

# Comprehension

## **Teacher Use:**

**Comprehension refers to the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning. In other words, there are two challenges: Figuring out how print represents words (accurately and efficiently--extracting), at the same time formulating a representation of the information being presented (building new meaning and integrating new and old information--constructing meaning).**

**(Snow & Sweet, 2003, p. 1.)**

**"Main Idea Progression," can help students learn how to categorize and analyze information, truly internalizing the purpose and process for identifying or writing main ideas.**

**This resource can be used in whole group instruction, literacy stations, small group instruction, or for reading intervention.**

# Comprehension

## Directions

Introducing and practicing key structures such as main ideas and supporting details can be challenging if you try to apply the skill immediately to a paragraph. Moving in a slower and more concrete progression can help students learn how to categorize and analyze information, truly internalizing the purpose and process for identifying or writing main ideas. A suggested progression is below:

- 1) **Topic Sort:** Students take a series of concepts/words and sort them by topic.
- 2) **Brainstorming Details:** Students are given a main idea on a graphic organizer/concept web, and must brainstorm supporting details relating to the main idea.
- 3) **Sorting Main Ideas and Details:** Students are given a blank graphic organizer/concept web and some cards containing a main idea and some supporting details. Students go through the process of placing the main idea in the center of the web and the supporting details along the spokes coming off of the web.
- 4) **Pick the Main Idea:** Students are given four paragraphs and four main ideas. They must read each paragraph, and match the main idea to the correct passage.
- 5) **Verbalize the Main Idea:** Students are given a brief paragraph. With a partner, they are asked to use a three step process to come up with a main idea. First, they must first identify the most important who or what in the paragraph. Second, they must figure out the most important thing about the who or what in the paragraph. Third, they must tell their partner in 10 words or less what the main idea is (should include the who/what and most important thing about who/what). If their main idea is longer than 10 words, they work with their partner to shorten it and share it with the whole class.
- 6) **Write the Main Idea:** Students are given a paragraph and a blank graphic organizer/concept web. They are asked to read the paragraph, determine the most important who/what, identify the most important thing about the who/what, write a main idea in the center of the web, and write any supporting details along the spokes of the web.

# Topic Sort

carrot

golf

onion

broccoli

apples

soccer

banana

boxing

basketball

cherries

tennis

cauliflower

football

volleyball

watermelon

peaches

pears

grapes

celery

zucchini

baseball

peas

peaches

lime

hockey

lemon

bowling

asparagus

kiwi

track

# Topic Sort

ankle

snake

hairspray

brush

Guinea pig

toe

turtle

fish

comb

heart

cat

hair dryer

knee

hair

razor

hockey

toothbrush

head

shampoo

lizard

leg

lungs

hamster

# Sort My Topics

Identify three topics related to the words above. Write your topic at the top of each category. Sort/glue words under the relevant topic.

