

Lesson 2

Finding Main Ideas and Key Details



Learning Target



Retelling the main idea and key details of a text will help you understand what you've read.

- ▶ **Read** The **main idea** is what a text is mostly about. Details are all the facts and ideas in a passage that **support** the main idea, or help explain it.

Sometimes you will want to retell a passage that you've read. First, make sure you know the main idea. Then figure out the **key details**, which are the most important facts in the passage.

Read the cartoon below. What is it mostly about?

★★ Life in the American Colonies ★★



People had to chop wood for fuel.

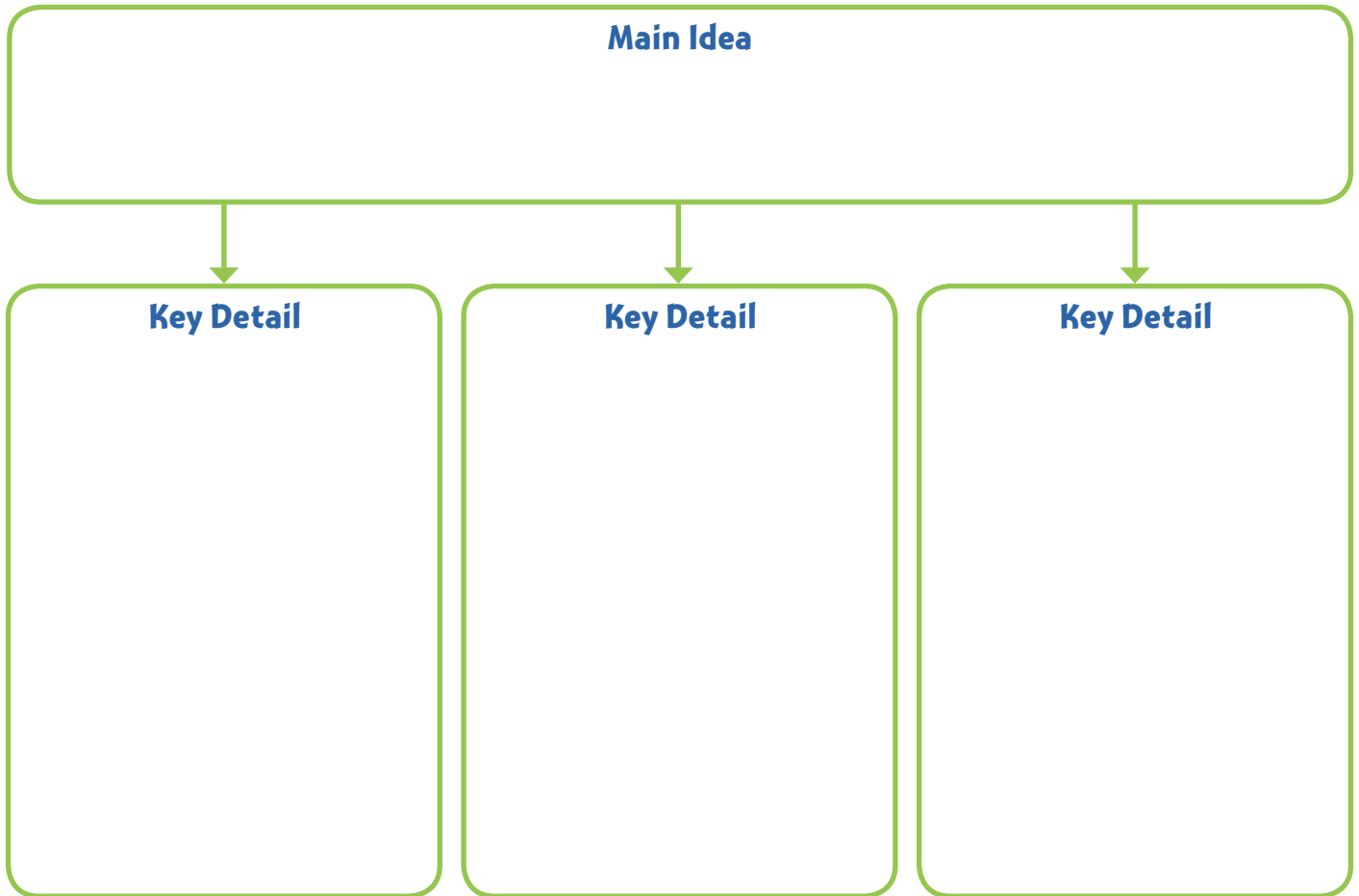


Taking farm goods to sell in town could take hours.



