

ENG925R

Reading Express



Objectives

Discuss finding the main idea (part 1)

Take Main Idea Test 1

Reading Comprehension

Activity & Discussion

College's Priceless Value

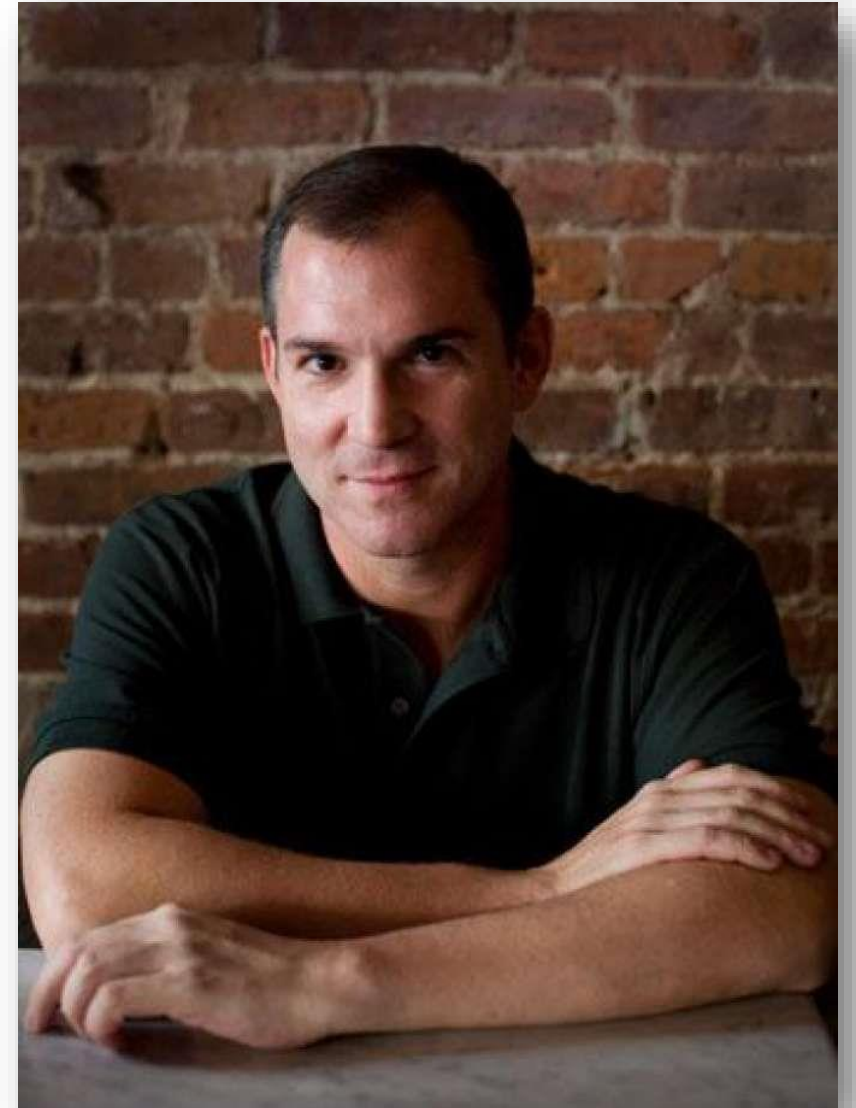
- If you haven't emailed me your completed Homework, do so now!
- Let's talk about the synonyms of each term!

praised
obviously
methods of measurement
single
life-changing

heartache
flexible
weak
dismiss
steadily
clear explanation
wide-ranging

scorn
achievement
puzzled
sudden discovery
like-minded group

variety
crucial
goldmine
excitement
practicality
paying for



Vocabulary, Part 1 (synonyms)

- praised
- exalted
- scorn
- disdain
- obviously
- bluntly
- achievement
- acquisition
- methods of measurement
- metrics
- puzzled
- stumped
- single
- discrete
- sudden discovery
- eureka
- life-changing
- transformative
- like-minded group
- chorus

