

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: _____

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: _____

