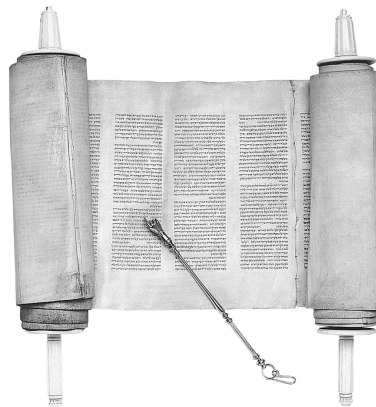


SAMPLE PAGES FOR
PASSING THE
GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARTS TEST

2006 EDITION



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CHAPTER 1

LITERAL READING

This chapter addresses literal reading comprehension, or being able to understand what the author actually said. The reader can actually point to the words on the page to demonstrate comprehension of literal reading. This chapter contains the following objectives:

Objective 1: Finding the Main Idea
Objective 2: Sequencing Ideas

Objective 1

FINDING THE MAIN IDEA

In order to meet this objective, read carefully the material on main idea, work diligently through the exercises to practice important skills, and then complete and score the practice test at the end of the chapter.

The purpose of this objective is to become comfortable with recognizing the main idea that is directly stated in what you are reading. One strategy for accomplishing this is to know the difference between the topic and the main idea. The topic is the one thing the text is about and can usually be stated in one or two words. It forms an “umbrella” under which all the details can fit. For example, what would be the “umbrella” under which all these words could be grouped together?

Items: Ice Cream
Cake
Candy
Pie

Topic: _____

EXERCISE 1: LABELING TOPICS

Under each list of specific items, label the topic, or umbrella, under which all four things may be grouped.

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| 1. Spruce | 2. Jeans | 3. Football | 4. Car |
| Fur | Sweaters | Soccer | Bus |
| Pine | Shirts | Swimming | Bike |
| Oak | Ties | Tennis | Motorcycle |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

To determine the topic of a paragraph or a passage, try asking yourself simply, “Who or what is this about?” Readers typically can identify the topic with little difficulty.

EXERCISE 2: FINDING THE TOPIC AND MAIN IDEA

Determining the main idea of what you're reading is more complicated than figuring out the topic. The main idea is what the author is trying to communicate about the "who or what," or the key idea being expressed by the author. Once you have established the topic, you can identify the main idea by asking, "What is the author trying to communicate about the topic?" Then answer this question with a complete sentence!

Read the following paragraphs and answer the questions for identifying the topic and main idea.

- A.** Reaching into almost every home in the land almost every hour of the day, entertainment art is the most pervasive art of our culture. Many millions of people watch television daily. The average high school graduate will have spent, by graduation day, more hours watching television than attending class. More than 22 million people a day watch daytime soap operas. Radio is now so portable that it goes with us in our cars, on our bicycles, and even in our hands or on our heads as we walk. When we are bored with radio or TV, we go to a movie, a circus, or a live sporting event. Plays, operas, ballets, and musical concerts also draw appreciative crowds.

Topic: Who or what is this about? _____

Main Idea: What is the author trying to communicate about this topic?

- B.** The tremendous power of music to enhance other activities, however, should not be underestimated. Music can help young fingers move freely over paper in creating abstract designs, it can provide thought associations in getting ideas, it can help in acquiring motor skills, it can evoke many moods (which have been previously learned), it can make periods of rest more interesting, and it can stimulate discussions about nearly any topic. Playing a Gregorian Chant may enhance study of life in the Middle Ages. Music can be used to help teach nationalism ("The Star Spangled Banner"), racism ("Society's Child"), poverty ("Tobacco Road"), or war ("Johnny Has Gone For a Soldier").

Topic: Who or what is this about? _____

Main Idea: What is the author trying to communicate about the topic?

C. The World War II Memorial in Washington, DC honors the 16 million who served in uniform and the more than 400,000 gave who their lives. It also honors the many millions who supported the war effort on the home front and celebrates the American spirit, national unity, and ultimate victory. The memorial celebrates a generation of Americans who emerged from the Depression to fight and win the most devastating war in world history. Americans and their allies triumphed over tyranny. Unprecedented unity at home saw the nation become the world's breadbasket and industrial arsenal. In a spirit of sacrifice, Americans rationed at home and channeled the nation's might to help restore freedom to millions. The World War II Memorial reminds future generations that we must sometimes sacrifice for causes greater than ourselves.

