



Main idea

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Practice

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The **main idea** of a paragraph is what the whole paragraph is *mostly about*.  
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As you read Uncle Ben's letter, think about the **main idea** of each paragraph.

Marco got a letter from his Uncle Ben, the airplane pilot. Uncle Ben has traveled all over the world.

Dear Marco,

I have to tell you about my visit to Rome. I don't think there is any place like it in the world. It was the center of the ancient Roman Empire. Today, thousand-year old structures still sit side-by-side with modern buildings. Maybe this is why Rome is known as the "Eternal City." I think that is a good description of the capital city of Italy.

The Colosseum is right in the middle of the city. It is an enormous outdoor circular arena built of stone. The ancient Romans held all kind of public events there. It had seats for 50,000 people. It had 80 entrances, so that crowds could get in and out quickly. It is mostly in ruins now.

Many of the young people of Rome get around on colorful motor-scooters. This makes a lot of sense to me, because the traffic in the streets is crazy! Most evenings, the young people gather at an ancient structure known as the Spanish Steps. Hundreds of the scooters line the street, as their owners go off to visit with their friends. The Spanish Steps have been a gathering place for centuries. Today, I'm sure it doesn't hurt that right around the corner there is an American fast-food hamburger drive-through.

There are many ancient fountains in Rome. One of the most famous is the Trevi Fountain. It was probably made even more famous by a popular American movie about it, called "Three Coins in a Fountain." People say that if you make a wish and toss a coin into this fountain, your wish will be granted. Of course I tossed my coin in, even though I don't really believe in magic fountains.

Yours truly,
Uncle Ben

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
 - A. Uncle Ben visited Rome.
 - B. Today, there are many thousand-year old structures in Rome.
 - C. Rome is known as the “Eternal City.”
 - D. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
 - A. The Colosseum is an enormous outdoor circular arena.
 - B. The Colosseum is right in the middle of the city.
 - C. The Colosseum had seats for 50,000 people.
 - D. The Colosseum is mostly in ruins now.

3. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
 - A. The traffic in Rome is crazy.
 - B. Young people in Rome gather at the Spanish Steps in the evenings.
 - C. Hundreds of scooters line the street in front of the Spanish Steps.
 - D. There is an American fast-food hamburger drive-through near the Spanish Steps.

4. What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
 - A. The Trevi Fountain is the most famous fountain in Rome.
 - B. There was an American movie about the Trevi Fountain.
 - C. People say if you make a wish and toss a coin into the Trevi Fountain, your wish will be granted.
 - D. Uncle Ben doesn't believe in magic fountains.

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5. What is the main idea of Uncle Ben's letter?
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## Answer Key

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. Accept any reasonable response, such as Uncle Ben's visit to Rome.