**Study Island Lesson**

**Main/Central Idea**

*The****central idea****, or****main idea****, of a passage is the idea that most of the passage covers. It is the basic point that the author wants to convey to the reader. In simpler terms, the central idea is the idea that the passage is mostly about. The sentences that explain, describe, or support the main/central idea are called****supporting details****.*

The **main/central idea** can range from an idea that the author wants the reader to agree with in a newspaper article to a main event that takes place in a story. Each passage you read, whether it is 5 sentences or 500 pages, has a main/central idea. When you are looking for the main/central idea, ask yourself:

* Why did the author write this passage?
* What is the point he/she is trying to make?
* What is the passage mostly about?
* What idea is conveyed in the passage?

Once you have found the main/central idea, check it against the passage. The sentences in the passage should support, describe, or explain this idea. These sentences are **supporting details**. They are used to make the author's main/central idea stronger. If the sentences do not support the main/central idea, then you have the wrong main/central idea. Look over the sentences again and see what point or idea they are trying to explain.

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| **Note:** Main/central idea and topic are not the same thing. A topic is a general category, like the paparazzi or global warming. A main/central idea is a specific idea about that topic, like "The paparazzi should not be allowed to follow celebrities in their cars," or "Global warming is already impacting the North and South Poles." Think of it like a research paper assignment. Your teacher might want you to write about the 2008 presidential election. That is the topic. If you write about the confusion of the American public over the numerous candidates in the pre-primary election, that is the main/central idea. |

**Example:**

* Once winter is gone and spring officially arrives, it is time to enjoy longer days, warm weather, and new seasonal produce. During the spring, many vegetables and fruits are at their peaks. This includes green beans, corn, sweet onions, peas, greens, and squash. On the fruit front, apples, citrus fruits, and pears have made way for juicy stone fruit, like peaches, nectarines, and plums. Melons and berries are also available in the spring.



What is the **main/central idea** of this passage?

Many seasonal fruits and vegetables hit their peak during the spring.

This passage mostly focuses on the variety of produce available in the spring. The rest of the passage details the various vegetables and fruits that one can find during the spring.