Common Core: Close Read to find the Main Idea!

Find the Main Idea! RI 2.2 - RI 5.2

Ask a Question! RI 2.1 - RI 5.1

Answer a Question! RI 2.1 - RI 5.1

Colleen Meier @2013
Before the lesson...
Make 5 color copies each of the colorful “lesson” sheet and the example page that will work the best for your group and have them laminated. I email mine to Staples for printing and laminating. Make 20 (or 100! Keep plenty handy!) copies of the worksheet and 5 (4 for kids + a copy for me) copies each of some leveled, nonfiction reading passages (A-Z Reading.com. has a good variety). I group them together ready to go ~ copies ready and paper clipped. This is a great lesson for getting observed! You can also use passages from science and social studies textbooks. Have students write the BIG ideas on the web as they read. Test prep: Have the whole class use one of the worksheets with a nonfiction passage.

Directions for Close Reading in small group lessons:
1<sup>st</sup> When I meet with students who need the extra practice, I read through the laminated “lesson” copy and have them follow along with their finger and whisper read as I read. The lesson page can be read by students as well.

2<sup>nd</sup> We examine the example for what we should do, and/or previous attempts for what we shouldn’t do.

3<sup>rd</sup> We read the reading passage and underline and important details. You want students to identify words, phrases and ideas that “jump out” at them. As students advance, they can write a one or two word summary of each paragraph in the margins. I have the students take turns reading out loud while the others whisper read, follow along and underline their own passage. (We also choral read part of the passage.) Sometimes I have them read silently first to get the “gist.” We also discuss/share what has been underlined and make sure underlining is being done appropriately ~ words and phrases ~ not whole sentences. 😊 For example, if Billy reads aloud 3 sentences while Jimmy follows along and underlines, we compare and check to see if they underlined similar ideas/words. Underlining BIG details that interest them is encouraged. We also ask and answer questions verbally during the reading.

4<sup>th</sup> We complete the web using the ”best” details and write the topic in the center of the web. We discuss which BIG important detail should be included as part of the main idea sentence (see example). We add up all the BIG ideas and agree on the central message.

5<sup>th</sup> Students write the main idea sentence and their questions and answers. Options: have the children switch with a partner and answer someone else’s questions, complete the task independently, work with the teacher or work with a partner. The writing can also be done independently as a formative assessment.
**SKILL: Main Idea**  
*(Nonfiction text)*

**Definition:** The main idea or the central message is what the passage is “mostly about”

- The main idea is either **stated** (told to you in a topic sentence or in the text), or you have to **infer** (guess) the main idea using **clues** and details from the text.

**What Do You Need To Do? ★ Close Read!**

- As you close read, underline **words, phrases or BIG details** in the text that you think are **important**.
- Put a ★ in the **margins** next to your favorite **BIG details**.
- Fill in the **web using 4 to 5 of the BIG★ details** you underlined in the passage.
- Use the web to find the **main idea, central message** or what the passage is mostly about!

**BIG Details Support the Main Idea!**
**SKILL: Main Idea**
(Nonfiction text)

**Definition:** The main idea is what the passage is “mostly about.”

1. **Alive for 280 million years**
2. **Lived before dinosaurs!**
3. **3,500 kinds of cockroaches**
4. **Go in tight places to hide**

**Topic:** Cockroaches!

**Cockroaches are insects!**

**Inference that goes with BIG detail # 2**

**Use one of the BIG ideas for the question. Answer using a fact from passage & inference.**

**Write your own topic sentence:** Did you know there are 3,500 kinds of cockroaches? Yikes!

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Thank you for downloading *Common Core; Close Read to get the Main Idea FREEBIE*. My students really enjoy this activity and find success with the response sheets. I am sure yours will as well. I made up this activity to help my students find the main idea and ask and answer questions. This activity as a whole also helps build fluency, close reading skills, writing skills and comprehension.

**Good luck!** Please let me know how this lesson works for you! If you like this activity, please check out *my other close reading products!* For **MORE DIFFERENTIATED Main Idea lesson guides and response sheets**, Check out *Close Read to get the Main Idea for Grades 1 - 5* which has 4 differentiated lesson guides and 7 response sheets.

*Contact me with any questions!*  
[**mrs_meier@hotmail.com**](mailto:mrs_meier@hotmail.com)
**SKILL: Main Idea**  
(Nonfiction text)

**Definition:** The main idea is what the passage is “mostly about.”

1. Find the BIG details in your reading passage.
2. Make a web of 4-5 BIG details. (*Important ideas in the passage*)

**Topic** ________________________________

2. Use the details on your web to find the **MAIN IDEA**.
3. Ask a question, answer it, and then write a cool **topic sentence**!

*The main idea is* __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Ask a question: __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Answer your question: _____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Write your own topic sentence! _____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Common Core: Close Read to get the Main Idea*  
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Close Reading: Analyzing Characters is a scaffolded system for teaching students how to analyze characters using the Story Man T-chart and write character analysis paragraphs using the writing templates. As they gain confidence, they move to independent analysis.

Close Reading can be FUN for kids and EASY for Teachers!