



Reading Skill: Identifying the main idea

Learn together!

Some questions test your ability to find out what the whole text is mainly about. There are three steps to answering such questions:

- 1** If there is a title in the text, read it carefully because it tells you what the whole text is about in brief.
- 2** To get more hints, read the first paragraph. The writer usually introduces the subject here. Next, read the last paragraph. The writer usually concludes with the message that he or she wants to bring out here.
- 3** Answer the question. Keep in mind that the main idea of a piece of text summarises the subject of the text in one or a few sentences. Do not choose the option that is just about a single detail.

Learn more!

e.g. For a piece of text about good places to visit in Hong Kong, the option 'The text is mainly about good places to visit in Kowloon.' is false because it cannot summarise everything the text talks about. The text may also include good places to visit in the New Territories and on Hong Kong Island.

Give it a try!

e.g. Sean writes the e-mail mainly to _____.

- A. introduce Sai Kung to Rebecca
- B. tell Rebecca what he does in the evenings
- C. tell Rebecca what she can do at the housewarming party
- D. invite Rebecca to the housewarming party

The **subject** of an e-mail is like the **title** of a piece of text. It tells you **what the whole e-mail is about in brief**. The subject of Sean's e-mail is '**Invitation to my housewarming party**'. Also, in the **first paragraph**, Sean tells Rebecca that the **reason for writing the e-mail is to ask her to come to his housewarming party**. In the **last paragraph**, Sean asks Rebecca to **let him know if she can come to the party or not**. So, option D is the correct answer. Even though Sean talks about options A, B and C in the e-mail, they are just **parts of the content and cannot tell the overall subject of the text**.