

Lesson 2

Finding Main Ideas and Key Details



Learning Target



Retelling the main idea and key details of a text will help you understand what you've read.

- **Read** The **main idea** is what a text is mostly about. Details are all the facts and ideas in a passage that **support** the main idea, or help explain it.

Sometimes you will want to retell a passage that you've read. First, make sure you know the main idea. Then figure out the **key details**, which are the most important facts in the passage.

Read the cartoon below. What is it mostly about?

★★ Life in the American Colonies ★★



People had to chop wood for fuel.



Taking farm goods to sell in town could take hours.



Everyone in the family had to work.

► **Think** Use key details from the cartoon to complete the chart below.

Main Idea		
Key Detail	Key Detail	Key Detail

► **Talk** Discuss the key details you used to complete the chart. How does each detail support the main idea?



Academic Talk

Use these phrases and word to talk about the text.

- main idea
- key details
- support

What Is a Community?

by Clayton James

1 Think about the people you saw on your way to school today. Maybe you saw a bus driver, a police officer, or a mail carrier. You probably saw business people on their way to work. Once you got to school, you saw teachers, other students, parents, and the principal. All of these people make a community. A community is a group of people who live and work in the same area.

2 People play different parts to make a community. For example, bus drivers help people get to school or work. Police officers make sure people follow the laws and stay safe. Business people make or sell the things we buy. Parents and teachers make sure children have what they need to learn and be safe. Students learn so they can become good parents and workers.

3 You are a part of your community, too. You can do things to make a difference. You can help keep your neighborhood clean. You can follow rules and laws. You can help others who are in need.

4 Communities work best when people do their jobs and help each other. You and everyone around you work together to make a community.



Close Reader Habits

Circle the sentence that best states the main idea. As you reread, **underline** key details that tell more about the main idea.

Explore

What is the main idea of the text, and how do the key details support it?



As you reread the passage, ask yourself, "What is it mostly about?" Look for a sentence that answers this question.

Think

- 1 Complete the chart with the main idea and key details of the text.

Main Idea		
Key Detail	Key Detail	Key Detail

Talk

- 2 One key detail is, "bus drivers help people get to school or work." How does this key detail support the main idea?

Write

- 3 **Short Response** Choose another key detail you wrote in the chart. How does it support the main idea? Use the space provided on page 30 to write your answer.

HINT What does this detail say about the parts people play in a community?

Life in My Village

by Maahe, a 19th-century Cheyenne Indian

- 1 My name is Maahe. I am a Cheyenne Indian. I live with my family on the plains. We work hard in my village, but we also have fun. Each morning before the sun rises, people in my village build a fire. Then women walk to the stream to collect water. They use the water to make the morning meal.
- 2 After our morning meal, a man called the crier circles our village on a horse. He makes announcements. We all gather to hear the day's news.
- 3 After cleaning up from our morning meal, the children play games and swim. The women leave camp to gather sticks and roots. They tie the sticks into bundles and carry them back to camp on their backs.
- 4 We live in tipis made of buffalo hides. We can put them up or take them down quickly. The tipis are our homes. Because we follow the buffalo herds, we move often. We can pack up our entire village in one hour! Dogs or horses help pull all our belongings, including our tipis, on big sleds.
- 5 When we hunt buffalo, both men and women help. The women chase the buffalo toward the men. The men use their bows and arrows to kill the buffalo.
- 6 As evening falls, everyone gets ready for the evening meal. We eat, dance, tell stories, and play music. Then everyone goes to sleep. We know tomorrow will be another busy day!

Close Reader Habits

What is the main idea of the passage? **Underline** the key details that helped you better understand the main idea.



A paragraph can have a main idea too. Pay attention to the key details in the paragraph. What idea do they all help explain?

Think

- 1** This question has two parts. Answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

What is the main idea of “Life in My Village”?

- A** People in the village work hard but also have fun.
- B** People in the village build a fire each morning.
- C** The people live in tipis made of buffalo hides.
- D** Women in the village make the morning meal.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports your answer in Part A?

- A** “After our morning meal, a man called the crier circles our village on a horse.”
- B** “After cleaning up from our morning meal, the children play games and swim.”
- C** “Because we follow the buffalo herds, we move often.”
- D** “When we hunt buffalo, both men and women help.”

Talk

- 2** What is the main idea of paragraph 5? What details in the paragraph support that idea?



Write

- 3 Short Response** Reread paragraph 4. Retell key details that show why the Cheyenne felt their tipis made good homes. Use the space provided on page 31 to write your answer.

HINT Reread the text to find key details about the tipis.



Write Use the space below to write your answer to the question on page 27.

What Is a Community?

- 3 Short Response** Choose another key detail you wrote in the chart. How does it support the main idea?

HINT What does this detail say about the parts people play in a community?



Don't forget to check your writing.