Topic 1

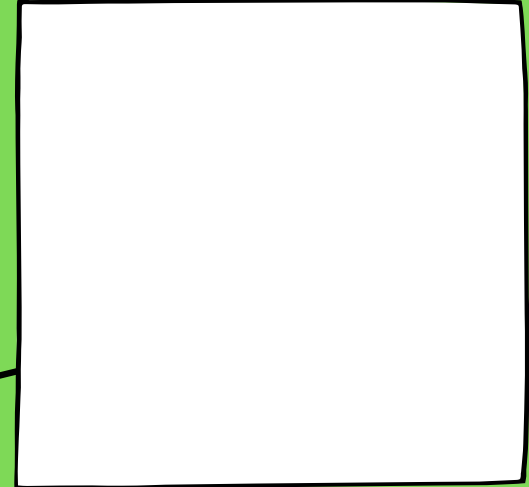
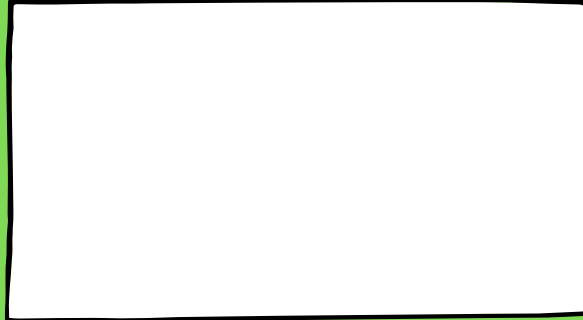
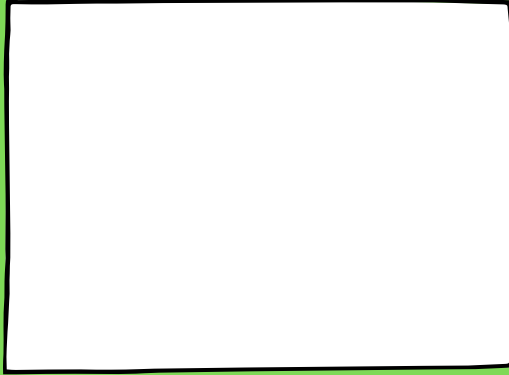
Topic 2

Topic 3

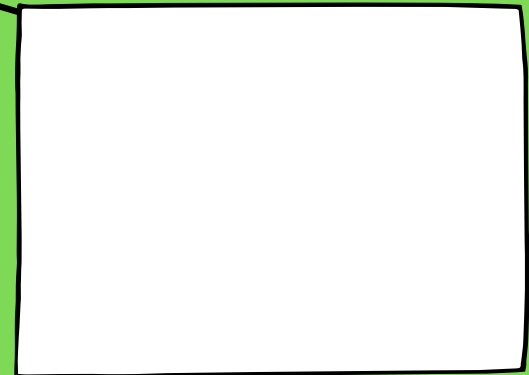
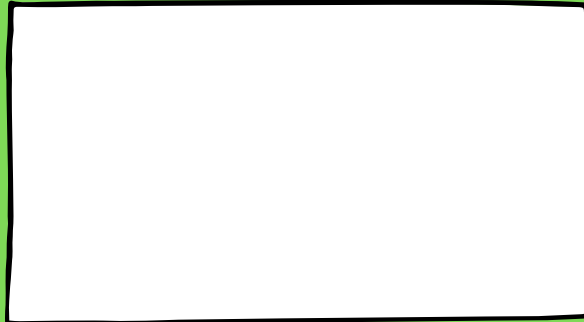
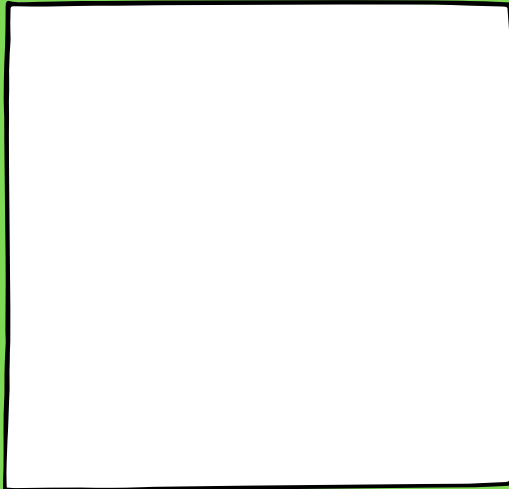
Name:

Date:

