

Main idea and supporting details

Grade 3 Reading Worksheet

The **main idea** is what the story is mostly about.

The **supporting details** are small pieces of information that help explain the main idea.

1. Read the story once.

Recycling is an important way to help the environment. When we recycle, we take old items like paper, plastic and metal and turn them into something new. Recycling helps reduce waste and keeps trash out of landfills. A landfill is a big area where garbage is buried. Too much trash in landfills can harm the Earth. Recycling is one way to solve this problem.

Recycling starts with sorting. People separate items like bottles, cans and cardboard into special bins. These items are taken to a recycling center, where machines and workers clean and sort them even more. After sorting, the materials are broken down. For example, paper is shredded, plastic is melted and metal is crushed. These broken-down materials can be used to make new things, like bags, boxes or even new cans.

Recycling helps save natural resources. When we recycle paper, fewer trees need to be cut down. Recycling plastic means we use less oil, and recycling metal saves energy. By reusing materials, we also help reduce pollution in the air and water.

When everyone recycles, it makes a big difference. Less trash ends up in landfills, and fewer resources are wasted. Recycling is a simple way to protect the planet and help keep it clean for future generations. Together, we can help the environment by recycling every day!



2. Read the story a second time. This time, underline the main idea and circle the supporting details.
3. Then answer the following questions:

What is the story's main idea?

- a. When we recycle paper, fewer trees need to be cut down.
- b. After sorting, the materials are broken down.
- c. Recycling is an important way to help the environment.

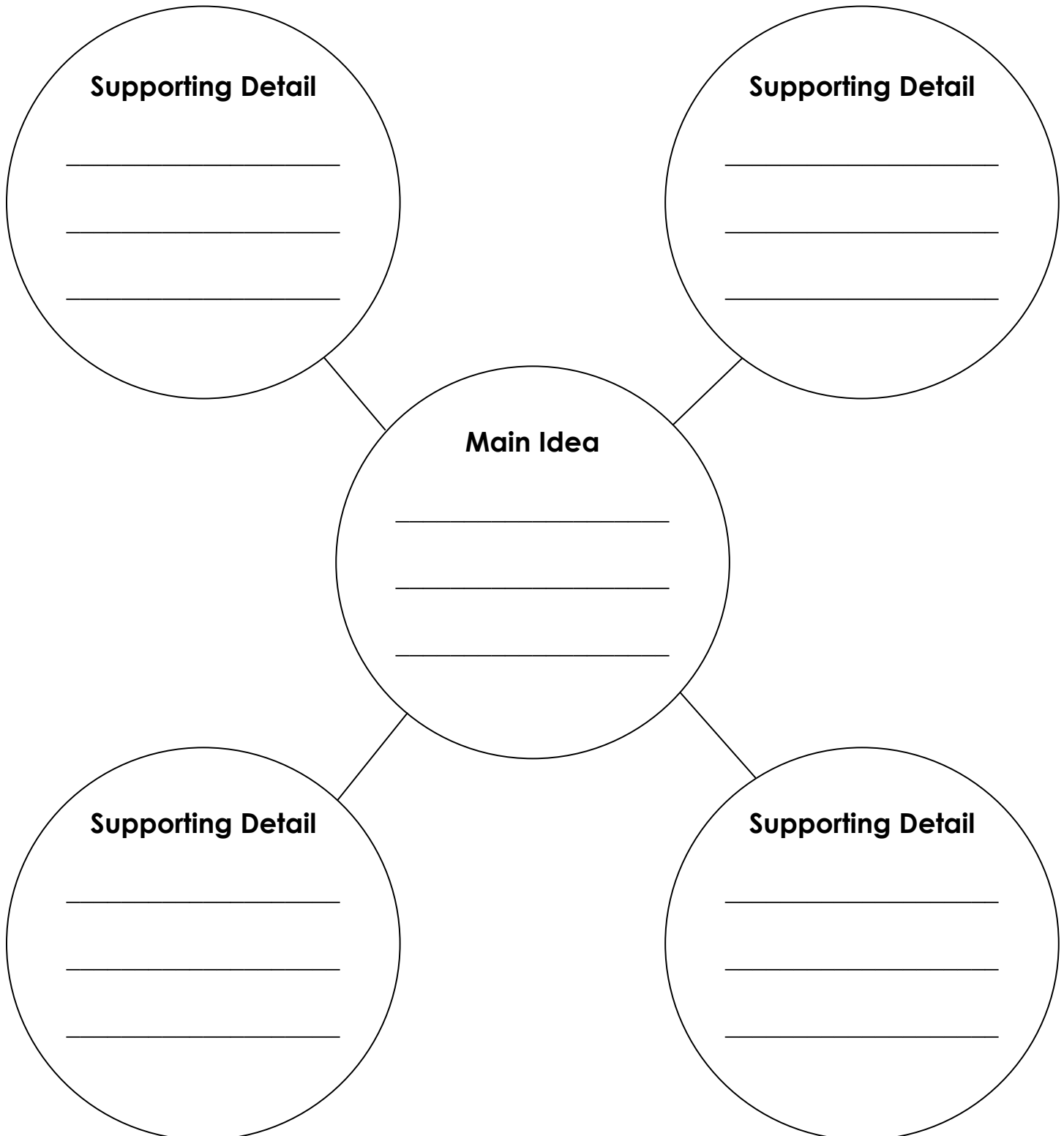
How do you know this is the main idea?

Which of the following details supports the main idea?

- a. Less trash ends up in landfills, and fewer resources are wasted.
- b. A landfill is a big area where garbage is buried.
- c. These items are taken to a recycling center, where machines and workers clean and sort them even more.

What is another detail that supports the main idea?

4. Use your answers to help you fill out this Main Idea Organizer.
(You will need to find two more supporting details from the text!)



The diagram is a Main Idea Organizer. It consists of a central circle labeled "Main Idea" with three horizontal lines for writing. This central circle is connected by lines to four surrounding circles, each labeled "Supporting Detail". Each of these four circles also contains three horizontal lines for writing. The circles are arranged in a diamond shape around the central circle.

Supporting Detail

Main Idea

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Supporting Detail

Answers

3. Then answer the following questions:

What is the story's main idea?

- a. When we recycle paper, fewer trees need to be cut down.
- b. After sorting, the materials are broken down.
- ☒ c. Recycling is an important way to help the environment.

How do you know this is the main idea?

Accept anything along the lines of: I knew this was the main idea because it is what the story is mostly about.

Which of the following details supports the main idea?

- ☒ a. Less trash ends up in landfills, and fewer resources are wasted.
- b. A landfill is a big area where garbage is buried.
- c. These items are taken to a recycling center, where machines and workers clean and sort them even more.

What is another detail that supports the main idea?

Answers will vary but must be taken from the text.

4. Use your answers to help you fill out this Main Idea Organizer. (You will need to find two more supporting details from the text!)

Answers will vary but must be taken from the text.