Skill Focus: Understanding the Main Idea

It is important to find the main idea of what you are reading. The main idea is what the story is mostly about. Here are some clues to help you:

- Read carefully.
- Look for a sentence that tells what the story is mostly about.
- Add up the important details.
- Look for words that are used often.
- Think what would make a good title for the story.

VOCABULARY

chessmen . . . . **chess•men** . . . . Jim moved his **chessmen** to win the game.
grapevine . . . . . . **grape•vine** . . . . . . There were big grapes on the **grapevine**.
dipstick . . . . **dip•stick** . . . . Jake checked the oil with the **dipstick**.

Read each story. Then choose the correct answer for each question.

Jan watched the boys move their chessmen. She had learned chess when she was three. She knew she could do well, but there were not many girls that played.

One day, a boy saw Jan watching. "Do you want to play?" he asked.

Jan said, "You bet!" Jan got to show how good she was at chess!

1 What is the main idea?

   A. Jan wants to learn how to play chess.
   B. Chess is a very hard game.
   C. Jan showed that girls can play chess.

2 What would be a good title?

   A. Jan Likes to Learn
   B. Jan Learns Chess
   C. Jan the Chess Whiz

There is a fun game called the grape stomp. You can work with a team. One kid picks grapes off the grapevine. The grapes go in a big vat. The next kid steps in the vat and starts stomping! There is a hose coming from the vat. The grape juice goes into a jug. If you stomp fast you can win a prize!

3 What is the main idea?

    A. The grape stomp is a lot of work.
    B. The grape stomp is a lot of fun.
    C. Grapes do not make good juice.

4 What would be a good title?

    A. Making Grape Juice
    B. Winning the Game
    C. The Grape Stomp

Mark made a treat to have for lunch. He got out some beef, squash, and greens. He cut up some leeks. He cooked them quick in some hot oil. He added some soy sauce. Then he put some rice in a pot. It cooked for a bit. He served up his treat in a big bowl.

5 What is the main idea?

    A. Mark is learning to cook.
    B. Mark does not like rice.
    C. Mark made a nice lunch.

6 What would be a good title?

    A. How to Cook Beef
    B. A Nice Lunch
    C. Mark Hates to Cook

There is a train that goes up to the top of a peak. The peak is very, very steep. How does the train get up? There are some gears on the track. When the hill gets steep, the gears crank. The gears help pull the train up the steep part.

7 What is the main idea?

    A. Gears help the train go up the peak.
    B. Trains do not go up peaks.
    C. Most peaks have trains.

8 What would be a good title?

    A. Riding a Train
    B. The Peak Train
    C. Trains That Go Slow

Jeff stopped the car. There was some smoke coming from under the hood. He opened it up and looked inside. He did everything he could think of. What could be wrong? Then he reached for the dipstick. He could see it was time to change the oil!

9 What is the main idea?

    A. Jeff was learning to drive.
    B. Jeff did not know what was wrong with his car.
    C. Jeff knew that the oil needed to be changed.

10 What would be a good title?

    A. Time for an Oil Change
    B. Jeff Has a New Car
    C. Learning to Drive

Now use the Answer Key to check your answers. Mark the number you got correct on the Progress Chart.

LESSON 19

VOCABULARY

harvest . . . . to pick
traffic . . . . . cars and trucks moving along

shallow . . . . . not deep
expression . . . a look on the face

Read each passage. Then choose the correct word to fill in the blank.

ANT RICE

Ants can be good farmers. They dig in the dirt. They plant new seeds. They weed their gardens. They grow "ant rice." They wait until the (1) _____ gets ripe. Then they harvest it. Then they (2) _____ it for later. They can eat it in the winter.

Look back at the passage. Choose the correct word to fill in the blank.

1   A. rice   C. dirt
    B. winter   D. ants

2   A. wait   C. grow
    B. eat   D. save

THE FAIR

The fair was in town for a week. Tom and Ricky went every day. At the fair there was always (3) _____ to do. There were games to play. There was food to eat. The last day, Ricky wanted to stay (4) _____. They stayed until it got dark. Then they ran home.

