

## Summary and Main Idea Worksheet 1

**Directions:** Read each passage and...

1. Create a title for the passage related to the main idea.
2. Accurately summarize the text.
3. Your summary must describe all key ideas from the text.
4. Do **not** include opinions or personal info in your summary.
5. Highlight or underline key ideas in each passage.



Picture this: a herd of elephants flies past you at sixty miles per hour, followed by a streak of tigers, a pride of lions, and a bunch of clowns. What do you see? It must be a circus train! One of the first uses of the circus train is credited to W.C. Coup. He partnered with P.T. Barnum in 1871 to expand the reach of their newly combined shows using locomotives. That's another word for train. You see, before trains, moving the circus was hard. They had to lug around all their animals, performers, and equipment with a team of more than 600 horses. Since there were no highways, these voyages were rough and took a long time. Circuses would stop at many small towns between the large venues. Performing at many of these small towns was not very profitable. Because of these limitations, circuses could not grow as large as the imaginations of the operators. After they began using circus trains, Barnum and Coup only brought their show to large cities. These performances were much more profitable and the profits went toward creating an even bigger and better circus. More stages or "rings" were added and the show went on. Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus relied on the train to transport their astounding show until they went defunct in 2017.

**1. Main idea related title for the passage:**

2. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

How do you say "Holy cow" in French? The fastest thing in France may just be the fastest ground transportation in the world. The TGV (*Train à Grande Vitesse*: French for very high speed) is France's national high-speed rail service. On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, a TGV test train set a record for the fastest wheeled train, reaching 357.2 miles per hour. In mid 2011, TGV trains operated at the highest speed in passenger train service in the world, regularly reaching 200 miles per hour. But what you may find most shocking is that TGV trains run on electric power not petrol. Now if you'll excuse me; I have a record to catch.

**3. Main idea related title for the passage:**

4. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

Giddy-up, cowboys and girls! In the Southwest during early half of the 1800s, cows were only worth 2 or 3 dollars apiece. They roamed wild, grazed off of the open range, and were abundant. Midway through the century though, railroads were built and the nation was connected. People in the Southwest could suddenly ship cows in freight trains to the Northeast. The Yankees there had a growing taste for beef and were willing to pay for it. Out of the blue, the same cows that were once worth a couple of bucks were now worth between twenty and forty dollars each. The only problem was that they had to get these cows to the train station. A new profession emerged from this. It became pretty lucrative to wrangle up a drove of cattle and herd them to the nearest train town. Of course it was dangerous too. Cowboys were threatened at every turn. They faced cattle rustlers, stampedes and extreme weather. But they kept pushing those steers to the train station. By the turn of the century, barbed wire killed the open range. Some may say the cowboy, too, was killed by barbed wire. Maybe, but it was the train that birthed them.

**5. Main idea related title for the passage:**

6. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Electric trolley cars or trams were once the chief mode of public transportation in the United States. Though they required tracks and electric cables to run, these trolley cars were clean and comfortable. In 1922, auto manufacturer General Motors created a special unit to replace electric trolleys with cars, trucks, and buses. Over the next decade, they lobbied for laws and regulations that made operating trams more difficult and less profitable. In 1936 General Motors created several front companies to purchase and dismantle the trolley car system. They received big investments from Firestone Tire, Standard Oil of California, Phillips Petroleum, and others in the automotive industry. Some people suspect that these parties wanted to replace trolley cars with buses to make public transportation less desirable. This would then increase automobile sales. The decline of the tram system in North America could be blamed on many things—labor strikes, the Great Depression, regulations that were unfavorable to operators. Yet, perhaps the primary cause was having a group of powerful men from rival sectors of the auto industry working together to ensure its destruction. Fill it up, please.

**7. Main idea related title for the passage:**

8. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Summary and Main Idea Worksheet 2

**Directions:** Read each passage and on a separate sheet of paper...

1. Create a title for the passage related to the main idea.
2. Accurately summarize the text.
3. Your summary must describe all key ideas from the text.
4. Do **not** include opinions or personal info in your summary.
5. Highlight or underline key ideas in each passage.

What's dressed in all black, practices stealth, and is a master of espionage, sabotage, and assassination? You guessed it: it's a ninja!



Perhaps the only thing more elusive than a ninja is the source of the word *ninja*. In Japan ninja are more often referred to as shinobi. The word *shinobi*, short for *shinobi-no-mono*, means “to steal away.” The word *shinobi* appears in poems as far back as the eighth century. So how did this word become *ninja*? Some believe that during the Edo period in Japan, the word *shinobi-no-mono* was transformed to the very similar word *ninja*. This probably happened because it was a lot quicker and easier to just say *ninja*. It is difficult to see how such a transformation could have occurred when we look at the words using our alphabet, but if you look at the kanji representing these words, it may make more sense to you. This is how you write *shinobi-no-mono*: 忍の者. And this is how you write *ninja*: 忍者. Now do you see the similarities?

**1. Main idea related title for the passage:**

2. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

Ninjas used many different tools and weapons to get the job done. They used throwing stars, bows, and acid-spurting tubes to name a few. But the favorite weapon of most ninjas may have been the katana. The katana is a long, curved sword with a single blade and a long grip to accommodate two hands. This sword was often carried in a sheath or scabbard on the ninja's back. Though the sword was primarily used for fighting and killing, the scabbard served other purposes too. The ninja could remove the sword, angle the scabbard against a wall, and use it to climb to a higher place. Or, while stealthily negotiating their way through a dark place (such as an enemy's residence at night), ninjas may have used the scabbard as a walking stick, feeling or probing their way around objects so as not to knock into anything and alert the enemy. Perhaps the ninja's most sinister use of the scabbard was to put a mixture of red pepper, dirt, and iron shavings at the top of the scabbard. Then, when the ninja drew his sword, his opponent would be blinded. I wonder what a ninja could have done with a Swiss Army knife.

