

Name: _____ Date: _____

Finding the Main Ideas

The main idea of a section or a whole article is an important idea that the author wants you to know about the topic. Looking at the details can help you figure out what the main idea is. What do they mainly describe? You can also use the titles of sections as clues.

Directions: Complete the chart below. Use the prompts to help you.

Section	Main idea	How do you know?
First section, starting at the beginning of the article	Before the November 8, 2018 wildfire, Paradise, California, was a beautiful and lively place.	<p>Give two details from this section that describe Paradise before November 8, 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
"Bigger and Deadlier"	Write the main idea:	<p>The main idea is supported by the details below. Think about how climate change has affected wildfires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfires are growing bigger and harder to fight. • As the climate gets hotter and less predictable, scientists say that fires are getting deadlier. • Many of California's worst fires have happened during the past 10 years, a time with record-high temperatures.
"Flaming Birds"	The November 2018 wildfire was more dangerous than past wildfires that had threatened Paradise.	<p>Give two more details from this section that explain why the 2018 wildfire was especially dangerous:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fire was moving so fast that a piece of land the size of a football field burned every second. • •

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Section	Main idea	How do you know?
"Beloved Things"	Write the main idea:	<p>The main idea is supported by the details below. Think about what they tell you about the challenges people faced as they tried to escape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People had time to grab only a few possessions before leaving their homes. • Cars were slowed down by traffic jams and blocked roads. • Many didn't know if their loved ones had escaped safely or not.
"Grueling Fight"	As they tried to take refuge from the flames, people faced terrifying conditions.	<p>Give three details from this section that explain what it was like to be trapped in the city during the fire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
"Life Continues"	Write the main idea:	<p>The main idea is supported by the details below. Think about what they tell you about the people of Paradise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thousands of people who lost their homes relocated to nearby towns. • People still do regular things, like have playdates and birthday parties and go to work. • Residents of Paradise are making plans for their future.