

Overarching Question: What is my story?

Overarching Challenge: Use the format of your choice to effectively tell your story.

Lesson Question: What is the main idea?

Lesson Challenge: Find the main idea in a piece of writing or an image.

Lesson Summary: Have you ever read something and asked yourself what the main point of it was? Maybe after listening to someone, you wondered what the person was trying to say? In this lesson, you'll practise finding the main idea in a piece of writing or an image.

Big Idea: Finding the main idea in a piece of writing or an image can help you more effectively tell your story.



Lesson Question: What is the main idea?

Lesson Challenge: Find the main idea in a piece of writing or an image.

Start Your Thinking

Have you ever read something and asked yourself what the main point of it was?

Maybe after listening to someone you wondered what the person was trying to say?

Below you'll find a piece of writing about hockey. What do you think the main idea is?

Hockey is good exercise and you need to be fast and strong to score goals. My coaches push me to work hard, think smart, and to not give up. I have made great friends playing hockey and have learned to work as a team. We have fun both on and off the ice. It is fun to play outside in the winter when it is cold. My mom likes me to play hockey instead of video games. I think hockey is the best sport to play.

Which statement below do you think best describes the main idea?

- It is cold in the winter.
- Hockey is the best sport to play.
- Hockey is better than video games.
- Other:

What details from the writing did you use to make your choice?



Think About the Lesson Challenge

In this lesson, you will practise using a thinking strategy to find the main idea in a piece of writing or image. Before moving on to the next part of the lesson, pause and think about how you decided on the main idea for the piece of writing about hockey. What did you think about?

You can also speak with another student, a teacher, a friend, a relative, a Knowledge Keeper, or an Elder about how they find the main idea in something they read, hear, or see. What do they think about?



To Find the Main Idea I Thought About

Grow Your Thinking

In the next part of this lesson, you will practise using a thinking strategy to find the main idea.

The main idea is the most important idea or overall message that the author or speaker is trying to get across. To communicate effectively the main idea must be clear to the audience. A piece of writing, a story, a text message, a movie, and even a picture will all have main ideas.

To find the main idea in something that you're reading or viewing, you may first need to find all the details. Similar to how a detective would use clues to solve a mystery, you can use these details to decide what the main idea is.

BUILDING MY TOOLBOX

The 5Ws are a set of questions that can help you make observations and determine the main idea in any type of communication.

- ✓ Who is involved?
- ✓ What is happening?
- ✓ Where does it take place?
- ✓ When does it take place?
- ✓ Why is this happening?

Go back to the hockey paragraph and see how many of the 5Ws you can find.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

After you've carefully examined the details, you're ready to think about the main idea.

On page 5 you'll find a thinking strategy that you can use to help identify the main idea.

Read the news article in the link below and then use the chart on page 5 to record details from the story. Use the details to help you find the main idea, just like you did earlier in this lesson. (There are some prompts that you can use as a guide and the first section is done for you.)

“Shannen Koostachin, Indigenous education advocate, named one of 150 greatest Canadians”:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/shannon-dream-legacy-150-canada-1.3981858>



Try this reading strategy: As you read through the article, try circling and labelling each of the 5Ws as you go (Highlighting or underlining is a good strategy too.)



| Source: News article on Shannen Koostachin | | |
|--|---|--|
| 5W Questions | What details do I notice? | What do the details tell me about the main idea? |
| Who is involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What names are mentioned? • What do we learn about Shannen? | Shannen Koostachin 15-years old from Attawapiskat First Nation, ON | This detail tells me that the main idea will probably have something to do with Shannen |
| What is happening? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did she do? • What is she receiving? | | |
| Where does the event take place? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what country or region? | | |
| When does the event take place? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What dates and events are mentioned? • When does the main event take place? | | |
| Why is this happening? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What reason might there be for her actions? • What reasons might there be to honour her? | | |
| I think that the main idea of the news article could be: Idea 1: Idea 2: | | |

CHECK: Did both of your statements represent what the article is trying to say?



If you were telling a friend about the main idea of the news article, which of your statements would you choose?

The idea that is most likely the main idea is:

Reasons that support my decision:

Check Your Progress

Has this thinking strategy helped you find the main idea?

I was able to find and note specific details.



Things for me to work on:

I was able to use the details to figure out what the main idea might be.



Things for me to work on:

Practise the Strategy

The 5Ws can be used to find the main idea in any style of communication. Practise using this thinking strategy with the chart on page 7 and one of these sources:

“Shannen’s Letter”: https://fncaringociety.com/sites/default/files/Shannens-letter_0.pdf
and



https://fncaringociety.com/sites/default/files/Shannens-letter-Cree_2.pdf



“ReMatriate Collective” (select one of the photos)
<https://newjourneys.ca/en/articles/we-are-the-rematriate-collective>



“Autumn Peltier speech to the UN”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zg60sr38oic>



“Qu?ušin” (Raven):
<http://www.our-story.ca/winners/writing/138:qu-uin-raven#story>



Interview with Greta Thurnberg:
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/19/greta-thunberg-we-are-ignoring-natural-climate-solutions>



Hockey news article:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/hockey-ethan-bear-devin-buffalo-1.4847403>





| Source: | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 5W Questions | What details do I notice? | What do the details tell me about the main idea? |
| Who is involved? | | |
| What is happening? | | |
| Where does it take place? | | |
| When does it take place? | | |
| Why is it taking place? | | |
| The main idea is... | | |

Lesson Question: What is the main idea?



Reflect on Your Thinking

Think About the Lesson Challenge



Think back to the beginning of this lesson. Which statement did you choose as the main idea for the paragraph about hockey? Do you still agree with your choice? Why or why not?



Can you think of other situations when you could use this thinking strategy to find the main idea?

Think About the Overarching Challenge

Remember our overarching question: What is my story? After you've finished the English lessons, you'll select the format of your choice to tell your story.



How might the thinking strategy in this lesson help me tell my story?

Lesson Question: What is the main idea?

To complete this lesson, take a moment to reflect on your learning.

1. Provide examples that show how you have met the success criteria.
2. Use the rating scale to indicate how well you have met the success criteria.
3. Describe the next steps in your learning.



| Success Criteria | How well am I doing? |
|---|---|
| I can use a thinking strategy to find specific details that support the main idea. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-bottom: 10px;"> 1 2 3 4 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-bottom: 10px;"> I'm still working on it I've got it </div> Examples that support my rating and next steps (e.g., use the thinking strategy, ask for help): |
| I can find the main idea and express it in one sentence. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-bottom: 10px;"> 1 2 3 4 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-bottom: 10px;"> I'm still working on it I've got it </div> Examples that support my rating and next steps (e.g., use the thinking strategy, ask for help): |
| I understand how a clear main idea and supporting details will help me tell my story. | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-bottom: 10px;"> 1 2 3 4 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-bottom: 10px;"> I'm still working on it I've got it </div> Examples that support my rating and next steps (e.g., ask for help): |