

Retelling a Story Printables

Does your child need practice summarizing and retelling stories? Give her these worksheets to practice identifying main ideas, themes, and key details. These skills will give her the foundation to effectively and accurately retell stories without missing the big picture.

Table of Contents

Main Idea of a Story
Identify the Main Idea
Reading Comprehension: Dr. Dolittle
Paraphrasing Practice
Paraphrasing: Annie Oakley
Super Story Retelling
Story of the Frog Prince
Retell the Story
Reading Comprehension: Wizard of Oz
Retell a Story

FIND THE MAIN IDEA



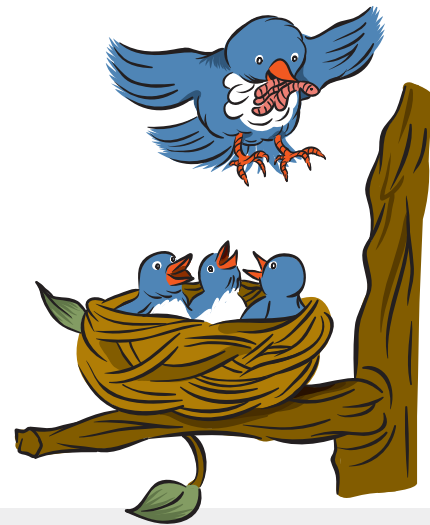
The **main idea** is the most important idea of a story or paragraph. The main idea tells what the story or paragraph is mostly about. Read the stories below carefully and circle the correct main idea of each.

Susie threw the Frisbee for Pete. The Frisbee landed in a tall tree. It was stuck in the branches. Pete barked and barked. Then a gust of wind blew the Frisbee loose. Pete finally caught the Frisbee. He stopped barking and started wagging his tail instead.

What is the main idea?

1. Pete barks at squirrels in the tree
2. Pete is excited to play fetch with his toy.

The three little birds patiently waited for their mom to return with lunch. Their stomachs grumbled as they thought about their favorite food: worms! It was a windy day so it took their mom longer to return. They played a game to keep their minds off of lunch. When their mom returned, they quickly ate up the worms.



What is the main idea?

1. The little birds were very hungry.
2. It was a windy day.



Scott was having a very busy day. He needed to write a report, answer the phone and check his email. His boss came by and dropped off some papers. At noon, he quickly ate his lunch. When he returned to his desk he checked his messages and got back to work.

What is the main idea?

1. Scott ate his lunch after work.
2. Scott is having a very busy day at work.

ADVERTISING

Irwin is having a hard time coming up with titles for his ads. You explain to him that to write a good title, he should read the whole ad, and then decide what it is all about. Irwin should then come up with a title that describes the main idea.

Directions: Help Irwin come up with a title for each of his ads below.

Example: We need three bedrooms and at least two bathrooms. There should be yard space for two dogs. We need a one story house.

HOUSE NEEDED

1. The car is a 2010 Honda Accord, and it is in excellent condition. I'm asking for \$10,500, or best offer.

2. The puppies are 6 weeks old, German Shepherds, and will be ready to leave their mother in two weeks. There are 2 boys and 3 girls. Both parents have good health records, and you are welcome to meet them.

3. I'm an experienced painter. I do free estimates, and charge \$10 a hour when I start painting. I can do houses of all sizes, inside and out.

4. I have a Poodle and a Labrador who need to be walked two times a day. They are both very friendly dogs, and walk well on the leash. I'm willing to pay \$8 an hour.

5. Saturday 9 am – 1 pm. We will be selling clothes, yard equipment, decorations, and house items. Our address is 12345 Light Way, Santee.

The Story of Doctor Dolittle

by Hugh Lofting

Doctor John Dolittle has an amazing ability. He is able to talk with animals and understand their language. In this selection from *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, Doctor Dolittle has traveled to Africa to help sick animals in the monkey kingdom.

