Reading Mini Lesson: Main Idea and Supporting Details

**Grade:** 4th

**Common Core State Standard:** Reading Standards for Literature K-5, Key Ideas and Details, 2

Grade 4 #2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

**Objective:** Students will be able to formulate main idea statements and explain and demonstrate the distinctions between topic, topic sentence, main idea, and supporting details, and identify each in an article.

**Materials:**

*She’s Back* from Time For Kids, computer, Internet, projector/smartboard, colored pencils, handouts, chart paper, markers

Link to article: http://www.timeforkids.com/news/she%E2%80%99s-back/97356

**Procedure:**

1. **Lesson Introduction/ Objective and Purpose**
   1. “Readers, yesterday during social studies I read you the article *She’s Back* from Time For Kids and I asked you to keep the article in mind since we would be using it for todays reading lesson. Today I will be teaching you how to determine the main idea of information texts by using supporting details. In order to figure out the main idea, we need to look at the supporting details, topic sentence, and the general topic of the entire text. After I teach you how to do this, we will have a chance to try in on your own.”
2. **Teach and Model (Modeling and Thinking):**
   1. “As you can see on the white board, I have the whole article projected (note: make sure to project the article on a whiteboard so you can use markers to make notes, or use a smartboard). I am going to model for you how to find the main topic and supporting details. First, lets look at this anchor chart I made. This anchor chart lists the definitions of topic, topic sentence, main idea, and supporting details. You will need to know what all of these are before you are able to identify them in the text. The definitions are:

Topic (circle) - the general subject that the passage is about, usually one or two words.

Topic Sentence (place a box around it) - a sentence in a passage that states the main idea of that passage

\*Some passages, paragraphs, or essays may not have a topic sentence.\*

Supporting Details (underline) - more narrow ideas, evidence, examples, details, and elaboration that support the main idea in a passage.

Main Idea (make a main idea and place it in a thought bubble) - a statement that tells what a passage is mostly about.

\*The reader can determine this after reading and comprehending, because it is not always stated outright in the passage.\*”

“You may notice that each definition is a different color and has something special going on around the word. That is because while reading, we are going to circle the topic is blue, draw a box around the topic sentence if there is one present, underline in red the supporting details, and write the main idea in a thought bubble that will be on the handout that I will pass out to you. This may seem like a lot of information to remember, but the anchor chart is here to help you and for you to refer back to. Let’s look at the first paragraph together. Doing all this color coding, underling, circling, etc. will help you when you are done reading to know what the main topic is. Now, let me show you how this should be done. The first paragraph says,

**Dressed in a robe and sandals, Lady Liberty braved strong winds, crashing waves, and heavy rain from Superstorm Sandy last October. The world-famous statue survived the storm—but its home on Liberty Island did not fare as well. The island had been closed since the storm. But on July 4, the Statue of Liberty finally reopened to visitors.**

In this paragraph, I see the topic, a topic sentence, and many supporting details. Now, I know the topic of this entire paragraph is about the Statue of Liberty because that is what this whole paragraph is about. Looking back at the anchor chart, I know I am supposed to draw a blue circle around the topic, so I will put my circle around the Statue of Liberty. This paragraph also contains a topic sentence. Remember, a topic sentence is a sentence that states the main idea of the whole passage. The topic sentence in this paragraph is ‘on July 4, the Statue of Liberty finally reopened to visitors.’ I am going to place a green box around this entire sentence. I want you to notice that the topic I circle is also going to be in the box. Know that this is okay because the topic will usually be found in the topic sentence since it is addressing what the whole article is about. Now that I have found the topic and topic sentence, I can start underlining my supporting details. I know from our anchor chart that supporting details are narrow ideas, evidence, or details that help support the main idea. In this paragraph, everything that I did not circle or place a box around can be considered a supporting detail since they are explaining why the Statue of Liberty was closed in the first place and was re-opened on July 4th, or in other words, our topic sentence and topic. So I will underline the rest of this paragraph in red. Remember, before I can decide what the main idea is, I need to read the entire article. So I will not be able to write the main idea in my thought bubble just yet. I can do so at the end.”

1. **Guided Practice (Example 1: Extensive Teacher Help):**
   1. After modeling, I will provide another example. This time students will assist me as I continue to take the lead in teaching.

