

LESSON PLAN

Finding the main idea and key details

English Language Arts · Grade 3 · 45 min · Term 3, Week 1

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Grade 3 ELA. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how key details support the main idea.

[Common Core State Standards](#) ↗

LEARNING INTENTION

Identify the main idea of a nonfiction text and find key details that support it

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain the difference between a main idea and a key detail.
- I can identify the main idea of a short nonfiction text.
- I can find at least two key details that support the main idea.
- I can explain how the key details connect back to the main idea.

Lesson Structure

HOOK

- Two sentences on the board: one main idea, one detail.
- Which sentence is the big idea? Which is a small fact?
- The main idea is like an umbrella. Details shelter underneath it.

TEACHING

- Short nonfiction passage about sea turtles projected on the board.
- Read aloud together. What is this mostly about?
- I ask myself: could every sentence fit under this idea?
- Key details answer who, what, when, where, or why about the main idea.

PRACTICE

- Read a second short passage about honeybees together.
- Turn and tell your partner: what is the main idea?
- Thumbs up when you spot a detail that supports your main idea.

CLOSURE

- Hold up one finger for the main idea you found.
- Name one detail that fits under that umbrella.
- Can a detail ever become the main idea? Think and share.

Differentiated Groups

EMERGING

TASK

- Read a short nonfiction passage about frogs with a partner.
- Circle the sentence that tells the big idea.
- Underline two sentences that are details underneath it.

MATERIALS

1 leveled nonfiction passage about frogs per student (6 to 8 sentences), 1 green highlighter per student, 1 yellow highlighter per student, anchor chart showing umbrella diagram (1 shared for group)

TEACHER ROLE

- Sit with this group for the first 10 minutes.
- Read passage aloud once before students work.
- Prompt: What is this mostly about?

DEVELOPING

TASK

- Read a short nonfiction passage about monarch butterflies independently.
- Write the main idea in one sentence on the graphic organizer.
- Write two key details that support the main idea.

MATERIALS

1 nonfiction passage about monarch butterflies per student, 1 main idea graphic organizer per student (umbrella template), pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Check in at 5 minutes and again at 15 minutes.
- Ask: How do your details connect to the main idea?
- Prompt students to use who, what, when, where, or why.

EXTENDING

TASK

- Read two short nonfiction passages: one about wolves, one about dolphins.
- Write the main idea of each passage independently.
- Write two key details per passage, then explain in writing how each detail connects back to the main idea.

MATERIALS

1 nonfiction passage about wolves per student, 1 nonfiction passage about dolphins per student, 1 dual graphic organizer per student (two umbrella templates side by side), pencils

TEACHER ROLE

- Allow independent work for the full group task.
- Check in briefly at 15 minutes.
- Ask: Could any of your details become its own main idea?

ASSESSMENT NOTES

- Criterion 1: Students can name main idea as the big idea, detail as a small supporting fact.
- Criterion 2: Circled or written main idea matches the passage topic, not one small fact.
- Criterion 3: At least two underlined or written details are present and relevant.
- Criterion 4: Students can say or write how each detail fits under the main idea umbrella.

RELIEF TEACHER NOTES

- Leveled passages and graphic organizers are in the red tray on the front table.
- The emerging group needs the most support. Sit with them first.
- The anchor chart with the umbrella diagram is on the left side board.
- Students practiced the umbrella idea whole class before splitting into groups.