3 A. something   C. somewhere
   B. fair   D. nothing

4 A. time   C. late
   B. home   D. dark

7 A. green   C. deep
   B. grow   D. pull

8 A. green   C. grow
   B. pull   D. wish

JESSE IN THE CITY

Jesse went to the city. She wanted to (5) _____ in a cab. She (6) _____ on the sidewalk. The traffic was very bad. She waved and waved. Finally, a cab stopped for her. Jesse got in. She took a ride to the park. She got some lunch. It was a great day.

Look back at the passage. Choose the correct word to fill in the blank.

5 A. draw   C. sing
   B. ride   D. run

6 A. stood   C. stamp
   B. rode   D. called

MONKEY'S SMILE

How can you tell that someone is happy? Someone is happy when they are (9) _____. You can also tell a lot from a monkey's expression. The look on its (10) _____ tells how it feels. Check it out next time you go to the zoo. See if the monkeys are in a good mood!

Look back at the passage. Choose the correct word to fill in the blank.

9 A. sad   C. talking
   B. monkey   D. smiling

10 A. smile   C. face
   B. happy   D. zoo

ROOTS

Some weeds have roots that grow (7) _____. These roots are hard to dig up. Other weeds have shallow roots. These roots are very easy to (8) _____ out. Remember this when you work in the yard. Make sure you get all the roots out. Otherwise, the weeds will come back.

Now use the Answer Key to check your answers. Mark the number you got correct on the Progress Chart.

LEVEL C – UNIT 5
LESSON 25

Skill Focus: Drawing Conclusions

Sometimes you need to figure out things that are not told in a story. This is called Drawing Conclusions. A conclusion is what you can tell from what you read. Here are some clues to help you:

- Read the story carefully.
- Think about what the writer tells about in the story.
- Use clues to draw conclusions about what the writer did not tell in the story.
- Read the story again. Check your conclusion.

VOCABULARY

hustled . . . . . ran fast
magnifies . . . . makes hotter or bigger

energy . . . . . power to do something
confidence . . being sure of someone

Read each passage. Then choose the correct answer.

A GREY DAY

Meg was halfway down the sidewalk. Then she looked at the dark gray sky. She went back in the house. She put on her raincoat, boots, and hat. Meg opened her umbrella as she stepped outdoors.

1 You can tell that—

   A. Meg wanted to stay inside.
   B. Meg didn't want to get wet.
   C. It was a warm day.
   D. It was nighttime.

2 From the story you can tell that—

   A. Meg got wet.
   B. Meg didn't like her house.
   C. The sun was shining.
   D. It had started to rain.

THE EARLY BIRD

Skip got out of bed. Today was a big day. He and Scoop were going to the car show. Skip grabbed some breakfast. He hustled over to Scoop's house. He knocked on the door. Finally, Scoop opened the door. He looked sleepy. He said, "What are doing up at this hour, Skip?"

3 You can tell that—

    A. Scoop was asleep when Skip knocked.
    B. Scoop lived far away from Skip.
    C. Skip did not like Scoop.
    D. Skip did not have a good breakfast.

4 From the story you can tell that—

    A. Scoop did not want to go to the show.
    B. Skip did not get up early.
    C. Scoop did not like Skip.
    D. Skip got up too early for the show.

WATERING PLANTS

Don't water your plants when it is sunny. The water gets on the leaves. The water magnifies the sun's heat. The plant's leaves could burn. It is better to water plants when the sun is low in the sky.

5 You can tell that—

    A. Plants don't need water.
    B. The sun could burn a plant.
    C. Plants do not grow in the sun.
    D. Plants like the dark.

6 From the story you can tell that—

    A. It is better not to grow plants at all.
    B. It is better to have plants inside.
    C. It is best to water plants early.
    D. It is best to not water your plants.

THE SWIM MEET

Meg and Kate ran into the kitchen. "Coach made us swim a mile today," said Kate. "Swimming makes me hungry!"

"Sit down, girls," said Mom, "You need energy for the swim meet tomorrow. I have a lot of confidence in you two!"

