

Name: _____

Reading Comprehension

Main Idea and Supporting Details

Read each paragraph. Choose the best answers.

Passage 1

You probably know that guide dogs are used to lead blind people. Did you know that a few blind people have guide horses? These are miniature horses trained much as guide dogs are. The small horses respond to more than 25 commands. They can see well in the dark. They are also trained to tap with a hoof on the door if they need to go out. One man has even taken his guide horse on an airplane!

1. The main idea of this passage is:

- a) How guide dogs are trained
- b) A guide horse on an airplane
- c) the use of small horses as guides
- d) why blind people like animals

2. A supporting detail is:

- a) Guide dogs lead blind people
- b) The horse responds to 25 commands
- c) miniature means small
- d) airlines welcome guide horses

Passage 2

Dictionary writers are always busy. That's because the English language keeps changing. People stop using some words, and new words keep popping up. Where do new words come from? Many recent words are from technology. For example, *snailmail* came into use after people started using the much faster e-mail. Other new words come from books, television, movies, and fads. Do you know what a *wannabe* is? If not, you can look it up in a recently published dictionary.

1. The main idea of this passage is:

- a) Dictionaries show changes in English
- b) How television affects English
- c) Why dictionary writers are so tired
- d) How to find words in a dictionary

2. A supporting detail is:

- a) Snails help to deliver the mail
- b) Many words come from technology
- c) Old dictionaries are not useful
- d) The English language never changes

MAIN IDEA & SUPPORTING DETAILS

WHAT IS MAIN IDEA?

The **main idea** is what the text is MOSTLY about. It can be found at the beginning of a short passage or at the end (the last sentence).

WHAT ARE SUPPORTING DETAILS?

The **supporting details** are the key points that support and help describe the main idea.



Use this strategy to help you find the main idea and supporting details of each passage.

TOPIC	MAIN IDEA	SUPPORTING DETAILS
Ask yourself... Who or what is the whole text about?	Ask yourself... What is the most important point or thought about the topic?	Ask yourself... Which details support and help to describe the main idea?

Passage 3

Have you ever carried a stone around in your pocket? According to a tradition of the Seneca, a favorite stone can tell something about you. If your stone is smooth, it means you are gentle. A rough stone means that you follow creative ideas. Gray stones suggest that you are friendly, while brown ones mean you love nature. The shape of your stone has meaning too. A round stone says you are flexible. Is your stone oval? You are seeking a better life.

1. The main idea of this passage is:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| a) It's good to carry stones in your pocket | c) Rough stones mean creativity |
| b) Stones are precious possessions | d) Stones have meaning to the Seneca |

2. A supporting detail is:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Everyone should carry a stone | c) Stones are found in many colors |
| b) Brown stones mean you love nature | d) A stone's shape is not important |

Passage 4

Lions live together in social groups called prides. Most of the lions in a pride are females and their cubs. The lionesses share the work of hunting and raising the cubs. By hunting in a pack, lions can take down animals far larger than themselves. Much of the food killed by a pride is taken by the males. In return, they provide protection from other males. A pride has a well-defined territory, which is marked by the males. When lions in a pride meet, they greet one another by head rubbing, licking, and grooming.

1. The main idea of this passage is:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a) Males eat most of the pride's food | c) Lions hunt together in a pack |
| b) Lions live in groups called prides | d) Lionesses share the work of a pride |

2. A supporting detail is:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a) The males mark a pride's territory | c) Cubs are helpless when they're born |
| b) The pride is a lion's family group | d) Lions are solitary hunters |