

## Comprehension Activity Introduce: Main Idea

**Activity Type:** Introduce

**Grade:** K-3

**Group Size:** Small Group, Large Group, Whole Class

**Length:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** A nonfiction book to read out loud, chart paper or board

**Goal:** Given a nonfiction book, students will be able to identify its main idea.

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### Prepare:

Choose a nonfiction book that appeals to early readers.

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### Model/Instruct:

1. Show students the book (the front cover, back cover, and some of the pages) and ask them to predict what the book will be about. This will prepare them for the substance of the book and aid their comprehension as you read.

**Today we are going to read a book entitled \_\_\_\_\_ . What do you think this book is about? What do you think we will learn from this book?**

2. Record the students' comments on the chart paper or board.

3. Explain the meaning of determining the main idea.

**Today, we are going to work on finding the main idea of this book. Everything you read has a main idea. It is the most important thought or piece of information from the book. It tells the overall idea of the book. When you think about what you have read after you are finished reading, you should be able to identify what the book was about.**

4. Give examples of the ways students have already used strategies to determine main ideas.

**When you tell a story, how do you get the main idea across? Have you ever figured out the main idea of a story your friend told you? Have you ever talked about the main idea of a television show or movie?**

5. Read the book, pausing at appropriate places to comment on important information.

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### Practice:

6. Finish reading the book.

**Let's talk about we have learned in this book and see if we can determine the main idea. Remember that the main idea is the most important idea in the book. It should also tell the overall idea of the book. What is this book about? What do you think is the main idea of the book? Why?**

7. Record students' comments on the chart paper or board.

8. Determine the main idea using the information from the chart paper or board.

**Now let's look at our list. It looks like we were able to gather some good information about our topic. Let's look at each thought on our list and discuss it. Do you think it is the main idea or an important supporting detail? Remember, the main idea is the overall idea of the book. When you know the main idea, you are able to understand the book better.**

9. Go through each item on the list and ask for student ideas on whether or not it is the main idea. Determine the main idea together.

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### **Adjust:**

#### **For advanced students:**

Encourage these students to write a new title for the book based on the main idea and draw a picture that goes with the title.

#### **For struggling students:**

Some students may have difficulty distinguishing important supporting details from the main idea. In this case it may be helpful to ask them to summarize the book in one sentence. This summary should be close to the main idea.

#### **For ELL students:**

Before reading the book, explain the meaning of any key vocabulary or concepts. After reading, ask these students to tell you what the book is about.

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