

# READING SKILLS

## Worksheet

### Find the main idea of a text




#### READING TIP

#### STUDY SKILLS: Know the text type

Different texts have different purposes. Before you read a text, ask yourself these questions about the text: Why was it written? Who wrote it? Who was it written for? What is the text trying to do?

This Reading Worksheet is about finding main ideas in texts. The tasks will help you understand how texts are structured and how to find 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.
- 2**  In pairs, match the three main ideas (a–c) to the texts (1–3).

- a** Most people make lists, but the problem with lists is they can get longer and longer and can be very demotivating. The secret of lists is to ensure that they get shorter as you finish things and that they make you feel you are getting things done.
- b** One of the problems with time management is that we don't always know how we spend our time. The most effective way of finding out is to write a diary showing how you spend your day.
- c** One of the most important aspects of examination success is that of timekeeping, as it is so easy to either waste time or not understand how long a particular question will take to answer.

### 1 Timekeeping in examinations

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some ideas to think about before the examination:

- Understand which questions or question types you can answer quickly and those which will take you more time.
- Find out which questions carry the most marks and compare that information with the point above. Your objective is to get as many marks as quickly as possible.
- When you do examination practice at home or at university, always time yourself.
- In the examination itself, don't waste time on questions you really can't answer. It's better to focus on your strengths and get as many marks as you can within the time limits.

### 2 How do I spend my time?

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_




The time diary should be divided into 15 or 20 minute sections, and after every 15 or 20 minutes, write down what you have done. This should include, for example, writing essays, attending lectures or reading. It should also include time 'wasted' looking out the window, having a cup of coffee or eating a snack. This may not really be wasted time because we all need to relax, but it's very interesting to see how much you relax compared with how much you work. This time diary will help you to focus your day.

### 3 Making lists

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Lists should prioritize items at the top, or there should be a separate list with the things that need to be done urgently (and you must ensure that you do these things urgently). Then cross these off your list and this will make you feel pleased with yourself.

Prioritize things on your list. Label them I for important and U for urgent. Important and urgent are not the same thing, so be sure that the urgent things get priority and the important things follow. Unimportant things perhaps don't need to be on your list.

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

### Organizing your paperwork

Just putting your papers into random files or leaving them on your desk will not help you when you need to write an essay or revise for an examination. Think about the following tips:

- Clearly label and colour-code files so you can find things quickly.
- When you put your files on the shelves, group them by subject, so when you need them, you will know where they are.
- The same applies to electronic files. Clear labelling and correct use of folders and files will allow you to find things on your computer quickly. And remember to back everything up!

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

## 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.**

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