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Try and Discuss

Now let's discuss the same three skills (*identifying main ideas, recognizing important details or clues, and drawing conclusions on your own*) for language arts tests.

Take a look at the question below.

Which one names the whole group?

- (A) Earth
- (B) Mercury
- (C) Pluto
- (D) solar system
- (E) orbits

Fill in the correct circle.

- (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)
-

One of these words includes all of the others. It is (D) “solar system.” The planets—Earth, Mercury, and Pluto—are all part of the solar system, and all the planets travel in an orbit in the solar system.

The main idea of a paragraph is just like that—it is an idea that names all of the other ideas in the paragraph by making them one group. You will be asked to identify main ideas on language arts tests. You also may be asked, “What would be a good title for this?” which is another way of asking, “What is the main idea?”

This time, look at the list of words below and decide what is the main idea of this group. (**Hint: The main idea is not mentioned!**)

What is the main idea that connects these things?

- (A) candles
- (B) games
- (C) ice cream
- (D) cake
- (E) gifts
- (F) guests

What do you think? _____

Think of a main idea that would include all of these things. You might come to the conclusion that the answer is a *birthday party*. In this case, you have to draw your own conclusion. In other words, you have to make a good guess at what the main idea is, even though it does not appear in words.

Sometimes the main idea of a paragraph is given in words directly—as in the solar system example above—but sometimes the main idea is only suggested, as in the birthday party example.

Language Arts: Library Research *(cont.)*

Part III—Online/CD-ROM Searching

Nearly all libraries offer a computerized catalog and searches on CD-ROM databases. Where might you search for each of the following topics?

16. How the NCAA has responded to incidents of gambling among players

- (F) newspaper index (G) journal index (H) online book catalog

17. Medical experiments in the treatment of AIDS

- (A) newspaper index (B) journal index (C) online book catalog

18. The history of space exploration

- (F) newspaper index (G) journal index (H) online book catalog

19. The President's recent remarks about China

- (A) newspaper index (B) journal index (C) online book catalog

20. Galileo: his conflict with the Church over his theories

- (F) newspaper index (G) journal index (H) online book catalog

Part IV—Research Paper Terms

Below is an index of terms in a book called *How to Write a Research Report*.

(A) Bibliography	9, 25, 26	(F) Editing	24
(B) Charts	7	(G) Endnotes	10, 25, 26
(C) Conclusions	23	(H) Fair use	11
(D) Drafting	20, 21	(J) Captions	15, 16

21. Where would you find information about writing the ending of your research report?
22. Where would you find example of improving what you've written by making changes?
23. Where would you find information about how to list the books and articles you've used at the end of your report?

(A) Note-taking	6, 18, 20	(F) Library research	35, 36
(B) Interview	5	(G) Manuscript form	26
(C) Introductions	21	(H) Graphs	7
(D) Library resources	2, 3, 4	(J) Outlining	19, 20, 26

24. Where would you find information about the right way to paragraph and space the writing in your report?
25. Where would you find information about writing down ideas and facts you borrowed from books, magazines, and articles?
26. Where would you find information about how to plan your report so all the ideas flowed logically?

