

Name: _____

Date: _____

Determining the Main Idea


Directions: Determining the main idea of a passage or text is an important part of reading comprehension. No matter how simple or complicated a text or story is, you'll want to be able to identify what it is about. First, read the article below. Use close reading skills, like highlighting, underlining, or circling important information. Remember, your goal is to identify the main idea of this passage: *What is the passage mostly about?* After reading, review the explanation below about the main idea of this passage.

"Amazing Icebergs"

Icebergs are gigantic chunks of ice that float in the ocean. They are formed from snow that falls on land and compacts into ice over many years. Most of an iceberg's mass is hidden underwater, while only a small portion is visible above the surface. Icebergs can be very, very large.

Did you know that not all icebergs look the same? They come in different shapes, sizes, and colors! Some icebergs are as small as a car, while others are huge. They can be white, blue, or even striped with layers of different ice.

Even though they might look calm, icebergs can be dangerous for ships. That's because the hidden part underwater can be much larger than what you can see above. Ships have to be very careful to avoid bumping into them.

 **What's the main idea of this passage?** The main idea of this passage is that icebergs are large chunks of ice floating in the ocean. The passage explains how icebergs form, their different shapes and sizes as well as their potential danger to ships. However, the main focus is always on describing what icebergs are—gigantic floating chunks of ice. Is this what you identified as the main idea, too?

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Reading A

Maple trees are amazing plants that provide us with many useful things. One of the most famous things that come from maple trees is maple syrup. Did you know it takes about 40 gallons of sap from a sugar maple tree to make just one gallon of maple syrup? That's a lot of sap!

But maple trees are useful for more than just syrup. The wood from maple trees is strong and sturdy, so it's used to make furniture, floors, and even musical instruments like guitars and violins. Some basketball courts are made from maple wood.

In the fall, maple trees put on a colorful show with their leaves turning vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow. These beautiful leaves are often used in crafts, like making leaf rubbings or decorations for celebrations.

 **What's the main idea of this passage? Explain how you know!**

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Reading B

Peppers come in all shapes, sizes, and flavors. But some peppers are so spicy that they make your tongue feel like it's on fire!

The Carolina Reaper holds the record for being the hottest pepper in the world. It's small and wrinkled, but don't let its size fool you! It packs a punch with intense heat that can make you sweat and feel really, really hot. Another fiery pepper is the Trinidad Moruga Scorpion. This pepper has a bumpy skin and a fiery taste that's even hotter than the Carolina Reaper. Just a tiny bite can make your mouth feel like a volcano. Ever heard of the Ghost Pepper? It's also known as Bhut Jolokia and is famous for its extreme spiciness. People say it's so hot that it can make you feel like you're breathing fire!

The heat in these peppers comes from a substance called capsaicin. It's what makes peppers spicy. Some people like to eat these super hot peppers as a challenge, while others use them to add a kick to their food. But be careful, eating too much of these peppers can be really, really spicy!

 **What's the main idea of this passage? Explain how you know!**

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Reading C

Dragons are really special in Chinese culture. Chinese dragons are considered powerful, wise, and friendly creatures that bring good luck and blessings. In China, dragons are seen as symbols of strength, power, and good fortune. They're often depicted as long creatures with colorful scales, sharp claws, and a kind face. Unlike Western dragons, Chinese dragons don't have wings, but they can fly using magical powers!

Dragons are also important during Chinese New Year, a festive time when families gather and celebrate. Dragon dances are performed during parades, with a long dragon made of silk and bamboo. People carry it through the streets, dancing to the beat of drums and symbols. It's believed that the dragon dance brings good luck for the coming year.

Emperors in ancient China saw themselves as descendants of dragons and used dragon symbols on their clothes and belongings. Even today, the dragon is a symbol of power and leadership.

 **What's the main idea of this passage? Explain how you know!**
