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## Introduction

The old adage “practice makes perfect” can apply to your child and his or her education. The more practice and exposure your child has with concepts being taught in school, the more success he or she is likely to find. For many parents, knowing how to help their children may be frustrating because the resources may not be readily available. As a parent, it is also hard to know where to focus your efforts so that the extra practice your child receives at home supports what he or she is learning in school.

A child's ability to understand what he or she reads depends largely upon the ability to locate the main idea of a passage and identify the details that support it. *Practice Makes Perfect: Main Idea* covers identifying the main idea and supporting details in both fiction and nonfiction text. To allow for the greatest variety of practice, the passages are not complete stories. The exercises included in this book meet or reinforce educational standards and objectives similar to the ones required by your state and school district for second-graders:

- ☞ The student will identify the main idea in fiction and nonfiction text.
- ☞ The student will locate supporting details in fiction and nonfiction text.
- ☞ The student will identify topic sentences in paragraphs.
- ☞ The student will choose the best title for a passage.

*Passage 3*

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A deer is afraid when it is in an open field. It knows that hunters and other animals might attack it. The deer quickly tears off leaves and twigs from trees. It does not chew them right away. The deer swallows everything whole! This food gets stored in a special part of the deer's stomach. When the deer feels safely hidden, it brings up the stored food, or cud. It chews the cud in order to digest its food.

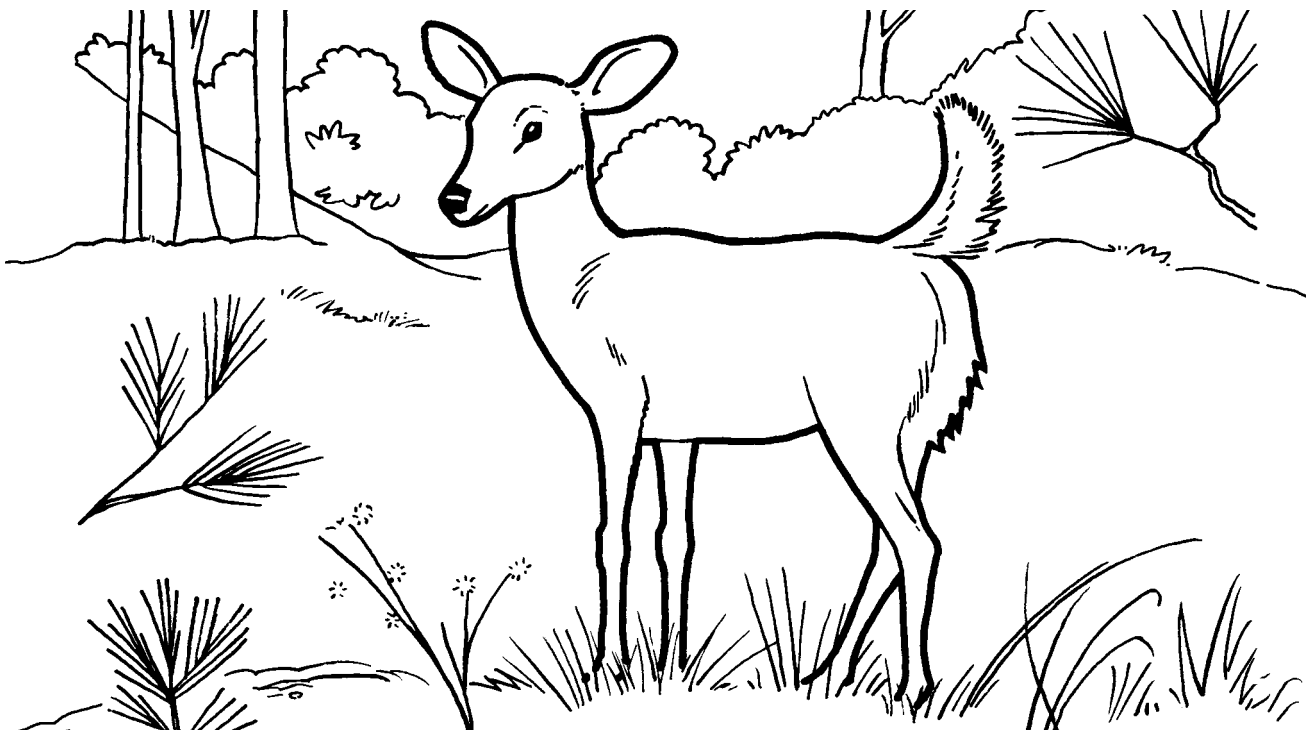
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**1. What is the main idea?**

- (a) Deer fear hunters and other animals that may attack them.
- (b) A deer does not really eat its food until it's in a safe place.
- (c) Food gets stored in a special part of the deer's stomach.

**2. Which sentences helped you to figure out the main idea?**

- (a) When the deer feels safely hidden, it brings up the stored food, or cud. It chews the cud in order to digest its food.
- (b) It does not chew the leaves and branches right away. It swallows them whole.
- (c) A deer is afraid when it is in an open field. It knows that hunters and other animals might attack it.



## Finding the Main Idea When It Isn't Stated

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The main idea is not always stated. This is often true in fiction. When the main idea is not given in nonfiction, ask questions to put together the main idea.

### *Passage 1*

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Everyone was surprised when shy little Kate stepped out on the stage to sing the final song of the show. Her sweet voice carried the tune with perfect pitch. Suddenly, she forgot the words and her voice faltered. Panicked, she felt like crying. But just then the audience started clapping. They thought the song was over! Kate smiled and took a bow.

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#### 1. Find the answers to these questions.

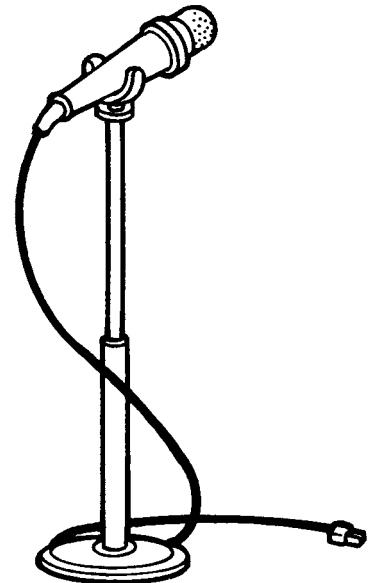
Who?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did What?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When?: she forgets the words to the song she's singing  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why?: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



#### 2. What is the main idea?

- (a) When Kate forgets the words to her song, she is surprised when the audience claps.
- (b) Kate had never sung for an audience before, so she was afraid.
- (c) Kate forgot the words to the song she was singing and ran off the stage.