The Eighth Chapter: The Leader of the Lions

John Dolittle now became dreadfully, awfully busy. He found hundreds and thousands of monkeys sick—gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, dog-faced baboons, marmosets, gray monkeys, red ones—all kinds. And many had died.

The first thing he did was to separate the sick ones from the well ones. Then he got Chee-Chee and his cousin to build him a little house of grass. The next thing: he made all the monkeys who were still well come and be vaccinated.

And for three days and three nights the monkeys kept coming from the jungles and the valleys and the hills to the little house of grass, where the Doctor sat all day and all night, vaccinating and vaccinating.

But so many were sick, there were not enough well ones to do the nursing. So he sent messages to the other animals, like the lions and the leopards and the antelopes, to come and help with the nursing.

But the Leader of the Lions was a very proud creature. And when he came to the Doctor's big house full of beds he seemed angry and scornful.

"Do you dare to ask me, Sir?" he said, glaring at the Doctor. "Do you dare to ask me—ME, THE KING OF BEASTS, to wait on a lot of dirty monkeys? Why, I wouldn't even eat them between meals!"

Although the lion looked very terrible, the Doctor tried hard not to seem afraid of him.

"I didn't ask you to eat them," he said quietly. "And besides, they're not dirty. They've all had a bath this morning. YOUR coat looks as though it needed brushing—badly. Now listen, and I'll tell you something: the day may come when the lions get sick. And if you don't help the other animals now, the lions may find themselves left all alone when THEY are in trouble. That often happens to proud people."

"The lions are never IN trouble—they only MAKE trouble," said the Leader, turning up his nose. And he stalked away into the jungle, feeling he had been rather smart and clever.



What Happened?

What was the first thing Doctor Dolittle did?

What did Doctor Dolittle want the lions to do?

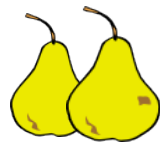
What does Doctor Dolittle say happens to proud people?

Name _____

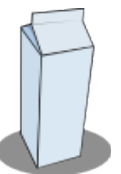
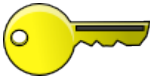
Date _____

Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase something, you say the same thing in fewer words. Read the paragraph below, then answer the questions. Using your answers, write a short summary paraphrasing what you read.



One day, my mother asked me to go to the store to buy three apples, two pears, a gallon of whole milk, a bunch of carrots and a head of lettuce. She gave me a ten dollar bill, four ones and three quarters. I hopped on my bicycle, put on my helmet and buckled it under my chin, and pedaled for one mile until I got to the store. When I got to the store, I parked my bike on the bike rack and locked it using my red bike lock and the key on my keychain that I keep in my pocket which has an "A" on it for my name, Alex. I took off my helmet and walked into the store. I walked around the store, up and down each aisle, and picked up all of the things my mom asked me to buy. When the cashier rang up my sale, he told me it would cost \$11.22. I handed him the ten dollar bill, one dollar bill and one quarter and put the other three ones, two quarters, and three cents change in my pocket. I took the bag and went outside. I strapped the bag to the back of my bike, took out my key and unlocked the red bike lock using the key on my keychain with the "A" on it. Then I put on my helmet and pedaled for one mile back to my house. When I got to my house, my mother was waiting in the driveway. I got off my bike and handed her three ones, two quarters and three cents and the bag of groceries. She said "Thank You, Alex," and gave me a hug. I brought my bike into the garage, took off my helmet and leaned my bike against the wall. Then I opened the door to my house, walked into the kitchen and poured myself a glass of orange juice.



Who is the main character? _____ Where did he go? _____

Why did he go? _____ How did he get there? _____

What would be a good title for this story? _____

Retell this story in one sentence:



THE SUPER SOAKER SAGA!