7 You can tell that—

    A. Meg and Kate will win the meet.
    B. Mom will get the girls some food.
    C. Mom did not want the girls to swim.
    D. Kate does not like swimming.

8 From the story you can tell that—

    A. Meg and Kate do not eat.
    B. Mom is hungry.
    C. Meg and Kate will win the meet.
    D. Meg and Kate will swim tomorrow.

THE BEAR CUB

Scoop and Skip were hiking in a big park. Skip saw a baby bear. He wanted to play with it. "Don't play with that bear cub," said Scoop. "The mother bear is never very far away."

9 You can tell that—

    A. It is fun to play with bears.
    B. The park was too big.
    C. The bears are wild.
    D. The mother bear is nice.

10 From the story you can tell that—

    A. The mother bear will be angry.
    B. The baby bear will sleep.
    C. Scoop and Skip are lost.
    D. Scoop will play with the bears.

Now use the Answer Key to check your answers. Mark the number you got correct on the Progress Chart.

LESSON 31

VOCABULARY

forecast . . . to tell what will happen
racket . . . . a lot of noise

compartment . . . a place to keep things

Read each passage. Then choose the correct answer for each question.

NATURE'S FORECAST

Did you miss the weather forecast on the news? Just look around at nature's weather forecast. Crickets chirp faster when it gets hot. Birds stay out of the sky when a storm is brewing. Is there dew on the grass in the morning? That means it will be a nice day.

1 Which is probably true?

    A. Animals don't care how hot it is.
    B. Insects like cold weather.
    C. Animals know the weather before people do.
    D. People always know the weather.

2 Birds probably—

    A. Don't like hot weather.
    B. Don't want to fly in a storm.
    C. Don't care about the weather.
    D. Like to fly in a storm.

THE VET

Rachel took her cat Max to the vet. They had to wait for a long time. A woman came in with two little dogs. Then a man came in with a big dog. What a racket!

    "I'll bring Max back tomorrow," Rachel said.

3 Which is probably true?

A. The dogs liked Max.
B. The dogs were quiet.
C. Max wanted to play.
D. The dogs barked at each other.

4 Rachel probably decided that—

A. Max was getting too upset.
B. Max wanted to play with the dogs.
C. She didn't like the vet.
D. She wanted to go shopping instead.

THE BIG MOVE

Marta's family was moving. The whole family would help move things into the new house. But what about the heavy stuff? Marta's parents couldn't do it themselves.

When they pulled up, there was a group of neighbors waiting. They helped get everything moved inside.

5 Which is probably true?

A. Marta is an adult.
B. Marta's parents were the only adults.
C. Marta didn't have much stuff.
D. Marta's family didn't move.

6 Marta and her family probably—

A. Didn't like their new neighbors.
B. Didn't like their new house.
C. Liked their old house better.
D. Were glad to get help moving.

THE LIVES OF TREES

How long do most trees live? An apple tree can live for 40 years. A maple tree can live for 50 to 75 years. Some oaks can live as long as 300 years. All of these trees flourish in the right conditions.

The bristlecone pine is an amazing tree. It can live for as long as 4,000 years!

7 Which is probably true?

A. A maple tree has the shortest life.
B. An apple tree has the longest life
C. The bristlecone has the longest life.
D. Most trees live100 years.

8 When a tree is planted, it probably—

A. Needs certain things to do well.
B. Will probably die soon.
C. Will live a long time.
D. Can grow anywhere.

THE MESSY CAR

Tina was looking for her tire gauge in the glove compartment. She took out ten plastic forks and three pair of sunglasses. Some quarters and dimes fell out.

"Where did it go?" Tina muttered.

9 Which is probably true?

A. Tina has a very neat car.
B. Tina has a hard time finding things.
C. Tina has too much stuff in the car.
D. Tina doesn't have a tire gauge.

10 Which is probably true?
A. Tina does not need the tire gauge.
B. Tina needs everything in the glove compartment.
C. Tina will look in the trunk of the car.
D. Tina did not find her tire gauge.

Now use the Answer Key to check your answers. Mark the number you got correct on the Progress Chart.