

# READING FOR THE MAIN IDEA



**Oleh**  
**Wachyu Sundayana**

# A. Key Ideas in Sentences

- **Key idea of a sentence usually tells:**
- **what a person or an object is**
- **what a person or an object is doing**

**Example:**

**(1) A tall girl in a white dress rushed away into the trees just beyond the gate**

- **In identifying key ideas in sentences, you have to :**
- **Ask who or what the sentence is about**
- **Ask what the person or object is doing or what is happening to the person or object**
- **Learn to separate details from the key idea. Many words in sentences describe things about the subject of the sentence and merely add details around it. If you ask *when, what kind, where, or why*, you will find the details. As a result, it is easier to see the key idea.**

*(why)*

*(what kind)*

**(2) Because of new laws most foreign auto-**

*(where)*

*(when)*

*(how)*

**mobiles in the Unites States now offer  
safety feature at no extra charge.**

- **Now, identity the key idea of the above sentence.**
- **Who or what is the sentence about?**
- **What do the automobiles do?**
- **The key idea is.....**

**Now, identify the key ideas of the following sentences:**

- (3) Uncrowded Western parks now offer tourists with campers and trailers a number of modern conveniences.**
- (4) If he does not study for Professor Roler's final examination in psychology of reading, he will not pass a really easy course.**
- (5) Was the woman who ran away after the robbery of First National City Bank part of the gang of thieves who stole \$500.000 last week at a bank in another part of town.**

## **B. Main Ideas in Paragraphs**

**A paragraph is a group of sentences about some related subject. One paragraph consists of one main idea. The main idea may appear in the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of paragraph. And main idea can also be implied (implicitly stated).**

# Main Idea in the beginning

## Text # 1

As the sun went down, the scene from the bridge was beautiful. It had been a perfect day. Up and down on either side of New York. The bright blue water lay gently rippling, while to the south it merged into great bay and disappeared toward the sea. The vast cities spread away on both sides. Beyond rolled the hilly country until it was lost in the mist of the sky. All up and down the harbor The shipping, piers, buildings were still gaily decorated.

# Main Idea in the middle

## Text # 2

There are 4.3 million television sets in the United States, at one set for 98 percent of all American homes. Forty-eight percent of all U.S. homes have more than set, and some families even have a set of every person in the house. Yet, despite the fact that the number of sets in the United States has virtually reached a saturation point, the amount of time spent watching television has declined steadily since 1976. Explanations vary from the increasingly poor quality of network shows to the rising popularity of home video equipment, but the fact remains that we are owning more sets but enjoying the less.



## Main idea at the end

### Text # 3

Although the buildings are tall, none of them blots out the sky. People rush about as in New York, but someone always stops to answer a question about directions. A person will listen when he or she is asked a question. Often a sudden smile will flash from the crowds of strangers pushing down State Street. It is a smile of welcome and happiness at the same time. And the traffic, it is though, noisy, active; but a person never feels as if he takes his life in his hands when he crosses the street. Of course, there is always the presence of the lake, the vast, shimmering lake that shines like an ocean of silver. Something about that lake each time it spreads out around a turn on Lakeshore Drive says, "Hello, It's good to see you again." Chicago is a fine, friendly city.

# Implied Main Idea

## Text # 4

The sky was blue and the grass was green. The hometown team joyfully ran out to their position on the base ball diamond. Then the umpire yelled “Play ball”; and all the fans’ attention turned to the game.

- Main Idea = The baseball game was ready to begin.

