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Units & Lessons

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 1

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Lesson 5: What is Main Topic and Key Details?

Focus Standard: RI.1.2

Additional Standards: RI.1.1, RI.1.5, RI.1.7, RI.1.10, SL.1.1, SL.1.2, L.1.2a

Estimated Time: 2-3 days

Text(s): *George Washington* by Caroline Gilpin

Resources and materials:

- Reading Response Journals for each student (e.g., spiral notebook, teacher-made journal from stapled paper)
- Handout 5.1: Main Topic and Key Details Anchor Chart Example
- Handout 5.2: Main Topic and Key Detail Graphic Organizer
- Handout 5.3: Student Progress Tracking Chart
- Handout 5.4: Teacher Retell a Text
- Handout 5.5: Student Retell a Text
- Three- or four-legged stool (an enlarged picture on chart paper will suffice)
- One label that reads “Main Topic”
- Three or four (depending on how many legs are on the stool) labels that read “Key Details”
- [Introduction to Reading Skills: Main Idea and Supporting Details](#) video
- Brainpop, Jr. “[Main Idea](#)” video (optional)

Lesson Target(s):

- Students will understand that:
 - Informational text has a main topic (what the text is mostly about).
 - The main topic is what the text is mostly about.
 - A key detail is a statement that provides more information about the main topic.
 - Readers use text and graphic features as sources to identify the main topic and think about key details.
 - Growing readers take notes using images and words. This helps them to think about what they have learned to generate a retelling on the topic.

- Students will be able to:
 - Identify the main topic or main idea.
 - Identify statements that support the main topic or main idea.
 - Retell the information in the text by giving the main topic (idea) and the key or supporting details in a text.
 - Participate in a discussion about the main topic in an effort to recall one or more details from the text.

Guiding Question(s):

- What are key details?
- What is a main topic?
- How can I use main topic key details from the main text and text features to retell the text?

Vocabulary

Academic Vocabulary:

- Main topic
- Key details
- Retell

Instructional Strategies for Academic Vocabulary:

- Introduce words with student-friendly definition and pictures
- Model how to use the words in writing/discussion
- Read and discuss the meaning of word in multiple contexts
- Students create pictures/symbols to represent words
- Students write/discuss using the words
- Students act out the words or attach movements to the words

In-ConTEXT Vocabulary:

- Based on the specific needs of your students, choose words/phrases that have clear context clues in the text.

Strategies for Teaching How to Determine Meaning from Context Clues:

- Use an [anchor chart](#) to model how to use context clues to determine the meaning of words

Direct Instruction Text Vocabulary:

- Review words placed on your word wall.

Instructional Strategies for Direct Instruction Text Vocabulary:

- Introduce words with student-friendly definition and pictures
- Model how to use the words in writing/discussion
- Read and discuss the meaning of word in multiple contexts
- Students create pictures/symbols to represent words

- Students write/discuss using the words
- Students act out the words or attach movements to the words

Instructional Plan

Anticipatory Set/Introduction to the Lesson:

Display a three- or four-legged stool as a visual reference to the main idea concept. Ask students what would happen if a leg was removed. Attach a label to the side of the seat, reading “Main Topic,” and make the analogy about the main topic being the overall part that holds the parts of the text together. Attach a label to each leg of the stool. Read “Key Detail” aloud as you point to each leg, and make the analogy about key details being the support of the main topic just like the legs of the stool are the support for the main part of the stool. Make sure students understand that though the stool may have three (or four) legs, there could be more or less key details.

Reveal **Handout 5.1: Main Topic and Key Details Anchor Chart Example**.

Understanding Lesson Purpose and Student Outcomes:

Use the **Handout 5.1: Main Topic and Key Details Anchor Chart Example** to explain to students the target skill for the day: using text features and the main parts of the text to identify key details and the main topic.

Tell students the main topic is one, two, or three words that state what the text is mostly about and the key details are the parts that give more information to support it, similar to the stool and its legs. Remind them that we have read *George Washington* several times. Have them remind you what our purposes for reading the text before have been. Students should respond with answers such as “to learn about text features,” “to learn about George Washington,” and “to practice using text features.”

