



## MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS/THEME

The main idea of a passage is what the passage is mostly about.  
A theme is the essential message, lesson or opinion about a topic.

### TIPS:

- A title tells about the main idea.
- The supporting details in a **passage** tell about the main idea of a passage.
- You have to infer the main idea of a **passage** if not stated by the author.
- All the sentences in a **paragraph** support the main idea of a paragraph.
- A topic sentence in a **paragraph** tells about the main idea of the paragraph.
- You have to infer the main idea of a **paragraph** if the paragraph does not include a topic sentence.
- Signal words for main idea are usually found in question stems rather than text.
- An **essential message** or **theme** is closely related to the main idea but includes a lesson, a moral, or the author's views about life and how people behave.

### SIGNAL WORDS:

mostly about	most likely
main theme	best title
best way	sums up
another title	main lesson
best describes	main purpose
best tells	best supported

## MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS

### QUESTION STEMS:

#### Main Idea

- What is this passage **MOSTLY** about?
- Which sentence **BEST** tells what the story is about?
- Which could be another title for this story?
- Which statement is best supported by the selection?
- According to the author, what is paragraph \_\_\_ mainly about?
- What is the **MOST** important lesson the character learns?
- What is the main idea of the entire article?
- What is the topic of the passage?

#### Details/Facts

- Which detail best supports the main idea of the text?
- Which detail from the article helps show how...
- Who? What? Where? When? Why?
- All of the following are facts from the article **EXCEPT**...
- How? How did it happen? How do you know?
- Which is a way to \_\_\_?
- Which statement best describes...
- Which statement best tells how...

#### Theme

- What is the theme of this story?
- What is the main message of the story?
- What information does the author use to support the main topic of this article?
- What is the best lesson that can be learned from this passage?