POLITEKNIK MALAYSIA

KEMENTERIAN PENGAJIAN TINGGI

KOLEJ KOMUNITI MALAYSIA

COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH 1

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Pengajian AM

READING & WRITING MADE EASY

Designed for Malaysian Polytechniques Students

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POLITEKNIK MALAYSIA
PORT DICKSON

DUE10012
COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH 1

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We would like to convey our utmost gratitude to the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education particularly the E-learning and Instructional Division (BIPD) for funding our e-book project.

We hereby declare that this module is our original work. To the best of our knowledge it contains no materials previously written or published by another person. However, if there is any, due acknowledgement and credit are mentioned accordingly in the e-book.

Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia Cataloguing-in-Publication Data (after eisbn is received)

Cataloguing Information (to be informed)

PUBLISHED BY:
Politeknik Port Dickson
KM14, Jalan Pantai, 71050 Si Rusa
Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan

AUGUST 2021

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Abstract

Based on previous semesters' results, it could be concluded that the second chapter of DUE10012 Communicative Skills which is Reading Skills is the most challenging one as compared to the other two chapters. Chapter 2, though titled as Reading Skills, actually covers more than the elements of reading. It also touches topics on current issues, writing skills and causes and effects. It is safe to say that this chapter is a bit technical compared to the other chapters.

Therefore, this book is created to assist students in tackling Chapter 2; Reading Skills, of DUE10012. This book contains 3 units which are Reading Skills, Information Gathering Skills and Writing Skills. Within those units are tips, notes and exercises aimed to making students understand more of what it takes to conquer Chapter 2.

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CHAPTER 1

READING SKILLS

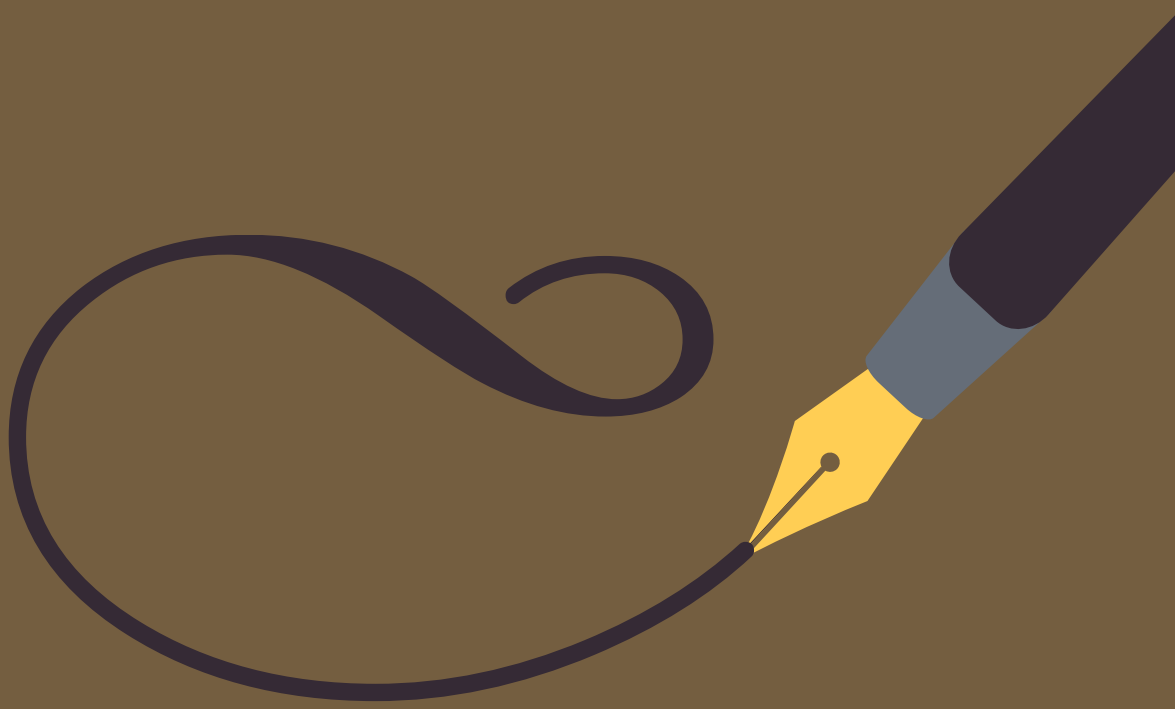
"Reading is essential for those who seek to rise above the ordinary"
-Jim Rohn

In this chapter, you will learn how to ...

UNIT 1:
SKIM FOR INFORMATION

UNIT 2:
SCAN FOR INFORMATION

UNIT 3:
FIND MEANING USING CONTEXTUAL CLUES



UNIT 1 :
SKIMMING FOR INFORMATION

What is skimming?

Skimming is one of the reading techniques that use rapid eye movement and keywords to quickly move through text for a purpose. The purpose is to get a general overview of the material. For example, general information within a section.

Skimming technique can be used in previewing a text you are going to read, reviewing a text you have read, determining the main idea of a certain long text, or finding the source materials for your research paper.

Skimming technique can help you save time although it may not be the best way to read. The reason being is that you may miss important information or overlook the meanings embedded in the text.

Skimming technique can be used to overview your textbook chapters or to review for a test. It can also be used to decide if you are going to read the text at all since skimming can give you the general idea and tone of the material as well as the similarities or differences found in other reading material of your choice.

SKIMMING STEPS

You don't have to read through every single word in a text when using the skimming technique. You only need to pay special attention to typographical cues-headings, boldface and italic type, indenting, bulleted and numbered lists.

You will be alert for key words and phrases, the names of people and places, dates, nouns, and unfamiliar words.

In general, follow these steps:

1. **Read the table of contents or chapter overview to learn the main divisions of ideas.**
2. **Read the headings of charts and tables.**
3. **Read only the first sentence, or the first few words of the paragraph to locate the main idea.**
4. **Read sentences containing keywords.**
5. **Read the entire paragraph that you think has significant meanings or ideas.**
6. **Read chapter summaries when provided.**

While skimming is always faster than your normal reading speed, you should slow down in the following situations:

- When you skim introductory and concluding paragraphs.
- When you skim topic sentences.
- When you find an unfamiliar word.
- When the material is very complicated.

EXERCISE TIME!

Skim through each passage and match with the correct headings provided below.

1. _____

Tourism have been prove an impact on the places visited. Sometimes the impact is good but often it's negative. For example, if lots of people visit one place, then this can damage the environment. The question is - how can we minimize the problems without preventing people from travelling and visiting places?

2. _____

The main aim of ecotourism is to reduce the negative impact that tourism has on the environment and local people. The idea is to encourage tourists to think about what they do when they visit a place.

3. _____

It's great to talk about protecting the environment, but how do you actually do this? There are a number of key points. Tourists shouldn't drop litter, they should stay on the paths, they shouldn't interfere with wildlife, and they should respect local customs and traditions.

4. _____

In 2002, the United Nation celebrated the 'International Year of Ecotourism'. Over the past twenty years, more and more people have started taking eco holidays. In countries such as Ecuador, Nepal, Costa Rica and Kenya, ecotourism represents a significant proportion of a tourist industry.

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/gm11910uj

Choice of answers:

(a) What is ecotourism?
(b) Is tourism always good?
(c) What exactly does ecotourism mean?
(d) How popular is ecotourism?

Answers : 1(b), 2(a), 3(c), 4(d)

EXERCISE TIME!

TUTORIAL:

Here's something to think about the next time you go shopping. Have you ever noticed how many trolleys are available when you go to the supermarket? In my experience, it seems like hundreds! But how about the number of hand baskets? Invariably I struggle to find even one, especially when I only need a few items. Why might this be the case? Well it seems to be a tactic used to encourage us to buy more. If you are walking around with an empty trolley, you are more tempted to fill it, so if you are planning on only doing a quick shop, always try to find a basket. It will be lighter, easier to use and is sure to save you money!

Source: https://www.liveworksheets.com/vc1663940ur

- What do you think the passage is about?
- What is the main idea of the text?

1) Skim through the passage.
- Look for words that seems to be repeating or significant.
- The words are *shopping*, *trolleys*, *hand baskets* and *save money.*

2) What does it tell you?
- Read the first few sentences and the last sentence, they show the general view of what the passage is about. Can you figure it out?

3)Next, ask yourself questions that could help generate the main idea. Look at the difference between trolleys and hand baskets.
- *Which one will cost you more money if you were to use it for shopping?*
- *What is the tactic mentioned in the passage?*
- *How can you save more money?*

4) Now, try to figure out the main idea of the text on your own.

Skim through each passage and answer the questions below.

Exercise 1

It is said that hip hop music was born at a birthday party in the Bronx, NY. This popular genre of music started out as party music in the 1970s. It was played by local DJs in the city neighbourhoods. DJs put different pieces of music together. They did this to make new sounds. Then, rapping was added. Rapping is a way of talking over the music with words that rhyme. DJs arranged the beats so that rappers could find a rhythm. Then, the rappers would speak in time with the beat. Rappers often wrote lyrics, or the words of a song, about their lives. At first, hip hop served as a response to disco which was all about wealth and status. Hip hop on the other hand emphasized reality and community. Hip hop quickly became an artistic outlet for African Americans. It was a new way to tell stories. Hip hop is an art form that continues to evolve and impact communities today. New artists and new sounds are brought into the genre. The new styles continue to become popular. Hip hop is a genre that is heard and enjoyed all over the world.

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/hr1828165id

- What do you think the passage is about?
- What is the main idea of the text?

1) Skim through the passage.

- The repetitive words are
  _____
  _____

2) What does it tell you?

- This passage discusses about
  _____
  _____

3) Next, ask yourself questions that could help generate the main idea.

- _____
- _____
- _____

4) Now, try to figure out the main idea of the text on your own.

Exercise 2

Fireworks were invented in China in the 7th century. Legend has it that a group of Chinese monks were trying to create a medicine that would give people immortality. Instead, they accidentally invented gunpowder, which is the explosive used in fireworks.

Gunpowder was eventually used for guns and bombs, but since its invention it has always been used for fireworks, too. The Chinese would use the gunpowder as signal flares and for celebrations.

Over time, people learned that if certain metals were mixed with the gunpowder, brilliant colours could be made when it was ignited. Many more advancements took place that allowed fireworks to create all sorts of shapes and sounds, but they still work in the same way today.

Source: https://learning-ph.com/english/question512162861/

- What do you think the passage is about?
- What is the main idea of the text?

1) Skim through the passage.
- The repetitive words are _____
_____

2) What does it tell you?
- This passage discusses about _____
_____
_____
_____

3) Next, ask yourself questions that could help generate the main idea.
- _____
- _____
- _____

4) Now, try to figure out the main idea of the text on your own.

UNIT 2 :
SCANNING FOR INFORMATION

While skimming gives you a birds-eye view of the material, scanning technique's goal is to locate and swoop down on particular facts.

What is scanning?
Scanning technique uses keywords and organizational cues to find specific information in the text.

Examples of scanning technique purposes are: to search for a word in a dictionary or index, to find a phone number or an address in a directory, to check the time schedule of a program in an agenda, to check the price of a specific item in a catalogue and to know a particular information from a text.

Once you have an overview of the passage/text, scan through the material to find the facts you needed. Skimming and scanning techniques usually work hand-in-hand.

SCANNING STEPS

Scanning technique is used mostly to answer questions related to the passage/text.

As the keywords are already given in the question itself, you may use the scanning technique by finding the related keywords in the passage/text and reading through the surrounding text to find its relevance, answer one question at a time and re-read the questions to determine if the answer is correct.

Here are some steps to follow when scanning for information:

1. Skim through the passage/text to get the general idea. This will help you to guess the section or part of the text where you might find the information you need.

2. Try to anticipate how the answer will appear and what clues you might use to help you locate the answer. For example, if you were looking for a certain date, you would quickly read the paragraph looking only for numbers.

3. Use headings and any other aids that will help you identify which sections might contain the information you are looking for.

4. Selectively read and skip through sections of the passage.

EXERCISE TIME!

Scan through the story titled ***A HOUSE OF MYSTERY*** and answer the given questions.

In 1884, heartbroken Sarah Winchester left her home in Connecticut on the east coast of the USA as well as the graves of her husband and only child, and travelled across the country to California where strange obsession awaited her. Did she know that it would last for the rest of her life?

Source: https://www.liveworksheets.com/qu1642988ax

1. Where was Sarah Winchester's home?

2. Where did Sarah Winchester travel to in 1884?

<u>VOCABULARY</u>
Grave: holes dug in the ground to receive a coffin or dead body

When her husband passed away, Sarah inherited the Winchester gun and rifle company, which had made the Winchester family very wealthy. After the deaths of her child and husband, Sarah fell into a deep depression and decided to consult a medium. According to some sources, the medium explained that her family was being haunted by the ghosts of American soldiers and others killed by Winchester rifles. Supposedly the deaths of her daughter and husband had been caused by these spirits and Sarah Winchester might be the next victim. The medium said that to keep the ghosts happy, Sarah had to build a huge house for them. As long as she never stopped building the house, her life would not be in danger.

Source: https://www.liveworksheets.com/qu1642988ax

3. What happened to Sarah after the deaths of her child and husband?

4. Who told Sarah that her family was being haunted by ghosts of American soldiers?

5. What did the medium tell Sarah to do to keep the ghosts happy?

VOCABULARY

Wealthy: having a lot of money or very rich.

Consult: ask for advice or to get information.

Sarah Winchester had strange habits, too. Apparently, she never slept in the same bedroom two nights in a row because she wanted to confuse any evil spirits that were waiting for her. She also used to visit the Blue Room at the centre of the house every night to communicate with good spirits. She would ring a bell at midnight to call them and again at 2 am when it was time for them to leave. She would wear one of the 13 special coloured robes and ask them for guidance on her construction plans.

Source: https://www.liveworksheets.com/qu1642988ax

6. Where was the Blue Room situated in the house?

7. How many colours of robes did she wear?

VOCABULARY
Wear: put a cloth on

Guidance: advice or information aimed at resolving a problem or difficulty

A year after Sarah's death, the house was opened to the public. Since then, many people have described strange experiences there. Neighbours claimed to hear a bell ring at midnight and at 2am. A caretaker heard the sound of a screw slowly turning, then hitting the floor. He looked everywhere, but found nothing. Tour guides have reported seeing a ghostly workman with a dark moustache in the basement of the house.