Activity 1: Vocabulary Review

Review vocabulary posted on the word wall by using the “Instructional Strategies for Direct Instruction Text Vocabulary” suggested activities above or see this resource about [multisensory vocabulary instruction and activities](#).

Activity 2: Direct Instruction of Main Topic and Key Details

Display the Introduction to Reading Skills: Main Idea and Supporting Details video. Display the Brainpop, Jr. “Main Idea” video (optional).

Explain to students that they will all determine the main topic and, if possible, determine the main idea. The key details tell the reader the small bits of the most important information related to the main topic and the overall main idea. Explain to students that identifying the key details and information plus determining the topic first will help them to finally determine the main idea, which is a skill they will all practice next school year if not this school year.

For students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade level:

- Create an anchor chart for main ideas and key details, using *George Washington* as a guide. This visual will help struggling students connect the ideas to a known topic.

Activity 3: Read the Text in Small Groups

Provide [differentiated instruction](#) for students based on their needs for better understanding key details and the main topic in this text.

Students reread *George Washington* with a partner and have students complete differentiated activities.

Activity 4: Understand the Text

Project **Handout 5.2: Main Idea and Key Detail Graphic Organizer** (or draw on blank chart paper) and distribute the student copy.

Tell them if the main topic is written in a text, it can usually be found in the title or at the beginning. Read aloud or ask students to read the title and page 4. Ask them to think to themselves (and not to announce aloud) if there are one or more words that give the main topic of the whole text. Direct them to turn and talk to someone if they have an answer.

Using **Handout 5.2: Main Idea and Key Detail Graphic Organizer**, point to the main topic section and ask students what the whole text was about: Who or what is this book about? Students should guess *George Washington*. If not, redirect them to certain details, such as the title or information in the text and text features. Direct them to different small sections/parts of the text at a time and ask them what or who this text is focus upon.

Note: This is not the entire topic, but this is an important step for them determining the main topic.

Have students copy and complete this sentence onto their student copy. Then, ask these questions:

- How do you know/what helped you to know that this is the main topic? Students should respond with answers referring to the title and specific information in the text.
- How did the parts of the book help you determine the main topic?
- How did the text features help you determine the main topic?

Lead students into a discussion about the key details. As you read through the first pages of the text, model how to think aloud about whether information is a key detail or not: As you continue to read through the text, pause in places and have students do the same think aloud with a partner.

- ✓ While students discuss, circle the room and complete **Handout 5.3: Student Progress Tracking Chart**. Be sure to note any misconceptions or difficulty with identifying key details and discussing how they did so. Make plans about how to address misconceptions or difficulty, if they are present.

Have students share their decisions about key details. As students provide key details, ask them: How do we know if a detail is important? Key details responses should be about George Washington's life:

- George Washington stopped going to school at 11, but taught himself a lot.
- He married Martha Custis in 1759.
- Washington was an important General in the Revolutionary War.
- Washington became the first President of the United States.

Model how to record accurate responses in the key details section on **Handout 5.2: Main Idea and Key Detail Graphic Organizer**. Have students record the key detail responses on their copy as well.

Note: Students should write the key details in sentences, but avoid directing students to write "The key detail is ____." Instead, direct students to write sentences similar to how they are recorded in the text. This will prevent misconceptions about how to retell in verbal/written form later in the class and school year.

Explain to students that sometimes after examining key details, they may realize that they need to revise the main topic statement so that it is more specific. Revisit the main topic statement and ask students if they can think of one word that makes a more-specific statement about what the text is mostly about. Provide this list of words if students cannot think of a word:

George Washington's

- A. Dog
- B. Wife
- C. Battles
- D. Life
- E. Presidency

On the teacher copy of **Handout 5.2: Main Idea and Key Detail Graphic Organizer**, direct students write the main topic (George Washington's Life) in the main topic section.

Note: It does not have to be recorded as a complete sentence because students will be directed how to do that later in the lesson.