## Brainstorming Details:



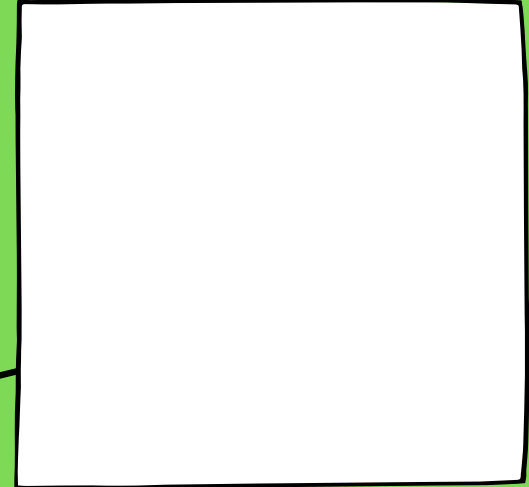
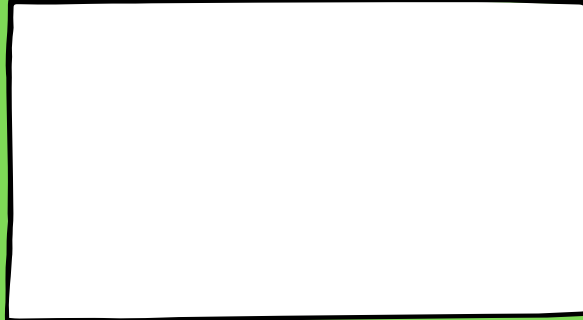
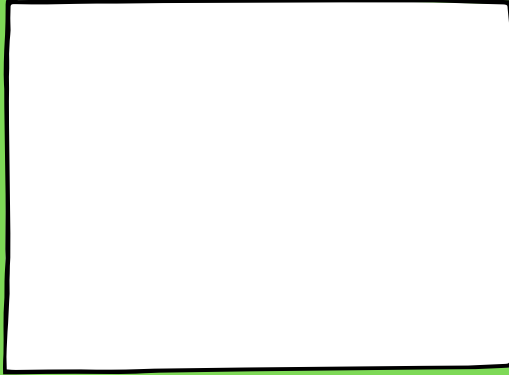
There are many ways to save  
the planet.



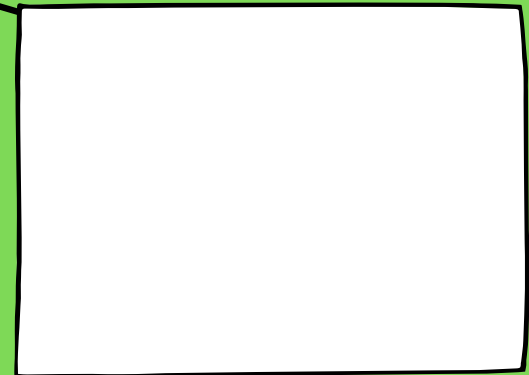
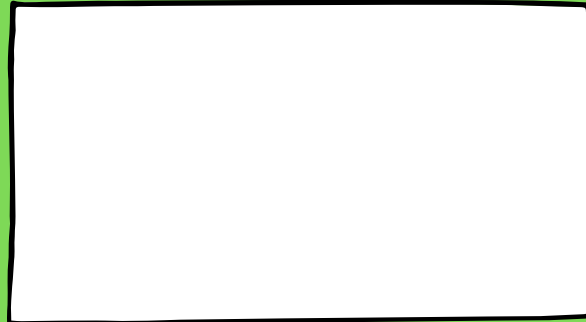
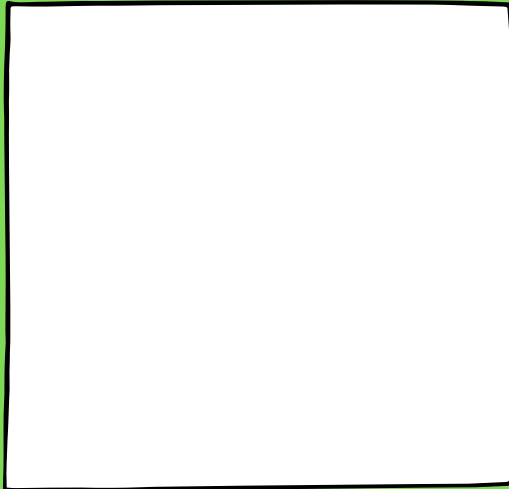
Name:

Date:

## Brainstorming Details:



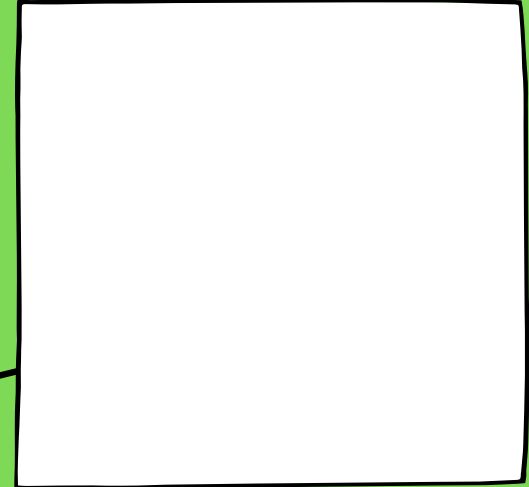
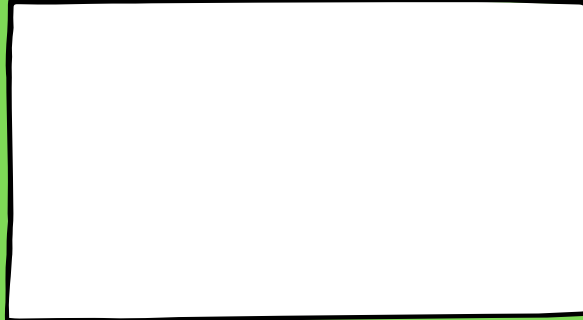
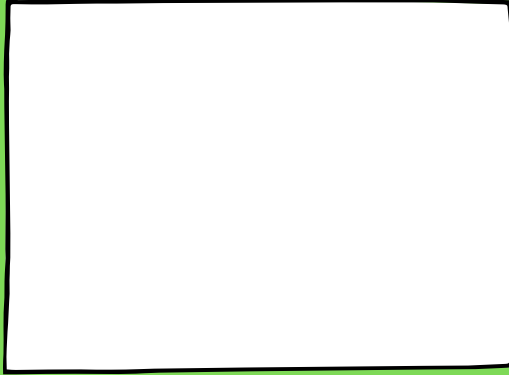
Many different sports are popular across the world



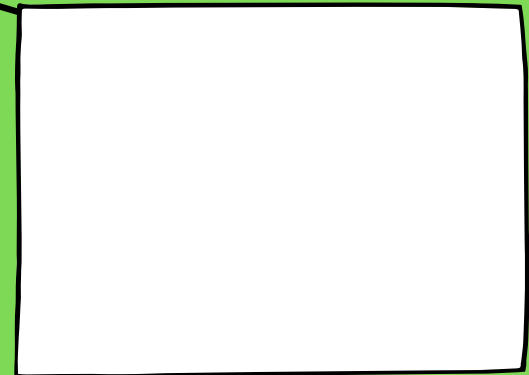
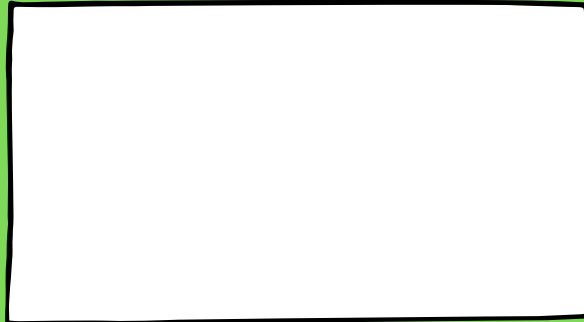
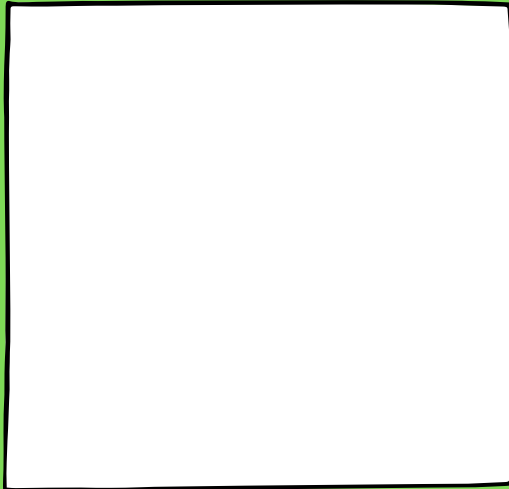
Name:

Date:

## Brainstorming Details:



To make pizza at home you  
will need a number of  
ingredients



## Sorting Main Idea and Details

Read the below cards containing a main idea and supporting details. Decide which is the main idea, and write the main idea in the center bubble on the graphic organizer on the next page. Write each supporting detail in one of the smaller bubbles of the graphic organizer.

A quarterback touches the football more than most players.

The quarterback is responsible for handing the ball off to the running back.

The quarterback might be the most important position on a football team.

The quarterback throws the ball to the wide receivers.

## **Sorting Main Idea and Details (continued)**

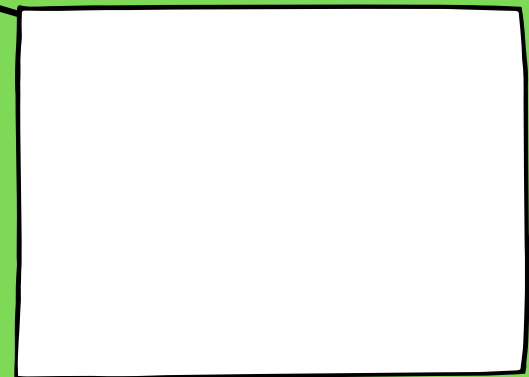
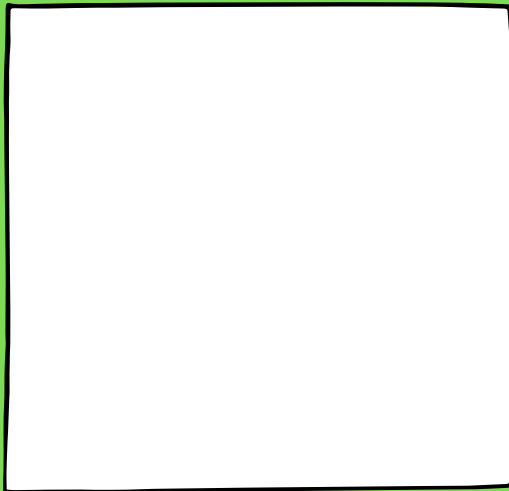
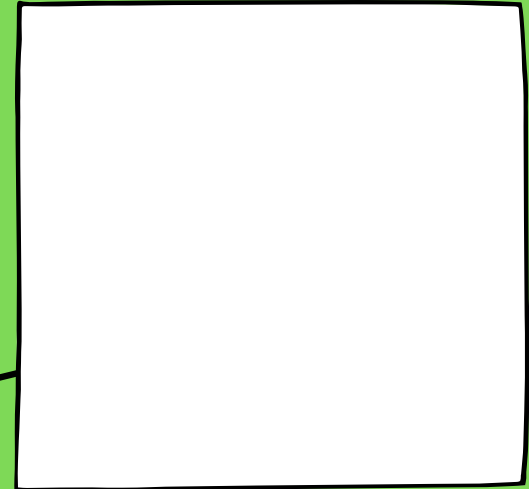
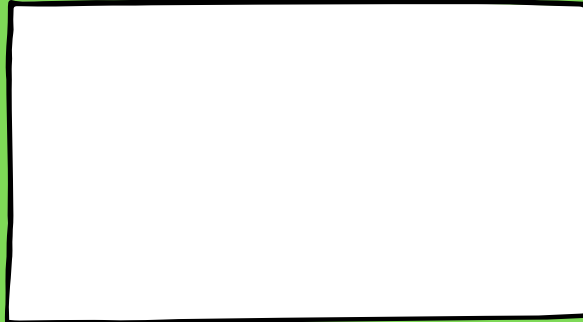
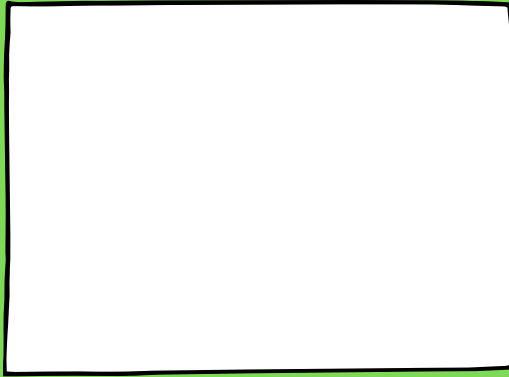
Read the below cards containing a main idea and supporting details. Decide which is the main idea, and write the main idea in the center bubble on the graphic organizer on the next page. Write each supporting detail in one of the smaller bubbles of the graphic organizer.

