

Finding Significant Details

Details: explain, develop, and support the main idea

Major Details: significant details that directly SUPPORT THE MAIN IDEA

Minor Details: significant details that SUPPORT MAJOR DETAILS

Summary: a brief, clear restatement of the most important points of a passage

Details make up most of what you read. Significant details will help the writer make a point. Details can have many different purposes within different passages. Details may serve the purpose of:

- ✓ defining a topic
- ✓ describing the topic
- ✓ giving examples of the topic
- ✓ showing character
- ✓ setting a tone or mood
- ✓ giving reasons for an opinion
- ✓ explaining a fact
- ✓ advancing the story

How to find significant details

- Identify the main idea (the topic and the author's message about the topic)
- Ask yourself:

What information helps make the author's point?

- Turn the main idea into a question by asking one of the reporter's questions:

Who, what, when, where, why, or how?

- Look for signal or transition words such as:

First, second, next, also, finally, last

Creating a summary

A summary is created from the main idea of the passage and the major details that support it. As you read, underline or circle the main idea. The main idea is the topic of the passage and the author's message about the topic. Next, identify the significant details. Organize and restate the main idea and details into a small paragraph to create your summary.

Julia's birthday was finally here; she was about to turn three, and the wait for her birthday party was over at last. Julia was a perfect hostess as she announced that it was time for the party games. Bean bag toss was first, and then it was the treasure hunt. The children scurried about the house following personalized treasure maps in search of their loot, and satisfaction filled their faces as they discovered each item. Next, it was time for cake. Julia's eyes sparkled as brightly as the candles that were sunk into the chocolate fudge icing. Finally, it was time to tackle the pile of presents. Julia, dwarfed by the mountain of gifts that she sat at the foot of, opened each gift with passion. Julia sang the same enthusiastic "ooh" and "thank you" for each. At last, the guests departed, and the rush of the day sank with the setting sun. Exhausted and elated, Julia snuggled into her bed with three new stuffed animals and an assortment of plastic figurines. She fell into slumber with a sweet smile on her face and a feeling of love in her heart.

1. The sentence "Next, it was time for cake." is a
 - a. Topic
 - b. Main idea
 - c. Major supporting detail
 - d. Minor supporting detail

2. The sentence "Bean bag toss was first, and then it was the treasure hunt." is a
 - a. Topic
 - b. Main idea
 - c. Major supporting detail
 - d. Minor supporting detail

3. The sentence "Julia was a perfect hostess as she announced that it was time for the party games." is a
 - a. Topic
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4. The sentence "Julia's birthday was finally here; she was about to turn three, and the wait for her birthday party was over at last." is a
 - a. Topic
 - b. Main idea
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 - d. Minor supporting detail

5. How many major details are in this passage?
 - a. 2
 - b. 3
 - c. 4
 - d. 5

6. List the major details.