Source: https://www.liveworksheets.com/qu1642988ax

8. What happened to the house a year after Sarah's death?

9. When did the neighbours hear a bell ring?

10. Who reportedly saw a ghostly workman in the basement?

VOCABULARY
Public: people / community

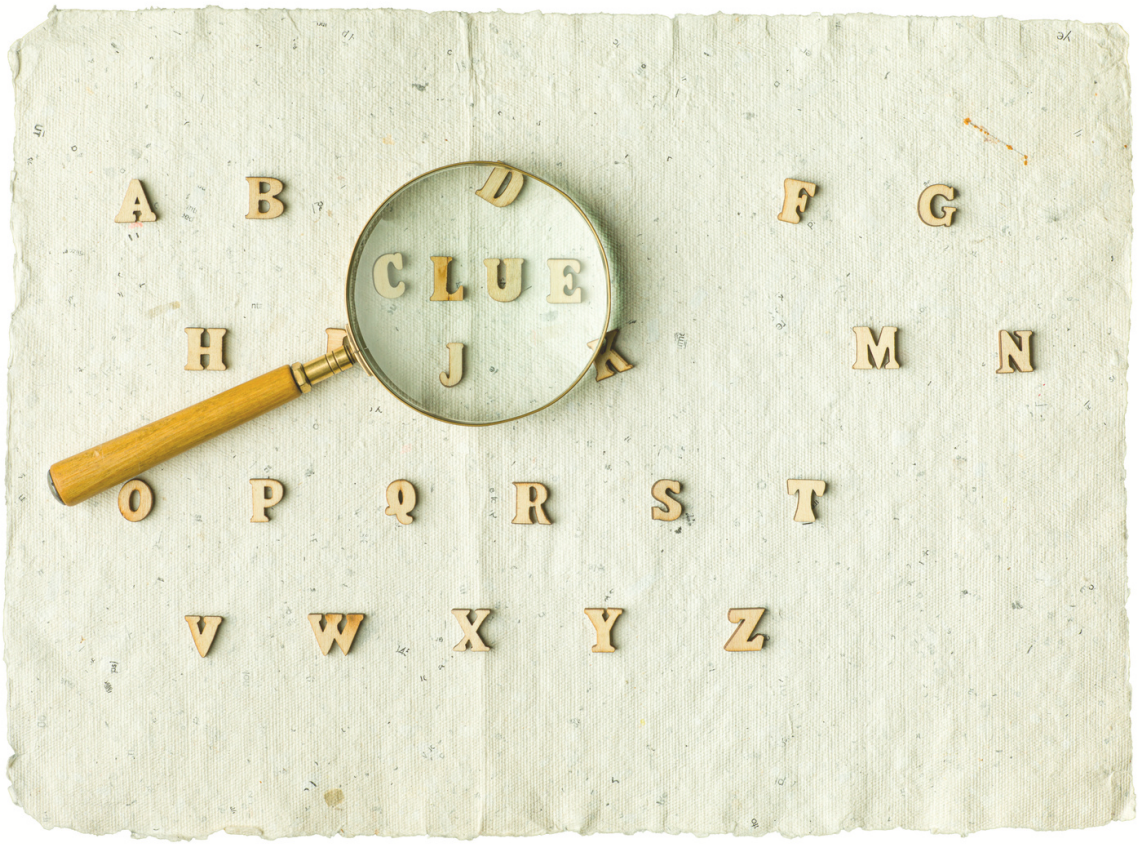
Neighbours: people who live next door to each other

UNIT 3 :
CONTEXTUAL CLUES

Normally when we are reading a passage/text, we often resort to using the dictionary or internet to find the meaning of words that we are not familiar with. However, that is not the case for a standardized test.

Especially when reading a very long section in a book or articles, finding meanings to new vocabularies can be hard especially when you will also need to know how to determine the main idea and make inferences. That is where contextual clues comes in handy.

Contextual clues are basically words or phrases around unfamiliar words that could help us understand or digest the meaning of the word.



TYPES OF CONTEXTUAL CLUES

There are many types of contextual clues. Here are a few and their examples:

1. **Definition or Restatement.** The meaning of the word is in the sentence itself, usually following the word.

e.g. Jack's ***duplicity*** caused him to steal his co-worker's pensions by funnelling their money into an offshore account.

2. **Synonym.** The sentence uses a similar word to help explain the meaning of the vocabulary word.

e.g. The baseball coach punished the team's ***duplicity*** or deceitfulness after they admitted to using steroids to boost their batting averages.

3. **Antonym/Opposite/Contrast.** The sentence uses a word with an opposite definition to give the meaning of the vocabulary word.

e.g. It was your ***duplicity*** that caused me to break up with you! Had you been honest, I wouldn't have felt the need.

4. **Example or Explanation.** This type of contextual clue uses examples to help the reader infer the meaning of the vocabulary word.

e.g. His ***duplicity*** involved lowering his employee's salaries, increasing their stock options, and then stealing the money he saved by doing so.

Based on the four examples given, you can tell that the word "duplicity" here means dishonesty.

TYPES OF CONTEXTUAL CLUES

Other contextual clues include:

5. **List of Series.** The unfamiliar word is included in a series of related words that give an idea of the word's meaning.
e.g. The painting was polychromatic, multi-coloured, vivid, and colourful.

6. **Cause and Effect.** The meaning of an unfamiliar word is signalled by a cause and-effect relationship between ideas in the text.
e.g. Because cans and bottles are not biodegradable, they will not break down into the earth.

7. **Description of Inference.** The meaning of an unfamiliar word can be inferred from the description of a situation or experience.
e.g. The novel has plenty of pictures, drawings and illustrations that are graphic and make me use my imagination.

EXERCISE TIME!

Here are some low to intermediate level of English exercises to help guide you in finding contextual clues.

Read the underlined word in the sentence and circle the meaning of the word.

1. The student replied to the teacher with a witty answer and the whole class laughed.
a. funny
b. mean
c. word

Clues:
The word "witty" is followed by the word "answer" which resulted in everyone laughing.

2. I looked at my brother with a glare after he broke my favourite toy.
a. confusing
b. dirty look
c. difficult

Clues:
The word "glare" is used to describe a look on someone's face.

3. Fireworks on the 4th of July often give off a beautiful glimmer in the sky.
a. glow
b. bright
c. look

Clues:
The word "glimmer" is used to describe shimmer or glow

Exercise taken from: https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/context-clues-finding-word-meanings/

Answers:
1(a), 2(b), 3(a)

4. When we go camping, my father will ignite the fire so that all of us can roast marshmallows.
a. start
b. call
c. see

Clues:
The word "ignite" shows the action of starting something

5. He chose to delete the unhealthy type of foods from his diet and make better choices.
a. include
b. make more
c. remove

Clues:
The word "delete" shows the action of taking off something.

6. My grandpa will almost always doze off during television shows he watches when he is tired.
a. cheer
b. nap
c. discuss

Clues:
The word "doze" shows the action of falling asleep without realising.

7. The curious puppy emptied the shopping bag while he sniffed around looking for something to chew.
a. problem
b. interested
c. happy

Clues:
The word "curious" shows the action of wanting to find out or know more about something.

Exercise taken from: https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/context-clues-finding-word-meanings/

Answers:
4(a), 5(c), 6(b), 7(b)

8. Each day during the spring season there is a slight increase in temperature until summer arrives.
a. small
b. increase
c. bright

Clues:
The word "slight" shows the action of increasing in a small manner.

9. The tower will topple if we put too much weight at the top.
a. pounds
b. grow
c. fall over

Clues:
The word "topple" shows the action of falling abruptly due to heavy load or uneven ground.

10. The students who put in the best effort in class will be included in the celebration.
a. attitude
b. hard work
c. completion

Clues:
The word "effort" shows the action of not giving up and putting on extra work.

Exercise taken from: https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/context-clues-finding-word-meanings/

Answers:
8(a), 9(c), 10(b)

EXERCISE TIME!

Now let's try a higher level of English exercise.

Choose the best answer. Use the contextual clues to help you find the correct answer.

1. Put this medicine on your skin and rub it until it's invisible. It will inhibit the infection's attempt to spread on your skin. What does "inhibit" mean?
a. live in a certain place
b. block or slow down
c. itch or burn
d. help to do something important

Type of Contextual Clue: Explanation

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/sf1825153ca

2. Fatin and Lizzy are having a dispute over which radio station to play while they are at work. It would be so much simpler if they both liked the same kind of music. A dispute is a ...
a. musical instrument
b. choice of music
c. discovery
d. disagreement

Type of Contextual Clue: Antonym

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/sf1825153ca

3. When your plan brings us great wealth, you will definitely be rewarded for your sagacity. What is sagacity?
a. good looks
b. mistakes
c. intelligence
d. huge appetite for herbs

Type of Contextual Clue: Definition/Restatement

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/sf1825153ca

4. We have rather lofty expectations for you, son. You will attend college, become rich and famous and you will be elected president of the United States before you turn forty. Which word is a synonym of “lofty”?
a. high
b. shaky
c. small
d. slowly

Type of Contextual Clue:
Example/Explanation

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/sf1825153ca

5. No one ever suspected that Jerry was a spy. On the surface, he would behave like any normal citizen. When his covert activity was discovered and announced to the world, we were all super shocked. Covert is...
a. friendly
b. helpful
c. loud
d. hidden

Type of Contextual Clue:
Opposite

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/sf1825153ca

6. If you don’t recover quickly from your condition, it could become chronic. Then you might have to take medicine for the rest of your life. If something is chronic, it ...
a. is very painful
b. won’t go away
c. makes you smell bad
d. isn’t real

Type of Contextual Clue:
Explanation

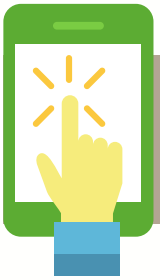
Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/sf1825153ca

7. Connie is never happy when everyone else is getting along. She always instigates fights and then acts like the little Miss Innocent that she is not. When you instigate something, you ...
a. check it out
b. protect it
c. get it started
d. ignore it

Type of Contextual Clue:
Opposite/Contrast

Exercise taken from: https://www.liveworksheets.com/sf1825153ca

Answers:
1(b), 2(d), 3(c), 4(a), 5(d), 6(a), 7(c)



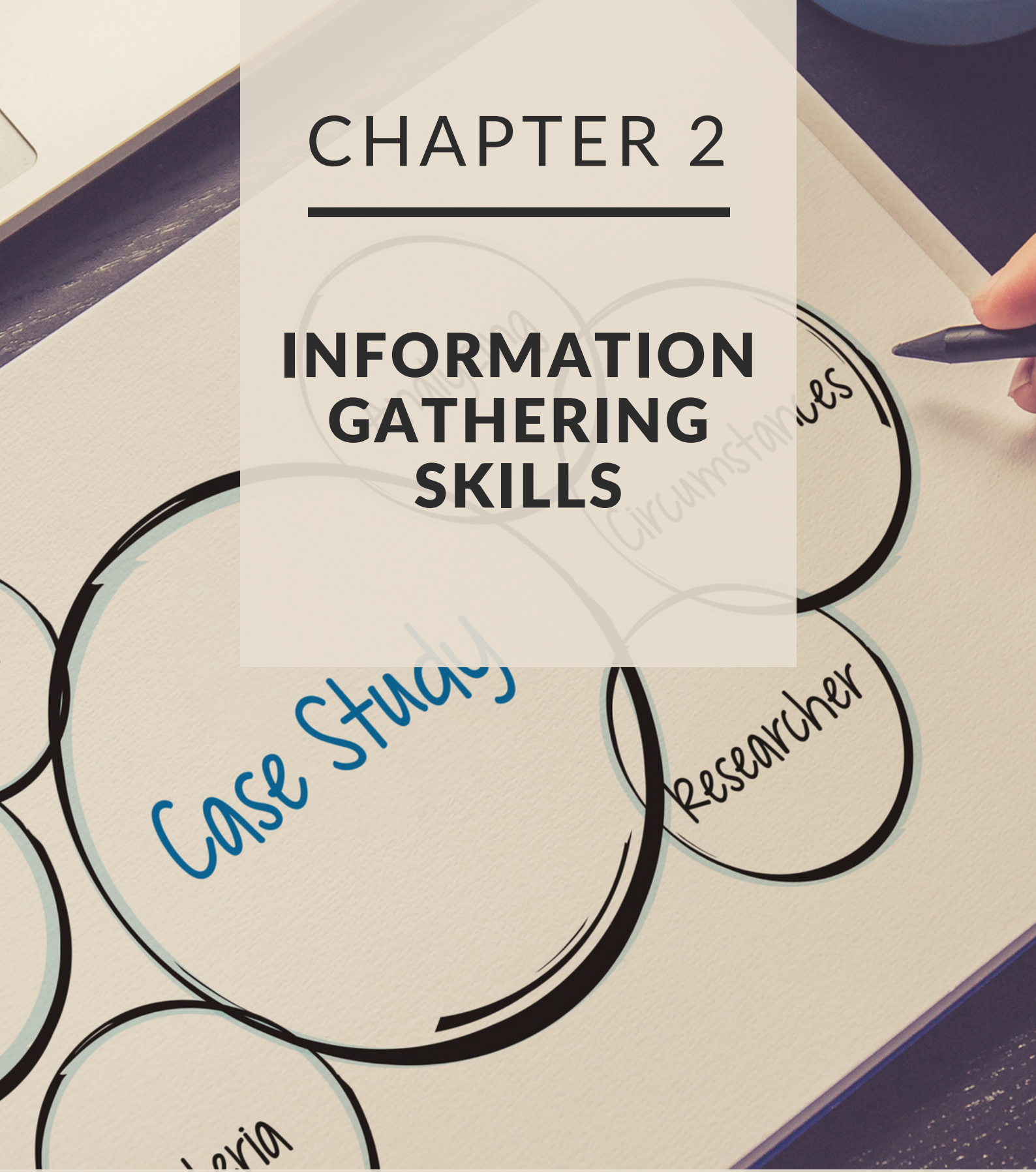
INTERACTIVE EXERCISE!

Click the following links for more interactive exercises on contextual clues:

- https://www.liveworksheets.com/el1328801tt
- https://www.liveworksheets.com/eh1207656tc
- https://www.liveworksheets.com/eu1548799mz
- https://www.liveworksheets.com/rl1542807fd

CHAPTER 2

INFORMATION GATHERING SKILLS



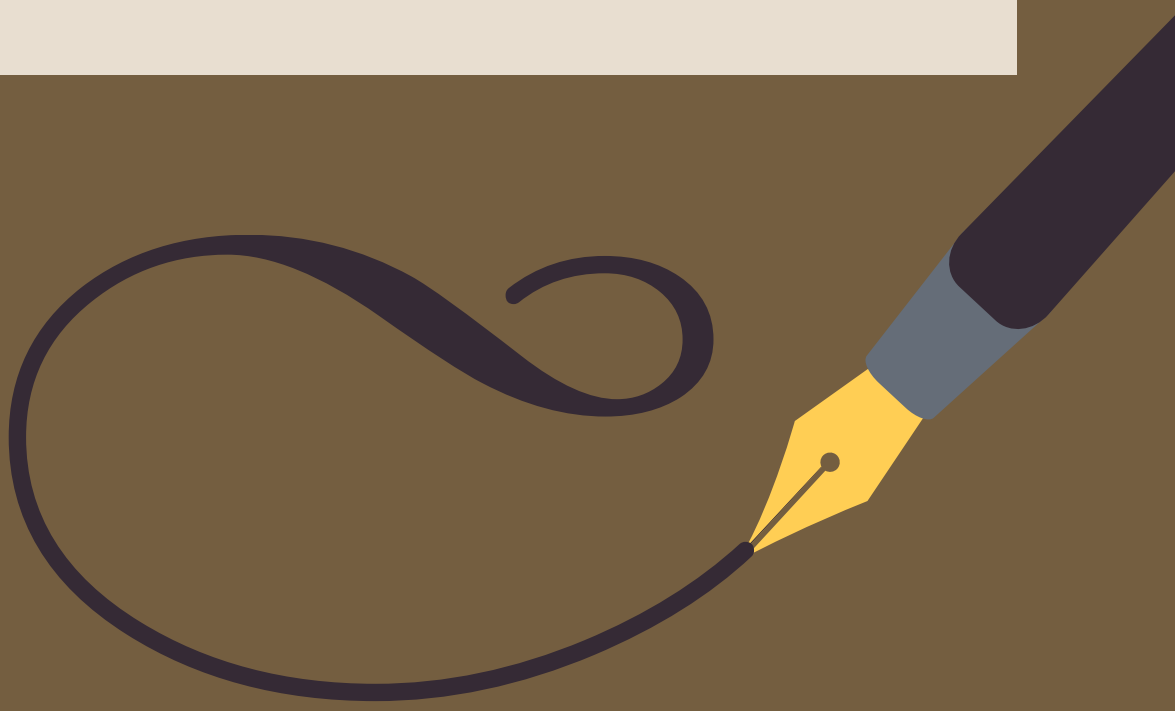
"Reading is a gateway skill that makes all other learning possible"
- Barrack Obama

In this chapter, you will learn how to ...

