NJSLA Research Simulation Task
Grade 7 Reading
Lesson 3: Identifying the Main Idea

Rationale

- Paramount for students' success on the reading portion of the NJSLA assessments is their ability to identify and understand an author's main idea.

Goals

- To prepare students for the reading assessment by teaching them strategies to identify and understand an author's main idea.

Task Foci

- **CCSS RI.7.2**: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS RI.7.5**: Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

Objectives

- Students will learn strategies for reading to determine a main idea.
- Students will be able to identify the main idea of an informational text.

Materials

- Sample text
- Main Idea worksheet

Procedures

- Tell students that today they will explore the concept "main idea" and learn strategies for determining the main idea of a text.
- Start by defining "main idea." You can define it in a couple ways: It is what the text is mostly about. It is the central point the writer makes.
- Explain to students, **"There are certain things you can do before, during, and after reading that will help you determine the main idea. Let's go through some of them as we look at this text."**

- Distribute the sample text and worksheet. In the following steps, pause to allow students time to fill out their worksheets as indicated.
- Start with the pre-reading strategy of examining text features: title, headings, pictures, charts, diagrams. Tell students, **"The first thing we want to do is figure out what the subject of the text is. The title can usually help us with this."**
- Read the title aloud. Discuss how the title can tell us what the subject is. For example, a straightforward title like, "What is Earth?" tells us that this text will be about our home planet. (A title in the form of a question often indicates that the main idea will be the answer to that question.)
- Go through any other text features present. Ask students what they are and what they show about the subject.
- Allow students time to fill out the BEFORE READING section of their worksheets.
- Next, tell students that there are things you can do while you're reading. One strategy is to be on the lookout for repeated terms and ideas, as these will often relate to the main idea.
- Read the text aloud or have students read independently. Allow students to annotate the text and fill out the DURING READING section.
- After students finish reading, ask them to share their answers to the "before reading" and "during reading" sections. Everyone's answers should be similar, though some students may have noticed something that others missed.
- Next, direct students to look at the AFTER READING section. Explain that every writer has an opinion about the subject they're writing about. But often, writers don't present that opinion as one direct statement, but develop it throughout the text through tone, wording, reasoning, and examples.
- Have students answer the AFTER READING section of the worksheet.
- Reiterate that the "main idea" is "what the text is mostly about." In other words, it is the biggest point the author makes about the subject.
- Ask your students to review their answers to each section of their worksheet.
- Then ask them, **"Using the information you've found, what do you think is the main idea of this text? Write your answer in the space provided on the worksheet."**
- Ask students to share their answers. Discuss.
- Collect student worksheets.
- Keep students' work for Lesson 4: Supporting Details

Check for Understanding

- Check that students correctly identify the main idea and were able to articulate it in their own words on the worksheet.
- Check for evidence that the student's answers on the worksheet provide evidence of his or her reasoning for determining the main idea.

Students and researchers disagree on whether 'cyberbullying' is a cause for concern

Courtesy: National Science Foundation

1. The book *Cyberbullying: What Counselors Need to Know* identifies non-punitive strategies for responding to cyberbullying. In it, author Sheri Bauman argues the most important advice for parents and teachers is to get knowledgeable about technology and its safety strategies.

2. Bauman writes about a national survey in which 33 percent of parents interviewed, who had youth ages 10-17 living with them, used filtering software on home Internet access. She says installing filtering software is an easy, non-punitive, initial step towards protecting youth at home and at school.

3. "When I'm queen, I would mandate that schools provide education in technology, not just how to use a tool, but also to use it wisely, respectfully, carefully, and how to protect yourself from cyberbullying," says Bauman.

4. Other advice from Bauman includes keeping abreast of the most recent social media sites, monitoring social network activities, monitoring who friends are and taking advantage of control options, which are now available on most cell phones.

5. Meanwhile, Nathan Fisk, a science and technology researcher, suggests parents and educators address the more common, everyday problems identified by students that can lead to more severe forms of bullying. "Understanding social context is critical in defusing and managing conflicts between students," he says. "It is important to address conflict at the local individual level."

6. To do that, one approach Fisk recommends is to listen to the advice of adolescents who are closest to the problem. In a winning essay, student Morgan Biggs, an eighth grade student at St. Anne's School of Annapolis in Maryland, proposes what she calls a "Bully Beatdown" campaign to raise awareness of bullying issues. Her campaign would allow students to share personal stories and experiences with bullying and train them on anti-bullying tactics.

7. She also suggests schools create an anonymous email for students who don't want to report an incident of bullying or cyberbullying in-person for fear of becoming bullying victims.

8. The suggestion mirrors one offered by some experts. "Victims often do not report incidents of cyberbullying because they fear retaliation and worry that they will be ostracized if it is known that they reported it," says Bauman, who also suggests anonymous reporting. While there are no data on the effectiveness of anonymous reporting systems, giving youth an avenue to report via an anonymous website, or telephone number, could help mitigate future online bullying, she says.

Fisk responds to the suggestion with skepticism. "I don't think that having an anonymous tip line is a terrible idea, but it is at least somewhat problematic on a number of levels," he says. He argues that bullying offers a seductively simplistic frame for adults, who lack true understanding of the complexity of youth social interactions and that it is important to realize that some youth will **exploit** this knowledge to their advantage.

What's the Main Idea?

<u>BEFORE READING</u>

What is the title?

What is the subject?

<u>DURING READING</u>

What terms and ideas are repeated in the text? Explain each you found.

<u>AFTER READING</u>

What do you think is the author's opinion on the subject? How can you tell?

I think the main idea is…

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