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8 Identifying the Main Topic



Introduction

THEME: >>> **Animals on Land and Sea**

Every text has a **main topic**. The main topic is what the text is about. A text also has **key details**. These details tell you about the main topic. Look for key details. They will help you understand the main topic.

Read the paragraph.

The anglerfish catches food in a surprising way. It grows a kind of living fishing line from its head. The fish waves this fishing line in the water. Small fish swim over to see what it is. Then the anglerfish eats them up.

Write details about the main topic.

Main Topic: how the anglerfish gets food		
Key Detail: It grows a living fishing line from its head.	Key Detail: Small fish _____ _____.	Key Detail: The anglerfish _____ _____.

Read the first part of the passage. Then answer the questions.

Sea Turtles

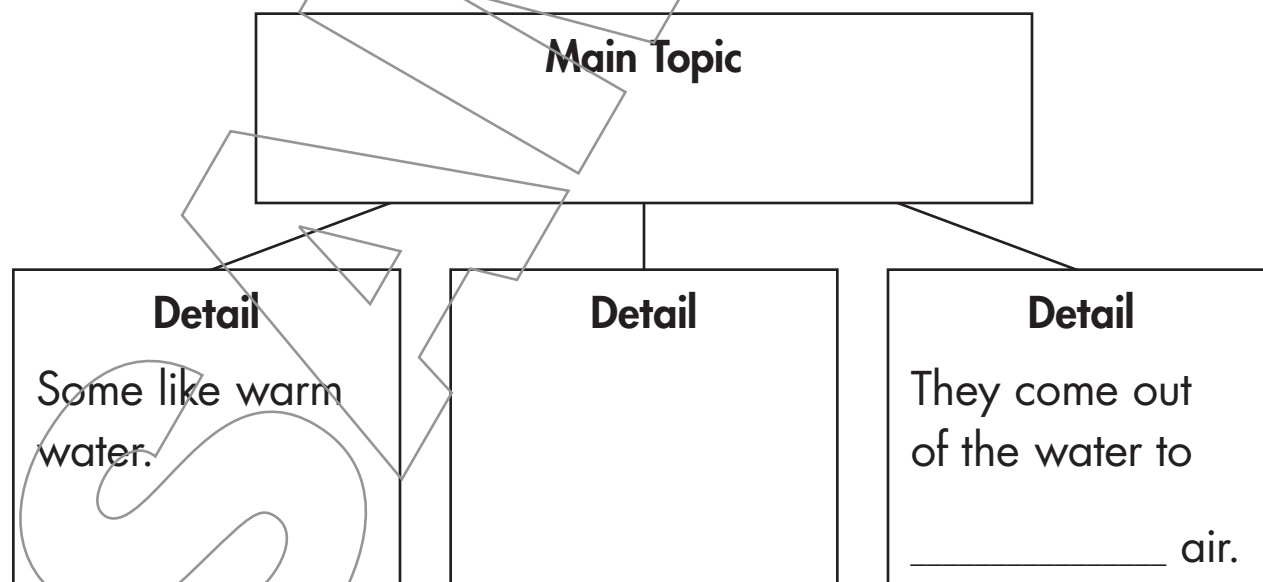
1 There are many kinds of sea turtles. They live all over the world. Some of them like very warm water. Others like cool water.

2 Sea turtles spend a lot of time underwater. But they have to breathe air. They come out of the water. They take a deep breath. Then they dive back under the water.



Think About It

Fill in the chart with the main topic and details.



Read the rest of the passage. Then answer the question.

3 Mother sea turtles lay eggs on land. They come up on the beach at night. They slowly move across the sand. Then they dig a hole. They lay eggs in the hole. They refill the hole with sand. They smooth out the sand. It is very hard to tell where the nest is. The mothers go back to the sea.

4 Later, baby sea turtles come out of the eggs. They dig out of the hole. Then they go into the sea. The young sea turtles eat and grow. Sea turtles can live to be very old. Some of them can be 100 years old!

A CLOSER LOOK

Read paragraph 4. Put a line under a detail about some sea turtles' ages.

Read paragraph 3. Find details that help you answer the question.

Where does a mother sea turtle make a nest for her eggs?

- A in the ocean
- B in a small tree
- C on a sandy beach
- D on a rocky island

DISCUSS IT

Talk with a partner about sea turtles. Do you think baby sea turtles are strong? What detail in the passage gives you a hint that they are strong, or have strong legs?

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

adapted from **Whale Behavior**

by National Marine Mammal Laboratory

1 Why do people like whales? One reason is because of how they act. We like to see them “breaching,” “spy-hopping,” and “spouting.”

What is breaching?

2 Whales breach when they leap clear out of the water.



A CLOSER LOOK

Read paragraph 3. Put a line under details that tell you about spy-hopping.

What is spy-hopping?

3 Spy-hopping is when a whale sticks its head straight up out of the water. Whales use their strong flukes to poke their heads out of the water. This way the animal can look around.



What is spouting or blowing?

4 Whales must breathe air just like humans. This can be hard for them to do because they live in water. Most whales can hold their breath for a long time. First, whales swim to the surface to breathe. Then they let air out through their blowhole. This makes the water rise into the air. This is called spouting or blowing. Different whales have different kinds of spouts. This helps you identify whales. Blue whales have the highest spout. It can rise up to 30 feet.

What is sounding?

5 Sounding is whale diving. Each type of whale has a special way of diving. First, most whales take a few breaths. Then they arch their backs. Next, they raise their flukes. Finally, they dive deeper into the water.

Read paragraph 4. What do whales do when they swim to the surface?

1 Why do whales spout?

- A to make waves
- B to look around
- C to find food
- D to breathe

Read paragraph 1 to understand the main topic.

2 What is the main topic of this passage?

- A Whales breathe air.
- B Whales live in the ocean.
- C Whales behave in interesting ways.
- D There are many types of whales in the sea.

Read paragraph 5. What is sounding?

3 What are two things a whale does when it is sounding?

1. _____

2. _____

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Delightful Dolphins



1 There are about 40 different kinds of dolphins. Dolphins live in warm water. Most dolphins live in the ocean. A few types live in rivers. All dolphins are very smart.

2 Dolphins are fun to watch. Dolphins spy-hop. They peak out of the water to have a look around. They also leap out of the water. Then they fall back into the water with a big splash. Dolphins also come to the surface to breathe the air they need to live.

3 Dolphins play together. They swim around each other. They move through the water together. Dolphins like to swim next to ships. They save energy by riding the waves the ships make. They swim by leaping in and out of the water as they move forward.

4 Dolphins live in groups. They make clicking sounds to talk to each other. Dolphins use clicking sounds to keep the group together. They click to tell each other where to find food.

5 Mother dolphins give birth to live baby dolphins. The babies drink the mother dolphin's milk. They grow quickly. Dolphins can live for 40 years or more!

1 What is the main topic of this passage?

2 How do dolphins "talk" to each other?

- A They make clicking sounds.
- B They make whistling sounds.
- C They sing underwater.
- D They hum in air and water.

3 How are dolphins and people the same?

- A They spend most of their time swimming.
- B They travel far to find food.
- C They have live babies that drink their milk.
- D They can live on land as well as in the sea.

4 Part A

How do dolphins act when they follow a ship?

- A** They swim against the direction of the waves.
- B** They swim in the same direction as the waves.
- C** They eat little fish stirred up by the ship's waves.
- D** They hold on to the ship and let it carry them along.

Part B

What details best support the answer to Part A?
