

**TOP SECRET**

# MAIN IDEA DETECTIVE FILES



SOLVE THE CASE BY FINDING THE MAIN IDEA!



# Teacher Directions

## Objective:

Students will identify the main idea of a text and gather key details that support it. Students will use evidence from the text to solve the case by determining the main idea and explaining how the details support it.

This activity can be used with any text focusing on main idea and supporting details.

## Main Idea Detective Files

### Materials:

- Main Idea Detective Files templates
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Large folder or construction paper (optional)



### Before Reading:

- Introduce the concept of main idea and supporting details.
- Explain that the main idea is what the text is mostly about.
- Share that details are clues from the text that help us understand and prove the main idea.
- Show students the detective file and explain their job is to solve the case!

### After Reading:

- Students write the main idea on the file tab.
  - Students fill in the evidence cards with details from the text.
  - Students glue the evidence cards inside their detective folder.
  - Review the main idea and how the details support it.
- Students may work independently, with a partner, or in small groups.

### During Reading:

Pause throughout the reading to discuss:

- What is happening in the text?
- What details are important?
- How might these details help us find the main idea?

Encourage students to think like detectives and collect strong clues from the text.

### Discussion Questions:

- What is the text mostly about?
- What details support this idea?
- Which detail is most important? Why?
- How do the details help prove the main idea?

### Extension Ideas:



Compare two texts and identify the main idea of each.



Have students create their own detective file for another text.



Write a summary using the main idea and key details.



Challenge students to find the main idea of longer passages or nonfiction texts.

### Teacher Tip:

Model how to find the main idea using think-alouds. Encourage students to underline or highlight details as they read. Remind students that strong detectives look for the most important clues!



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## MAIN IDEA DETECTIVE FILES

Detective: Bryan



**EVIDENCE:**

First, the caterpillar hatches from a tiny egg.



**EVIDENCE:**

Then, he builds a cocoon around himself and stays inside for more than 2 weeks.



**THE MAIN IDEA IS...**



The Very Hungry Caterpillar grows and changes until he becomes a beautiful butterfly.



**EVIDENCE:**

Next, he eats lots of food everyday.



**EVIDENCE:**

Finally, he comes out as a beautiful butterfly with bright, colorful wings!



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# MAIN IDEA DETECTIVE FILES

Detective: \_\_\_\_\_



✂ Cut on the dashed lines.

**THE MAIN IDEA IS...**

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**EVIDENCE:**

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**EVIDENCE:**

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**EVIDENCE:**

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**EVIDENCE:**

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