**3. Main idea related title for the passage:**

4. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_

Invisibility, flight, the power to split into multiple bodies... these superhuman abilities have long been associated with ninjas. But ninjas didn't really do all that stuff. They were just regular people with exceptional abilities. So why do people think that ninjas had super powers? Well, one reason is that ninjas were very secretive. They left behind few historical records of their activities. Since we do not know much about what they actually did, we are left to speculate. Another reason why people think that ninjas had superhuman abilities is because of how ninjas are depicted in folklore (particularly during the Edo period in Japan). In such legends and works of art, ninjas were mythicized and romanticized. In other words, writers gave ninjas super powers. Romantic notions of ninjas as superhero are perpetuated in today's media too. Maybe that's just because people expect ninjas to have supernatural abilities these days. Ki-yah!

**5. Main idea related title for the passage:**

6. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_  
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The image of the ninja wearing all black is a popular one indeed, but there is no evidence that ninjas ever wore such a costume. In fact, it is much more likely that ninjas dressed as regular civilians. This would have been far more effective camouflage in most situations than an all black suit. The use of disguises amongst ninja was common and well documented. Ninja often dressed as monks, entertainers, fortune-tellers, merchants, or farmers. Each of these disguises carried advantages that dressing in all black did not. Dressed as monks, ninjas could conceal weapons in their robes. Dressed as entertainers, they could spy in enemy buildings without arousing suspicion. Dressed as fortune-tellers, they could extract information from unknowing targets. Dressed as merchants, they could travel freely across enemy borders. Perhaps the deadliest disguise was that of the farmer. If a ninja were dressed as a farmer, he or she would carry simple tools (such as sickles or trowels). Of course, these would be used as deadly weapons. If authorities caught such a ninja, he could claim that his deadly apparatus were tools, not weapons. Though they may not have been wearing all black stealth suits, ninjas were always well-disguised.

**7. Main idea related title for the passage:**

8. Summarize the passage in your own words: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary Worksheet 3****Directions:** Read each passage. **Highlight or underline necessary information.** Write your summary.

1. The English were not the first Europeans to land their ships on American soil. The Vikings had discovered North America in the 11th century. Columbus landed in the Bahamas in 1492 for Spain, and the French began expeditions to the New World in 1524. But the first English presence in North America is important because the thirteen English colonies that would later be established eventually became the country now known as the United States of America.

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2. In April of 1585 Sir Walter Raleigh, under the authority of Queen Elizabeth of England, sent an expedition of seven ships carrying 600 men, half of them soldiers, to found an English **colony** in North America. The colony was to be used to establish an English presence in the New World as well as a base from which English privateers, or pirates, could attack and plunder Spanish treasure fleets. Raleigh's cousin, Sir Richard Grenville, led the expedition.

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3. In July of that year the bulk of the fleet reached a small island off the coast of Virginia that was called Roanoke. After building a small fort on the north side of the island, the colonists initiated relations with a Native American tribe that lived on the island, the Aquascogoc. These natives showed little interest in building relations with the English colonists, and they soon parted company. After this encounter, however, the English noticed that one of their silver cups had gone missing, and they attributed its disappearance to the Aquascogoc. Grenville, the English captain, was furious. He believed that the Aquascogoc had stolen the silver cup. Whether or not this was true, angry exchanges followed and soon the English burned the Aquascogoc village. The English held their fort against the subsequent attacks of the natives.

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4. Despite their success in battle, the colonists had a miserable time because they were mainly soldiers and adventurers, not farmers. They were hungry. They missed the comforts of England, such as soft feather beds and dainty foods. Also they had expected to find gold and silver on the island, and were disappointed when they found none. Grenville soon tired of these conditions and set out on his ship to plunder Spanish treasure fleets and return to England. The colony was gradually abandoned.

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5. In 1587 Sir Walter Raleigh dispatched a further expedition of three ships and 150 colonists, led by John White, to Roanoke. This time the expedition included women and children, including White's pregnant daughter, Elenora. Shortly after they reached Roanoke, Elenora delivered a child whom they named Virginia. Virginia was the first English person born in America. But the English soon ran into more trouble with the Native Americans. A colonist named George Howe was killed by natives while searching for crabs alone on the beach. The colonists were scared. They persuaded White to sail back to England to ask Sir Walter Raleigh for help. White left behind 114 colonists, including his daughter Elenora and granddaughter Virginia.

6. Unfortunately for White and the colonists, England was preparing for a naval war with Spain. All shipping from English ports was ceased. It took White three years to get his relief expedition back to Roanoke. When he returned in August of 1590, White found no sign of his daughter, granddaughter, or anyone else. They found three letters, "CRO," carved on a tree and the full word, "CROATOAN," on a nearby post. Possibly this referred to the Croatoan Island, which was nearby. White searched long and anxiously, but failed to find them.

7. No further trace of the lost colony has ever been found. Sir Walter Raleigh himself searched for the colonists in 1595, and he sent another search-party in 1602, but nothing came of either attempt. To this day no one knows for certain what happened to the colonists.