Source: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

Topic: Who or what is this about? _____

Main Idea: What is the author trying to communicate about the topic?

EXERCISE 3: USING DETAILS TO FIND THE MAIN IDEA

Keep in mind as you are reading that all communication can be broken down into three parts: the topic (or who or what it is about), the main idea (or what the author is trying to communicate about the who or what), and the details. Details are the proof, explanation, or support provided by the author to back up, justify, or explain the main idea. Identifying the details and then asking yourself the question, "What do all these details point to?" or "Why did the author tell me this information?" may help you find the main idea.

Read the following passages, jot down the topic, write some of the details provided in your own words, and then use these details to identify the main idea.

- A.** Acids are familiar substances. We hear about stomach acid in commercials as though it was dangerous unless treated with "antacids." In fact, stomach acid (hydrochloric acid) is necessary to help digest the foods we eat. The fluid inside an automobile battery is sulfuric acid and is used in the battery to help change chemical energy to electrical energy. Many foods contain acids. Citrus fruit contains citric acid and ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Vinegar contains acetic acid, and apples contain malic acid. Acidic foods taste sour, and basic foods taste bitter.

Topic: Who or what is this about? _____

Details: What is the proof, explanation, support?

Main Idea: Why did the author tell me these details?

B. Almost everyone, in fact, claims to be a “good driver,” even people who have had several accidents. Unfortunately, the reverse is true: almost no one is a “good driver.” A good driver is one who can recover safely from a dangerous situation. Most of us have not practiced recovering from uncontrolled skids, or braking at high speeds on different surfaces. When we got our driver’s licenses, the driving test was a very simple, low speed exercise. It did not test the driving skills we would need in an emergency, and most of our subsequent experience is not in emergency situations either.

Topic: Who or what is this about? _____

Details: What is the proof, explanation, support?

Main Idea: Why did the author tell me these details?

C. During the 1840s, the United States gained even more new territory. In 1845, Congress voted to add Texas to the Union. More land was gained in 1846 when Britain gave the southern part of the Oregon territory to the United States. Following the Mexican-American War, Mexico gave the United States all its land between Texas and the Pacific Ocean.

Topic: Who or what is this about? _____

Details: What is the proof, explanation, support?

Main Idea: Why did the author tell me these details?

D. Hearing loss or deafness can be the result of many things. Disease in any portion of the ear can result in a hearing loss, and diseases incurred by a mother while pregnant can cause hearing loss in the child. Other causes include the taking of certain drugs, exposure to loud sounds or noises, heredity, birth defects, and the normal process of aging.

Topic: Who or what is this about? _____

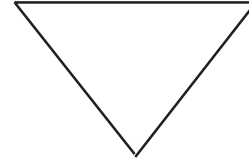
Details: What is the proof, explanation, support?

Main Idea: Why did the author tell me these details?

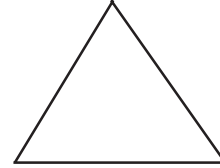
EXERCISE 4: IDENTIFYING THE MAIN IDEA

Another strategy for identifying a main idea literally stated in a paragraph is to visualize the possible locations of the main-idea sentence.

Very often the main-idea sentence may be at the beginning of the paragraph followed by the supporting information. You could think of the paragraph as information presented in the shape of an upside-down triangle.



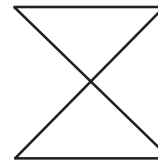
Sometimes the supporting information may be presented first with the concluding sentence that states the main idea presented last. Picture the paragraph as a right-side up triangle.



A paragraph may also begin with the supporting information, state the main idea in the middle, and then present additional information to support the main idea at the end. A diamond shape would best represent this format.



Finally, both the introduction and concluding sentence of a paragraph may state the main idea. Visualize this format:



Read the following paragraphs and locate the main-idea sentences. Underline the main-idea sentence(s) and then draw the shape that best fits the paragraph.