Everyone in the family had to work.

▶ **Think** Use key details from the cartoon to complete the chart below.



▶ **Talk** Discuss the key details you used to complete the chart. How does each detail support the main idea?



Academic Talk

Use these phrases and word to talk about the text.

- main idea
- key details
- support

What Is a Community?

by Clayton James

- 1 Think about the people you saw on your way to school today. Maybe you saw a bus driver, a police officer, or a mail carrier. You probably saw business people on their way to work. Once you got to school, you saw teachers, other students, parents, and the principal. All of these people make a community. A community is a group of people who live and work in the same area.
- 2 People play different parts to make a community. For example, bus drivers help people get to school or work. Police officers make sure people follow the laws and stay safe. Business people make or sell the things we buy. Parents and teachers make sure children have what they need to learn and be safe. Students learn so they can become good parents and workers.
- 3 You are a part of your community, too. You can do things to make a difference. You can help keep your neighborhood clean. You can follow rules and laws. You can help others who are in need.
- 4 Communities work best when people do their jobs and help each other. You and everyone around you work together to make a community.



Close Reader Habits

Circle the sentence that best states the main idea. As you reread, **underline** key details that tell more about the main idea.

Explore

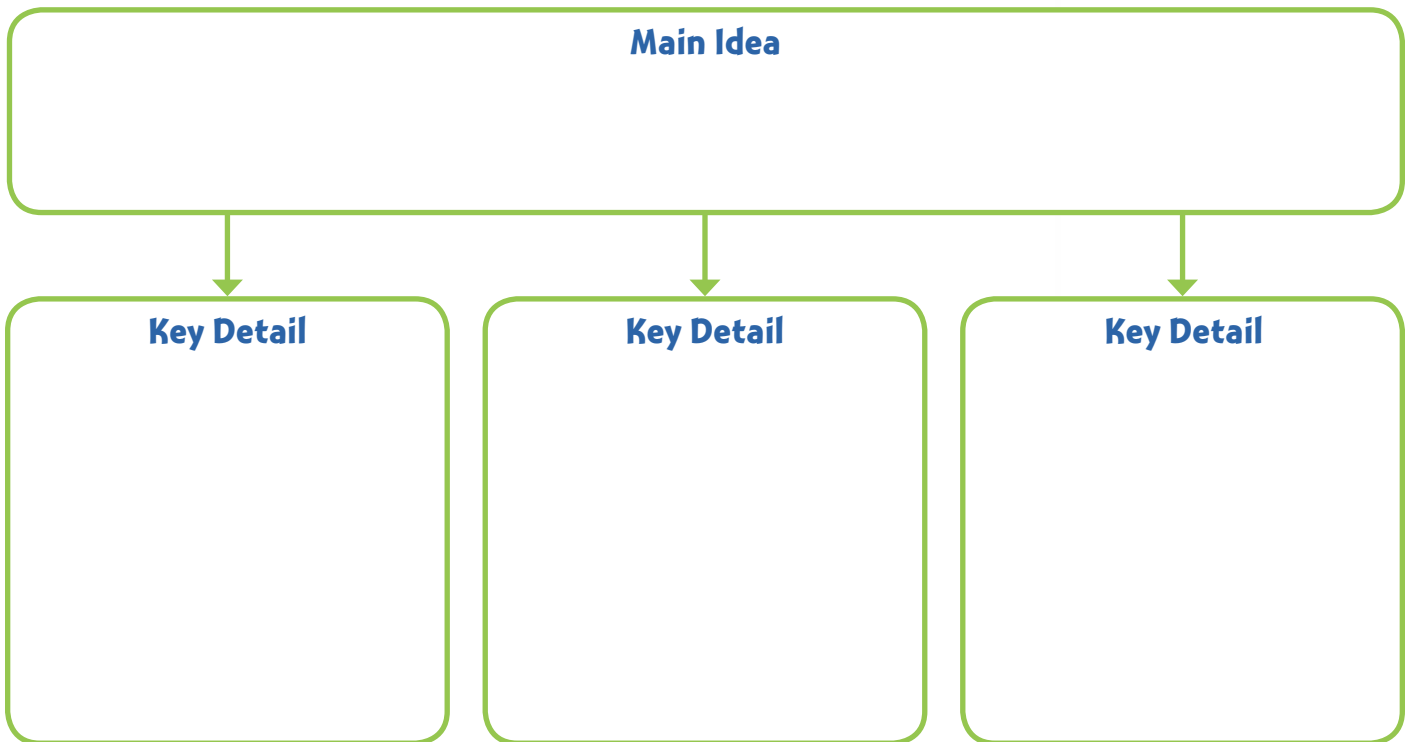
What is the main idea of the text, and how do the key details support it?



