

Warm up

Ask students to work in groups and brainstorm their ideas about how they would identify the main point of a text. You could bring in a few texts – preferably in a diversity of genres – and distribute them to groups to look at; after a few minutes, elicit the main point of each text, and ask each group how they found the main idea.

Practice

1 You are going to read three texts in pairs. Each text has supporting arguments, but the main idea is missing. Each text is about an aspect of time management in an academic context.


- Tell students they are going to read three texts about time management in an academic context. Explain the main idea is missing from the text.
- Check there is general understanding of what time management is in an academic context.

2  In pairs, match the three main ideas (a–c) to the texts (1–3).

- Put students in pairs and check understanding of what they have to do.

Answers


- 1 c
2 b
3 a

3  Discuss and decide how to add the main ideas to the texts. You can put the main ideas in any position and change the words a little if you want to.

- Encourage students to adapt the main ideas if they wish to and discuss their decisions in pairs. There is more than one possible answer in some cases.

4  With your partner, join another pair and compare your ideas. Do you agree with each other?

- Ask each pair to compare and discuss their choices with another pair.
- Monitor and intervene as necessary.

5  You are going to read a text called 'Organizing your paperwork', but it has no main idea sentence. You need to write one and add it to the text. Work in pairs.

- Explain to students that the short text 'Organizing your paperwork' they are about to read has no main idea sentence. Ask them in pairs to discuss, plan and write one and add it to the text.
- Note this is not a true writing activity, so you can focus on content rather than grammar, syntax and spelling. However, if you have a mixed-ability class, you can differentiate when you look at the students' sentences.

6 Your teacher will discuss your ideas with you, so be ready to share them.

- Discuss several of the sentences from the pairs at class level. The sentence below is an example you can use, but there are many possibilities.

One of the challenges of student life is ensuring all your notes from lectures, from your reading and from internet research are organized.

Reflect

7 Write some notes about identifying main ideas and supporting arguments. These notes are just for you, and you should keep them. Some *Wh-* questions may help you plan your ideas.

- Ask students individually to write some notes about identifying main ideas and supporting arguments. Remind them that the notes are just for them, and they should keep them for future reference.