ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Identifying the main idea

Difficulty level: Easy

English, Literacy, and Communication

This document was made by AI and there may be mistakes. If a question or answer looks wrong, use the Flag a mistake button to let Brett know so he can fix it.

Overview of the concept

This is how you sum up a passage in one sentence, like telling a friend what a news article was really about without retelling the whole thing. Every article, chapter, and report has one central point, and finding it is what lets you remember the passage long after the details fade. You use it when you skim a textbook before a test, explain a news story to someone else, or write a summary that shows you actually understood what you read.



© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q **Find the main idea: Dogs need food, water, exercise, and love. Owners feed them daily, walk them, and play with them.**

SOLUTION

Ask: what is the passage mostly about? Dogs and what they need.

The details (food, water, exercise, love) all support that one idea.

So the main idea is: Dogs need care from their owners.

EXAMPLE 2

Q **Find the main idea: Bees collect nectar, make honey, and pollinate flowers. Without bees, many plants could not grow.**

SOLUTION

Ask: what is the passage mostly about? Bees and their work.

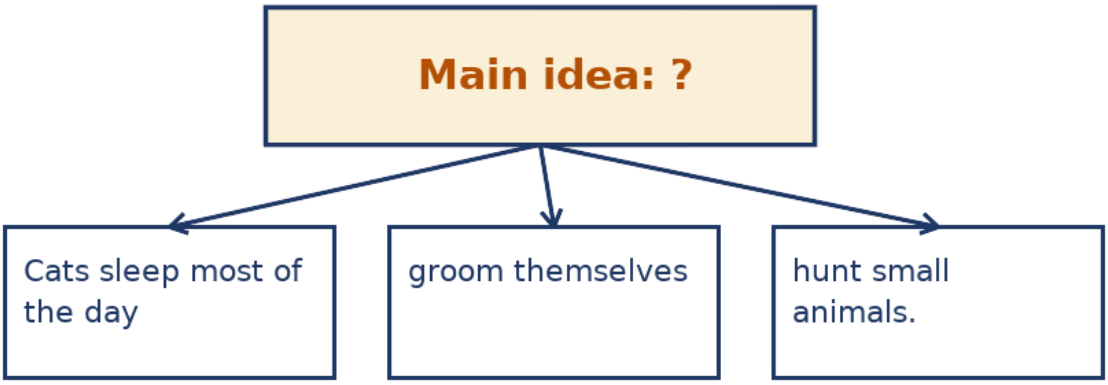
The details (nectar, honey, pollination) all support that one idea.

So the main idea is: Bees do important work for plants.

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Practice questions

1 **Passage: Cats sleep most of the day, groom themselves, and hunt small animals. What is the main idea?**



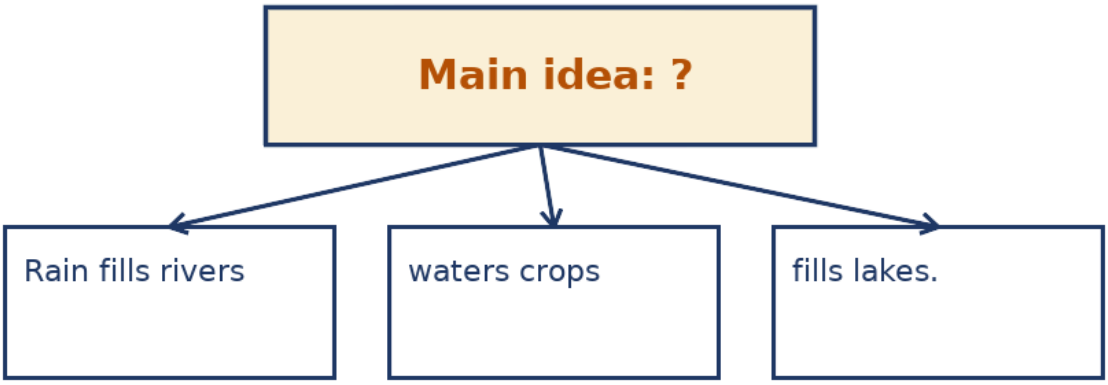
- **A** Cats sleep most of the day.
- **B** Cats have daily habits and behaviours.
- **C** Cats groom themselves.
- **D** Cats are the best pets.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

2

Passage: Rain fills rivers, waters crops, and fills lakes. What is the TOPIC of this passage?



