



Main idea and summarizing

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Practice

A parent or tutor should read along with the student, helping as needed.

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The **main idea** of a paragraph is what the whole paragraph is *mostly about*.

The **details** are *small pieces of information* that make the paragraph more interesting.

A **summary** includes the **main idea** of *each of the paragraphs* in a story. It does not include the **details** of the paragraphs.

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As you read this story, look for the **main idea** of each paragraph. These can be put together to make a **summary** of the whole story.

Whales are the biggest creatures that have ever lived on the earth. They are even bigger than the biggest dinosaurs were. Scientists think that whales once walked on land. They believe this because whales are not fish—they are mammals.

Not only are whales the biggest creatures on earth, they also are some of the smartest. They live in family groups. They communicate with each other, and hunt for food in groups. Mother whales keep their babies close by, and give them gentle taps to guide them in the right direction. Sometimes a whale will lift its head out of the water just to take a look around.

Because whales are mammals, they must breathe air. They breathe through a blowhole on their back. However, they can hold their breath for a very long time. Some kinds of whales can hold their breath for two hours at a time. Whales never really sleep. Instead, they swim along with their blowhole above the water.

Many kinds of whales migrate to warmer waters during the winter months. During the summer, they build up a layer of fat so that during migration they do not have to eat. Bears also eat during the summer to build up a layer of fat so that they can sleep during the winter. Some scientists think the prehistoric whales may have looked like gigantic bears.

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
 - A. Whales are bigger than the dinosaurs were.
 - B. Whales are the biggest creatures on earth.
 - C. Whales are mammals.

2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
 - A. Whales are some of the smartest creatures on earth.
 - B. Whales live in family groups.
 - C. Mother whales keep their babies close by.

3. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
 - A. Some kinds of whales can hold their breath for a very long time.
 - B. Whales must breathe air.
 - C. Whales breathe through a blowhole.

4. What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?
 - A. Bears sleep during the winter.
 - B. Whales do not eat while they are migrating.
 - C. Many kinds of whales migrate for the winter.

5. Write the number 1 through 4 in the boxes beside the events to show the sequence of what happened, from *first to last*.

1-4?

Whales are the biggest creatures on earth.	
Whales must breathe air.	
Many whales migrate for the winter.	
Whales are some of the smartest creatures on earth.	

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6. What would be a good title for this whole story?

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## Answer Key

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. 1, 3, 4, 2
6. Accept any reasonable response, such as "Facts About Whales."