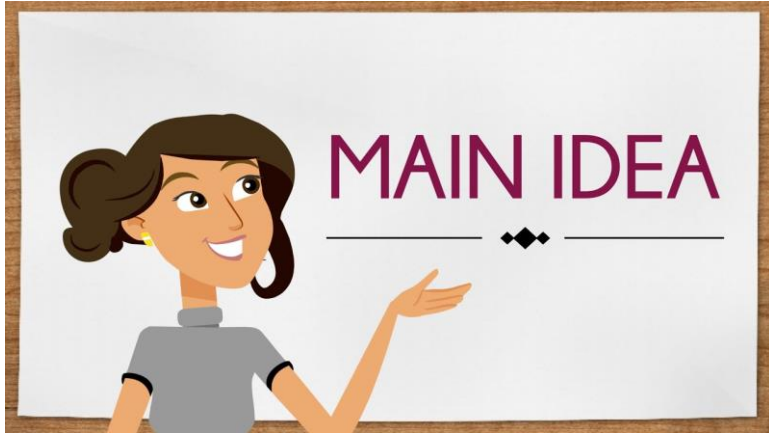




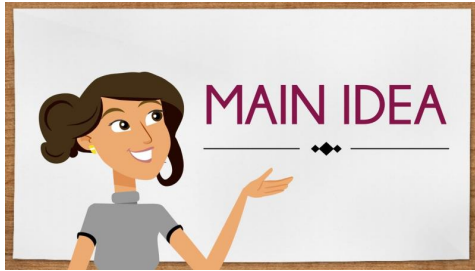
## 7. OVERVIEW / MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS



- The *main idea* is the central, or most important idea in a paragraph or a passage. It states the purpose and sets the direction of the paragraph or passage.



## 7. OVERVIEW / MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS



- The main idea may be *stated* or *implied*. It is most often found in the first or last sentence of the paragraph. Sometimes, it may be found in both the first and last sentences or in any sentence of the paragraph.
- *Skill*: skimming



## 7. OVERVIEW / MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS

- **Main idea questions look like this:**
  - ✓ What is the main = primary *topic / idea / subject / point / theme* of the passage / paragraph?
  - ✓ What does the article / passage *mainly discuss?* / What is *mainly discussed* in this paragraph?
  - ✓ What is the information / paragraph *about?*
  - ✓ Which of the following would be the best *title?*
  - ✓ What is the *message* to the reader?





## *Example:*

What is the main purpose of this letter?

- A. To select the appropriate cover design
- B. To confirm the receipt of shipment
- C. To place an order for book orders
- D. To contact the seller's office.

Yesterday our office received the package of book covers you sent on November 3. The order came to us complete and earlier than expected. After reviewing the designs, one of our staff will contact your office to let you know of our choice.



## 7. OVERVIEW / MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS

PRACTICE



## Question 1

Recently I saw your advertisement in the paper for a receptionist at your main office. I would like some more information regarding the opportunity to work for your company. Please send any pertinent information to the address at the top of the letter.

1. *Why was this letter written?*

A. *To advertise a job opening*

B. *To inquire about employment*

C. *To apply for the position*

D. *To ask for an advertisement*



## Question 1 (Key)

Recently I saw your advertisement in the paper for a receptionist at your main office. I would like some more information regarding the opportunity to work for your company.

**Please send any pertinent information to the address at the top of the letter.**

*1. Why was this letter written?*

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*C. To apply for the position*

***D. To ask for an advertisement***



## Question 2

People often refer to taxes in terms of their being much too high. In reality, they are probably even higher than you think, because in addition to the federal income tax we are now studying, there are many other Federal, State, and local taxes, including sales taxes, inheritance taxes, state income taxes, personal property taxes, real estate taxes, and others. These are just some of the most obvious ones.

2. *What is the main idea of the passage?*

- A. *Taxes are much too high*
- B. *We pay more taxes than we may realize*
- C. *Inheritance taxes and real estate taxes are unfair*
- D. *Some taxes are hidden*



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## Question 3

The fact that electronic computers are now used for data processing has led the general public to believe that it is a mysterious, complicated science and that the computers are giant brains. Both of these ideas are false. A computer is basically just a high-speed adding machine that performs the functions it is told to. If the input data are varied even a little, the computer is unable to operate until it is programmed to accept the variations. The business operations it performs are impressive only because of the extremely high speed of manipulation, but most of these operations have been used for decades. Unlike man, the computer performs repetitive calculations without getting tired or bored.

3. *What is the main idea of the passage?*

- A. *A computer is a high-speed adding machine*
- B. *A computer is a mysterious giant brain*
- C. *A computer is impressive because of its high speed.*
- D. *A computer is superior to man in many ways.*



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## Question 4

The Louisiana Purchase proved to be one of the shrewdest business pacts in the entire history of the United States. The purchase doubled in the area of the country and provided territory from which fourteen new states were created either wholly or in part. It also gave us control over the mouth of the Mississippi River and opened up the way to foreign trade. Prior to the purchase, the waterway had been blocked by the Spanish, probably with the approval of Napoleon. The land that was bought was rich in timber, minerals, and natural resources of many kinds. Finally, the cost of the transaction was unbelievably low; the total of \$15 million amounted to about four cents an acre.

4. *What is the main idea of the passage?*

- A. *The Louisiana Purchase was a very good business deal for the U.S.*
- B. *The land bought by the Louisiana Purchase was rich in minerals.*
- C. *The land bought by the Louisiana Purchase was very cheap.*
- D. *Most Americans were very pleased with the purchase.*



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## Question 5

There is a common belief that while the dog is man's best friend, the coyote is his worst enemy. The bad reputation of the coyote traces back to his fondness for small animals; he hunts at night and is particularly destructive to sheep, young pigs, and poultry. Yet it is sometimes wise to encourage coyotes. Provided valuable farm animals are protected, the coyote will often free the property of other animals, like rabbits, which are ruinous to crops and certain trees. He is especially beneficial in keeping down the rodent population.

Where coyotes have been allowed to do their work without molestation, ranchers and fruit growers have found them so valuable that they would no more shoot them than they would shoot their dogs.

5. *What is the main idea of the passage?*

- A. *Under certain conditions the coyote is helpful to man.*
- B. *The coyote is feared because of his fondness for small animals.*
- C. *Modern ranchers would no sooner shoot coyotes than they would shoot dogs.*
- D. *The coyote usually prefers rabbits and other rodents to sheep and poultry.*



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*Thank  
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