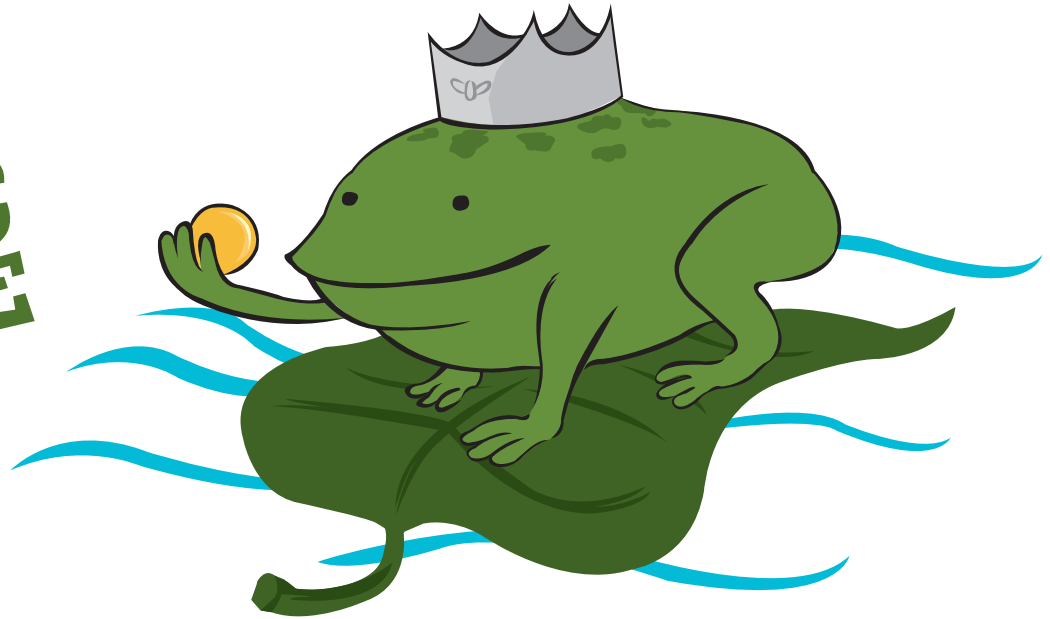
This early August afternoon was particularly hot. The sun had toasted the entire neighborhood, and all the lawns were now a light brown. Mason and his sister Madison were hiding beneath the shade of the canopy over their front porch.

A bright sight caught their eyes from where they sat. Their friend Zachary was strolling up the lane with a multi-colored object. What Zachary held was the H2O Blaster 3000, the most hip and advanced water super soaker of the day. They watched with envious eyes as Zach began to spray the thirsty lawns. He laughed with great joy, for with each press of the trigger, a miraculous fountain of cold water sprouted into the air. Much of the blast fell upon him. Mason and Madison wished to feel cool too—super cool!

In your own words, retell the story of Mason, Madison and Zachary.

What do you think happened next? _____

THE FROG PRINCE



In a faraway land, a princess was enjoying the cool evening breeze outside her family's castle. She had with her a small golden ball, which she loved to play with as a way to relax. On one particular toss, she threw it so high in the air that she lost track of it, and the ball went rolling towards a spring. The ball plopped into the water and quickly sank out of sight. The princess began sobbing in despair, and wished for her toy to return to her.

Then, a small frog popped out from the spring. "What's wrong beautiful princess?" asked the frog. The princess wiped away her tears and said, "My favorite golden ball is gone, and nothing I do will bring it back." The frog tried his best to comfort the princess, and assured her that he could retrieve the ball if she would grant him just one favor. "Anything! I will give you all my jewels and handfuls of gold!" exclaimed the princess. The frog explained that he had no need for riches, and only wanted a simple kiss from her in return. The thought of kissing a slimy frog made the princess shudder, but in the end she agreed, as she really loved her golden ball. Without much effort, the agile frog jumped back into the spring and located the golden ball. In a blink of an eye the frog had retrieved the ball and returned it to the princess. Keeping her word, the princess kissed the frog. Suddenly, the ground began to rumble and a haze of smoke filled the air. To the princess's surprise, the frog was really a handsome prince trapped by an evil witch's curse. Her kiss had freed the prince from a lifetime of pain and misery. The prince and princess became great friends, and eventually wed in a beautiful ceremony by the spring.



