Summarizing

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Practice

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The **main idea** of a paragraph is what the whole paragraph is *mostly about*.

The **details** are *small pieces of information* that make the paragraph more interesting.

A **summary** includes the **main idea** of *each of the paragraphs* in a story. It does not include the **details** of the paragraphs.

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As you read this story, look for the **main idea** of each paragraph. These can be put together to make a **summary** of the whole story.

We know that the planets of our solar system orbit the sun. Comets also orbit our sun—more than 4,000 of them. Most comets circle the sun very slowly. While the earth circles the sun once a year, many comets take thousands of years to complete just one orbit of the sun.

Comets are made of frozen gasses and bits of rock and dust. The solid part of most comets can be up to 10 miles across. As a comet gets close to the sun, the heat causes the comet's frozen gasses to turn into a cloud of vapor and dust. The cloud can be thousands of miles across. Solar winds cause this vapor cloud to trail out behind the comet like a tail. This "vapor tail" can be *hundreds of millions* of miles long.

Sometimes comets are visible from earth. You might think that when this happens you would see the comet whizzing across the sky. But in fact, it would appear to be motionless. This is because both the comet and the earth are moving.

The most famous comet is Halley's Comet. Its orbit around the sun takes 76 years. This is pretty fast for a comet. There are records of sightings of Halley's Comet from 2,500 years ago. The next time it will be visible from earth will be in 2061.

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
   A. The planets of our solar system orbit the sun.
   B. Comets in our solar system orbit the sun.
   C. The earth circles the sun once a year.

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2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
   A. Solar winds cause a comet's vapor cloud to trail out like a tail.
   B. The solid part of a comet can be 10 miles across.
   C. Comets are made of frozen gasses and bits of rock and dust.

3. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
   A. A comet's vapor tail can be hundreds of millions of miles long.
   B. When comets are visible from earth, the appear to be motionless.
   C. When comets are visible from earth, the appear to whiz across the sky.

4. What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?
   A. The most famous comet is Halley's Comet.
   B. The orbit of Halley's Comet takes 76 years.
   C. The next time Halley's Comet will be visible will be in 2061.

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5. Write the numbers 1 through 4 in the boxes beside the events to show the sequence of what happened, from *first to last*.

	1-4?
Comets are made of frozen gasses and bits of rock and dust.	
Comets in our solar system orbit the sun.	
When comets are visible from earth, the appear to be motionless.	
The most famous comet is Halley's Comet.	

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6. What would be a good title for this whole story?

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