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# Lesson Plan: The Main Idea Detective Agency

## Materials Needed:

- A "Top Secret" manila folder (or any folder)
- Paper and pencils/pens
- Colored pencils or markers
- A magnifying glass (optional, but fun!)
- Three short, high-interest paragraphs printed out (Examples provided below)
- "Case File" Graphic Organizer (A sheet of paper with a large box at the top labeled "The Big Idea (The Case)" and three smaller boxes below it labeled "The Clues (Supporting Details)")

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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Define "main idea" as the most important point of a text.
- Define "supporting details" as the facts or examples that prove the main idea.
- Identify the main idea and at least three supporting details in a short paragraph.
- Create a new paragraph with a clear main idea and strong, relevant supporting details.

## Alignment with Standards

This lesson aligns with Common Core ELA Standards for Grade 5, particularly **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2**: Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

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## Lesson Activities & Procedure

### Part 1: The Detective Briefing (5 minutes)

**Goal:** Introduce the concept using a fun analogy.

1. **Hook:** Present the student with the "Top Secret" folder. Say, "Welcome, Detective! Your mission today is to learn how to crack any case. In reading, every paragraph has a 'case' to solve. We call this the **Main Idea**. The main idea is the big mystery—what is this whole thing about?"
2. **Introduce Supporting Details:** "To solve the case, you need clues. In reading, we call these **Supporting Details**. These are the facts, evidence, and examples that prove the main idea is true. A main idea without supporting details is just a guess, not a solved case!"

### Part 2: Training Mission - Modeling the Skill (10 minutes)

**Goal:** To model how to find the main idea and supporting details.

1. **I Do (Modeling):** Take out the first sample paragraph ("Case File #1: The Sloth"). Read it

aloud with the student.

2. **Think Aloud:** "Okay, Detective, let's solve this first case together. I'll show you my thinking process."
  - "First, I'm asking myself, 'What is the *one thing* the author wants me to know?' After reading this, it seems like the author is telling me that sloths are built to save energy. That sounds like our **Main Idea**."
  - "Now, I need to find the clues, the **Supporting Details**, that prove this. I'll use my magnifying glass to look for evidence."
    - "Clue #1: It says they sleep for up to 15 hours a day. That saves energy."
    - "Clue #2: Their diet of leaves is hard to digest, so a slow metabolism helps."
    - "Clue #3: It even says algae grows on their fur because they move so slowly. That's great proof!"
3. **Record:** Fill out a "Case File" graphic organizer together on a piece of paper, writing the main idea in the top box and the three clues in the boxes below.

### Part 3: First Solo Case - Guided & Independent Practice (15 minutes)

**Goal:** Allow the student to practice the skill with support and then independently.

1. **We Do (Guided Practice):** Hand the student "Case File #2: The Video Game." Ask them to read it. Work together to identify the main idea and the supporting details (clues). Let the student take the lead in identifying the clues. They can fill out a new "Case File" graphic organizer.
2. **You Do (Independent Practice):** Hand the student "Case File #3: The Deep Sea." Say, "Alright, Detective. You've proven yourself. It's time for your first solo case. Read this file and fill out the graphic organizer on your own. Let me know when you've cracked the case."
3. **Review:** Once the student is finished, review their work. Ask questions like, "How did you know that was the main idea?" and "How does this clue connect back to your main idea?" This checks for understanding.

### Part 4: Create Your Own Case File - Creative Application (15 minutes)

**Goal:** To apply the learned skills creatively by producing original work.

1. **The Challenge:** "Excellent work, Detective. For your final test, you must create your own case file for me to solve. You are now the author!"
2. **Instructions:** "Choose any topic you love—dogs, Minecraft, Jupiter, baking cookies, anything! Your job is to write one paragraph about it. Your paragraph must have a clear **Main Idea** (the case) and at least three strong **Supporting Details** (the clues) to prove it."
3. **Creation Time:** Give the student time to choose a topic, think of a main idea, and write their paragraph on a clean sheet of paper. Encourage them to decorate it like a real case file.
4. **Sharing and Assessment:** The student presents their "Case File" to you. As the "new detective," you read it and try to identify the main idea and supporting details. This provides a fun, low-pressure way to assess their mastery of the concept.

## Differentiation & Extension

- **For Support:** In Part 3, provide a paragraph where the first sentence is clearly the main idea. Offer sentence starters for the creative writing part, such as "My main idea is that \_\_\_\_\_. One reason is \_\_\_\_\_."
- **For a Challenge:** Provide a paragraph where the main idea is implied, not directly stated, requiring the student to infer the main point. For the creative project, ask them to write a "case file" with two paragraphs, each having its own main idea that supports a larger, overarching theme.

## Sample Paragraphs ("Case Files")

### Case File #1: The Sloth

The three-toed sloth is one of the slowest and seemingly laziest creatures in the world. Everything about a sloth is designed to save energy. Sloths spend most of their lives in trees, and they often sleep for up to 15 hours every day. Their diet of tough leaves is difficult to digest, so a very slow metabolism helps them get every possible nutrient. Sloths move so slowly and so rarely that algae can actually grow on their fur, which helps them camouflage in the leafy trees.

### Case File #2: The Video Game

Playing the video game "Stardew Valley" can be a very relaxing experience. The game does not have intense battles or stressful time limits like many other games do. Instead, players spend their time completing peaceful tasks like planting crops, fishing in the river, and raising animals. The game's music is soft and calming, and the pixelated art style is charming and simple. Players can also build friendships with the townspeople, giving the game a friendly and positive feeling.

### Case File #3: The Deep Sea

The deepest parts of the ocean are home to some of the strangest animals on Earth. Because there is no sunlight, many creatures have developed bioluminescence, which means they can produce their own light to attract prey or find mates. For example, the anglerfish uses a glowing lure on its head to trick smaller fish into coming close. The pressure is also immense, so animals like the blobfish have gelatinous bodies with no real skeleton to avoid being crushed. Food is scarce, so creatures like the gulper eel have giant mouths that allow them to swallow prey much larger than themselves.

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