

# LESSON 3: IDENTIFYING THE MAIN IDEA



## Essential Question

How can readers identify the main idea of a nonfiction passage in order to write summaries?

## Materials

"Narwhal? Narwhal!" passage  
"Simone Biles" passage  
teacher & student anchor charts

## Mini Lesson

"Yesterday we read and underlined the main idea and supporting details of the passage 'Narwhal? Narwhal!'. Today we are going to identify the main idea by writing it in a graphic organizer to help us later write our summary."

Display the teacher anchor chart titled, "Identifying the Main Idea". Have students take out "Narwhal? Narwhal!"

"We are going to fill in the main idea section of our graphic organizer. Since a summary is a shorter version of the text, we aren't going to include minor details. We want to keep it short and sweet.

"When we write the main idea in our graphic organizer, we need to write it as a complete sentence. This will help us when we begin writing our summary. It is also important that we are not copying the exact words of the author. We need to write a sentence telling the main idea of the text in our own words."

Model for students how to write the main idea as a complete sentence in your own words on the teacher anchor chart.

Pass out the student anchor chart.

"Using the "Simone Biles" passage that you read and underlined on your own yesterday, fill in the main idea on your anchor chart."

## Work Time

Students will fill in the main idea in their own words as complete sentences on their anchor charts using the passage titled, "Simone Biles".

# INCLUDES 10 DAYS OF LESSON PLANS!

"With your partner, share your complete sentence for the main idea of the text. Did your partner write the main idea they shared using their own words?"

## Narwhal? Narwhal!

By: Lacey Fickes

What lives in the Arctic and has a tusk like a walrus and a blowhole like a whale? That would be a Narwhal. A Narwhal is a type of tusk-possessing whale called an odontocete (oh-don-tuh-seet), that lives in deep and frigid waters.

### Physical Features

Narwhals are medium in size compared to other whales. They can weigh between 1,000 and 3,000 pounds. Narwhal's bodies are long and smooth. They can range in length from 13 to 18 feet, not including their tusks. They have two flippers, very similar to dolphins' flippers. Their tails are much like whales' tails. Like most other mammals, their grayish coloring is darkest at birth and lightens with age.

### Terrific Tusks

If people know anything about narwhals, it's probably that they have a long tusk coming out of their heads. This can differ from male to female. It's because of these tusks that they were given the nickname "unicorn of the sea". However, their "tusk" is actually a really long tooth! This tooth works like a sensor for them, because it has millions of nerve endings. Another unique quality about their tusks is that they can grow to be up to nine feet long! That's more than half the length of their whole bodies! Narwhals use their tusks to communicate, protect themselves from danger, and feel around the dark ocean.

### Cold, Deep Water

Narwhals are found in Arctic waters and live farther north than other species of whales. This makes them especially difficult for scientists to study. In addition, they are a fearful and shy species. What we do know about them is that they travel in groups called pods of around 20 narwhals, and they are very deep divers! Typically, narwhals dive down 800 meters (that's over 2,000 feet!) in the ocean. They take these deep dives between 18 and 25 times per day and stay under for almost half an hour each time.

From their famous tusks to their extreme deep-water dives, narwhals are as impressive as they are mysterious. These one-of-a-kind cold-water creatures stick together, protecting themselves and one another with their famously long tusks.

INCLUDES 3 nonfiction reading passages to  
USE FOR MODELING, INDEPENDENT WRITING, OR AS  
AN ASSESSMENT

# ADDING THE MAIN IDEA & SUPPORTING DETAILS

A nonfiction **SUMMARY** retells the **IMPORTANT PARTS** of a passage in a much shorter version.

This week in class, we read "Narwhal? Narwhal!" by Lacey Fickes. "Narwhal? Narwhal!" was mostly about how narwhals are long-tusked whales that live deep in Arctic waters. Like other whales, narwhals have flippers and tails but only grow between 13 and 18 feet long. Each narwhal has a long tusk or tooth that it uses to protect itself, guide it through the ocean and communicate. Narwhals live in the deep, dark waters of the Arctic Ocean, where they travel in pods and resurface up to 25 times per day.

Did I include all the **IMPORTANT PARTS** from the text?

NOT SO WIMPY TEACHER: LESSON 6

# ADDING THE MAIN IDEA & SUPPORTING DETAILS

A nonfiction **SUMMARY** retells the **IMPORTANT PARTS** of a passage in a much shorter version.

This week in class, we read "Narwhal? Narwhal!" by Lacey Fickes.

INCLUDES 20 BLANK AND FILLED IN  
ANCHOR CHARTS OR POSTERS

NOT SO WIMPY TEACHER: LESSON 6

# ADDING TRANSITION WORDS

helps  and   
the important parts in your summary.

**BEGINNING**

**MIDDLE**

**END**

not so wimpy teacher  
Lesson 7

INCLUDES 7 STUDENT PRINTABLES TO  
FOLLOW ALONG DURING THE MINI LESSON  
OR REFERENCING LATER

# NONFICTION SUMMARY RUBRIC

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Score: /14

	2	1	0
wrote an introduction	The introduction to the summary includes the title and author of the text I summarized.	The introduction to the summary includes only the title or author of the text I summarized.	There is no evidence of an introduction to the summary.
Main Idea	The summary includes sufficient evidence of the main idea of the text.	The summary lacks sufficient evidence of the main idea.	The summary does not include any evidence of the main idea.
SUPPORTING DETAILS	All important events from the text are present in the summary.	Some of the important events from the text are present in the summary.	The summary is missing important events from the text.
transition WORDS/ structure	The summary includes sufficient transitions.	The summary includes some transitions.	The summary does not use transitions.
close	The summary includes a close that sums up the main idea.	The summary includes a close, but it does not sum up the main idea.	There is no evidence of a close for the summary.

INCLUDES SIMPLE AND STUDENT FRIENDLY RUBRICS

punctuation	The summary uses correct punctuation.	The summary has some punctuation errors.	The summary has many punctuation errors.
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