

Identifying the main idea

Master the reading strategy!



What is a main idea?

- the most important message in a passage or paragraph

How to identify the main idea?

- the title and the first paragraph usually tell the main idea of the passage
- look for the topic sentence—it is usually the first sentence of a paragraph

Checking for the topic sentence

- see whether the sentences in the same paragraph are all related to it
- see whether the keyword in it reappears later

Let's have a closer look!

Topic sentence

Keyword → **K-pop music has become popular since the 2000s because of its special features.** The term 'K-pop' refers to Korean pop songs originating in South Korea. Songwriters often put music of different styles and genres into K-pop songs. Foreign elements are added to the songs to make them catchy and attractive. Also, K-pop songs are usually sung by idol groups. Every member of an idol group has his or her own role, like the vocalist, the rapper and the dancer. Before a song is debuted, they need to practise one time after another to ensure their performance is perfect.

What does the topic sentence tell us?

The popularity of K-pop music is directly related to its features.

Checking for the topic sentence

- the sentences in the same paragraph elaborate on the term 'K-pop' and its features
- the keyword 'K-pop' reappears

Let's practise!

I bet you may have already heard of the 'sinking Maldives'. There are several islands in Papua New Guinea which are sinking too. Scientists say these islands are sinking for about 30 cm every year. One example is an enormous group of islands named Duke of York Islands. For many years, the islands have been home to around 20,000 people. These people have developed their own culture and a unique way of life on the islands, but now they will have to leave their home. As the sinking worsens, the government expects that about 40,000 people will need to relocate to new homes in the coming years.

What is the main idea of the above paragraph?

- A. Duke of York Islands are the islands which are sinking in the Maldives.
- B. Several islands are sinking in Papua New Guinea.
- C. Forty-thousand people are leaving their homes.
- D. People live a special way of life on Duke of York Islands.