UNIT 1:
IDENTIFY AND DISCUSS SIGNIFICANT POINTS FROM A TEXT

UNIT 2:
MAKE INFERENCES FROM A TEXT

UNIT 3:
MIND MAP INFORMATION FROM A TEXT



UNIT 1: IDENTIFY AND DISCUSS SIGNIFICANT POINTS FROM A TEXT

Gathering information from reading requires readers to apply certain strategies that will help them to understand better what the author is going to convey through text.

As skimming and scanning help readers to get general and specific information of a text, the same reading techniques will be applied too in comprehending the author's purpose and ideas.

The following tips would give some overview to help you in establishing a context, purpose and expectation for reading as well as to develop more strategies throughout the process of identifying details from a text.

BEFORE YOU READ

- Read the title.
- What is the text about? (fiction/non-fiction)
- What is the topic?

DURING THE READING

- Look for and carefully read text features.
- Identify the text structures used.
- What repeated information can be found in the text?

AFTER YOU READ

- What are the details and examples used to support the main ideas?

STEPS TO IDENTIFY SIGNIFICANT POINTS FROM A TEXT

To identify significant points from a text, we first need to understand what they are. Significant means **important** or **main**.

Generally, looking for main ideas help the reader to remember important information in a text and is the essence of comprehension. Readers need to understand what is important and what are the details.

The following steps provide readers for an effective approach in identifying significant points from text:

1. **Identify the title and topic.**
2. **Look at the first and last sentences / paragraphs of the extract.**
3. **Look for repeated words and phrases in the extract.**
4. **Ask ourselves "What does the writer want me to know?"**

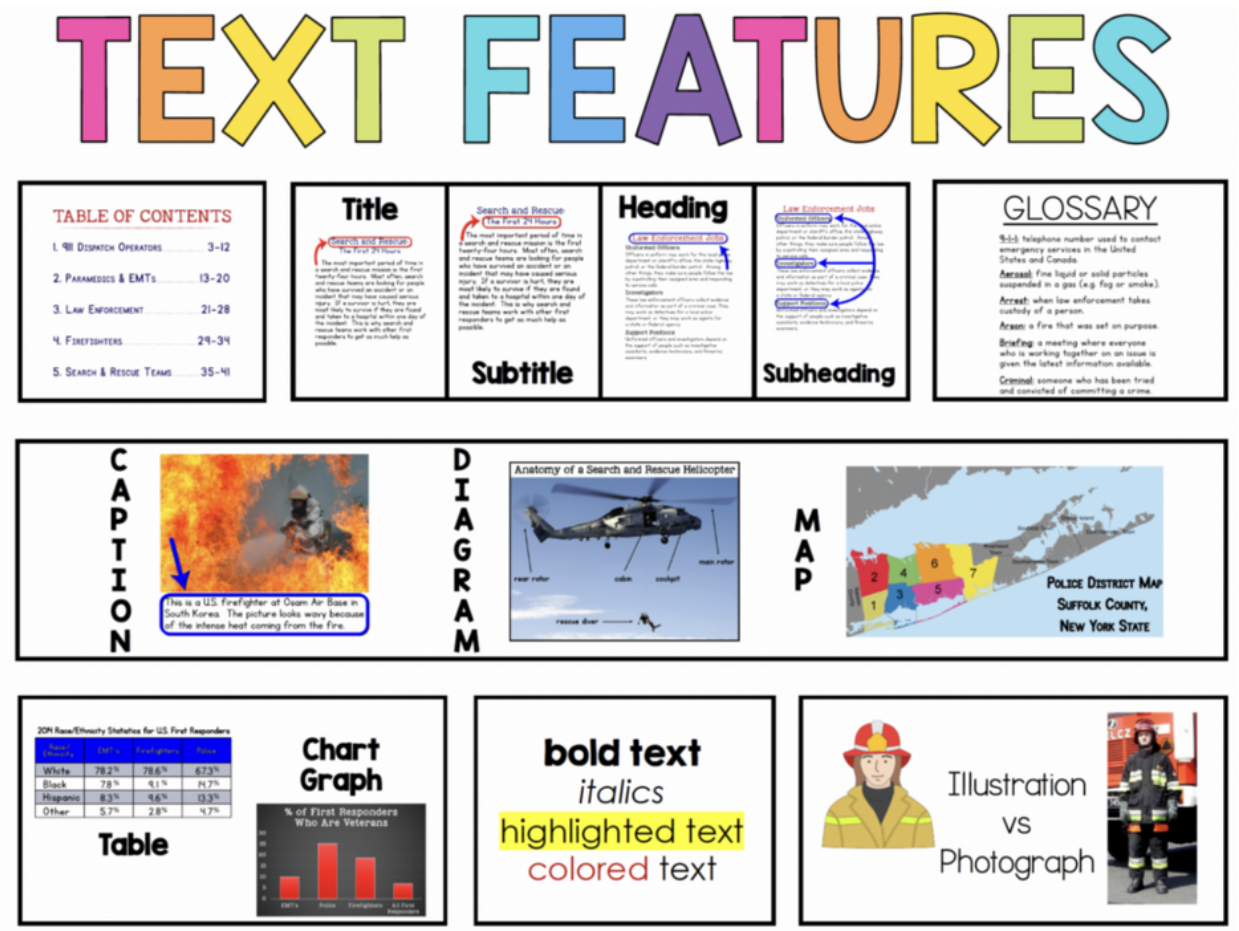
As you work through each of the above steps, you may highlight, underline, or circle the keywords and phrases and then use these to help you in forming a statement of the main idea.

STEP 1 :
IDENTIFY TITLE AND TOPIC

The key to identify the title and topic of a text is by looking for text features and text structures used by the author. Readers could get the general idea of what the text is about by searching for text features as many as they can see throughout the text.

What are text features?

Text features are the different, specific characteristics in a text that help the reader to understand the information better. This includes titles, headings, subheadings, graphics (charts, pictures, maps), captions, italic and bold words, table of contents, index or glossary.



https://luckylittlelearners.com/top-teaching-resources-nonfiction-text-features/

Text features can help readers get a sense of a text structure before you even read the text.

Watch the video for summary

https://youtu.be/3mAI9QMJJTo

LET'S PRACTISE!

Fill in the blanks with the suitable text feature.

table of contents	glossary	index	heading	caption	photograph

Magnets Help Us
Magnets can help us in many ways. They can help us pick things up and make a refrigerator door stay closed. There are helpful magnets all around you.

Chapter 1: Shark babies..... 4
Chapter 2: Where sharks live..... 8
Chapter 3: What sharks eat..... 10
Chapter 4: Shark attacks.....16
Glossary.....24
Index.....27

antennae-thin feelers on the heads of some animals
colony-a group of animals that live together
larvae- animals that go through major body changes before becoming an adult
molt-to shed hair, feathers, skin, or a shell

The red eye tree frog lives in the rainforest.

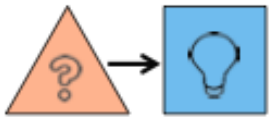
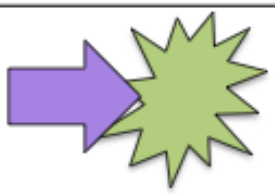
ants 34
beetles 16, 75
caterpillars 23
eggs 43
grasshoppers 62, 81
larva 77

Source : https://www.liveworksheets.com/eu1402418rd

LIVEWORKSHEETS

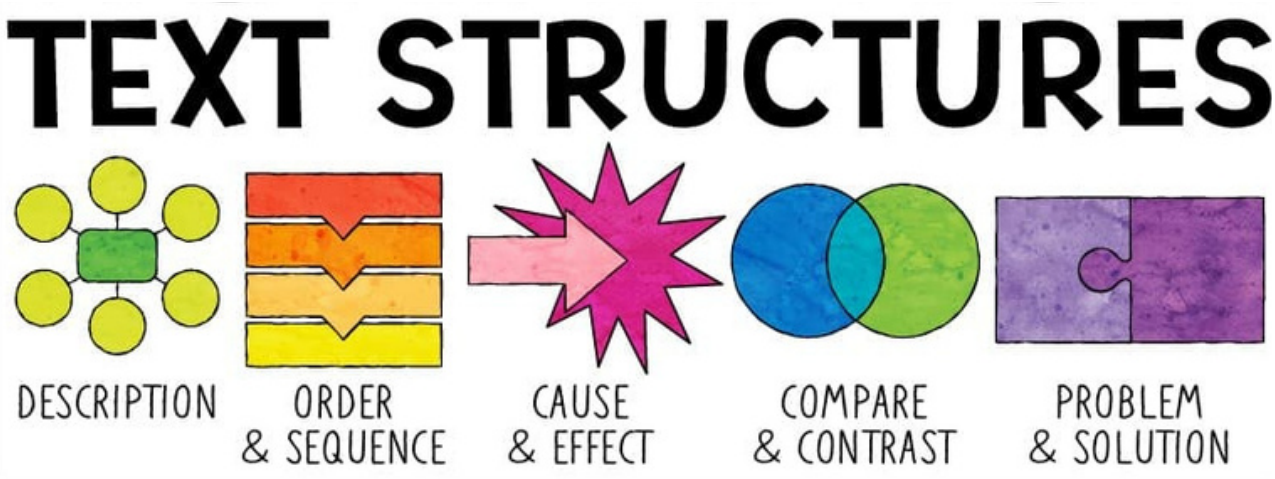
Well, you have been introduced with different text features in the previous part. Now, what about text structure? How does text structure help readers to identify the title or topic of a text?
Let's explore.

What are text structures?
Text structure refers to the way a particular text is constructed and organised by the author. There are a few ways an author can organise and construct a piece of text. The structure could be in a form of description, compare and contrast, order and sequence, problem and solution or cause and effects.

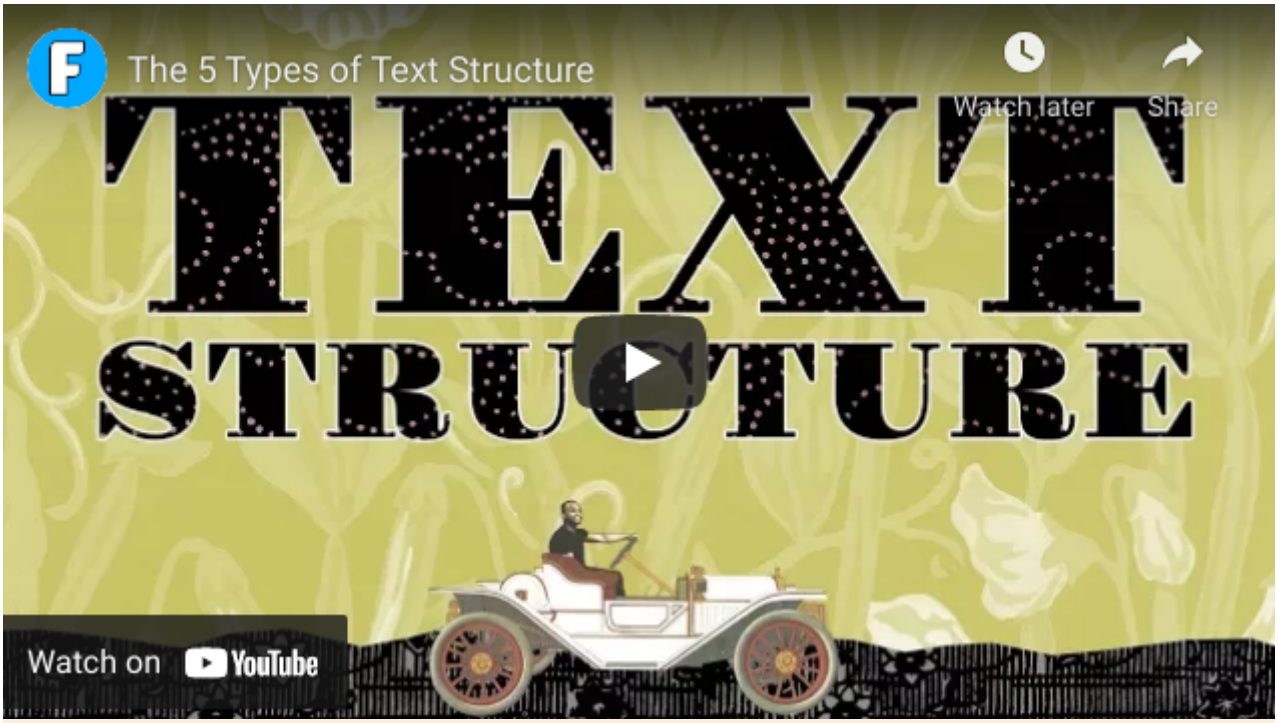
Structure	Definition	Visual	Clues
Description	the author provides several details of something to give the reader a mental picture		many adjectives, characteristics, or examples
Compare & Contrast	the author discusses similarities and differences between people, things, concepts, or ideas		likenesses and differences are discussed; also, both, in contrast, etc.
Order & Sequence	the author provides readers with chronological events or a list of steps in a procedure		events in order of occurrence, instructions given step-by-step, order words: first, next, etc.
Problem & Solution	the author gives information about a problem and explains one or more solutions		a problem is solved or needs solving; problem, solution, solve
Cause & Effect	the author describes an event or several events (cause) and the events that follow (effect)		cause, because, effect, as a result of, due to, reason

Source:

A knowledge of text structure will be very helpful for readers as it will guide them through the content. Good readers pay attention to the text structure to help them find specific information and find answers to questions as well. In other words, it helps them to deepen their understanding of the text.



Watch the video for summary



Source : https://youtu.be/7kWGQ-_ipBY

LET'S PRACTISE!

The first step in redesigning your closet is to take everything out and sort through it. Anything you haven't worn in over a year should be given to charity. Check garments for wear and tear. Simply categorise those garments accordingly. Anything that needs mending should be taken care of. If it is beyond repair, get rid of it. The second step is to install a closet organiser. Choose one that will hold the different types of garments in your wardrobe. The third step is to put items in the closet so that those you wear most often are easy to be reached. The final step is to stay organised. Return those garments in their appropriate places so that you will be able to find them.

Source : https://studylib.net/doc/9766562/organizational-text-structure-notes

Text Structure :

_____

Signal Words :

_____

Suggested Topic :

_____

Answers :
Sequence, the first, the second, the third , the final, Step To Redesign Closet

LET'S PRACTISE!

Although they are sisters, Jennifer and Jessica are complete opposites. Jennifer enjoys playing sports, while Jessica would rather watch movies. Jennifer has no interest in playing any musical instrument, while Jessica is the first chair violinist. Jennifer listens to new age music, while Jessica prefers country. Jennifer's favourite subject is English, but Jessica's favourite is Maths. Jennifer likes to curl up in a chair on a rainy day and read a good book , but Jessica would rather sleep all day long. No one would ever guess that they are actually twins.

Source : https://studylib.net/doc/9766562/organizational-text-structure-notes

Text Structure :

_____

Signal Words :

_____

Suggested Topic :

_____

Answers :
Compare and Contrast, although, while, but, The Twins

LET'S PRACTISE!

Because toys have become electronic devices, some children today are hardly find ways to entertain themselves. Back in those days, children invented their own adventures and used sticks as swords, cookie sheets as armor, and refrigerator box as a fortress to defend. The electronic age has delivered children all sorts of gadgets and gizmos that are supposed to be realistic. Some toys even have buttons to push so prerecorded messages can be played to begin scripted adventures that require no imagination. No imagination? Well, we are not surprise when some children today have short attention spans.

