MAIN IDEA
TASK CARDS

Mini Passages · Grades 2-4

My name

What is the Main Idea?

Read the steps. Use them on every card.

1 **Read** Read the card. Read

2 **Ask** Who or what is it

3 **Look** Find the details

4 **Pick** Pick the big id

An example

Cows spend the day in the
night, they rest in the barn

The main i
Cows eat

Detail 1
They eat grass

9 **Main Idea**

A frog begins life in the water as a tiny egg. Next it hatches into a tadpole with a long tail. Later it grows legs and hops onto land.

What is the main idea?

(A) A frog changes as it grows.
(B) A tadpole has a long tail.
(C) Frogs like to eat bugs.

10 **Main Idea**

Ms. Lee's class took a trip to the farm. They fed the goats and picked pumpkins. The kids rode home tired and happy.

What is the main idea?

(A) Goats eat corn.
(B) The kids picked pumpkins.
(C) Ms. Lee's class had a fun day at the farm.

11 **Main Idea**

Winter is a hard time for small birds. Snow covers the seeds they like to eat. Some people fill feeders so the birds have food.

What is the main idea?

(A) People fill feeders with seed.
(B) Winter is a hard time for birds to find food.
(C) Snow is cold and white.

12 **Main Idea**

A cat may nap for most of the day. It curls up in a warm, sunny spot. Cats sleep a lot.

What is the main idea?

(A) Cats sleep for much of the day.
(B) Cats chase mice.
(C) Cats like sunny spots.

24 CARDS

3 LEVELS



Bright Path Sped

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- This file is for one classroom: one teacher, one group of students.
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This is a fillable PDF

- Open it in a PDF reader (Adobe Acrobat Reader, Preview, or your browser), click into a line or a box, type, and Save As.
- Every name line, answer box, check box and writing box on the student pages is a type-in field, and so are the tracker, class grid, team note and family page. The task cards are made to print and hold. You can print any page and write by hand.
- It works offline. No account, no subscription, no internet connection needed after you download it.

Print at 100 percent

Turn off fit to page and shrink to fit so the cards and the answer boxes stay the size a child needs. Every student page is black and white inside a colored border, so it still reads when copied in black and white.

Student work

A filled-in tracker, class grid or team note carries a real student's name. Keep it in your data folder, and use a first name only on any page that leaves your hands.

Need help?

If a field will not behave or a page will not print right, use Ask a Question on the product page first. Every question is read, and a fix ships as a free update from My Purchases.

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PREVIEW

How To Read a Page

The parts of a card and an answer sheet, then the page types in the order they come.

The parts of a page

- **The card.** A number, a picture, a short passage, the question and three choices lettered A, B and C. A shape in the corner shows the level.
- **The answer sheet.** A row for each card with three check boxes. Circle sheets add a box to check after reading the card twice. Square sheets add a line for one detail. Triangle sheets add a line for how the child knows.
- **The name line.** The first thing on every student page. Click it to type, or print and write.
- **The choices.** One choice is the main idea. One is a detail, a single fact from the card. One is not in the card at all. The key (page 20) names which is which.

Page type	What it is	What the student does
What Is the Main Idea?	1 page	A poster: read, ask, look, pick, with a worked example.
Big Idea or Detail?	4 boxes	Check the sentence that tells the big idea in each box of three.
Task Cards	24 cards, 6 pages	Print, cut apart, laminate. 8 cards in each of the 3 shapes.
My Answers	3 sheets	Check A, B or C for 8 cards. Sheet 1 is for circle cards, 2 for square, 3 for triangle.
Main Idea Map	1 page	Three details and the big idea that fits them, for any card.
Write Your Own Card	1 page	Write a passage and three choices, then trade with a partner.

Untimed, unscored on the page

No student page has a timer or a score on it. The keys and the tracker are for you. The answer key is on pages 19 and 20.

Invented examples

Every name and story here is made up for practice. Nothing refers to a real child, a brand or a place.

Printing and the type-in fields

Every page prints clean in black and white. The name line, check boxes and writing boxes on the student pages are type-in fields in any PDF reader: click, type, save. This is a fillable PDF, not a slideshow or a word-processor file.

Getting the cards ready

Each card page holds 4 cards, 3.7 by 4.5 inches. Print on card stock, cut on the dashed lines, laminate, and keep each shape in its own bag.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____



What Is the Main Idea?

Read the steps. Use them on every card.

1	**Read**	Read the card. Read it again.
2	**Ask**	Who or what is it about?
3	**Look**	Find the details. They are the little facts.
4	**Pick**	Pick the big idea that fits all the details.

An example



Cows spend the day in the field. They eat grass and chew it slowly. At night they rest in the barn.

The main idea is the big idea.
Cows eat and rest on the farm.

Detail 1	Detail 2	Detail 3
They eat grass.	They chew slowly.	They rest in the barn.

Details are little facts. They help tell the big idea.

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____

Big Idea or Detail?

Read the three sentences. Check the big idea.

