

Warm up

Ask students to work in groups and compare what they wrote on the Factsheet, if they have completed it yet. Then elicit their opinions. There are a number of possible ways of approaching the task; see the Theory to practice section of these Teacher's notes. If students haven't done the Factsheet yet, 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.

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the Factsheet:

- 1 Give students the Factsheet before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the Worksheet. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the Factsheet and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the Factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with students.
- 3 Focus on the Worksheet in the lesson, then give students the Factsheet at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice

Suggested answer

The main point is the following: *Dealing with an emergency is something that happens to most of us, and we need to be ready to follow the best procedure even if we are very stressed and beginning to panic.*



Its position in the texts is as follows:

- 1 first sentence
- 2 last sentence
- 3 first sentence, with the addition of the signpost phrase *the key point is*

Opinions on how easy to find the main point is in each text, or the most effective placement, may differ. The placement of the main point at the end of text 2 could be argued for or against: it is an effective summary of the text, and its placement does have the effect of shortening the paragraphs, which often makes this sort of factual text more easily 'navigable'. On the other hand, the start of text 2 is confusing when compared with the clear beginnings of texts 1 and 3. Text 3 is probably better than text 1 because of the inclusion of the signpost phrase.


Using the Worksheet

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. This is a fairly simple activity to consolidate what is on the Factsheet.
- 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.

Learning outcome

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to demonstrate that they can find the main idea and supporting arguments in a text as part of their reading strategy.

Ending the lesson

Ask students to look at the Factsheet and underline any connections they can find between the contents of the Worksheet and the Factsheet.