Source : https://studylib.net/doc/9766562/organizational-text-structure-notes

Text Structure :

_____

Signal Words :

_____

Suggested Topic :

_____

Answers :
Cause and Effects, because, The Impacts of Electronic Toys on Children

LET'S PRACTISE!

There are a number of students receive poor grades on writing assignments, not because they are lack of ability to communicate, but because they can not seem to manage their time when it comes to a large project. They do not know where to begin, and as a result, things are put off until the last minute. To solve this problem, time management is crucial. Students need to develop a timeline in accomplishing the project. If they divide the assignment into manageable "chunks" or parts and then set a schedule for completing each part, they will be able to finish the entire project before the deadline. Without the pressure of not knowing where to begin, the students will be able to focus on the assignment and communicate their ideas effectively.

Source : https://studylib.net/doc/9766562/organizational-text-structure-notes

Text Structure :

_____

Signal Words :

_____

Suggested Topic :

_____

Answers : Problem and Solution, because, to solve, Ways To Get the Assignments Done

LET'S PRACTISE!

My Teddy Bear is very big, and the colour is cream. It is about 180 and the width is about 50 centimeters. When I put it on my bed it will occupy half of it. It is almost as big as my body. It is made of a typical kind of fabric called rasfur. The head is round with the size of 25 centimeters. It has two ears which are located on top of its head. The shape of the ear is a half circle and the size is half of my palm. The colour of its eye is dark brown. I think it is made of glass since I can see through it. It has a blue shirt encircling its body. On the sole of each foot, there is a paw pattern made of smooth fabric.

Source : https://puspapendini.blogspot.com/2018/12/descriptive-text-definition-structure.html

Text Structure :

_____

Signal Words :

_____

Suggested Topic :

_____

Answers :
Description, adjectives (colour, size, length , shape etc.), My Teddy Bear

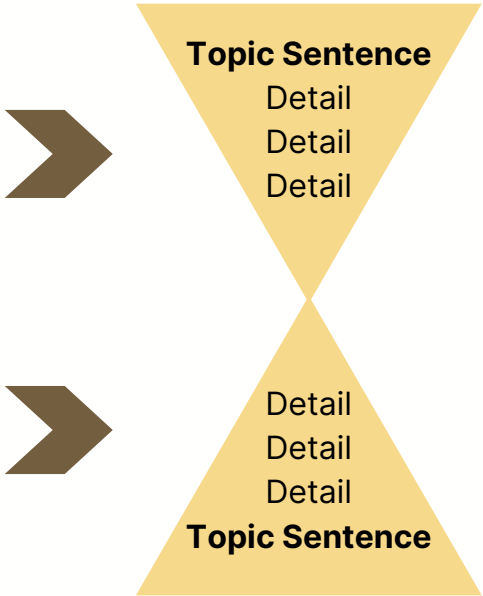
STEP 2 :
STUDY THE FIRST AND LAST SENTENCES IN EACH PARAGRAPH

Main ideas help the reader to remember important information. Finding the main idea is the essence of comprehension. Readers need to understand what is important and what is details.

Whether we are talking about the main idea of a paragraph, a poem, a chapter, or a longer text, finding the main idea or significant point requires the reader to identify the topic of a piece of writing and then uncover what the author wants us to know about that topic.

It is easy to identify a main idea that is directly expressed in the text. Main ideas are often found:

- **At the beginning of paragraphs.** The first sentence often explains the subject being discussed in the passage.
- **In the concluding sentences of a paragraph.** The main idea can be expressed as a summation of the information in the paragraph as well as a link to the information in the next paragraph.



EXAMPLE

Main idea at the beginning of a paragraph

A focus group is a small group, typically consisting of about seven to ten people who are brought together to discuss a subject of interest to the researcher. Focus groups are commonly used today in business and politics; that flashy slogan you heard for a political campaign or a new toothpaste was almost certainly tested in a focus group to gauge people's reactions. Social researchers may use a focus group to help design questions or instruments for quantitative research or to study the interactions among group members on a particular subject. In most cases, researchers ask predetermined questions, but the discussion is unstructured. Focus groups are a relatively cheap method of research and can be completed quickly. They also allow for the flexible discussions and answers that are desirable in qualitative research.	Main Idea Detail Detail Detail Detail

Adapted from Kunz, THINK Marriages & Families, p.36

From the example given above, the writer defines the term "focus group" at the beginning of a paragraph. The details about focus groups were specifically stated to give ideas what the whole paragraph is about.

EXAMPLE

Main idea in the concluding sentences of a paragraph

In the evolving world 1.1 billion people still lack access to safe drinking water, 2.6 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation services, and more than 1.6 million deaths each year are traced to waterborne diseases (mostly in children under five).	Detail
All too often in developing countries, water is costly or inaccessible to the needy in society, while the wealthy have it piped into their homes.	Detail
In addition, because of the infrastructure that is used to control water, whole seas are being lost, rivers are running dry, millions of people have been dislocated to make room for reservoirs, groundwater aquifers are being pumped down, and disputes over water have raised tensions from local to international levels.	Detail
Fresh water is a limiting resource in many parts of the world and is certain to become even more so as the 21st century unfolds.	Main Idea

Adapted from Wright and Boorse, Environmental Science, p. 247

Here, the author discusses water as a limiting resource and concludes that water will become more limited throughout the 21st century. This explains clearly we are all experiencing water shortage day by day!

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE!

Click the following links to do practice on finding the main ideas.

- https://www.liveworksheets.com/bv1342946kk
- https://www.liveworksheets.com/aa1469485re

STEP 3 :
LOOK FOR REPEATED WORDS AND PHRASES IN THE EXTRACT

If you read through a paragraph and you have no idea how to summarize it because there is so much information, start looking for repeated words, phrases, or related ideas. Read this example paragraph:

"When PETA sent investigators with hidden cameras into a KFC "supplier of the Year" slaughterhouse in Moorefield, West Virginia, what they found was enough to make KFC choke on its own pink publicity stunts. Workers were caught on video stomping on chickens, kicking them and violently slamming them against floors and walls. Workers were also filmed ripping the animals' beaks off, twisting their heads off, spitting tobacco into their eyes and mouths, spray-painting their faces, and squeezing their bodies so hard that the birds expelled feces—all while the chickens were still alive."

Adapted from John Robbins, Greed, Cancer and Pink KFC Buckets, p.95

In this example, the author is discussing one topic throughout the paragraph:

"The mistreatment of chickens in KFC slaughterhouses"

Notice that words related to mistreatment that provide clues to the topic:

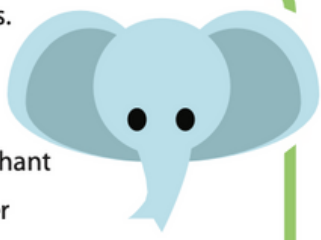
stomping, kicking, slamming, twisting, spitting, and squeezing

Authors often repeat key words or use related words to discuss and emphasise their main point.

LET'S PRACTISE!

Identify the key ideas with repeated words and phrases.

Directions: Read the passages below and then complete the graphic organizers.



Elephants are the largest living land mammals. The Asian Elephant, also known as the Indian Elephant, can weigh up to 11,000 pounds. The African Elephant is even bigger. It can weigh as much as 20,000 pounds. The largest elephant ever measured was 13 feet tall and weighed 24,000 pounds! Elephants are the largest animals found on land.

Question	Answer
What words and phrases are repeated?	
What is a key idea?	The elephant is _____ _____.

Have you ever seen a giraffe at the zoo? Giraffes are the tallest animals in the world. The average height of a giraffe is 16-18 feet tall. This animal has a very long neck and legs. Giraffes eat the leaves from tall trees. Other animals cannot reach that high. Male giraffes are even taller than female giraffes. They are the tallest animals in the world.

Question	Answer
What words and phrases are repeated?	
What is a key idea?	The giraffe is _____ _____.

Source : *https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/identifying-key-ideas-with-repeated-words-and-phrases/*

STEP 4 :
ASK YOURSELF, "WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR WANT YOU TO KNOW?"

Questioning is fundamental to the reading process. Good readers ask themselves questions while reading. As they read through the text, this question will always be in mind:

"What does the author want me to know in this paragraph/passage?"

Thus, the following questions will accompany readers to get through the details of the text effectively:

- **Who** - Can you identify the person or people the text is about?
- **What** - Can you identify the topic or underlying theme of the text?
- **When** - Can you identify a reference to a specific time or period?
- **Where** - Can you identify a specific place or a setting?
- **Why** - Can you identify a reason or explanation for what happens in the text?
- **How** - Can you identify a method or theory in the text?

These questions, and variations of these questions, can help readers draw out what the text is about. The two most important questions of those above are **who** and **what**. These will be sufficient to elicit the information required to identify the main idea in most circumstances.

EXAMPLE

Most teenagers and young adults do not know what they want to do for the rest of their lives. It is a critical decision. There are a number of things you can do to narrow the choices. For example, you can take an interest test, do some research on your own about a career, try volunteer work in the field in which you are interested, or "job-shadow", in which you spend a day with a person who is working in a field that interests you. These are just a few helpful ideas as you begin to choose a career.

Source : https://www.landmarkoutreach.org/strategies/finding-main-idea/

Identify the topic	***Text Structure*** *- Problem and Solution* ***Signal Words*** *- Verbs (take, do, try)* ***Topic*** *- Helpful Ideas To Narrow The Career Choices*
First and last sentences	***First*** *- Most teenagers and young adults do not know what they want to do for the rest of their lives.* ***Last*** *- These are just a few helpful ideas as you begin to choose a career.*
Repeated / related words and phrases	*decision, career, interest, job, work, choose, choices*
What does the writer want you to know?	***Who?*** *- Most Teenagers and young adults* ***What?*** *- do not know how to decide the best career for themselves* ***How?*** *- things to do to narrow the career choices*

LET'S PRACTISE!

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

Google

You know that you're doing something big when your company name becomes a verb. Ask Xerox. In 1959 they created the first plain paper copy machine. It was one of the most successful products ever. The company name Xerox grew into a verb that means "to copy," as in "Bob, can you Xerox this for me?" Around 50 years later, the same thing happened to Google. Their company name grew into a verb that means "to do an internet search." Now everyone and their grandma knows what it means to Google it.

Unlike Xerox, Google wasn't the first company to invent their product, not by a long shot. Lycos released their search engine in 1993. Yahoo! came out in 1994. AltaVista began serving results in 1995. Google did not come out until years later, in 1998. Though a few years difference may not seem like much, this is a major head start in the fast moving world of tech. So how did Google do it? How did they overtake their competitors who had such huge leads in time and money? Maybe one good idea made all the difference.

There are millions and millions of sites on the internet. How does a search engine know which ones are relevant to your search? This is a question that great minds have been working on for decades. To understand how Google changed the game, you need to know how search engines worked in 1998. Back then most websites looked at the words in your query. They counted how many times those words appeared on each page. Then they might return pages where the words in your query appeared the most. This system did not work well and people often had to click through pages and pages of results to find what they wanted.

Google was the first search engine that began considering links. Links are those blue underlined words that take you to other pages when you click on them. Larry Page, cofounder of Google, believed that meaningful data could be drawn from how those links connect. Page figured that websites with many links pointing at them were more important than those that had few. He was right. Google's search results were much better than their rivals. They would soon become the world's most used search engine.

It wasn't just the great search results that led to Google becoming so well liked. It also had to do with the way that they presented their product. Most of the other search engines were cluttered. Their home pages were filled with everything from news stories to stock quotes. But Google's homepage was, and still is, clean. There's nothing on it but the logo, the search box, and a few links. It almost appears empty. In fact, when they were first testing it, users would wait at the home page and not do anything. When asked why, they said that they were, "waiting for the rest of the page to load." People couldn't imagine such a clean and open page as being complete. But the fresh design grew on people once they got used to it.

These days Google has its hands in everything from self-driving cars to helping humans live longer. Though they have many other popular products, they will always be best known for their search engine. The Google search engine has changed our lives and our language. Not only is it a fantastic product, it is a standing example that one good idea (and a lot of hard work) can change the world.

Source : https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/worksheets/reading/nonfiction-passages/google/

Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

1. Which event happened last?
 a. Lycos released their search engine.
 b. Yahoo! released their search engine.
 c. Google released their search engine.
 d. Xerox released their copy machine.

2. Which statement would the author of this text most likely disagree with?
 a. Part of Google's success is due to the design of their homepage.
 b. Google succeeded by following examples of others in their field.
 c. Google wasn't the first search engine, but it was the best.
 d. Google's success may not have been possible without Larry Page.

3. Which best expresses the main idea of the third paragraph?
 a. There are lots and lots of websites connected to the internet.
 b. Google created a better way to organize search results.
 c. Many smart people have worked on search engines over the years.
 d. Older search engines used unreliable methods to order results.

4. What is the author's main purpose in writing this article?
 a. To explain how Google overtook its rivals.
 b. To compare and contrast Google and Xerox.
 c. To persuade readers to use Google for internet searches.
 d. To discuss how companies can influence language over time.

5. Which statement would the author most likely agree with?
 a. Google became successful because its founders were well-connected.
 b. Google was the world's first and best search engine.
 c. Google changed the world by solving an old problem in a new way.
 d. Google's other products are now more important to its success than search.

Exercise taken from https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/worksheets/reading/nonfiction-passages/google/

Answers :
1(c), 2(b), 3(d), 4(a), 5(c)

6. Which best expresses the main idea of the fourth paragraph?
 a. Links allow people to surf from one website to the next.
 b. Larry Page's ideas about links helped Google get to the top.
 c. Larry Page contributed to the internet by inventing the link.
 d. Google is a website that serves important links to users.

7. Which best explains why the author discusses Xerox in this text?
 a. He is discussing big companies that came before Google.
 b. He is explaining how companies must change with the times.
 c. He is showing how companies can affect our language.
 d. He is comparing and contrasting Google and Xerox.

8. How did Google improve search quality in 1998?
 a. They counted how many times queries appeared on each page.
 b. They looked more closely at the words in search queries.
 c. They linked to more pages.
 d. They studied the relationships of links.

9. Which was cited as a reason why Google became so popular?
 a. Google's homepage was clean.
 b. Google provided catchy news stories on their homepage.
 c. Google homepage loaded quickly.
 d. Google provided useful stock quotes on their homepage.

10. Which title best expresses the author's main purpose in writing this text?
 a. Xerox Vs. Google: Battle of the Titans
 b. Search Engines: How They Work and Why They're Important
 c. A Better Way: How Google Rose to the Top
 d. Search Engines: A Short History of Important Tools

Exercise taken from https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/worksheets/reading/nonfiction-passages/google/

Answers :
6(b), 7(c), 8(d), 9(a), 10(c)

UNIT 2:
MAKING INFERENCES FROM A TEXT

Deriving the gists from a linear text could be simpler if the points or ideas are clearly stated in paragraphs or passage. There are a few occasions where the authors implied certain messages to be discovered by readers. Most often, this requires readers to develop more strategies throughout reading process such as making inferences.

