



Parent Pipeline



CAFÉ Strategy: Use Main Idea and Supporting Details to Determine Importance

The main idea of a passage is often stated in a sentence within the passage. It helps readers understand the most important idea about what is being read. The other sentences of the passage include pieces of information that tell more about the most important idea. These are called the supporting details.

Understanding the general idea of a text can be tricky for beginning, emerging, or even established readers. It can require time, brain power, and hard work to determine the main idea of a passage. Learning how to use the main idea and supporting details is an essential piece to a reader's success in comprehending text.

How can you help your child with this strategy at home?

1. When reading with your child, stop frequently and ask your child what they think the selection is about. Then, ask your child to give you one detail to support their thought.
2. Remind your child that readers may think differently about what the author's main point is in the selection. When a reader decides what he/she believes is the main idea, evidence from the text must be given as support. Model this process for your child, thinking aloud as you go and supporting your findings with details from the text. You may wish to use the following terms:
 - **topic** – the subject, what the text is about
 - **main idea** – most important idea about the topic (usually a sentence)
 - **supporting details** – bits of information used to support main idea
3. Give your child an opportunity to practice this strategy. After reading a selection, ask:
 - In a few words, what is this selection about?
 - What do you think is the most important idea about this topic?
 - Did you find the main idea written in the passage or did you infer it?

Thank you for your continued support at home!

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