A Rain

B Rivers

C Crops

D Clouds

Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

3

Passage: Sara practised piano every day, learned new songs, and played at a concert. Which sentence is a supporting DETAIL, not the main idea?



A Sara practised piano every day

B Sara worked hard at piano and performed

C Sara likes music

D Sara owns a piano

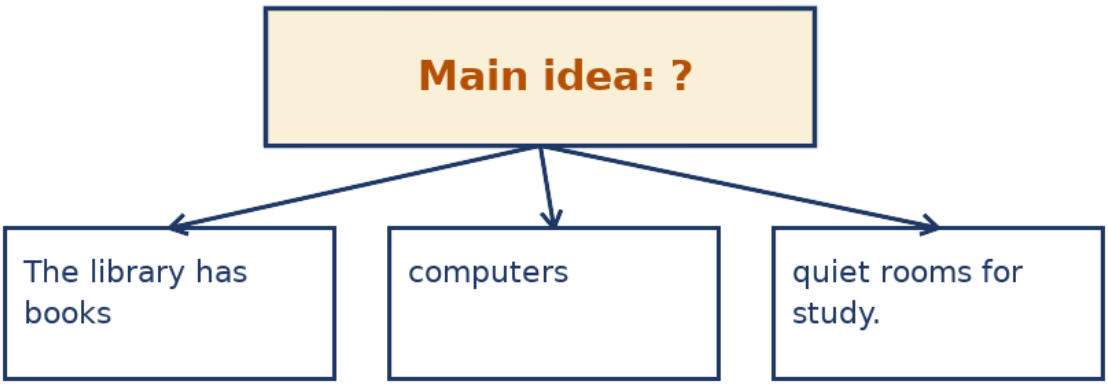
Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

4

Passage: The library has books, computers, and quiet rooms for study. Which detail does NOT support the main idea that the library offers resources for reading and study?



A The library has books

B The library has computers

C The library has quiet rooms for study

D The library is open on Sundays

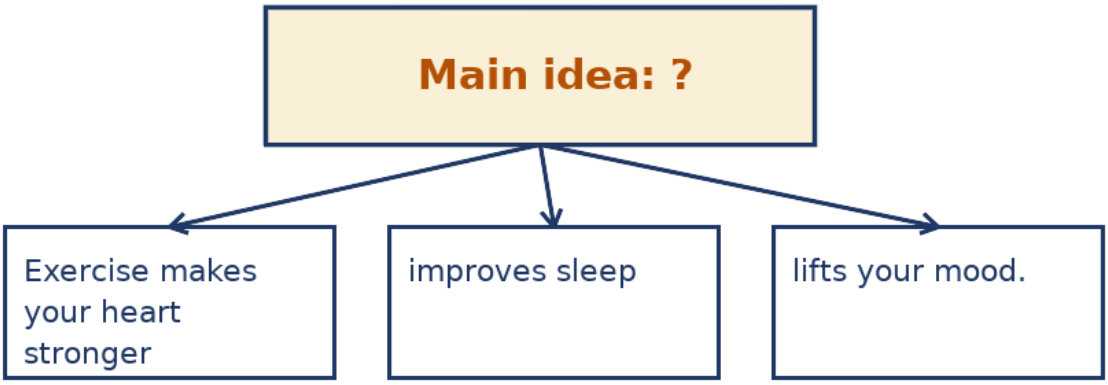
Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

5

Passage: Exercise makes your heart stronger, improves sleep, and lifts your mood. Choose the best TITLE for this passage.



