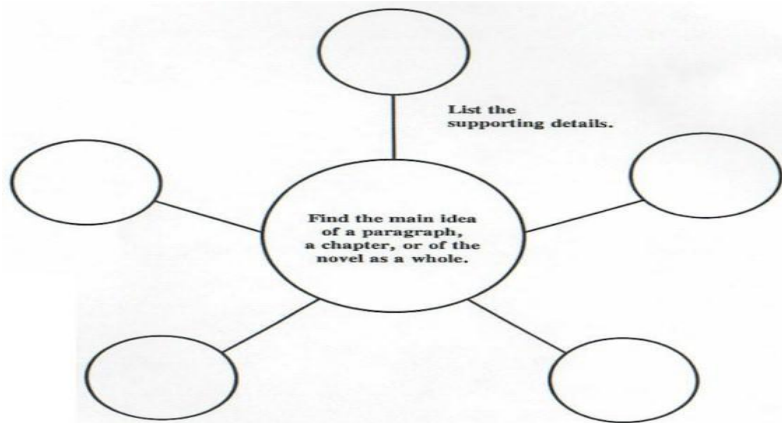


Main idea and supporting details:

What is main idea?

The main idea of a lesson or a paragraph is what the author wants the reader to understand when they read. The supporting details tell the reader more information about the main idea.

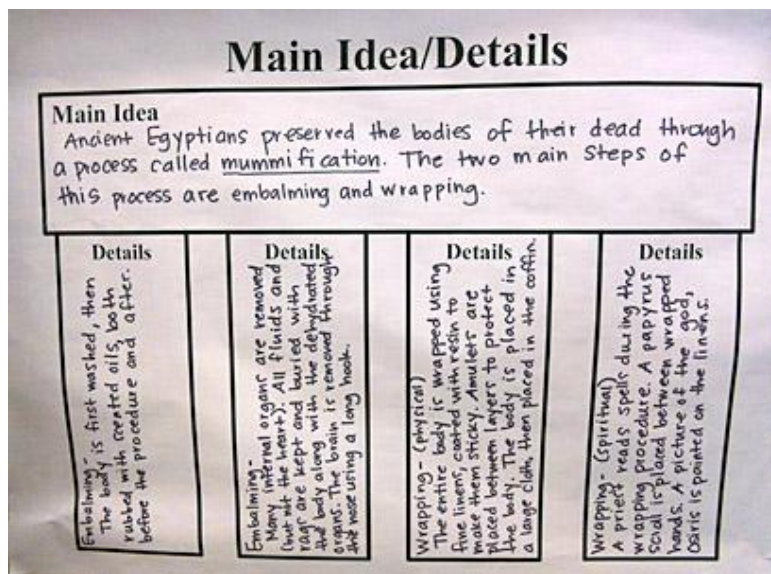
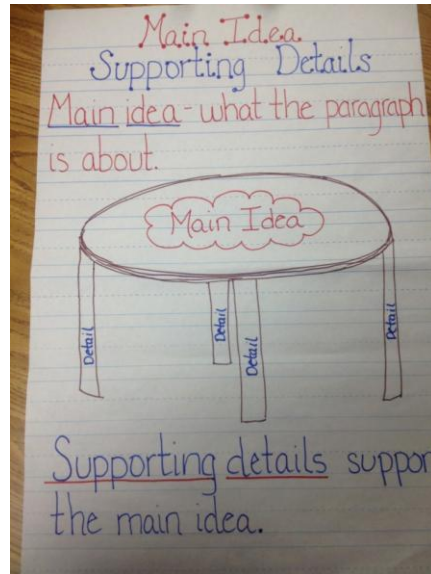


This is a simple graphic organizer that a teacher can use to guide the students to understand clearly about main idea and supporting details. It will be easy to find out the main idea and supporting details in a small paragraph or a lesson. But to note down the main idea and supporting details in a long essay or a long story, the graphic organiser can be used.

The fish bone organiser can be used to identify the main idea and supporting details.



Image courtesy: Enchantedlearning.com



Examples:

Niagara Falls is one of the most beautiful sights in North America. It is on the Niagara River about halfway between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Niagara Falls is on the American and Canadian border. The American Falls is 167 feet high. On the Canadian side, the Horseshoe Falls is 161 feet high.

- 1) What is the main idea of the passage?
Niagara Falls is one of the most beautiful sights in North America.
- 2) Choose two supporting details for the main idea.
Niagara Falls in on the American and Canadian border.
The Falls at the American side is 167 feet high.

The main idea in a paragraph is a general idea. But the supporting details are specific as they tell more about the main idea.

How to identify the main idea?

1. Locate the topic. It can be person, place, object or an idea.
2. The main idea is the general statement about the topic.
3. The topic sentence can occur in the beginning, middle or in the end.

How to identify supporting details?

The supporting details first name the topic. Clarifying sentences support the main idea. Completing sentences add specific details. The following are the types of supporting details that talk about the main idea in a paragraph.

1. Examples, Illustrations
2. Reasons
3. Facts and statistics
4. Descriptive details
5. Steps or procedures
6. Comparison and contrast

What is the main topic in the following paragraph?

Nutrition is the process of taking in and using food for growth, repair, and maintenance of the body. The science of nutrition is the study of foods and how the body uses them. Many North Americans define nutrition as eating a healthy diet. But what is healthy diet? Our food choices may be influenced by advertisements, likings or our convenience. We may reflect on the meaning of nutrition while pushing a cart down in a supermarket or while making a selection from a restaurant menu.