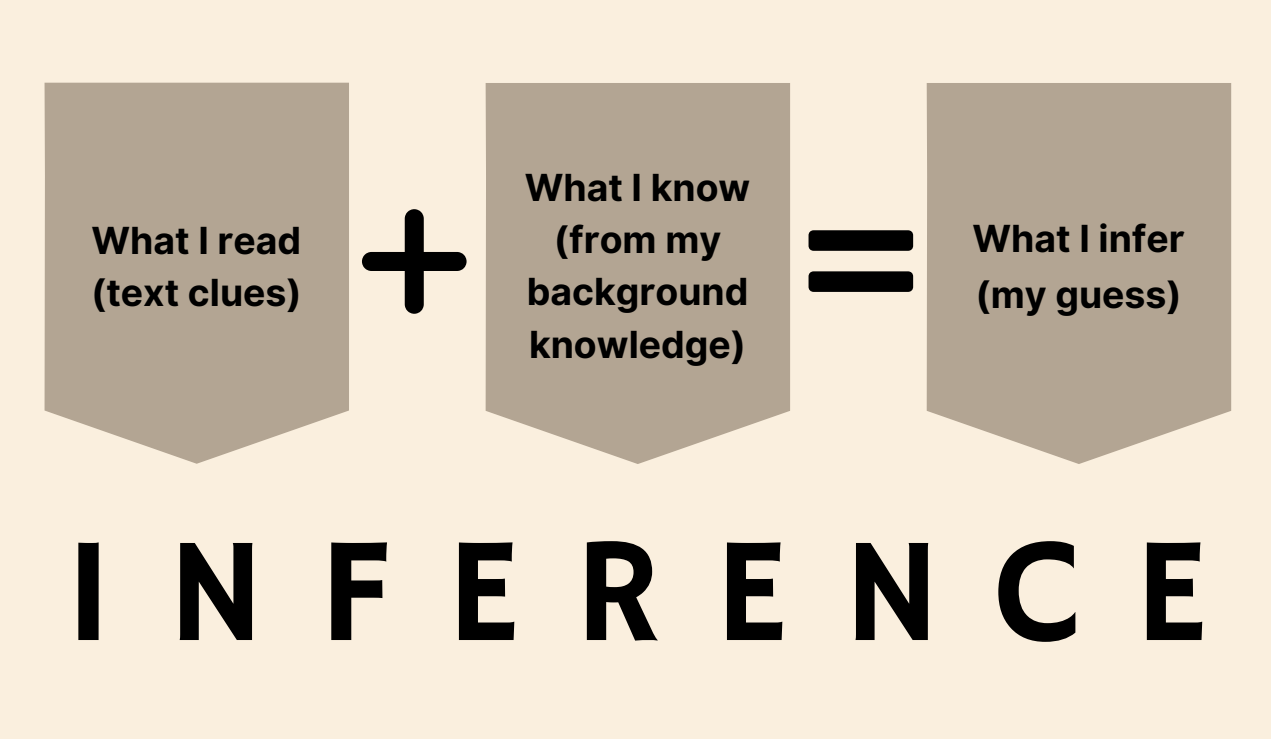
Making inference from text happens when you try to understand and figure out something beyond the author's words. Usually, the readers are given hints or clues so that the messages are delivered without using the exact words.

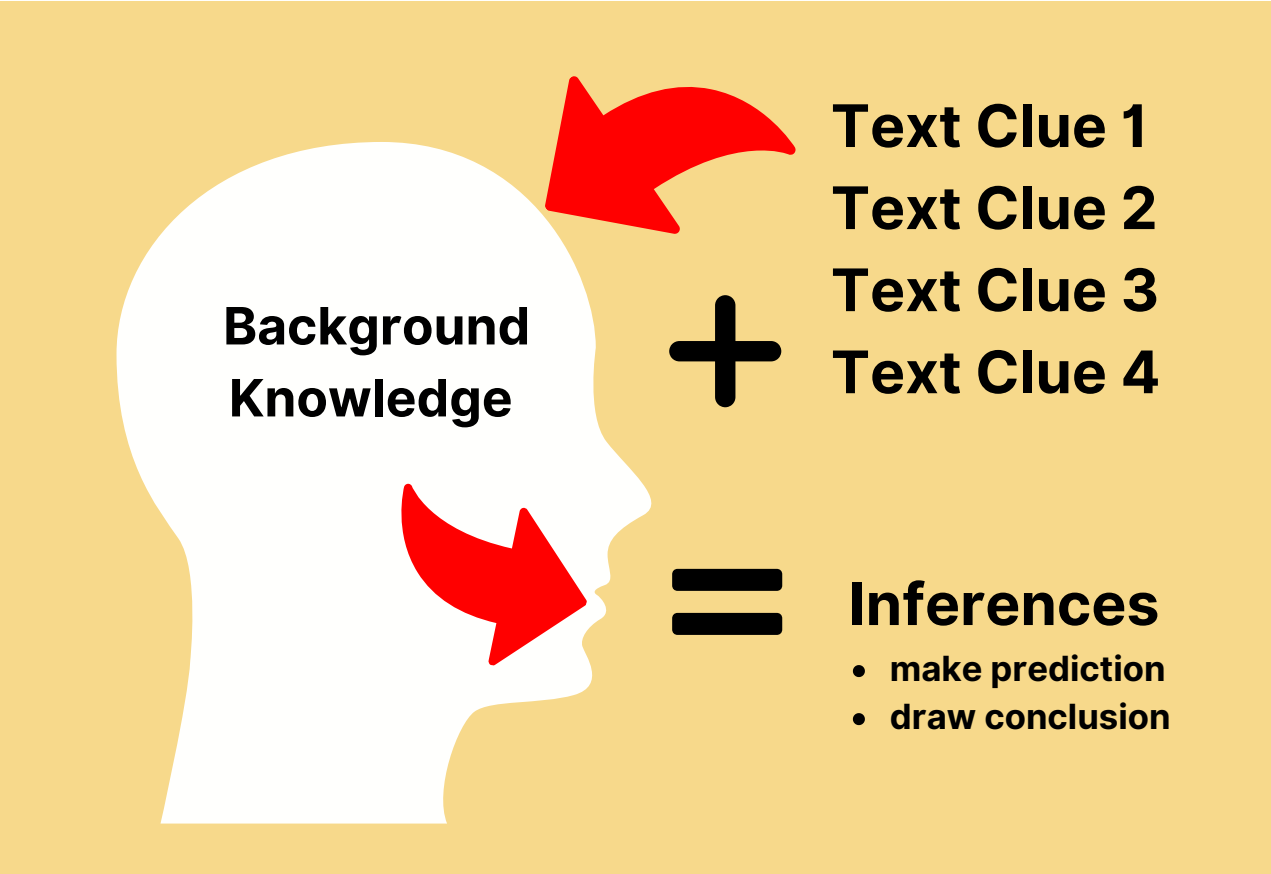
When you infer, you should be able **'to read between the lines'** in which more meanings could be derived from the text to reach a deeper understanding of indirect messages implied by the authors.

Thus, this strategy might work if readers acquire more information from previous experience or background knowledge (schema) and putting multiple hints or clues left by authors together to achieve a new understanding.

This new understanding could be in a way of making a prediction or drawing a conclusion.

Below are the illustrations of how an inference can be made from the text:





EXAMPLE

Now, let's look at the following examples to get clearer picture and understand how inferences can be made from clues or evidence from text:

- A pair of sport shoes
- A bicycle
- Mineral water
- Sunny day
- Sweating

What activity is going on?

Cycling

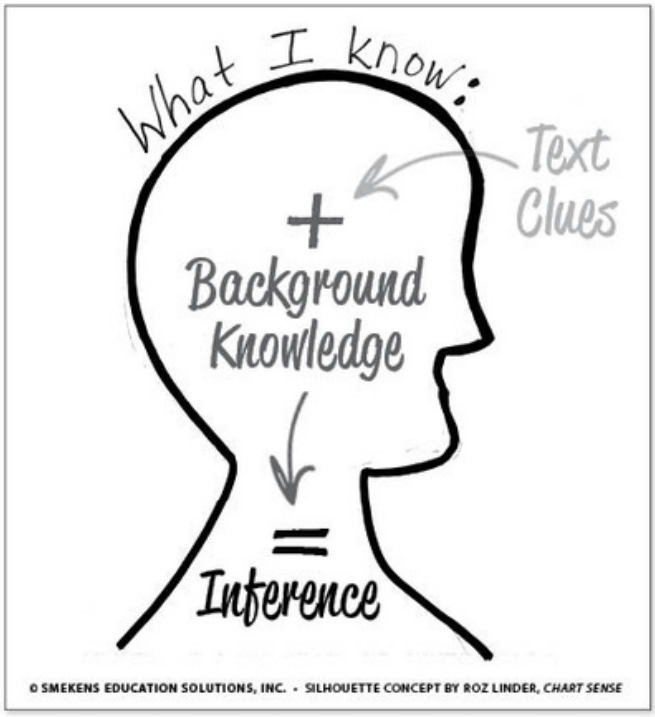
- Five flight tickets
- Passports
- Luggages
- Airport
- Windy
- Summer

What activity is going on?

Going for a family vacation

5 STEPS TO MAKE AN INFERENCE

Here are the 5 steps you can follow to make a reasonable inference using Roz Linder's silhouette organizer from her book Chart Sense.



1. Read / View the text.
2. Read the question.
3. List relevant details.
4. Put details together.
5. Detemine what they mean.

Read through the excerpt:

> *Imagine a half a dozen students standing at the end of the street. It's a dark morning at 7:00 a.m. The students are huddled together. Several are hugging themselves. Others are jumping up and down. And still others are rubbing their hands together and huffing on them. When the bus arrives, one student hollers, "Bus!" All of the students run to get on the vehicle.*

Source : https://www.smekenseducation.com/follow-5-steps-to-make-an-inference/

- What is the text trying to tell you?
- What season does this scene take place in?

Using that text, let's apply the five-step process.

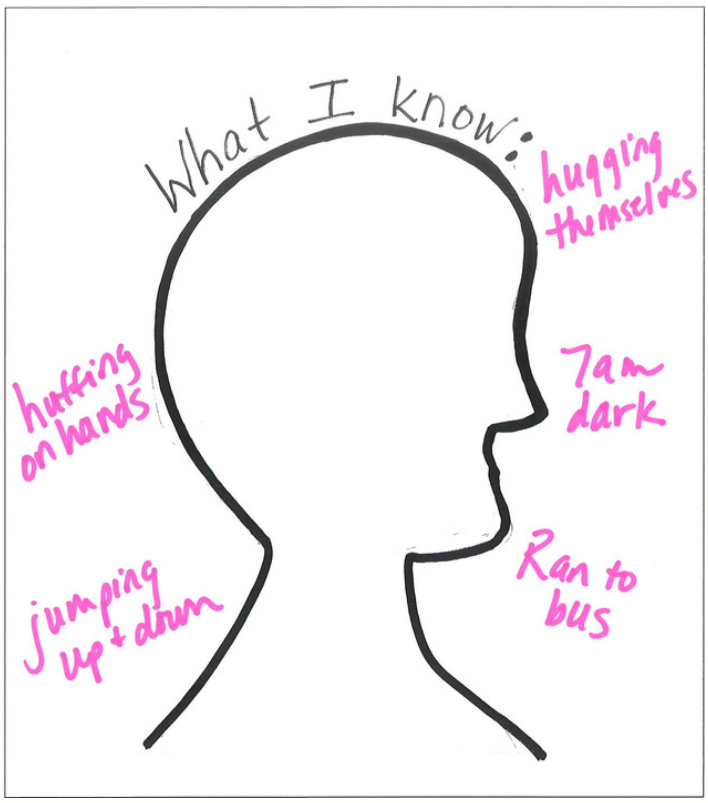
Step 1: Read the text. (Refer to text above.)

Step 2: Read and understand the question.

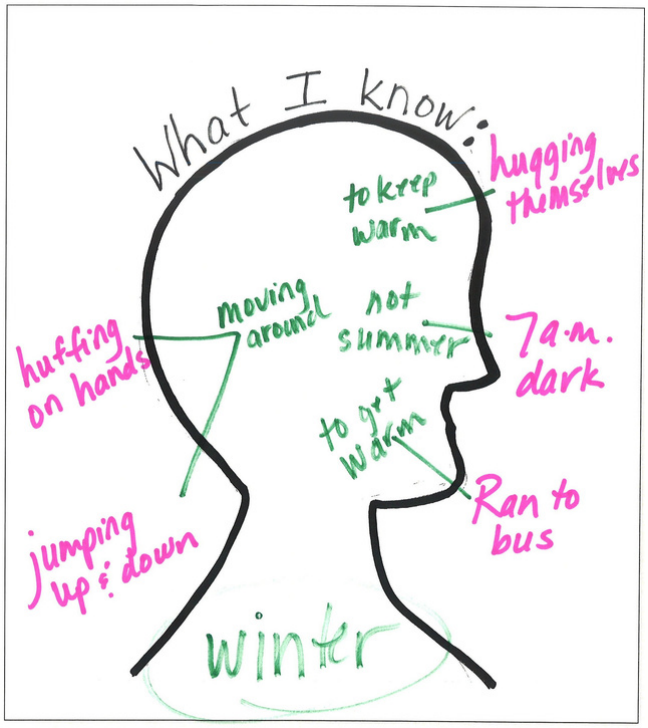
"*What season does this scene take place in?*"

(Granted, the answer is obvious—winter, but by jumping to that conclusion, you would be skipping Steps 3 and 4.)

Step 3: List the relevant details (all clues/evidences from the text)



Step 4: Put details together (try to relate relevant details to your prior knowledge)



Step 5 : Determine what they mean (revert to the earlier questions)

- What is the text trying to tell you?
- What season does this scene take place in?

Thus, you might infer the scenes as stated in the text happen during **winter**.

You might explain your thinking using words/phrases like:

- "I think..."
- "Maybe..."
- "I predict..."
- "I believe..."
- "Probably..."
- "My guess is..."

You will draw a conclusion by saying,

*"**I believe,** it is winter season and **I think** they are school students who are shivering in cold weather while waiting for a bus to school."*

LET'S PRACTISE!

Inferences Worksheet 1

Directions: Read each passage and then respond to the questions. Each question will ask you to make a logical inference based on textual details. Explain your answer by referencing the text.

Every day after work Paul took his muddy boots off on the steps of the front porch. Alice would have a fit if the boots made it so far as the welcome mat. He then took off his dusty overalls and threw them into a plastic garbage bag; Alice left a new garbage bag tied to the porch railing for him every morning. On his way in the house, he dropped the garbage bag off at the washing machine and went straight up the stairs to the shower as he was instructed. He would eat dinner with her after he was "presentable," as Alice had often said.

1. What type of job does Paul do? _____

How do you know this?

2. Describe Alice: _____

What in the text supports your description?

3. What relationship do Paul and Alice have? _____

Why do you feel this way?

Crack! Thunder struck and rain poured. Max stared blankly out the window, trying to contain his emotions that raged like the weather. He was beginning to lose it. Dropping the kite from his hand, Max broke out into full sobs. His mother comforted him, "There, there, Max. We'll just find something else to do." She began to unpack the picnic basket that was on the counter and offered him a sandwich. Max snapped, "I don't wanna sand-mich!" A flash from the sky lit up the living room. *Boom!* Mom sighed.

4. Why is Max upset? _____

How do you know this?

5. What was Mom planning on doing today? _____

What in the text supports your description?

Source : https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/worksheets/reading/inferences/inferences-worksheet-01/

LET'S PRACTISE!

"Tommy!" Mom called out as she walked in the front door. "Tommy," she continued shouting, "I sure could use some help with these groceries. There was still no reply. Mom walked into the kitchen to put the grocery bags down on the counter when she noticed shattered glass from the picture window all over the living room floor and a baseball not far from there. "I'm going to kill you, Tommy!" Mom yelled to herself as she realized that Tommy's shoes were gone.

6. What happened to the window? _____

How do you know this?

7. Why did Tommy leave? _____

What in the text supports your description?