The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

by L. Frank Baum



“There’s a cyclone coming, Em,” Uncle Henry called to his wife. “I’ll go look after the stock.” Then he ran toward the sheds where the cows and horses were kept.

Aunt Em dropped her work and came to the door. One glance told her of the danger close at hand.

“Quick, Dorothy!” she screamed. “Run for the cellar!”

Toto jumped out of Dorothy’s arms and hid under the bed, and the girl started to get him. Aunt Em, badly frightened, threw open the trap door in the floor and climbed down the ladder into the small, dark hole. Dorothy caught Toto at last and started to follow her aunt. When she was halfway across the room there came a great shriek from the wind, and the house shook so hard that she lost her footing and sat down suddenly upon the floor.

Then a strange thing happened. The house whirled around two or three times and rose slowly through the air. Dorothy felt as if she were going up in a balloon.

In the middle of a cyclone the air is generally still, but the great pressure of the wind on every side of the house raised it up higher and higher, until it was at the very top of the cyclone; and there it remained and was carried miles and miles away as easily as you could carry a feather.

It was very dark, and the wind howled horribly around her, but Dorothy found she was riding quite easily. She felt as if she were being rocked gently, like a baby in a cradle.

Toto did not like it. He ran about the room, now here, now there, barking loudly; but Dorothy sat quite still on the floor and waited to see what would happen.



Who Was It?

Circle the correct answer.

1. Who went to check the cows and horses?

- A. Dorothy B. Toto
C. Uncle Henry D. Auntie Em

2. Who hid under the bed?

- A. Dorothy B. Toto
C. Uncle Henry D. Auntie Em

3. Who sat still on the floor?

- A. Dorothy B. Toto
C. Uncle Henry D. Auntie Em

Sequence of Events

The events of the story are mixed up. Put them in the correct order.

Toto ran around the room barking. _____

The house rose into the air. _____

Uncle Henry saw the cyclone. _____

The cyclone hit the house. _____

Dorothy caught Toto. _____

Auntie Em went into the cellar. _____

Answer Sheets

Retelling a Story Printables

Main Idea of a Story

Identify the Main Idea

Reading Comprehension: Dr. Dolittle

Paraphrasing Practice

Reading Comprehension: Wizard of Oz

FIND THE MAIN IDEA



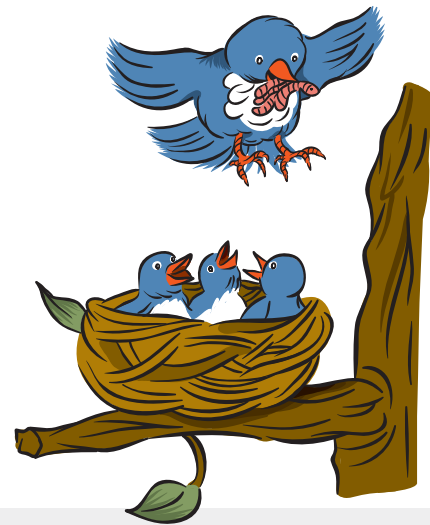
The **main idea** is the most important idea of a story or paragraph. The main idea tells what the story or paragraph is mostly about. Read the stories below carefully and circle the correct main idea of each.

Susie threw the Frisbee for Pete. The Frisbee landed in a tall tree. It was stuck in the branches. Pete barked and barked. Then a gust of wind blew the Frisbee loose. Pete finally caught the Frisbee. He stopped barking and started wagging his tail instead.

What is the main idea?

1. Pete barks at squirrels in the tree
2. Pete is excited to play fetch with his toy.

The three little birds patiently waited for their mom to return with lunch. Their stomachs grumbled as they thought about their favorite food: worms! It was a windy day so it took their mom longer to return. They played a game to keep their minds off of lunch. When their mom returned, they quickly ate up the worms.