“Now let’s look at the second paragraph together. It says,

**Sandy made landfall one day after the statue's 126th birthday. The storm flooded most of the 12-acre island in New York Harbor. Floodwaters damaged the visitor center, walkways, and electrical systems. In some areas, water surged as high as 8 feet. The storm caused more than $59 million worth of damages to the island. But the Statue of Liberty itself was unharmed, since it stands on a high pedestal.**

While reading, did anyone notice another topic word that we can circle in blue? Yes, that’s right! We can circle in blue Statue of Liberty again. Remember, it is okay for a topic to appear more than once in article, in fact, it usually will appear more than once. Let’s look at the paragraph more closely. Did anyone notice a topic sentence? Take a minute to turn and talk with your neighbor. Did anyone find a topic sentence? No? Wow awesome! That was a trick question, but it didn’t stump any of you! Because topic sentences state the main idea of the article, they can normally be found in the beginning of the article. So there is no topic sentence in this paragraph because there was one in the first paragraph. Now, with what we have left in this paragraph, what can be considered supporting details? All the answers you just gave me are all correct! Everything in this paragraph is supporting details because they are elaborating on the main idea. What are we going to do with the supporting details? Right! Underline them in red. Are we going to write our main idea yet? Correct, we aren’t. Why not? Yes, because we have to finish reading the article. Lets continue to read on.”

(Example 2: Less Teacher Help)

“Now let’s read the last two paragraphs. This time I will not give you as much help. You must think for yourselves more. I will only ask you questions that will guide you in the right direction. I want you to read the example to yourself and then turn and talk with your partner about what the topic, topic sentence, and supporting details are. I will give you three minutes.”

**Over the past eight months, the National Park Service (NPS) has worked to clean up and repair the damages. More than 1,000 employees from all over the country helped with the repairs. Through their efforts, Lady Liberty was made ready for visitors again. While some repairs to brick walkways and docks are still underway, visitors arrived by ferryboats to tour the national landmark on Independence Day.**

**“It’s a perfect day to reopen the statue,” NPS spokesman John Warren told TFK.  “It’s a great day to celebrate liberty throughout the country and the world.”**

“Did you have a chance to find everything with your partners? Who would like to come up and find the topic in this sentence? Come on up Jim! Why did you circle Lady Liberty? Good! Lady Liberty is another name for the Statue of Liberty. Therefore, it is still a topic and should be circled. Great job noticing that Jim! Are there any other topics that can be circled in this paragraph? Come show us Stacy. Awesome! Why did you circle national landmark? Right! Because just like Lady Liberty, national landmark is also another term that can stand for the Statue of Liberty in this article. Did anyone find a topic sentence in these two paragraphs? Right, there was no topic sentence. What about supporting details? Would anyone like to come up and find the supporting details? Come on up Joe! *Continue to call students up until all supporting details are underlined.* Very nice! I’m very impressed with everyone’s observations while reading these paragraphs on your own. Now that we have read the entire article, what should we do next? Right, it is time to decide what our main topic is. Lets look at all the details we circled, underlined and put a box around. By looking over those details, we can create a main idea statement. Remember a main idea, formulated by your thoughts and not always stated outright in a passage. Here is an example of a main idea statement that I came up with:

**After closing for 8 months following Hurricane Sandy, the Statue of Liberty reopened July 4th.**

**\*Note: Draw this example on the board in a thought bubble to remind students that main ideas come from our thoughts.**

Turn and talk with your partner to see if you can come up with another main idea that is different from mine.”

Call on some students and listen to their main ideas. Re-enforce what a main idea is if the students need it.

“Great job readers! I am very impressed with how well you were paying attention to the details while reading to create your main ideas! How about you try this on your own now.”

1. **Independent Practice (Example 3: No Teacher Help):**
   1. Once students are comfortable with creating main ideas, they will practice this strategy on there own with no help from me at all. They will do the same exact process with a different article that is printed out for them.

“Readers now you are going to try this out on your own. In a minute, I am going to pass out another article to you. I want you to go back to your seats and use your colored pencils to underline, circle, and draw boxes where need be in the article. Remember, if you need help remembering what colors to use for what please refer to our class chart. I will also leave the Statue of Liberty article up on the board for you to reference as well. After you read and have made all your markings in your article, you will create your main idea and write it with a purple colored pencil in a thought bubble. I will give you a handout with thought bubbles on them. You will only need one for this activity but save the rest for the future. When you finish all of this, you will then take this paper (hold up paper) and cut up between where it says main idea and supporting details, cut out the diamond in the middle, and then up between topic and topic sentence. You will then glue this sheet on top of the article that you colored in. In addition to practicing, you are also creating notes that you can keep in your reading folder (example of this at end of lesson). When you look back at the article and maybe forget what all the circles mean you can just look at the flap that has the circle and know that those words are the topic words. This is what it should look like when you are done (hold up finished example). While you are working I will be meeting and conferencing with some of you.”

* 1. Closure:

“Remember that in order to figure out the main idea, we need to look at the supporting details, topic sentence, and the general topic of the entire text. Once you know how to create main ideas, you will have an easier time understanding informational text that you read in the future. Knowing this skill can also help you summarize articles once we learn how to do that later on in the unit. Does anyone have any questions? Great! Have fun readers!”

1. **Assessment (How will I know the lesson was successful?):**
   1. I will be able to determine that the lesson was successful if students are able to identify the topic, topic sentence, and supporting details in an article and using that information to formulate a main idea. I will also be able to assess students understanding of this through conferring with them individually, during turn and talk, and by asking them questions throughout the lesson.