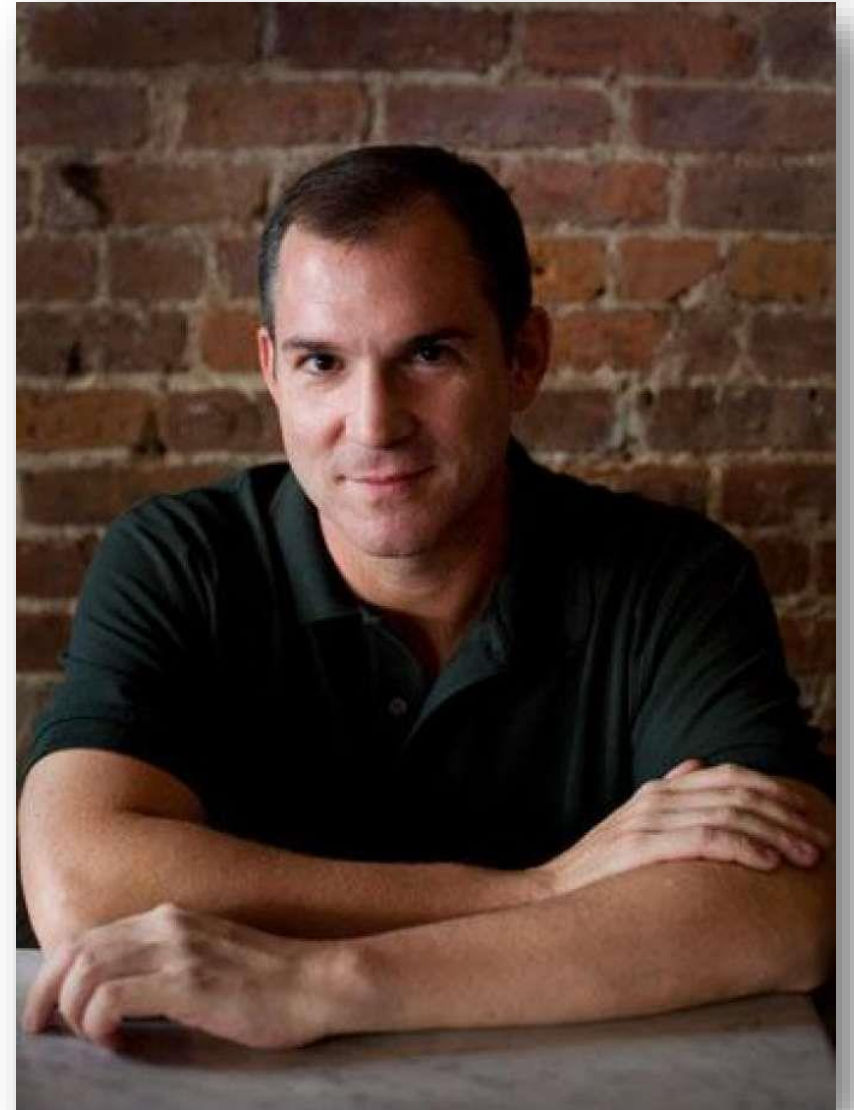
Vocabulary, Part 2 (synonyms)

- Heartache
- **anguish**
- Variety
- **eclectic**
- Flexible
- **nimble**
- Crucial
- **pivotal**
- Weak
- **tenuous**
- Goldmine
- **quarry**
- dismiss
- **belittle**
- Excitement
- **fervor**
- Steadily
- **reliably**
- Practicality
- **utility**
- clear explanation
- **illumination**
- paying for
- **subsidizing**
- wide-ranging
- **spectrum**

College's Priceless Value

Let's talk about the Comprehension Questions!

- What's the article about? (Don't explain every detail—imagine you have to text the answer to me—be brief!)
- Michael Roth wrote a book about how college has been viewed in American history. What did Thomas Jefferson think about it? (Don't just copy and paste from the article!)
- How about Benjamin Franklin? (Again, don't just copy!)
- The article's author states that three other modern politicians also had opinions about higher education. Who were they and what did they say/think? (Again, don't just copy!)
- What is your opinion on the role of college in American society?



Main Ideas, Part 1

Activity & Discussion

Topic versus Main Idea



- A **topic** can usually be covered in one or two words.
- A **main idea** is the writer's main point *about* the topic.
- For example, "School bullies have been around as long as there have been schools. Studies reveal several reasons why some children become bullies."
- What do you think the topic is?
 - Bullies
- So, what do you think the main idea is?
 - Studies reveal several reasons why some children become bullies.

How Can I Locate the Main Idea?

- The author can locate the **main idea** in different places within a paragraph.
- The main idea is usually a sentence, and it is usually the first sentence (but not always).
- The writer then uses the rest of the paragraph to support the main idea with **details**.





How Can I Locate the Main Idea?

- Let's use the paragraph below as an example. First find the **topic**, then look for the **main idea**.

Summer is a wonderful time to spend at West Beach. It is a beach with light-colored, soft sand. The coastline goes on for a long way and many people enjoy walking along it. Children like to play in the surf and walk along the rocks that are visible at low tide. This is a fun beach for people of all ages.

In this paragraph:

- the topic is
 - West Beach
- the main idea (what the writer is saying about the topic)
 - is that summer is a wonderful time at West Beach

More Practice



The movie Apollo 13 was a blockbuster for the summer of 1995. It is an exciting story about space exploration. In the movie, the astronauts get in trouble while they are trying to return to Earth. People in the audience are on the edge of their seats waiting to see what happens. What makes it even more exciting is that it is a true story.

In this paragraph:

- the topic
 - is the movie *Apollo 13*
- the main idea is
 - in the first sentence: *Apollo 13 was a blockbuster for the summer of 1995*

Other Locations for a Main Idea

- While the main idea is usually in the first sentence, **the next most common placement is in the last sentence of a paragraph**. The author gives supporting information first and then makes the point in the last sentence.
- Here's a paragraph we can use as an example. Try to locate the topic and the main idea.