Life in My Village

3 Short Response Reread paragraph 4. Retell key details that show why the Cheyenne felt their tipis made good homes.

HINT Reread the text to find key details about the tips.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Check Your Writing

- ☐ Did you read the prompt carefully?
- ☐ Did you put the prompt in your own words?
- ☐ Did you use the best evidence from the text to support your ideas?
- ☐ Are your ideas clearly organized?
- ☐ Did you write in clear and complete sentences?
- ☐ Did you check your spelling and punctuation?

WORDS TO KNOW

As you read, look inside, around, and beyond these words to figure out what they mean.

- **difficult**
- **objects**

Living in the Clouds

by Jeanette Cannon

- 1 Imagine living in a place so high that clouds are everywhere. And they're not just above you. They're all around you! This is what life is like in the Andes. The Andes are very high mountains in South America. The Inca people have lived in the Andes Mountains in Peru for over 500 years. But it is not easy to make a living on that rocky mountain land.

Mountain Farming

- 2 The mountainsides make farming difficult. Farmers need a flat area to plant. So they cut giant steps into the mountains. There they grow hundreds of kinds of potatoes. They also grow corn, wheat, and grains. Cotton, bananas, and sugarcane are common crops, too.



- 3 The Incas raise sheep, llamas, guinea pigs, and alpacas. Llamas were important to the Inca people 500 years ago and still are today. The animals are very surefooted. This means they do not easily trip or fall. The farmers use them to carry heavy loads through the mountains. People also drink the llama's milk.

Made in Peru

- 4 Beautiful handmade objects come from Peru. Many of them are made from the soft wool of llamas and alpacas. Spinners spin the wool into threads or yarn. The yarn is used for colorful sweaters and scarves. Weavers also form cloth from the threads. The cloth is used to make blankets, handbags, and hats.


Ancient Cities

- 5 Visitors come to Peru to see things they could not see anywhere else. One of the most famous places is Machu Picchu. The Incas carved this city on a mountaintop. People can walk there using the same trail the Incas used 500 years ago. The city and trail are kept very clean. Hikers and campers have to take their trash with them. Many people come every year. It is worth sore legs to see the ruins of this beautiful Inca city.

Peru's Garden of Eden

- 6 Peru is also home to beautiful Manu. Manu is one of the world's great rain forests. But too many of the trees there were being cut down. Some people are trying to stop more damage from happening. One reason is that rain forests are home to animals and plants that do not live anywhere else.
- 7 Life can be hard in the Andes. Still, the Inca people make the most of what the land offers. And more and more visitors are learning what life is like near the clouds.



 **Think** Use what you learned from reading the selection to respond to these questions.

- 1** What is the main idea of the entire passage?
 - A** The Incas raise sheep, llamas, and other animals.
 - B** The Incas make beautiful handmade crafts.
 - C** The Incas are working to protect the Manu rain forest.
 - D** The Incas live high in the Andes Mountains of Peru.
- 2** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

Which sentence **best** states the main idea of the section “Mountain Farming”?

- A** The Inca people have lived in the Andes Mountains for over 500 years.
- B** Farming is hard work in the Andes.
- C** A number of different crops are grown in the mountains.
- D** Llamas are used to carry heavy loads through the mountains.

Part B

Which **two** sentences from the passage **best** support your answer to Part A?

- A** “The Andes are very high mountains in South America.”
- B** “The mountainsides make farming difficult.”
- C** “The Incas raise sheep, llamas, guinea pigs, and alpacas.”
- D** “Beautiful handmade objects come from Peru.”
- E** “So they cut giant steps into the mountains.”
- F** “There they grow hundreds of kinds of potatoes.”

- 3** Which sentence states the main idea of paragraph 3?
- A** “The Incas raise sheep, llamas, guinea pigs, and alpacas.”
 - B** “Llamas were important to the Inca people 500 years ago and still are today.”
 - C** “The farmers use them to carry heavy loads through the mountains.”
 - D** “The animals [llamas] are very surefooted.”
- 4** How do the key details in paragraph 4 support its main idea?
- A** They describe different objects that are made.
 - B** They describe how sheep and alpaca wool is used.
 - C** They explain how wool is made into thread and yarn.
 - D** They describe what spinners and weavers do.
- 5** Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of the passage.

It is worth sore legs to see the ruins of this beautiful Inca city.

What does *ruins* mean in this context?

- A** a place that has been destroyed
- B** stones used to pave roads
- C** what is left of old buildings
- D** objects that were once used

- 6** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

Reread paragraph 6.

Peru is also home to beautiful Manu. Manu is one of the world's great rain forests. But too many of the trees there were being cut down. Some people are trying to stop more damage from happening. One reason is that rain forests are home to animals and plants that do not live anywhere else.

Which sentence **best** describes the main idea of the paragraph?

- A** There are several great rain forests in the world.
- B** Many animals and plants live in the rain forest.
- C** The rain forest needs to be protected.
- D** Tourists visit the rain forest.

Part B

Underline **two** key details in the paragraph that **best** support your answer for Part A.



7 Short Response What is the main idea of the section “Made in Peru”? Use details from the passage to support your answer.



Learning Target

Explain how retelling key details can help you understand the main idea of a text.
