, and two supporting details. In the space provided, 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. One or two cups of coffee a day will relieve drowsiness and can increase concentration.
- ___ B. Drinking a cup of coffee before a workout boosts strength and fights muscle fatigue.
- ___ C. The effects of drinking coffee.
- ___ D. Coffee, when consumed in reasonable amounts, can produce positive effects on the body.

Group 2

- ___ A. Sunglasses that block harmful ultraviolet light were first developed by the space program.
- ___ B. Surprisingly, the U.S. space program has led to some useful items in everyday life.
- ___ C. The material in football helmets and protective padding was first made to protect astronauts in space.
- ___ D. Some unexpected benefits of the U.S. space program.

(Continues on next page)

- C.** In the space provided, write the letter of the list words in each sentence. (List words are a clue to what supporting details to look for in a paragraph.)

- _____ 13. People who do not vote in national elections give a number of excuses.
 A. *a number of excuses* C. *people who do not vote*
 B. *national elections*
- _____ 14. To decide whether or not to take a job, consider several key factors.
 A. *To decide* B. *whether or not* C. *several key factors*
- _____ 15. One study after another has found that cigarette smoking has long-term effects on the body.
 A. *One study after another* C. *cigarette smoking*
 B. *long-term effects on the body*
- _____ 16. Advertising should not be permitted on children's television shows for a variety of reasons.
 A. *Advertising should not be permitted* C. *a variety of reasons*
 B. *children's television shows*

- D.** Read the following passage. Then, in the space provided, write the letter of the addition words that introduce each supporting detail.

¹Illiterate people face great problems in our society. ²For one thing, people who cannot read or write are limited in a world full of print. ³They can't read stories in the newspaper or the menu in a restaurant. ⁴In a supermarket, they must depend on packages with familiar pictures and colors. ⁵In addition, illiterate people do not vote. ⁶As a result, they are "half-citizens" who cannot exercise their democratic rights. ⁷Another problem is in pursuing an education. ⁸Illiterate people find it difficult to take courses that might help them advance in their job or get a better job. ⁹Finally, they have trouble helping their children learn. ¹⁰They are not able to help with homework and often do not visit a school for fear of embarrassing their child or themselves.

- _____ 17. The addition words that signal the first problem of illiterate people are
 A. *limited in a world full of print.*
 B. *For one thing.*
 C. *familiar pictures and colors.*
- _____ 18. The addition words that signal the second problem of illiterate people are
 A. *"half-citizens."* B. *democratic rights.* C. *In addition.*
- _____ 19. The addition word that signals the third problem of illiterate people is
 A. *Another.* B. *education.* C. *courses.*
- _____ 20. The addition word that signals the fourth problem of illiterate people is
 A. *trouble.* B. *embarrassing.* C. *Finally.*

MAIN IDEAS: Mastery Test 6

- A.** (1–4.) In the group below, one statement is the general point, and the other statements are specific support for the point. Identify the point with a **P** and each statement of support with an **S**.

- ___ A. In 1908, a meteor struck a remote region in Russia, destroying thousands of square miles of forest.
- ___ B. In March 2004, an asteroid just missed the Earth, passing inside the moon’s orbit.
- ___ C. There is a real chance that an asteroid will collide with the Earth.
- ___ D. In 2028, a mile-wide asteroid—big enough to destroy a continent—is expected to come dangerously close to Earth.

- B.** (5–12.) Each group of four items includes one topic, one main idea, and two supporting details. In the space provided, 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. Those exposed to secondhand smoke for 30 years or more are 23 percent more likely to get lung cancer.
- ___ B. Exposure to secondhand smoke presents a number of serious health hazards to nonsmokers.
- ___ C. Exposure to secondhand smoke.
- ___ D. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke at home have a 15 percent higher death rate than those exposed to clean air.

Group 2

- ___ A. Advances in computer technology.
- ___ B. E-mail is now used to steal people’s identification and credit card information.
- ___ C. High-speed Internet connections are used to send harmful viruses around the world.
- ___ D. Advances in computer technology have created new tools for criminals.

(Continues on next page)