Each box has three sentences. One tells the big idea. The other two are details.



The Zoo

- [ ] The zoo has many animals to see.
- [ ] The monkeys swing on ropes.
- [ ] The bears nap in the shade.



Riding the Bus

- [ ] Wait for the bus at the stop.
- [ ] Bus riders need to be safe.
- [ ] Stay in your seat on the bus.



Our Class

- [ ] We read a story at ten.
- [ ] We paint pictures after lunch.
- [ ] Our class is a busy place.



Spring

- [ ] Baby birds hatch.
- [ ] Spring is a time of new growth.
- [ ] Flowers pop up in the garden.

PREVIEW

Read the card. Pick the main idea.

5 Main Idea



Jin packs his backpack the night before school. He puts in his lunch and his folder. Then he hangs it by the door.

What is the main idea?

A. Jin puts his lunch in the bag.

B. Jin gets his backpack ready for school.

C. Jin walks to school.

6 Main Idea



A carrot starts as a tiny seed. The seed grows green leaves above the dirt. At last a long orange carrot grows below.

What is the main idea?

A. A carrot grows from a seed.

B. Carrots are used for soup.

C. The leaves are green.

7 Main Idea



Bees work hard all day. They fly from flower to flower to get nectar. Then they carry it back to the hive.

What is the main idea?

A. Bees fly to flowers.

B. Bees make a loud buzz.

C. Bees work hard to get nectar.

8 Main Idea



Dad and Rosa made cookies on Sunday. They mixed the dough and rolled it flat. Then they cut star shapes and baked them.

What is the main idea?

A. Rosa likes to draw stars.

B. Dad and Rosa baked cookies together.

C. They cut star shapes.

PREVIEW

Read the card. Pick the main idea.

13 Main Idea



Kai put on his coat and took his kite to the hill. The wind was strong, so the kite shot up high. Kai had a great time.

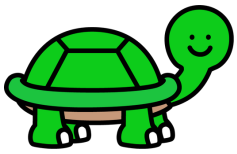
What is the main idea?

A. Kai wore a coat.

B. Kai likes to climb hills.

C. Kai had fun flying a kite on a windy day.

14 Main Idea



Turtles are slow walkers. But they have a hard shell on their backs. A turtle can pull in its head to stay safe.

What is the main idea?

A. Turtles live in ponds.

B. Turtles are slow, but their shells keep them safe.

C. A turtle can pull in its head.

15 Main Idea



Pack a flashlight, a warm jacket and a water bottle for a camping trip. Bring a tent and a sleeping bag too. Good packing makes camping easy.

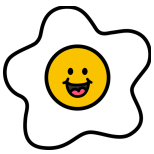
What is the main idea?

A. Good packing makes a camping trip easy.

B. A tent is something to bring.

C. Camping is only for summer.

16 Main Idea



Every morning, Grandpa feeds his hens. Then he collects the eggs in a basket. He also fills their water bowls.

What is the main idea?

A. Hens lay brown eggs.

B. Grandpa carries eggs in a basket.

C. Grandpa does morning chores for his hens.

PREVIEW

Read the card. Pick the main idea.

21 Main Idea



Bears eat a lot in the fall. They eat berries, fish and nuts all day. They get big and round. Then they find a cave to sleep in for the winter.

What is the main idea?

A. Bears get ready for winter.

B. Bears eat berries and fish.

C. Bears are good at climbing.

22 Main Idea



Nia has a chart of chores. On Monday she waters the plants. On Tuesday she sets the table. On Wednesday she feeds the cat.

What is the main idea?

A. Nia loves plants.

B. Nia feeds the cat on Wednesday.

C. Nia does a different chore each day.

23 Main Idea



Eli and his aunt put on life jackets. They paddled a small boat across the lake. Ducks swam by, and a breeze blew. Eli wished the ride would last all day.

What is the main idea?

A. Eli put on a life jacket.

B. Eli had a fun boat ride on the lake.

C. Ducks live on lakes.

24 Main Idea



Look up at the moon on a clear night. One night it is a thin curve. A week later it is half full. Two weeks later it is big and round.

What is the main idea?

A. The moon looks different each night.

B. The moon is far away.

C. Sometimes the moon is round.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

My Answers: Cards 9 to 16



Read the card. Check A, B or C.

9	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____
10	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____
11	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____
12	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____
13	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____
14	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____
15	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____
16	☐ A	☐ B	☐ C	A detail from the card _____

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____

Main Idea Map



Pick a card. Fill in the map.

My card number: ☐

Detail 1: one little fact

Detail 2: another little fact

Detail 3: one more little fact

The main idea: the big idea that fits all the details

How do I know? Tell about it.