Most teenagers and young adults do not know what they want to do for the rest of their lives. It is a big decision. There are a number of things you can do to narrow the choices. For example you can take an interest test, do some research on your own about a career, try volunteer work in the field in which you are interested, or "job-shadow", in which you spend a day with a person who is working in a field that interests you. These are just a few helpful ideas as you begin to choose a career.

In this paragraph:

- the topic is
 - *jobs or career choices*
- the main idea is
 - a few ideas to help the reader choose a career



Other Locations for a Main Idea

- Finally, an author **might put the main idea in the middle of a paragraph**. The author will spend a few sentences introducing the topic, present the main idea, then spend the rest of the paragraph supporting it. This can make the main idea more difficult to find.
- See if you can find the topic and main idea in the paragraph below.

The United States seems to be in love with the idea of going out to eat. Because of this, a real variety of restaurants has come about specializing in all kinds of foods. McDonald's is the king of a subgroup of restaurants called fast-food restaurants. Chances are, no matter where you live, there is a McDonald's restaurant near you. There are even McDonald's in the Soviet Union. Now McDonald's is trying something new. It is called McDonald's Express and there is a test site in Peabody, Massachusetts. It is part of a Mobil gas station. This allows you to fill up with gas and fill up on food at the same time. What will they think of next?

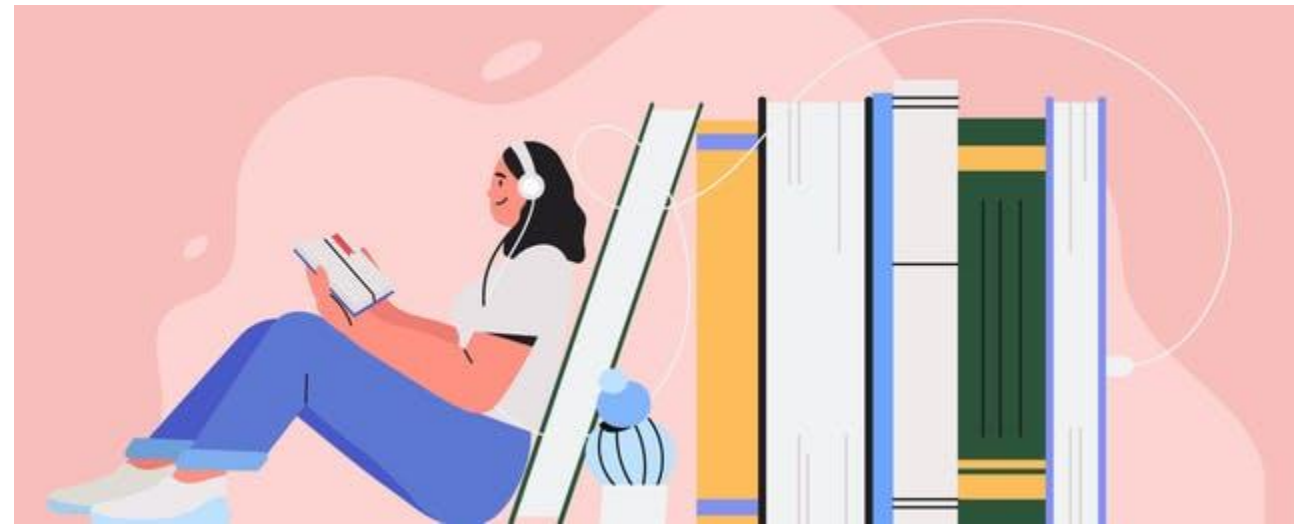
In this paragraph:

- the topic is
 - *McDonald's*
- the main idea is
 - in the third sentence: *McDonald's is the king of fast food*



The Takeaway

- Figuring out the **topic** leads to figuring out the **main idea**.
- Obviously, the main ideas of articles, essays, chapters, or entire books are more complex than the examples we've discussed.
- A way to practice this for college and real life is to decide the topic and main idea of everything you read, whether it's something you read on Twitter or in *The New York Times*.



Vocabulary & Prep for Reading 4

Discussion & Activity

Birth Order & Your Place in Life

- Go to <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/groups/eng925r-fyssp-reading-express-summer-2020/files/>
- Find the document titled “Birth Order and Your Place in Life.”
- Open your notebook. Spend 10 minutes working on parts A and B on your own. If you aren’t familiar with some of the vocabulary on part A, look up the definitions.

Homework

- **Complete** Main Ideas Test 1. Email the test to me by 4:30 pm today at readingexpressfysp@gmail.com.
- **Read** “How Your Birth Order Influences Your Life Adjustment” by Lucille K. Forer, which is in the “Birth Order & Your Place in Life” packet we worked on today.
- **Complete** Exercise C, D, E, questions 1-5 and **choose** six key terms from the reading that you will **explain** to the class on Monday.
- Email the completed assignment to me by 1 pm on **Monday**. (It just can be in the email message box, a picture of your notebook, or a Google Doc.)

Find the “Active Reading Cheat Sheet”
<https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/groups/eng925r-fysp-reading-express-summer-2020/files/> and use it with your reading assignment this weekend!



Main Idea Test 1

You have the remainder of this class to take the test. You must email it to me by 4:30 pm.