When finished, review the key details and discuss how they help us retell the important details of the book and support the main topic.

Activity 4: Respond to the Text

Tell students that a great way to really show that they have comprehended a text is to retell the parts of it and write it down.

Display and use **Handout 5.4: Teacher Retell a Text** to model for students how to retell what they have just read. Use the color-coded sections and the example provided to model how to retell the main topic and key details of a text.

Display on the top half of **Handout 5.4: Teacher Retell a Text** have students practice retelling *George Washington* verbally with a partner. Remind students to use what they recorded on **Handout 5.2** to help them. Have students share out responses. Guide them through completing the top part of **Handout 5.4**. Complete it on a displayed version while they complete it on the students' version.

See **Handout 5.5: Student Retell a Text**.

- ✓ Monitor students' progress and provide support as needed. Make note of common punctuation errors you see and use that data for the next activity. Determine for either writing skills or punctuation skills if [differentiated instruction](#) with specific teacher supports needs to follow.

For students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade level:

- Students can read in small groups with teacher guidance if needed.
- Students can work in pairs to remember features from the previous lesson.

Extensions and/or a more advanced text for students who perform/read well above grade level:

- Students justify answers with complete, developed statements by using evidence from the text.
- Students can read independently and make notes in their RR journals about what they've read.

Activity 5: Teaching and Applying Capitalization in Context

Return to the text and lead students through a discussion about how the author capitalized the dates and names of people. Using your data from your formative assessment during Activity 4, provide some additional examples of how to avoid common types of errors students make regarding capitalizing dates and names of people. Create an [anchor chart](#) for capitalizing dates and names of people. Have students complete a short game about capitalizing dates and names of people. For example, have students sitting in their desks or on the floor. Read a sentence that has names and dates that should be capitalized. Direct students to either stand up or sit down as they hear that word should be capitalized. If there is confusion about a word, have a classroom conversation about it. Have students repeat it for each sentence.

After the mini-lesson, save students correct any errors in their writing from Activity 4.

- ✓ Monitor how well students mastered L.1.2a in the context of their writing.

Reflection and Closing:

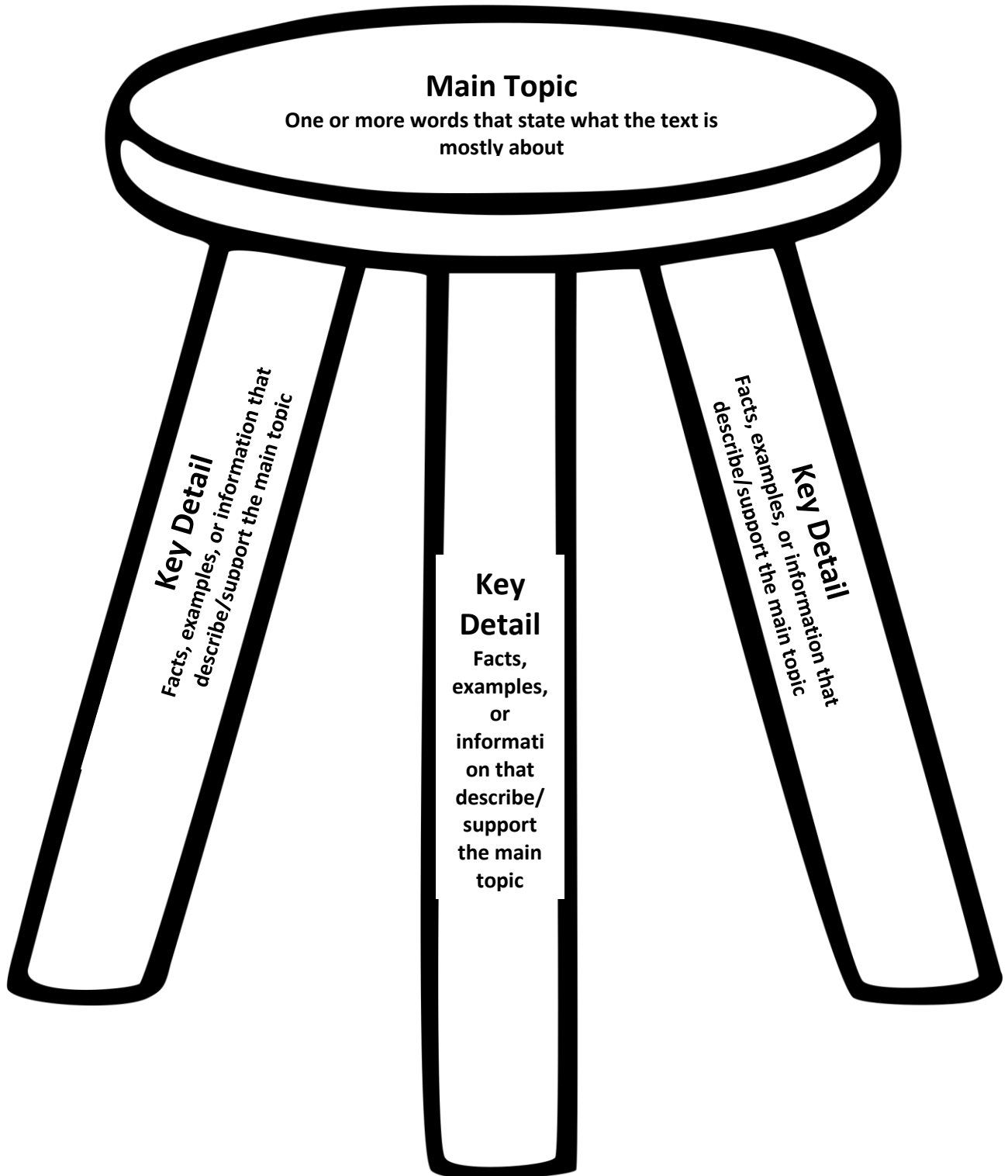
- ✓ Discussion: Have students answer the essential question in their RR journals: How does identifying the main topic and key details in the main text and in text features help readers understand the text better? (Example response: Key details and text features provide additional information the support the main topic, what the text is about.)

Homework

Options:

- After reading a book, have students sum up the book in one or two sentences. Have students decide what the entire story was about. Then have students give details that support the main topic of the story.
- For longer books, have students tell the main topic and key details in each chapter, rather than the entire book.
- See page 11 of the [Family Guide for Student Success](#).

Handout 5.1: Main Topic and Key Details Anchor Chart Example



Handout 5.2: Main Topic and Key Details Graphic Organizer

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Main Topic				
Key Detail		Key Detail		Key Detail

Handout 5.3: Student Progress Tracking Chart

Directions:

1. Write your students' names in the first column.
2. In the second column, place the following symbols to represent students' understanding of the lesson target:
 - A check mark to represent at-grade-level understanding.
 - A zero (0) to represent no understanding.
 - A plus sign (+) to represent above-grade-level understanding.

Lesson Targets:		
1. Students will understand that a key detail is a statement that provides more information about the main topic.		
2. Students will be able to		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify statements that support the main topic or main idea; and • participate in a discussion about the main topic in an effort to recall one or more details from the text. 		
Student Name	Target 1	Target 2
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.
11.	11.	11.
12.	12.	12.
13.	13.	13.
14.	14.	14.
15.	15.	15.
16.	16.	16.

Handout 5.4: Teacher Retell a Text

Topic Sentence: The text _____ provides a lot of information about _____.

Key Detail 1:

Key Detail 2:

Key Detail 3 (optional):

Closing Sentence:

Here is an example from an unrelated text:

The book ***A Tree Is a Plant*** tells a lot about **trees**. A tree is the biggest plant that grows. Most trees grow from seeds. We can see most of the tree, but we cannot see the roots because they are underground. **Trees are amazing!**

Handout 5.5: Student Retell a Text

Name: _____

Topic Sentence: The text _____ provides a lot of information about _____.

Key Detail 1:

Key Detail 2:

Key Detail 3 (optional):

Closing Sentence:

For training or questions regarding this unit,
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