

# What is Main Idea?

- The main idea is what the paragraph is mostly about. All the sentences are joining together to give the reader a message.
- Sometimes the main idea is directly stated within the passage. Other times, it is inferred, which means the reader has to "read between the lines" and figure it out on their own.

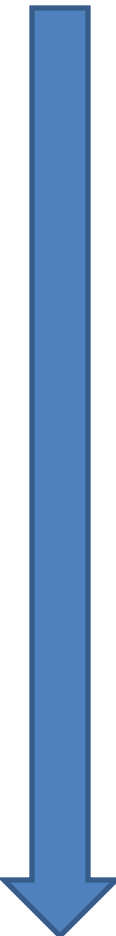
# Why Teach Main Idea?

- When the main idea is present at the beginning of a text, it alerts the reader to upcoming information.
- It provides the reader with a framework for understanding and recalling the important ideas in the text.
- Learning how to identify the main idea will help readers remember what they read and improve their comprehension.

# Teaching Main Idea

- Begin by identifying the main idea at the sentence level, then practice with a paragraph, and finally with an entire selection.
- Teach students that main idea is sometimes expressed as a topic sentence usually found in the beginning of the text.

# Teaching Main Idea Continuum

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1. Identify the key words of a sentence
  2. Identify key words or topic of a paragraph
  3. Identify the topic sentence of a paragraph
  4. Recognize the explicitly stated point of a paragraph
  5. Infer the main idea of a paragraph
  6. Recognize the relationships among ideas in related paragraphs in longer selections
  7. Infer relationships among ideas in related paragraphs in longer selections

# How to Identify Key Words

- Mastery of identifying key words at the sentence level is essential in order for students to move on to larger bodies of text.
- Begin at the sentence level to identify key words:

***The small pig was frightened by the big, bad wolf.***

- *"What is the sentence about?"* - It is about a small pig.
- *"What about that small pig?"* - It is frightened by the wolf.
- Once mastery at the sentence level is achieved, move on to identifying key words of a paragraph. Model how to highlight important words and discuss their meaning within the paragraph.

# Your Turn!

Now ask yourself:

- What is main idea?
- What is the best way to begin teaching students to find the main idea?



# Check for Understanding

- What is main idea?
  - The main idea is what the paragraph is mostly about.
- What is the best way to begin teaching students to find the main idea?
  - Begin by identifying key words at the sentence level.