Today was a special day in Ms. Smith's class. Some of the children were walking around the room, some of them were standing in small groups, and some of them were at their desks, putting finishing touches on cardboard mailboxes. After coloring a cool flame on the side of his racecar mailbox, Johnny hopped off his chair, strutted over to Veronica's desk, and dropped a small white envelope into her princess castle mailbox. Veronica blushed and played with her hair. While this was happening, Bartleby was frantically trying to put a small white envelope into everyone's mailbox. After giving one to Ms. Smith, Bartleby pulled out a medium-sized red envelope from his pocket. He blushed and tried to put it in Veronica's mailbox, but it wouldn't quite fit. Bartleby struggled with it for a few seconds and then ran off with the envelope. Veronica rolled her eyes and popped her gum.

8. Why is today a special day? _____

What in the text supports your idea?

9. Which boy does Veronica like? _____

What in the text supports your idea?

10. Why did Bartleby run? _____

What in the text supports your idea?

Source : https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/worksheets/reading/inferences/inferences-worksheet-01/

UNIT 3:
MIND MAPPING INFORMATION

Various studies have shown mind mapping is a powerful tool to help learners develop their skills, including reading comprehension.

What is Mind Map?

A Mind Map is a diagram for representing tasks, words, concepts, or items linked to and arranged around a central concept or subject using a non-linear graphical layout that allows the user to build an intuitive framework around a central concept.

A Mind Map can turn a long list of monotonous information into a colorful, memorable and highly organized diagram that works in line with your brain's natural way of doing things.

Using Mind Map in Gathering Information from Reading

The use of mind map is very useful in gathering information process in which this strategy is believed help readers in organizing concepts and ideas by sorting out the gists from linear texts read into a visual graphic designs.

Mind map works for reasons:

- They force you to break down information to smaller parts that are easier to understand.
- All information can be quickly found at one glance.
- The pictures make it easy to remember.
- Provide visual comprehending mechanism that will help readers recognize relationships they may miss while reading.

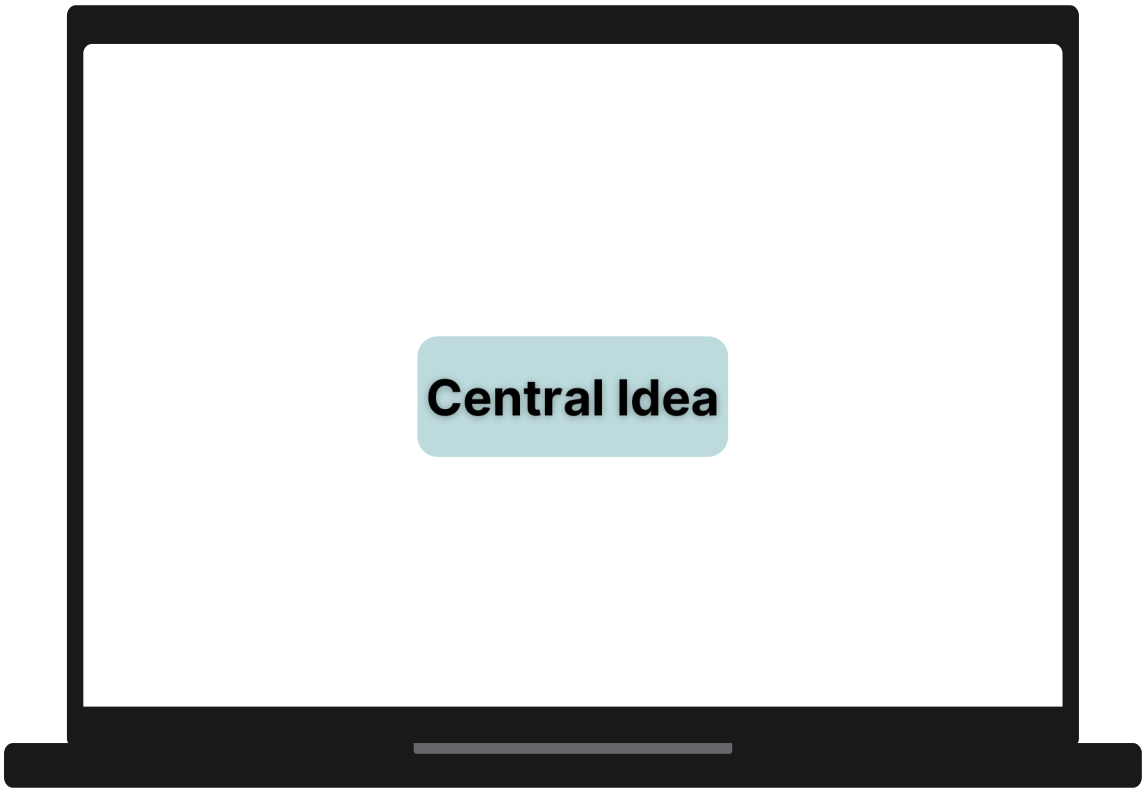
5 STEPS TO MIND MAP INFORMATION FROM TEXTS

To help you make sense of everything you read, there are several steps you may apply in mind mapping those information from texts. How to do it?

1 Create a central idea

The central idea is the starting point of your Mind Map and represents the topic you are going to explore. This should be at the centre of your page.

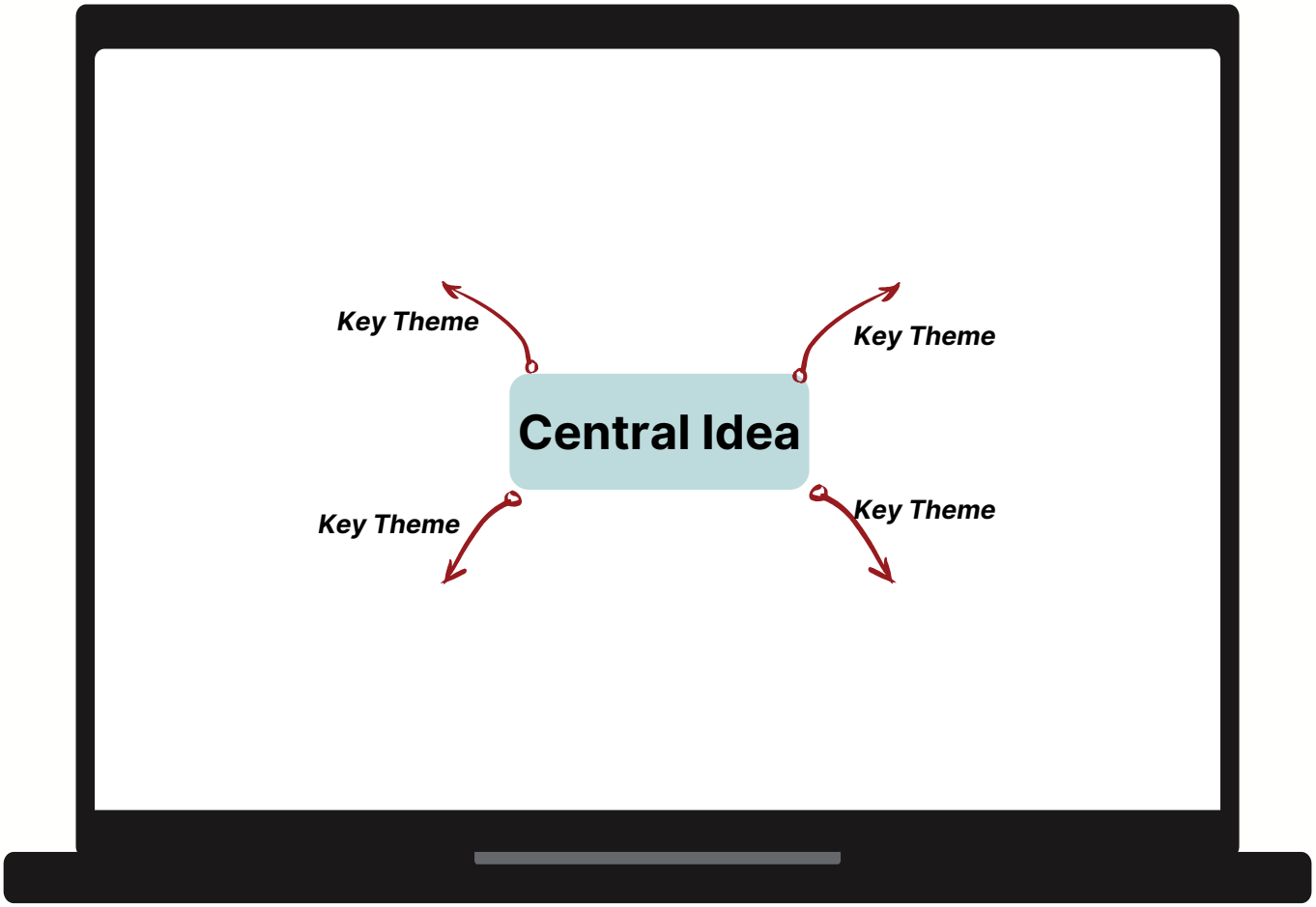
Skimming the text is what readers should do to pick the gist out from the text. Look for text features and structures, figure out what they have in common and only then the keyword or phrase for central idea will be decided.



2 Add branches to your map

The next step is to add branches. The main branches which flow from the central image are the key themes. You can explore each of the themes in greater depth by adding sub-branches.

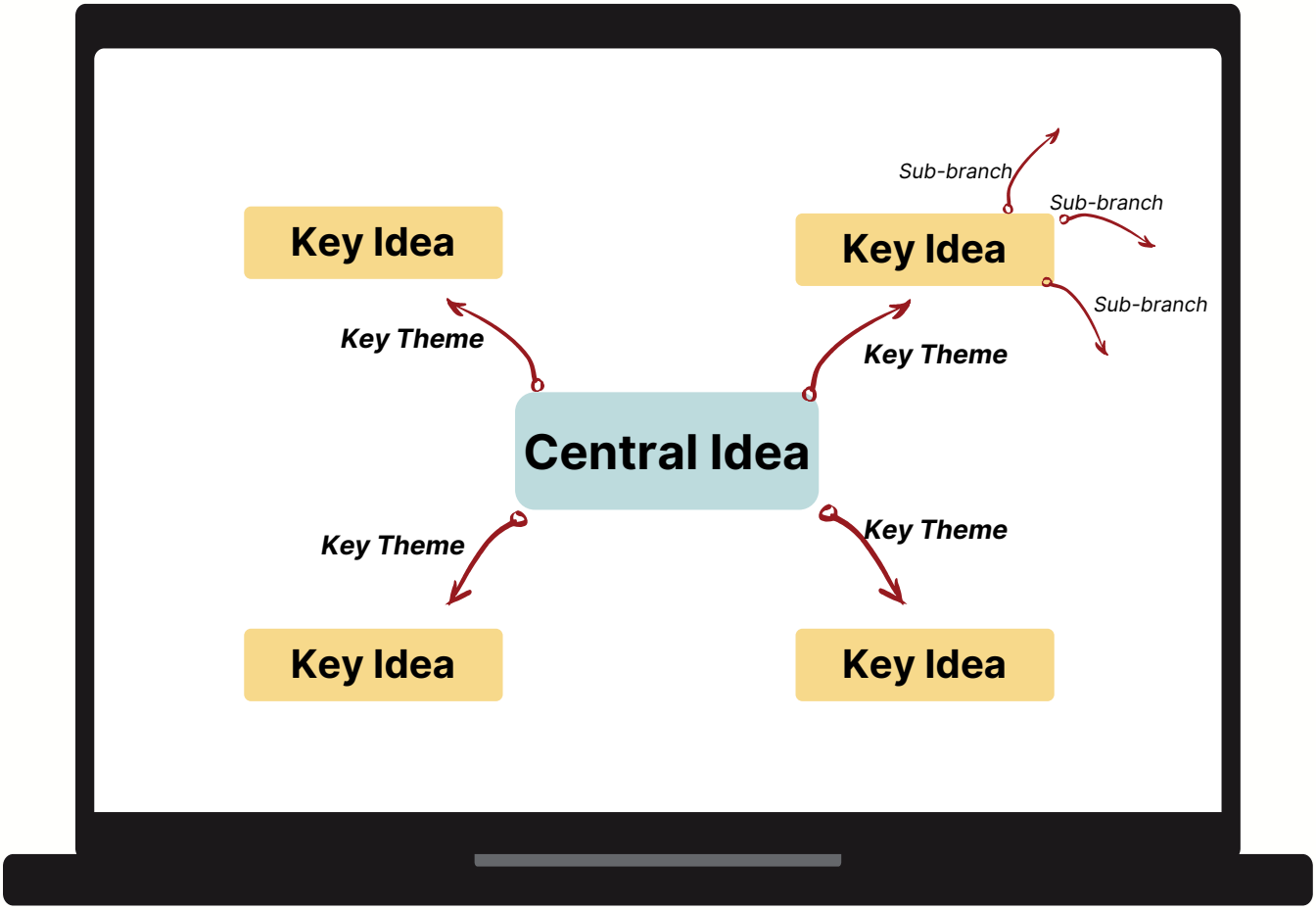
During this part, scanning details in the text is necessary. Look for the significant ones by excluding the supporting points and examples. By locating the key themes for each branch, this will help you to determine the most relevant key ideas to be included later on.



3 Add keywords

When you add a branch to your mind map, you will need to include a key idea. Try to keep this idea as brief as possible; this will allow you to spark off a greater number of associations, compared to longer more complex phrases.

Since the use of keywords triggers connections in your brain and allows you to remember a larger quantity of information. Thus, while exploring the text, you may add more sub-branches to each key idea representing other supporting details that will be simplified in a form of keywords too.

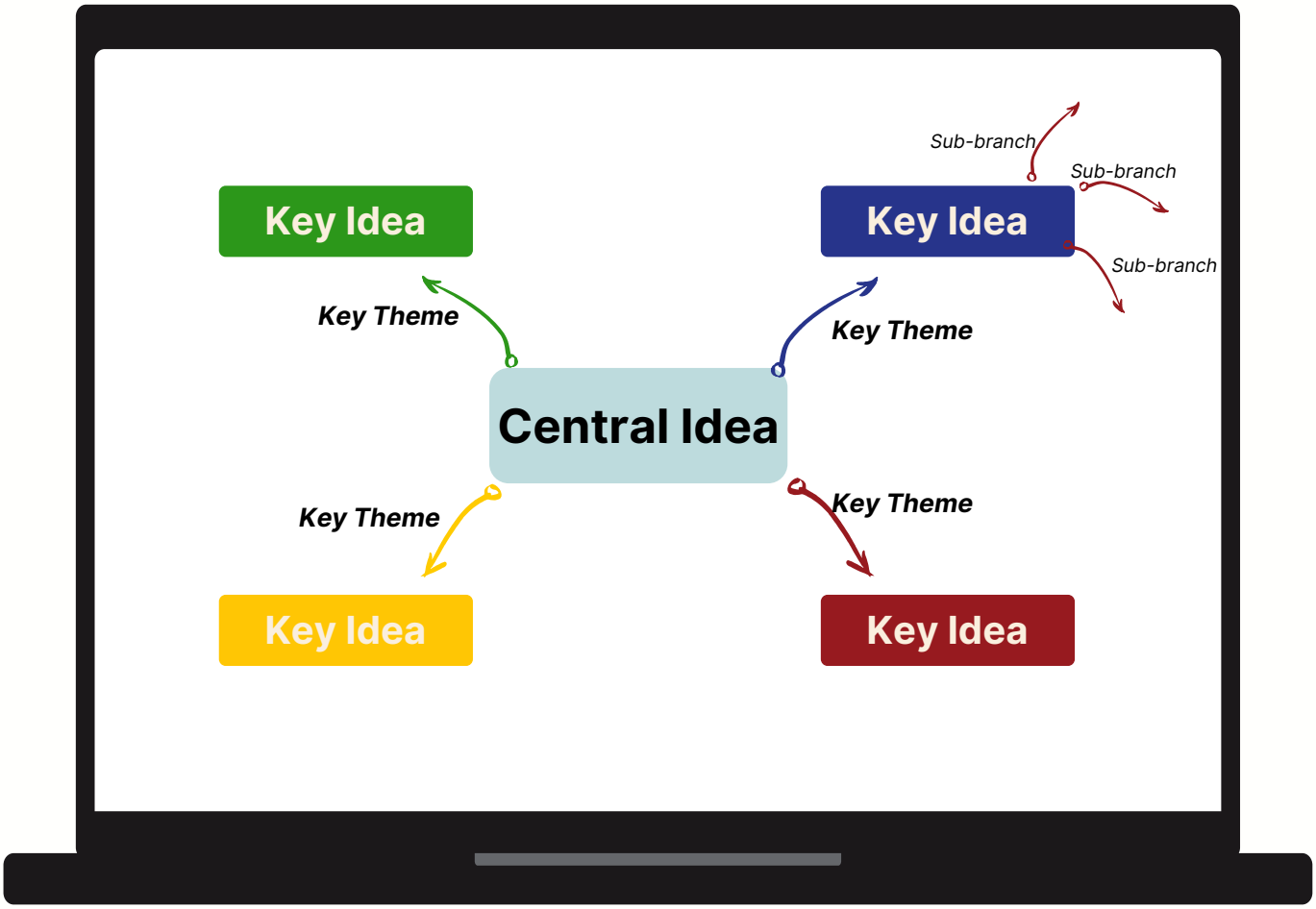


4 Colour code the branches

Once you are finished adding branches and sub-branches, you can go onto the more creative steps - decorating the map with different colours which will make it bold and eye-catching.