- A.** Foods that supply “empty calories”—calories without many nutrients—are not considered nutrient-dense. Soft-drinks, potato chips, candy bars, and cookies are not very nutrient-dense and are sometimes called “junk foods.” However, many foods labeled as junk foods supply more than calories even if they are not considered traditional sources of nutrients. For instance, cookies are made with flour, usually enriched, that provides some nutrients. Also, some people need calories, just as some people need to limit calories. Foods that supply just calories are not inherently bad. It is the overeating of these foods, precluding or limiting the intake of more nutritionally valuable foods, that can create problems. Within the framework of sound nutritional practices, the consumption of these so-called junk foods is, and should be, permitted. Therefore, the term junk food is considered by most nutritionists to be inappropriate. All foods supply some nutrients, albeit sometimes in limited amounts.

Shape that best fits this paragraph: _____

- B.** Sounds are heard not only through the outer and middle ear, but be heard in this way. If a vibrating tuning fork is placed on the teeth, some of the vibrations are conducted directly to the cochlea of the inner ear. This kind of conductive hearing is very important when trying to determine whether a person has a hearing loss in the middle ear or has nerve damage in the inner ear. If a person has experienced a hearing loss and can hear a tuning fork placed on the teeth, the hearing loss has probably occurred in the outer or middle ear. If the tuning fork cannot be heard well using this method, the hearing loss is probably located in the inner ear.

Shape that best fits this paragraph: _____

- C.** Sometimes known as the House of Moliere, the Theatre Francais was a symbol, in two important ways, of the emerging dominance of the middle class in the upcoming century. First, the repertoire of the Theatre Francais was based heavily on the comedies of Moliere, peopled with middle-class characters and their concerns. Second, the architectural shape of the Theatre Francais was more of a horseshoe than a semicircle. This subtle change commenced the process of eliminating the worst seats in the proscenium theatre and making more good seats available for the general public. That general public was the middle class who came to see themselves in Moliere's plays.

Shape that best fits this paragraph: _____

- D.** If you want to increase your consumption of dietary fiber, increase your consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. It is not recommended that you consume purified fiber sources. Too much purified fiber will interfere with the absorption of trace minerals, especially iron, zinc, and copper, from the diet. Many people, especially women and growing children, are consuming less than optimal amounts of these trace minerals. Continual consumption of purified fiber sources may cause one to develop trace-mineral deficiencies. To summarize, you should attempt to reduce your consumption of simple carbohydrates while at the same time increasing your consumption of complex carbohydrates. This can be accomplished by increasing your intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Shape that best fits this paragraph: _____

EXERCISE 5: DIRECTIONAL WORDS AND MAIN IDEA

Another strategy for identifying the main idea is to pay attention to what are called “directional” words. For example, *in general*, *generally*, *above all*, and *of great importance* are “directional” words that direct you to the main idea of the paragraph. The author may even say literally, *the main idea is*, *the main point* or *the main feature is*, *the key point is*, etc.

Read the following paragraphs and circle the directional words that point you to the main-idea sentence.

- A.** Structure begins when one enters a classroom. As soon as people get together, even under a tree, structure begins. When they start talking we have even more structure. If it rains and we build a shelter to get in out of the rain even more structure emerges. And if there are too many people to meet all in the same room then other kinds of structure arise. Structure starts as soon as two people get together and continues as people continue meeting. The crucial point is that some people persist in talking about unstructured education when they ought to be thinking about how much and what kind of structure.
- B.** Skeletal aging is generally less accurate in adults than in children, but there are a number of reliable methods available. These include the extent of wear or attrition of the teeth, the fusion of suture of the skull, and appearance of the pubic symphysis. In general, the best approach to adult skeletal aging is to use as many indicators of age from a skeleton as are available for estimating age at death. A single indicator will not be as accurate as the combination of a number of age indicators or sites.
- C.** It is clear that much of technology does come from the discoveries of science. It is also clear that a lot of technology doesn't. New “superconducting” materials are being made today. They conduct electricity with no resistance at relatively high temperatures, but we don't know how they work. The point is that it is technology that changes our lives, with the changes coming faster and faster. Given this tremendous impact, is it the case that students study technology in school? Do well-educated people understand how microwave ovens work? Televisions? Automobile transmissions?