A Exercise Makes Your Heart Stronger

B Why Exercise Is Good for You

C How to Sleep Better

D Exercise Is Hard Work

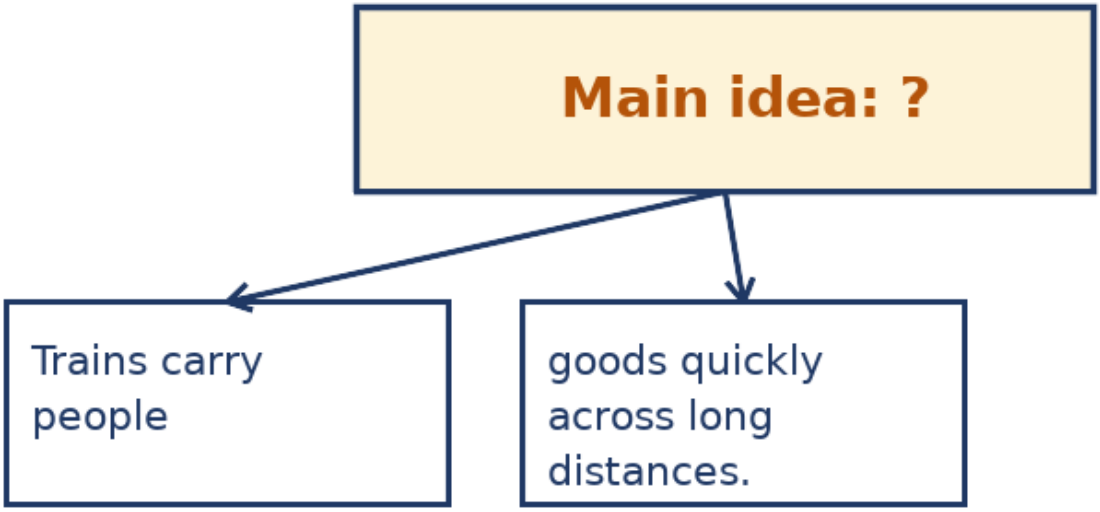
Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

6

Passage: Trains carry people and goods quickly across long distances. The main idea is that trains are a fast way to move people and goods. Which detail could be ADDED to support it?



A Trains run on tracks

B Trains can travel at high speeds

C Trains are painted blue

D Trains carry coal

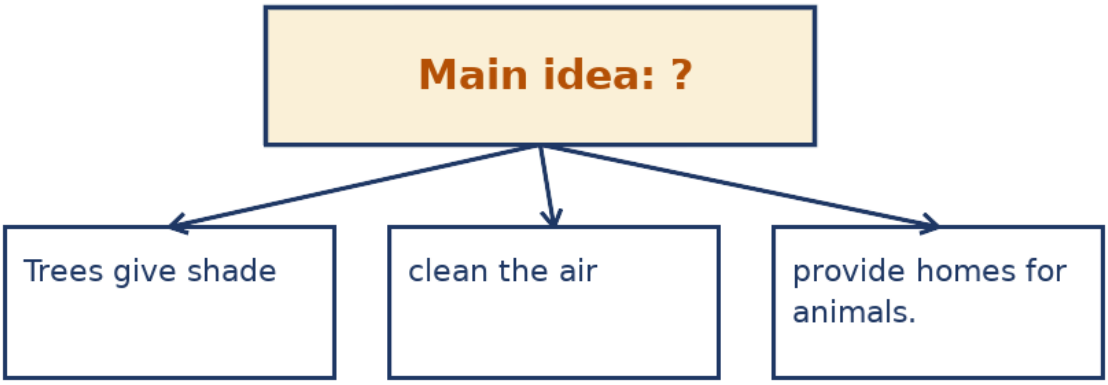
Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

7

Passage: Trees give shade, clean the air, and provide homes for animals. Why is 'Trees grow tall' NOT the main idea?



A It is not true

B It is only one detail, not what the whole passage is about

C It is too long

D It is about animals

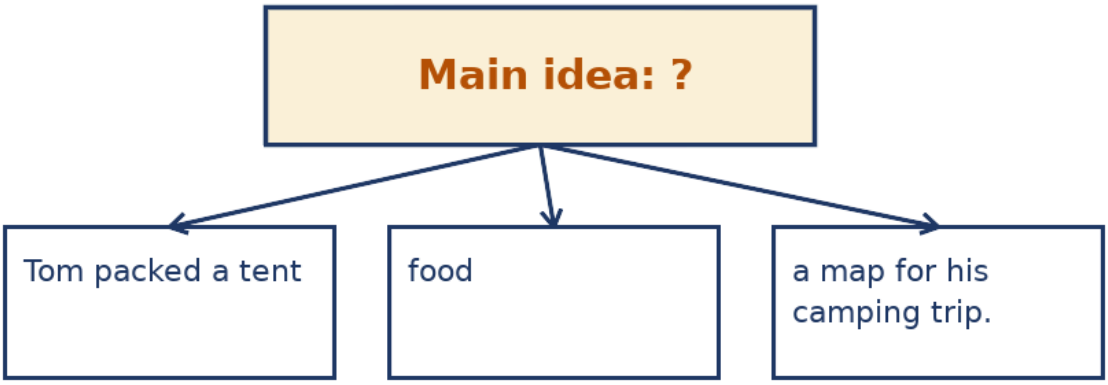
Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

8

Passage: Tom packed a tent, food, and a map for his camping trip. Which of these did Tom NOT pack?