The role of the colours is not only to make your map more attractive and enhance its visual appeal. It has been found that colours have a beneficial impact on people's memorizing skills. To be more precise, several studies have shown that people have a greater ability to memorize and recall a certain color than a word.

Therefore, using diverse colors when creating a mind map is always a good idea as it will help you to memorize information more easily as you will connect that information with a color.

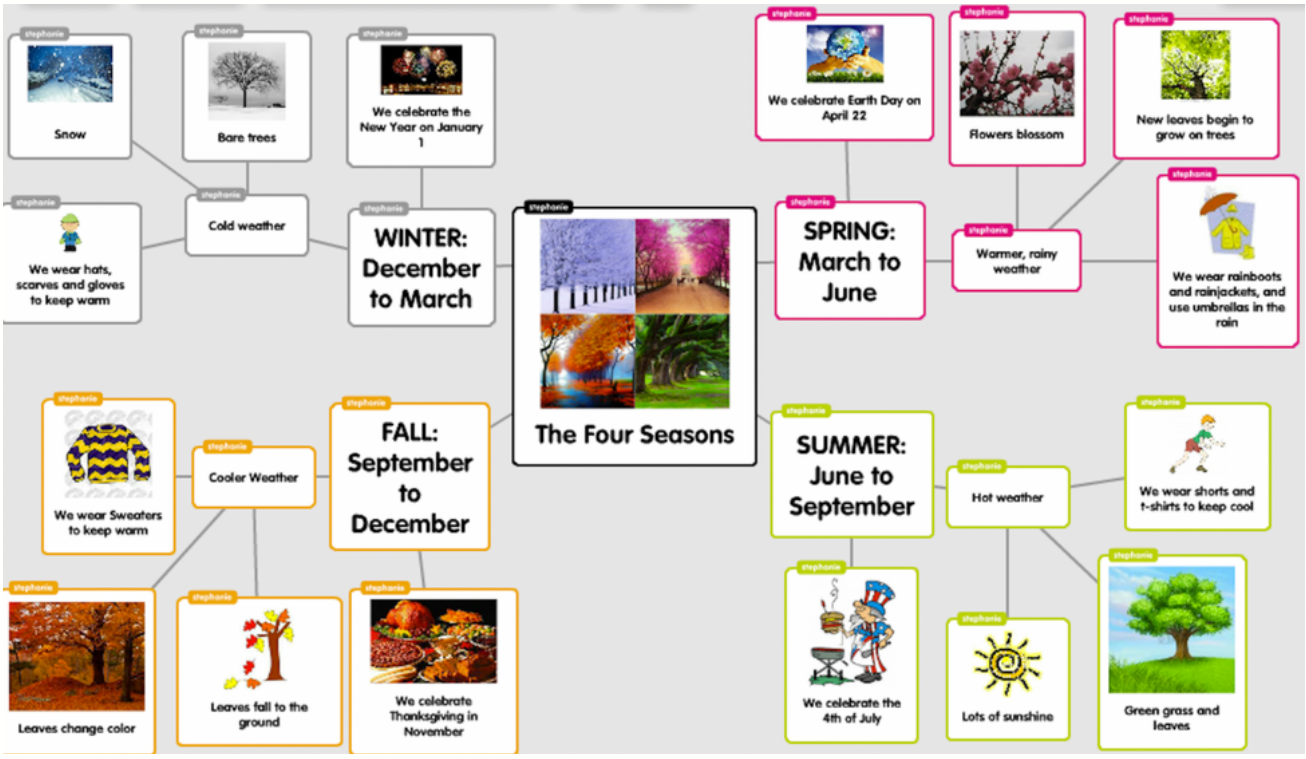


5 Include visual signifiers (e.g : images/symbols)

Once your mind map is expanded and all relevant themes and key ideas are emphasised with an array of different colours, you can continue with the next step, which may be the most interesting one – putting images and/or symbols to the content.

Including images and other visual elements in your mind map is important due to the power that they have to convey much more information than a word, sentence or even an essay. As per saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words".

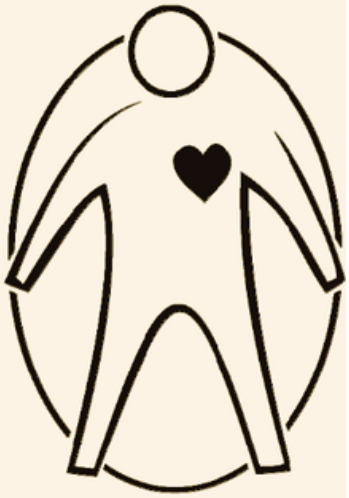
As specified earlier, colours help in memorizing things more easily, but when attached to colour and content, visuals provide even greater benefit for the brain. Images and symbols that are associated with a certain concept or an idea can help to memorize and recall information better.



LET'S PRACTISE!

Read the passage below carefully. Locate the information into a mind map.

Healthy Habits That Promote Wellness



As humans, we develop habits that we follow throughout life. These habits save us time and mental energy, allowing us to perform many actions without using concentrated thought. While many of the typical person's habits are healthy, most of us also develop a number of unhealthy habits over time. Conscious effort is necessary to adopt a new habit or change an unhealthy habit to a more beneficial one.

A Nutritious Diet

One of the most important healthy habits is to follow a nutritious diet each day. Eat a medium-sized breakfast, followed by a light lunch and dinner. Snack on whole grains, fat-free dairy products, nuts, seeds and fresh fruits and vegetables. Drink plenty of water and avoid sodas and foods high in cholesterol, saturated fats and sugars. Avoid eating large portions, and eat only when you are hungry, never because you are bored, emotionally taxed or stressed. A regular, nutritious diet is important to your physical health.

Adequate Sleep

Many doctors recommend maintaining the same sleep schedule seven days a week in order to keep the body accustomed to a routine. Sleep in a dark room without distractions such as music or other noise. If you regularly have difficulty falling or staying asleep, ask your physician about other ways to relax before bedtime.

Regular Exercise

The human body requires regular exercise for health, but many people fail to adopt good exercise habits. Regular exercise can help prevent chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure.

Stress Management

When life gets hectic, many individuals fail to develop healthy stress management habits. Talking and laughing with friends, watching a movie, taking a nature walk, reading a book or playing a game can all help reduce stress levels.

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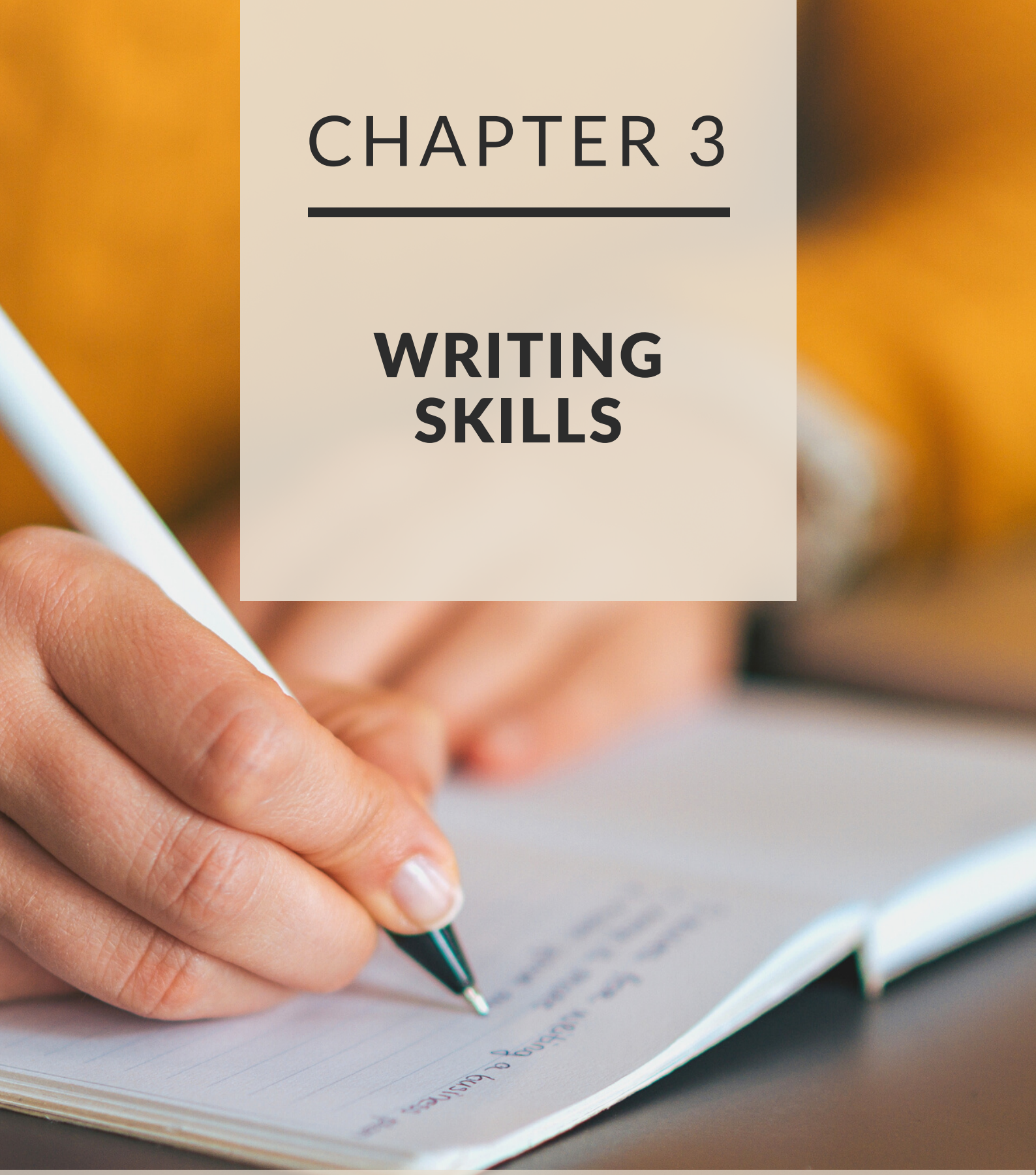
Draw your mind map down here:



CHAPTER 3

WRITING SKILLS

"If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: Read a lot and write a lot"
-Stephen King

In this chapter, you will learn how to ...

UNIT 1:
DEPICT CAUSES AND EFFECTS IN WRITING

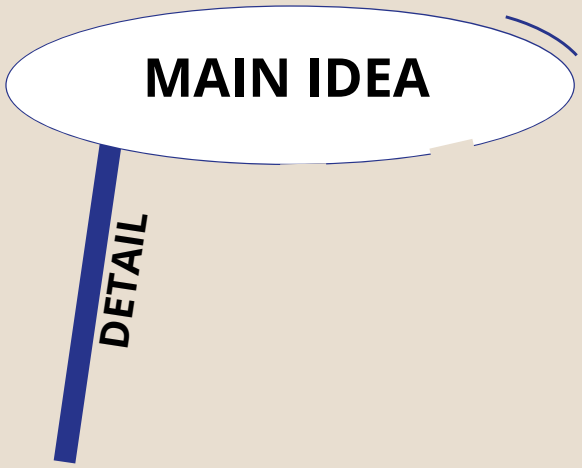
UNIT 2:
LISTENING STIMULUS TO IMPROVE WRITING

UNIT 3:
USE APPROPRIATE VOCABULARY AND IDIOMS IN WRITING

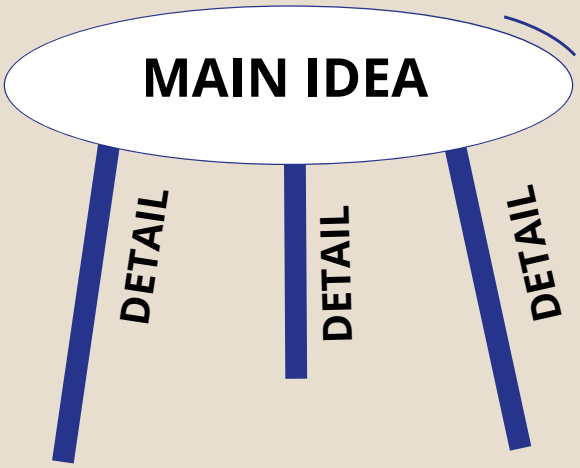
UNIT 1:
DEPICT CAUSES AND EFFECTS IN WRITING

College or university level of writing can be thought as an extended version of answering a question. The end products of writing would present students' stance or opinion regarding the issues raised.

Essay writing provides a platform for students to show that they can think critically about certain issues. The more ARGUMENTS or DETAILS provided in an essay, the more solid the students' opinions are.



Only 1 detail, the idea is weak.



The more details there are, the stronger the main idea is.

You can imagine essay writing as a table where the legs represent the details or arguments. The more details you have, the stronger the table.

FORMAT OF ACADEMIC WRITING

INTRODUCTION

Background information

General information that grabs attention

Thesis statement

Topic and main ideas

BODY

Main Idea 1

Supporting details

Main Idea 2

Supporting details

Main Idea 3

Supporting details

CONCLUSION

Summary

Review of ideas

Among the details or arguments that can be inserted in academic essays are the causes and effects of certain issues.