EXERCISE 6: MAIN IDEA OF A PASSAGE

The main idea of a passage is an expanded version of the main idea of a paragraph. The main idea of a passage is the central or most important thought in the passage. Every other sentence and idea is related to the main idea. With a passage, the topic may be referred to as the “general subject” and the main idea as the “central thought.” The general subject, or topic, would answer the question, “Who or What is this about?” The central thought, or main idea, would answer the question “Who or What is the author trying to communicate to me about this general subject?”

Read the following passages, and answer the questions for identifying the explicitly stated main idea (or central thought).

A. There are two types of corporations found in the entertainment industry, as elsewhere: profit-making and nonprofit corporations. The latter category, which is employed mostly in entertainment enterprises away from commercial centers, includes such ventures as programs done by colleges and universities, by regional and local repertory theatres, and by orchestras and dance companies. The advantage of a nonprofit status is that gifts made to such a group are tax-deductible and that only nonprofit groups are eligible for many of the largest financial grants from governmental and private sources. There are two disadvantages in being nonprofit. First, most states require that the board of directors and officers be made up of lay citizens. Therefore, the power and influence of the producer is further reduced. Second, no matter what the profit on a single venture, it must be put back into the organization or given to other charities. The producer receives only a fixed amount.

The nonprofit approach works best in locations where profit is not likely to be great even on a hit show. In the larger cities, or in national ventures in film and television, profits from a single hit are handsome indeed. *Titanic* cost \$200 million to make and earned \$1,835,400,000.00 and only took 66 days to reach \$400 million gross. *Titanic* spent 15 weeks at the top of the charts. Because of this possibility of huge profits, most large entertainment ventures are incorporated for profit. The financial risks are large, but the monetary reward for a single hit can be mind-boggling.

General Subject: Who or what is this about? _____

Central Thought: What is the author trying to communicate about the general subject?

B. Performers must be committed to their artistic specialty and to developing their skills through training, rehearsal and practice. But practice requires discipline and a willingness to work and to accept help and criticism in order to achieve excellence.

Commitment means not only an intellectual dedication to the art, but an emotional one as well. Performers are human beings with varied, conflicting, and volatile emotions. These emotions must be subordinated to the demands of the art and of the audience. The quarterback must not let the roar of the crowd and the tension of the situation carry him away. The same is true of the actress playing Ophelia's mad scene in *Hamlet*. The actress cannot indulge personal emotions; she must present the emotions of

Ophelia to an excited audience. She must remain collected. She must keep her concentration focused on the emotions of the character, not on her own feelings.

Commitment also means the willingness to give generously of one's personal emotional life. In acting, this kind of commitment is called "honesty." Such honesty means dropping all defenses, although such self-revelation may not always arouse the audience's interest.

General Subject: Who or what is this about? _____

Central Thought: What is the author trying to communicate about the general subject?

- C.** One of the easiest star patterns to recognize is the Big Dipper. During the spring it can be seen high overhead about 20 to 25 degrees north of the zenith (top of your globe). The Big Dipper consists of a group of 2nd-magnitude stars arranged in a bowl-shaped fashion. The bowl will be facing roughly south with the handle extending to the southeast.

The Big Dipper is actually part of the larger constellation Ursa Major, The Big Bear. Thus the Big Dipper is not a constellation, but is instead called an asterism. Asterisms are distinctive star patterns within a constellation or between several constellations.

Look at the three stars making up the handle of the Big Dipper. The middle star is called Mizar and has a magnitude of 2.4. If you look carefully you can see that Mizar has a faint 4th-magnitude companion named Alcor. This pair is sometimes referred to as the *horse and rider*. Mizar is a multiple-star system which is about 88 light years away. Thus when you observe Mizar you are seeing it as it was 88 years ago.

General Subject: Who or what is this about? _____

Central Thought: What is the author trying to communicate about the general subject?