What is the main idea?

1. The little birds were very hungry.
2. It was a windy day.



Scott was having a very busy day. He needed to write a report, answer the phone and check his email. His boss came by and dropped off some papers. At noon, he quickly ate his lunch. When he returned to his desk he checked his messages and got back to work.

What is the main idea?

1. Scott ate his lunch after work.
2. Scott is having a very busy day at work.

ADVERTISING

Variations are completely acceptable as long as they still have something to do with the main idea.

Irwin is having a hard time coming up with titles for his ads. You explain to him that to write a good title, he should read the whole ad, and then decide what it is all about. Irwin should then come up with a title that describes the main idea.

Directions: Help Irwin come up with a title for each of his ads below.

Example: We need three bedrooms and at least two bathrooms. There should be yard space for two dogs. We need a one story house.

HOUSE NEEDED

1. The car is a 2010 Honda Accord, and it is in excellent condition. I'm asking for \$10,500, or best offer.

CAR FOR SALE

2. The puppies are 6 weeks old, German Shepherds, and will be ready to leave their mother in two weeks. There are 2 boys and 3 girls. Both parents have good health records, and you are welcome to meet them.

FREE PUPPIES

3. I'm an experienced painter. I do free estimates, and charge \$10 a hour when I start painting. I can do houses of all sizes, inside and out.

DO YOU NEED A PAINTER?

4. I have a Poodle and a Labrador who need to be walked two times a day. They are both very friendly dogs, and walk well on the leash. I'm willing to pay \$8 an hour.

DOG WALKER NEEDED

5. Saturday 9 am – 1 pm. We will be selling clothes, yard equipment, decorations, and house items. Our address is 12345 Light Way, Santee.

GARAGE SALE!

The Story of Doctor Dolittle

by Hugh Lofting

Doctor John Dolittle has an amazing ability. He is able to talk with animals and understand their language. In this selection from *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*, Doctor Dolittle has traveled to Africa to help sick animals in the monkey kingdom.

The Eighth Chapter: The Leader of the Lions

John Dolittle now became dreadfully, awfully busy. He found hundreds and thousands of monkeys sick—gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, dog-faced baboons, marmosets, gray monkeys, red ones—all kinds. And many had died.

The first thing he did was to separate the sick ones from the well ones. Then he got Chee-Chee and his cousin to build him a little house of grass. The next thing: he made all the monkeys who were still well come and be vaccinated.

And for three days and three nights the monkeys kept coming from the jungles and the valleys and the hills to the little house of grass, where the Doctor sat all day and all night, vaccinating and vaccinating.

But so many were sick, there were not enough well ones to do the nursing. So he sent messages to the other animals, like the lions and the leopards and the antelopes, to come and help with the nursing.

But the Leader of the Lions was a very proud creature. And when he came to the Doctor's big house full of beds he seemed angry and scornful.

"Do you dare to ask me, Sir?" he said, glaring at the Doctor. "Do you dare to ask me—ME, THE KING OF BEASTS, to wait on a lot of dirty monkeys? Why, I wouldn't even eat them between meals!"

Although the lion looked very terrible, the

"I didn't ask you to eat them," he said quietly. "And besides, they're not dirty. They've all had a bath this morning. YOUR coat looks as though it needed brushing—badly. Now listen, and I'll tell you something: the day may come when the lions get sick. And if you don't help the other animals now, the lions may find themselves left all alone when THEY are in trouble. That often happens to proud people."

"The lions are never IN trouble—they only MAKE trouble," said the Leader, turning up his nose. And he stalked away into the jungle, feeling he had been rather smart and clever.



What Happened?

What was the first thing Doctor Dolittle did?

He separated the sick monkeys from the well ones.

What did Doctor Dolittle want the lions to do?

He wanted them to help with nursing the monkeys

What does Doctor Dolittle say happens to proud people?

