



Identifying the main theme / focus



What is the main theme or main focus?

- the main topic of a text or the writer's main purpose for writing the text

How to identify the main focus of a text?

- refer to headings and topic sentences in paragraphs, then figure out the subjects being discussed
- look for synonyms or antonyms of key words
- identify the text type and its purpose

Let's look closer!

procrastinate (v.) = to keep delaying something that must be done

The night before school started, three boys stayed up until 3 am, trying to complete their summer assignments. Their parents were a little worried and warned them, 'See, this is what happens when you *procrastinate* on your homework. It's like shopping with a credit card—it's a lot of fun until you get the bill.' Finally, the incomplete schoolwork became detention tasks on the first day of school. That is the moral of this story.

Key words could serve as distractors.

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DSE 2018 Part B2 Q48 Multiple choice

e.g. The 'moral of this story' (line 5) is that students should ...

- A. finish homework without delay.
- B. do homework during detention.
- C. see homework as a fun thing to do.
- D. try to ease their parents' worries.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A | B | C | D |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

24/7 means 'all the time'

Social media has *destroyed* family relationships,' says Tam. Nowadays, people are scrolling through news feeds, photos, reels and trending issues *24/7*. 'People think family members don't need to sit down and talk. It is easy to connect with people: all you need is a social media account. People used to meet up to catch up with one another. Now? They can interact by simply posting photos or replying to stories,' says Tam. He believes that social media divides people more than it unites them.

- Tam's belief can be found in the topic sentence.
- 'improved' means the opposite of *destroyed*

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DSE 2022 Part A Q11 Proofreading

e.g. Below is a summary of the paragraph. In each line, there is a mistake. Underline it and write the correct word.

- (i) Tam believes that family relationships have improved _____ worsened
- (ii) as social media content take up some of people's time. Besides, _____ all
- (iii) most people prefer to communicate and interact offline. _____ online

Let's practise!

The use of technology in education is not new. In the past several years, more and more schools have shifted to mixed-mode teaching. Online learning can be effective because it is a measure to enable learning when students cannot physically attend school. However, it fails to cater to students' need to develop social skills. Parents also voice concerns over its drawbacks, such as the negative impact on students' eyesight. While online education may become mainstream one day, there is a risk that it may hinder students' whole-person development.

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DSE 2022 Part A Q3 Multiple choice

1 What is the purpose of this paragraph?

- A. to show a contrast of views
- B. to explain the shift to mixed-mode teaching
- C. to conclude that online education will be the main form of learning
- D. to argue that online education is effective
- A B C D
○ ○ ○ ○

DSE 2022 Part A Q11 Proofreading

2 Below is a summary of the paragraph. In two of the lines, there is a mistake. Underline it and write the correct word. Both grammar and spelling must be correct. If there is no mistake, put a tick (✓) in the Correction column.

Summary	Correction
(i) Many schools have switched to online education as a way of	_____
(ii) learning due to its quality. Some parents say that it has a more	_____
(iii) positive impact on students than the face-to-face mode of teaching.	_____

Exam Booster

In the book, I discuss various common problems that students are likely to face while studying, including low motivation, too many distractions, difficulty remembering facts and figures, and poor time management. These problems have one thing in common: they all can lower students' productivity and increase their anxiety. Whether or not students can overcome these challenges will determine their ability to get back on track with their studies.

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DSE 2019 Part A Q3 Multiple choice

1 What is the purpose of the list of examples of the 'various common problems' in lines 2–3?

- A. to conclude the main topic
- B. to show the contrast of ideas
- C. to show cause and effect
- D. to sum up the arguments made
- A B C D
○ ○ ○ ○