A A tent

B Food

C A map

D A sleeping bag

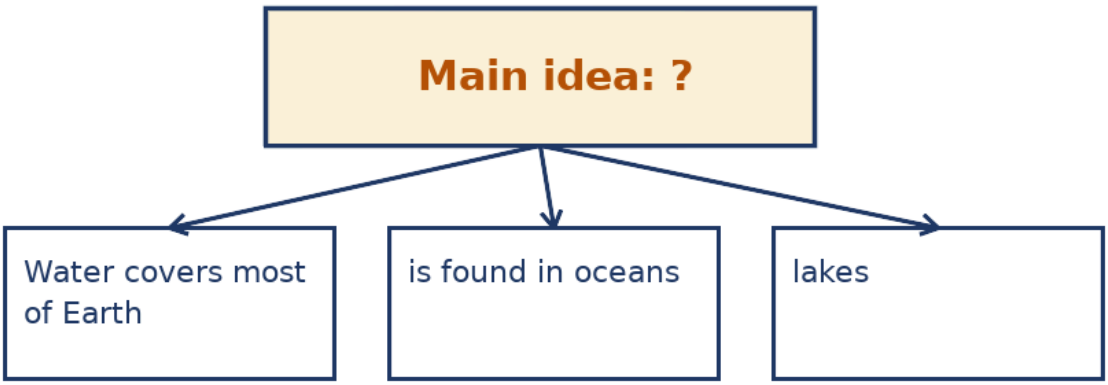
Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

9

Passage: Water covers most of Earth and is found in oceans, lakes, and rivers. The main idea is: Water is found in ___ on Earth. Which words complete the main idea?



A many places

B oceans

C lakes

D rivers

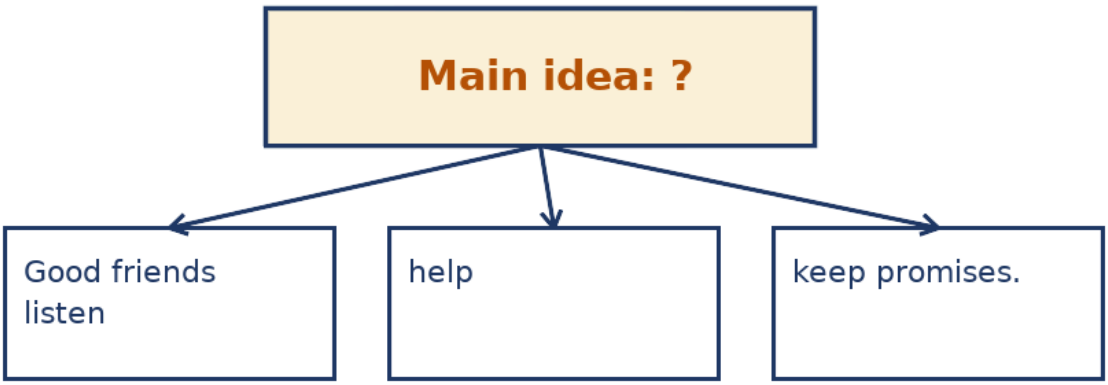
Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

10

Passage: Good friends listen, help, and keep promises. Which two details BOTH support the main idea that good friends act in caring ways?



A Listen and keep promises

B Listen and are funny

C Help and tell jokes

D Keep promises and are tall

Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

ANSWER KEY

1. Cats have daily habits and behaviours.
2. Rain
3. Sara practised piano every day
4. The library is open on Sundays
5. Why Exercise Is Good for You
6. Trains can travel at high speeds
7. It is only one detail, not what the whole passage is about
8. A sleeping bag
9. many places
10. Listen and keep promises

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.