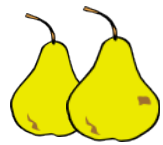
They are often left all alone when

Name _____

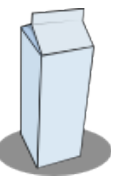
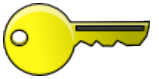
Date _____

Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase something, you say the same thing in fewer words. Read the paragraph below, then answer the questions. Using your answers, write a short summary paraphrasing what you read.



One day, my mother asked me to go to the store to buy three apples, two pears, a gallon of whole milk, a bunch of carrots and a head of lettuce. She gave me a ten dollar bill, four ones and three quarters. I hopped on my bicycle, put on my helmet and buckled it under my chin, and pedaled for one mile until I got to the store. When I got to the store, I parked my bike on the bike rack and locked it using my red bike lock and the key on my keychain that I keep in my pocket which has an "A" on it for my name, Alex. I took off my helmet and walked into the store. I walked around the store, up and down each aisle, and picked up all of the things my mom asked me to buy. When the cashier rang up my sale, he told me it would cost \$11.22. I handed him the ten dollar bill, one dollar bill and one quarter and put the other three ones, two quarters, and three cents change in my pocket. I took the bag and went outside. I strapped the bag to the back of my bike, took out my key and unlocked the red bike lock using the key on my keychain with the "A" on it. Then I put on my helmet and pedaled for one mile back to my house. When I got to my house, my mother was waiting in the driveway. I got off my bike and handed her three ones, two quarters and three cents and the bag of groceries. She said "Thank You, Alex," and gave me a hug. I brought my bike into the garage, took off my helmet and leaned my bike against the wall. Then I opened the door to my house, walked into the kitchen and poured myself a glass of orange juice.



Who is the main character? ALEX Where did he go? STORE

Why did he go? MOTHER ASKED How did he get there? BIKE

What would be a good title for this story? Alex Goes on an Errand

Retell this story in one sentence:

 Alex biked to the store to buy groceries for his mother.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

by L. Frank Baum



“There’s a cyclone coming, Em,” Uncle Henry called to his wife. “I’ll go look after the stock.” Then he ran toward the sheds where the cows and horses were kept.

Aunt Em dropped her work and came to the door. One glance told her of the danger close at hand.

“Quick, Dorothy!” she screamed. “Run for the cellar!”

Toto jumped out of Dorothy’s arms and hid under the bed, and the girl started to get him. Aunt Em, badly frightened, threw open the trap door in the floor and climbed down the ladder into the small, dark hole. Dorothy caught Toto at last and started to follow her aunt. When she was halfway across the room there came a great shriek from the wind, and the house shook so hard that she lost her footing and sat down suddenly upon the floor.

Then a strange thing happened. The house whirled around two or three times and rose slowly through the air. Dorothy felt as if she were going up in a balloon.

In the middle of a cyclone the air is generally still, but the great pressure of the wind on every side of the house raised it up higher and higher, until it was at the very top of the cyclone; and there it remained and was carried miles and miles away as easily as you could carry a feather.

It was very dark, and the wind howled horribly around her, but Dorothy found she was riding quite easily. She felt as if she were being rocked gently, like a baby in a cradle.

Toto did not like it. He ran about the room, now here, now there, barking loudly; but Dorothy sat quite still on the floor and waited to see what would happen.



Who Was It?

Circle the correct answer.

1. Who went to check the cows and horses?

- A. Dorothy B. Toto
C. Uncle Henry D. Auntie Em

2. Who hid under the bed?

- A. Dorothy B. Toto
C. Uncle Henry D. Auntie Em

3. Who sat still on the floor?

- A. Dorothy B. Toto
C. Uncle Henry D. Auntie Em

Sequence of Events

The events of the story are mixed up. Put them in the correct order.

Toto ran around the room barking. 6

The house rose into the air. 5

Uncle Henry saw the cyclone. 1

The cyclone hit the house. 4

Dorothy caught Toto. 3

Auntie Em went into the cellar. 2