

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

Listening Comprehension Instructional Routine: Identify Main Idea

Preparation/Materials: Three different pre-written paragraphs consisting of three to five sentences (e.g., Tom has a cat. He feeds the cat each day. He gives the cat water. He brushes the cat outside.)



- *Italicized type is what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say

- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Sounds are noted using / /

TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK

We are going to identify the main idea of a paragraph.

TEACHER MODELS TASK

To identify the main idea, think about who or what the story is about. The main idea is the most important information the author wants the reader to know about the who or what.

Listen.

Read aloud pre-written paragraph.

Tom has a cat. He feeds the cat each day. He gives the cat water. He brushes the cat outside.

'Think aloud' to demonstrate the process of identifying the main idea.

I first ask myself, who or what is this paragraph about?

This paragraph is about Tom.

What is the most important information about Tom?

The author tells me that Tom feeds the cat, gives it water, and brushes the cat.

The most important information the author wants me to know is that Tom takes care of his cat.

TEACHER & STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER

Let's answer these questions together.

How do I figure out the main idea of a paragraph?

- First, I figure out who or what the paragraph is mainly about.
- Next, I ask myself what is the most important information about the who or the what.

So who or what is the paragraph about?

- It is about Tom.

What is the most important information the author wants us to know about Tom?

- Tom takes care of his cat.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

- Tom takes care of his cat.

Yes. The main idea of this paragraph is that Tom takes care of his cat.

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK

Listen.

Read aloud the same paragraph to students.

Your turn.

Repeat dialogue as in TEACHER & STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER but only the students answer.)

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

When students consistently identify the main idea in a paragraph, provide individual turns using other passages.

SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

Verify that students are identifying the main idea for the sample paragraph. If an error is made, repeat the steps by explaining, modeling, and providing another practice opportunity. If difficulties persist, shorten the sentence length and simplify the word choice in the text.

Adaptations using this instructional routine:

- Provide students a picture and ask who or what the picture is about.
- Have a small group of students listen to a short text on tape and determine the main idea.

For further independent student practice, refer to the FCRR Kindergarten and First Grade Student Center Activities at http://www.fcrr.org/curriculum/pdf/GK-1/C_Final.pdf

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