PREVIEW

Answer Key: The 24 Cards

#	Right	The main idea	Page
1	C	Max and Ruff play together.	8
2	A	Apples are a tasty fruit.	8
3	B	Mia and her brother had a rainy day inside.	8
4	C	Ducks are good swimmers.	8
5	B	Jin gets his backpack ready for school.	9
6	A	A carrot grows from a seed.	9
7	C	Bees work hard to get nectar.	9
8	B	Dad and Rosa baked cookies together.	9
9	A	A frog changes as it grows.	10
10	C	Ms. Lee's class had a fun day at the farm.	10
11	B	Winter is a hard time for birds to find food.	10
12	A	Cats sleep for much of the day.	10

#	Right	The main idea	Page
13	C	Kai had fun flying a kite on a windy day.	11
14	B	Turtles are slow, but their shells keep them safe.	11
15	A	Good packing makes a camping trip easy.	11
16	C	Grandpa does morning chores for his hens.	11
17	B	Sam and Mom made pancakes.	12
18	A	Tess takes care of her horse.	12
19	C	Owls are awake at night.	12
20	B	Dev's family takes a train trip to see Grandma.	12
21	A	Bears get ready for winter.	13
22	C	Nia does a different chore each day.	13
23	B	Eli had a fun boat ride on the lake.	13
24	A	The moon looks different each night.	13

The Page column is the card page. A child may say the main idea in different words; accept it if it fits every sentence. The letters in order: C A B C B A C B A C B A C B A C B A C B A C B A. Totals: A 8, B 8, C 8 = 24.

PREVIEW

Task Card Tracker

One student, all 24 cards. Filled example: page 25.

Student _____ Teacher _____ Month _____

Card	Shape	Right	I picked
1	starting		
2	starting		
3	starting		
4	starting		
5	starting		
6	starting		
7	starting		
8	starting		
9	building		
10	building		
11	building		
12	building		

Card	Shape	Right	I picked
13	building		
14	building		
15	building		
16	building		
17	ready for more		
18	ready for more		
19	ready for more		
20	ready for more		
21	ready for more		
22	ready for more		
23	ready for more		
24	ready for more		

How to fill this in

Write Y if the child checked the right letter with no prompt, N if not, and the letter picked. A blank means not tried yet, never wrong. Use the key (pages 19 and 20) to see whether a wrong pick was a detail. Filled example: page 25.

This month we are working on (your own standard or wording)

PREVIEW

Team Note

Use this page between team meetings or when a student moves classes, to hand off what changed without writing a note from scratch. Everything below is observable, with a blank for the number or the wording your team already uses.

Student _____ Team member _____ Date _____

Page	Covered since last note (Y/N)	Cards right	Still blank
Starting cards			
Building cards			
Ready for more cards			
Map or Write Your Own			

What I saw (observable, not a conclusion)

- Checked the right letter on ___ of ___ cards without a prompt.
- Used the poster (page 6) / pointed to a sentence / read the card twice: yes / no.
- Picked a detail on ___ cards and a choice not in the card on ___ cards.
- Told the main idea in own words on ___ of ___ cards.

Next step

- Next shape or page: ___, because ___ (what you saw).
- What to try in another class or at home: ___.
- What to keep doing because it is working: ___.
- Anything for the team meeting to decide: ___ (this page records what happened, never a label or a plan).

Summary, in one or two sentences, for whoever reads this next

A filled-in line, for reference

"Checked the right letter on 7 of 8 circle cards on 10/8. Next step: have the child point to the sentence that matches the choice." That is the level of detail this page is built for. It matches the filled example on page 25.

PREVIEW

Jordan's Tracker (Invented Student)

Jordan P. is invented; nothing on this page describes a real student. The blank tracker is on page 21.

Student: Jordan P. (an invented student)

Teacher: Ms. Rivera (invented)

Month: October

Card	Shape	Right	I picked
1	starting	Y	C
2	starting	Y	A
3	starting	Y	B
4	starting	Y	C
5	starting	Y	B
6	starting	N	C
7	starting	Y	C
8	starting	Y	B
9	building	Y	A
10	building	N	B
11	building	Y	B
12	building	Y	A

Card	Shape	Right	I picked
13	building	N	A
14	building	Y	B
15	building	Y	A
16	building	Y	C
17	ready for more	Y	B
18	ready for more	Y	A
19	ready for more	Y	C
20	ready for more	N	A
21	ready for more	Y	A
22	ready for more	N	B
23	ready for more	Y	B
24	ready for more	N	B

Shape	Right	Of
Starting	7	8
Building	6	8
Ready for more	5	8

How to read it

Jordan got **18 of 24** cards right with no prompt: 7 of 8 circle, 6 of 8 square and 5 of 8 triangle. Of the 6 cards missed, **4** picks were a detail and **2** were a choice not in the card (from the key on page 20). Every number comes from the tables.

What the tables point to

The wrong picks are mostly details, so the child is finding true facts but not yet asking what all the sentences are about. Next practice: the Main Idea Map (page 17) with a square card, naming three details first.

PREVIEW

Binder Cover

Slide this into the front of a binder. The divider tabs and a spine label to cut out are on the next page (page 28).

Reading - Grades 2-4

MAIN IDEA TASK CARDS

24 cards, 3 shapes



Teacher _____

Class or student _____

PREVIEW