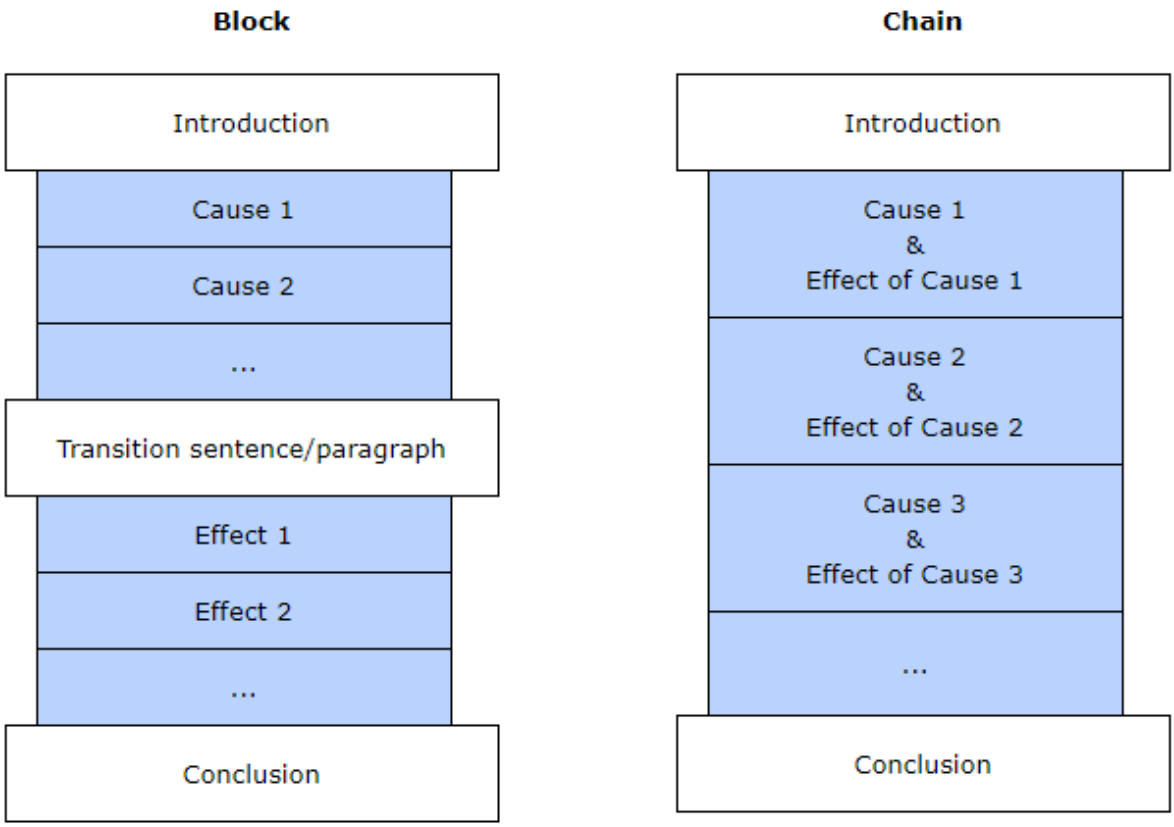
CAUSE
The reason why something, especially something bad, happens

EFFECT
The result of a particular influence

A cause and effect essay looks at the reasons (causes) for something, then discusses the results (effects).

Depending on the tasks, students may be asked to write EITHER a cause essay or an effect essay. But bear in mind that there are times when they are combined into one task – cause AND effect essays.

There are two main ways to structure a cause and effect essay; Block & Chain.



As mentioned before, college or university level of writing challenges students to think critically on a particular issue.

Students' main ideas must be **relevant** to the topic, **clear** and **logical**. Apart from that, in order to gauge readers' interest, students must insert a level of **interestingness**.

Reading a lot on current issues may help students in coming up with relevant, clear and logical ideas in writing.

However, reading is not the only way to gain more knowledge regarding certain issues. Students may also listen to podcasts, watch informational videos or simply discuss with knowledgeable individuals.

PRACTICE

Let's test your knowledge on current issues.

Above is the headline of a news article reporting more than 21,000 new Covid-19 cases in Malaysia. Without relying on any sources for information, what do you think is the CAUSE of the high number of new daily cases of Covid-19 in Malaysia?

If you were struggling to come up with an idea of what might be causing the surge of number of new cases, you might not have been reading a lot on the issue.

Among the possible causes are:

- Mass testing on factory workers
- People not following SOP
- The emergence of new Covid-19 variants

PRACTICE

Now try to think about the causes of each of these issues:

1.The increase of child abuse cases

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Landslides during rainy seasons

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Drug abuse among teenagers

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Students skipping classes

- _____
- _____
- _____

Knowledge on current issues is not just applied to writing cause essays. Whereas, you would also need them in writing effect essays.

Indonesia forest fires: Area burnt so far this year exceeds all of 2018

By Reuters - October 21, 2019 @ 5:41pm

Looking at the above headline, what do you think is the effects of Indonesia forest fires on Malaysia?

_____

_____

_____

Among the most likely effects from the Indonesian forest fires on Malaysia is;

- Malaysia would be experiencing haze / air pollution
- The health of many Malaysians would deteriorate

These effects have been discussed in many news articles and mentioned a lot whenever Malaysia was hit by the haze caused by Indonesian forest fires. Therefore, if you have been following current issues by reading or watching the news, you would most probably can answer the questions.

PRACTICE

Test your knowledge and critical thinking by giving the effects of these issues:

1. Illegal deforestation at Cameron Highlands area.

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Lack of censorship in foreign television series and movies.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. The ban of CCTV cameras in public areas.

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. The lack of maintenance and upgrade on school facility.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Suggested answers:

The answers that you have given so far are mostly main ideas.

MAIN IDEA:
the central, most important, idea in a paragraph

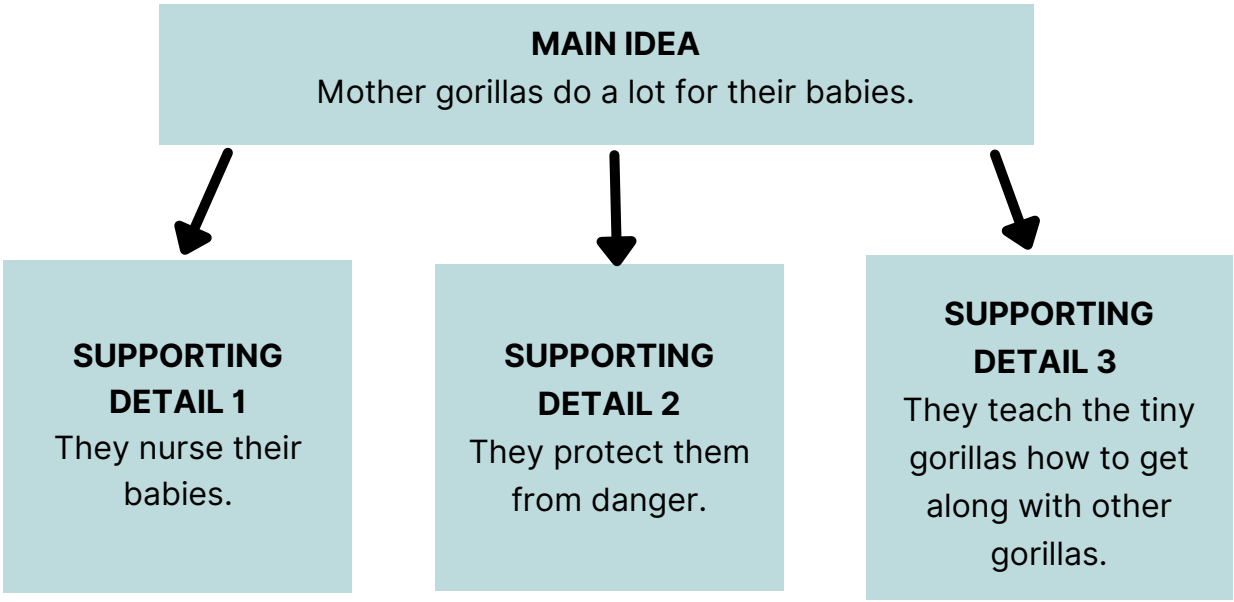
Main ideas often found in the first sentence of a paragraph.

SUPPORTING DETAILS:
explain about the main idea

They make the main idea clearer and stronger.

For example:

Mother gorillas do a lot for their babies. They nurse their babies. They protect them from danger. They teach the tiny gorillas how to get along with other gorillas.



Supporting details provide information to CLARIFY, PROVE, or EXPLAIN the main idea. These details demonstrate the validity of the main idea.

They often list PARTS, ASPECTS, STEPS, or EXAMPLES of the main idea.

Students often give too many main ideas and no supporting details in their writings, which is wrong. The most important thing is the explanations of the main ideas and examples to support them.

You may also use **WH Questions** when figuring out the supporting details. For example;

Main idea = One of the main causes of air pollution is the massive number of vehicles on the road.

Supporting details =
WHY? = Vehicles produce harmful gases like carbon monoxide.
WHO? = Malaysians tend to buy more vehicles because of the bad public transport service.
WHERE = Evidently, we can see how bad the air quality is in major cities compared to countrysides.

You may not use all of the WH Questions. Three to four questions may be enough for you to build strong supporting details.

Please read the paragraph below and answer the following questions.

Recently, robots and remote controlled machines are being used in sumo wrestling competitions. Sumo wrestling is one of the most popular traditional sports in Japan. It takes place in a ring and two players would try to score points by pushing each other out of the ring or holding each other down. Now, instead of humans, robots are being used to contend in sumo matches.

1. Which of the following is this paragraph's supporting detail?
   a. Robots are currently being used in sumo wrestling competitions.
   b. Robot sumo competitions are more popular than human sumo contests.
   c. Robots are being used to contend in sumo matches.
   d. Watching robot sumo is a waste of time.

2. The best definition of supporting details would be...
   a. Sentences that explain more about the main idea of a piece of writing.
   b. Sentences that make the main idea clearer and stronger.
   c. The sentences that make up a large portion of a paragraph in any piece of writing.
   d. Details that act as support to other details.

3. The best definition of main idea would be...
   a. Important ideas or information that tells about the overall idea of a piece of writing.
   b. What an article or a piece of writing is mostly about.
   c. What a person is mainly talking about.
   d. A vague idea that is supported by specific details.

Please read the following paragraphs and then complete the outline for each paragraph.

Being a celebrity is mostly difficult. Firstly, celebrities have to look perfect most of the time. There would always be a photographer ready to take a picture of a famous person looking unfashionable in old clothes. Celebrities also cannot have private lives. Their divorces, family tragedies or personal struggles all end up in the news. Besides, most frightening of all, celebrities are always in constant danger of the wrong kind of attention. Threatening emails and letters and physical attacks from crazy fans are things a celebrity must live with.

Main idea: _____
Supporting detail 1: _____
Supporting detail 2: _____
Supporting detail 3: _____

Depression, unlike the fleeting sadness we all feel at times, has definite warning signs. One of the symptoms of depression is either sleeplessness or sleeping too much. Plus, abnormal eating patterns could also develop, either loss of appetite or eating too much. The third sign is trouble in thinking or concentrating—even to the point of finding it difficult to simply read any book or comics. Lastly, a feeling of hopelessness could be a signal of depression. People who feel indifferent to their jobs and families and think that life is not worth living.

Main idea: _____
Supporting detail 1: _____
Supporting detail 2: _____
Supporting detail 3: _____

Please read the following paragraphs and then complete the outline for each paragraph.

There are a few ways to encourage your family to exercise more often. To start, get them to exercise by emphasizing how good they will feel and how better looking they will be if they work out on a regularly. Besides that, you can also set an example. If they see you walking to a lot to places like the market and shops instead of driving, they might be encouraged to do the same. Lastly, make exercise a family activity. Suggest that the whole family go camping or hiking together, join the gym together or take up early morning jogging sessions.

Point: _____
Main idea: _____
Supporting detail 1: _____
Supporting detail 2: _____
Supporting detail 3: _____

People lie for varied reasons. One of the reasons is to not hurt someone's feelings. For instance, a friend might ask, "Do you like my new haircut?" If you think it's not good, you might still answer, "Yes." Besides, another reason for lying is to avoid a fight. Say a friend make you feel angry you and then asks, "Are you mad at me?" You may answer, "No," to avoid an argument. People also lie so that they will fit in, as when you listen to a boring person and politely say, "That is very interesting." Plus, people lie to avoid spending more time with someone. For example, you might lie, "I have to go now."

Main idea: _____
Supporting detail 1: _____
Supporting detail 2: _____
Supporting detail 3: _____

UNIT 2:
LISTENING STIMULUS TO IMPROVE WRITING

As mentioned in the previous unit, reading a lot is not the only way to gain more knowledge which can elevate one's writing skills.

There are other ways to gain knowledge and one of them is LISTENING.

Besides gaining more knowledge, good listening skills can lead to: better customer satisfaction, greater productivity with fewer mistakes, increase sharing of information that in turn can lead to more creative and innovative work.

LISTENING may be defined as the process of making sense of the spoken.

LISTENING IS NOT THE SAME AS HEARING.

HEARING refers to the SOUNDS that you hear, whereas LISTENING requires FOCUS.

In chapter 1, you have learned about the reading skills of skimming and scanning. You can actually skim and scan when it comes to listening too.

There is a listening sub-skill called **LISTENING FOR GIST**. It is extensive listening for skimming. This happens when we listen to get a general idea about a topic.

In order to skim a listening stimulus, you will have to know first what you are looking for.

By simply listening for the specific helper words, such as WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW, and other interrogator words such as DID, COULD, SHOULD, CAN, etc., you can gain a lot of information from listening.

By synthesizing and briefly conveying the gist of the entire paragraph, and then adding the paraphrased
question to the end, the listener demonstrates the capacity to understand and define the issue and question through reflective playback.

Another listening subskill that is useful is LISTENING IN DETAIL :

It is the intensive listening for scanning. This is when we listen very closely, paying attention to ALL the words and trying to understand as much information as possible.

Both subskills; LISTENING FOR GIST and LISTENING FOR DETAIL, are very important if you want to listen to stimulus (news, talks, podcasts and etc) in order to gain knowledge and thus enhancing your writing skills.

Choose listening materials that are informational so you can absorb the knowledge that can be used when writing.

UNIT 3: USING APPROPRIATE VOCABULARY AND IDIOMS IN WRITING

Writing at college or university level is certainly not a piece of cake compared to school level.

Your lecturers would expect more from you. How can you impress them with your writing?

Having a vast vocabulary and using idioms would certainly show sophistication and poise in your writing. Instead of just using one word again and again and again, it is way better for you to use its synonyms.

HOW DO I GAIN BETTER VOCABULARY?

READ MORE

Vocabulary building is easiest when you encounter words in context. Seeing words appear in a novel or a newspaper article can be far more helpful than seeing them appear on vocabulary lists. Not only do you gain exposure to unfamiliar words; you also see how they're used.

USE THE DICTIONARY

Online dictionaries and thesauruses are helpful resources if used properly. They can jog your memory about synonyms that would actually be better words in the context of what you're writing. A full dictionary definition can also educate you about antonyms, root words, and related words, which is another way to learn vocabulary.

PLAY WORD GAME

Word games may not be enough in and of themselves, but they're a fun and effortless way to increase the recall speed of the vocabulary you know already, as well as to pick up an occasional new word from your peers.

LISTENING

Listening is how we first learn words as a child and can profoundly impact how we learn to pronounce and use new words. Music is a fun way to learn new words while immersing yourself in the popular culture of English-speaking countries.

WHAT IS AN IDIOM?

An idiom is a phrase, saying, or a group of words with a metaphorical (not literal) meaning, which has become accepted in common usage.

Idioms have great intensity to make a language exciting and dynamic. The more idioms you use in your essay, the more impressed your readers will most probably be.

Common Idioms

piece of cake
Meaning: something that is easy to do
Example: Learning English is a piece of cake as long as you do it with our website.

once in a blue moon
Meaning: very rarely
Example: I go to visit my grandfather only once in a blue moon; he lives in a remote farm house.

a bed of roses
Meaning: easy option
Example: Taking care of my younger sister is no bed of roses; she is very silly.

raining cats and dogs
Meaning: raining very heavily
Example: I wanted to go to play outside, but it was raining cats and dogs yesterday.

Without looking them up on the Internet, try to guess the meaning of these idioms. After you have answer all of them, look up the meaning on the internet.

bull's eye

_____

by hook or by crook

_____

in cold blood

_____

look on the bright side

_____

hit the road

_____

so far so good

_____

cold shoulder

_____

no pain, no gain

_____

elephant in the room

_____

break the ice

_____

old school

_____

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