As you reread the passage, ask yourself, "What is it mostly about?" Look for a sentence that answers this question.

Think

- 1 Complete the chart with the main idea and key details of the text.



Talk

- 2 One key detail is, "bus drivers help people get to school or work." How does this key detail support the main idea?

Write

- 3 **Short Response** Choose another key detail you wrote in the chart. How does it support the main idea? Use the space provided on page 30 to write your answer.

HINT What does this detail say about the parts people play in a community?



Life in My Village

by Maahe, a 19th-century Cheyenne Indian

- 1 My name is Maahe. I am a Cheyenne Indian. I live with my family on the plains. We work hard in my village, but we also have fun. Each morning before the sun rises, people in my village build a fire. Then women walk to the stream to collect water. They use the water to make the morning meal.
- 2 After our morning meal, a man called the crier circles our village on a horse. He makes announcements. We all gather to hear the day's news.
- 3 After cleaning up from our morning meal, the children play games and swim. The women leave camp to gather sticks and roots. They tie the sticks into bundles and carry them back to camp on their backs.
- 4 We live in tipis made of buffalo hides. We can put them up or take them down quickly. The tipis are our homes. Because we follow the buffalo herds, we move often. We can pack up our entire village in one hour! Dogs or horses help pull all our belongings, including our tipis, on big sleds.
- 5 When we hunt buffalo, both men and women help. The women chase the buffalo toward the men. The men use their bows and arrows to kill the buffalo.
- 6 As evening falls, everyone gets ready for the evening meal. We eat, dance, tell stories, and play music. Then everyone goes to sleep. We know tomorrow will be another busy day!

Close Reader Habits

What is the main idea of the passage? **Underline** the key details that helped you better understand the main idea.



A paragraph can have a main idea too. Pay attention to the key details in the paragraph. What idea do they all help explain?

Think

1 This question has two parts. Answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

What is the main idea of “Life in My Village”?

- A** People in the village work hard but also have fun.
- B** People in the village build a fire each morning.
- C** The people live in tipis made of buffalo hides.
- D** Women in the village make the morning meal.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports your answer in Part A?

- A** “After our morning meal, a man called the crier circles our village on a horse.”
- B** “After cleaning up from our morning meal, the children play games and swim.”
- C** “Because we follow the buffalo herds, we move often.”
- D** “When we hunt buffalo, both men and women help.”

Talk

2 What is the main idea of paragraph 5? What details in the paragraph support that idea?

Write

3 Short Response Reread paragraph 4. Retell key details that show why the Cheyenne felt their tipis made good homes. Use the space provided on page 31 to write your answer.

HINT Reread the text to find key details about the tipis.