The quarterback is responsible for calling plays and reading the defense.

Name:

Date:

## Brainstorming Details:



## Sorting Main Idea and Details

Read the below cards containing a main idea and supporting details. Decide which is the main idea, and write the main idea in the center bubble on the graphic organizer on the next page. Write each supporting detail in one of the smaller bubbles of the graphic organizer.

Weather is becoming less predictable and more extreme every year.

The number of hurricanes and intensity of hurricanes is increasing.

Long droughts in a number of areas are leading to forest fires.

Thunderstorms and derechos are becoming more common and extreme.

## Sorting Main Idea and Details (continued)

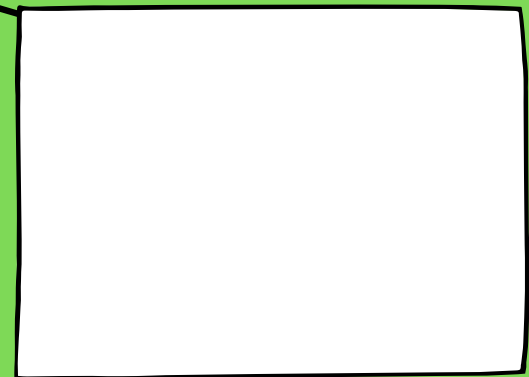

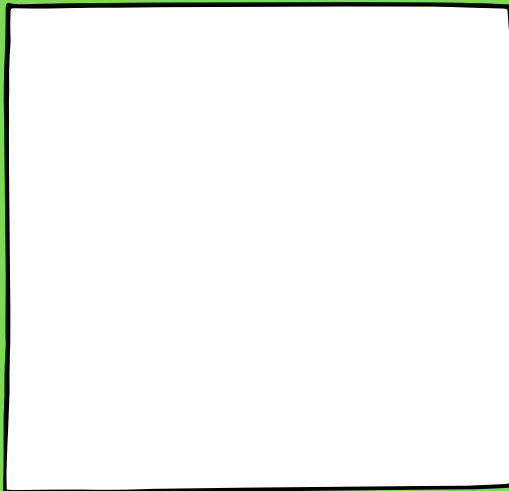
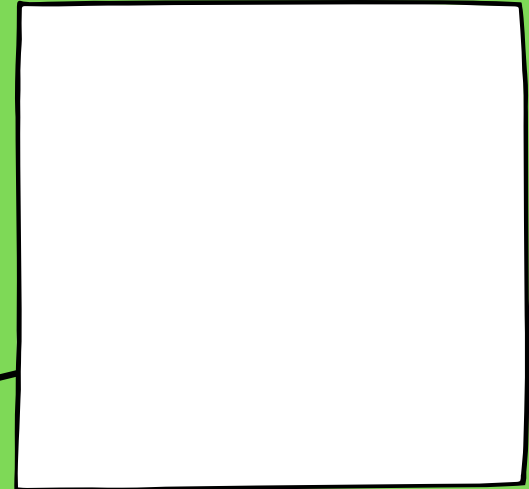
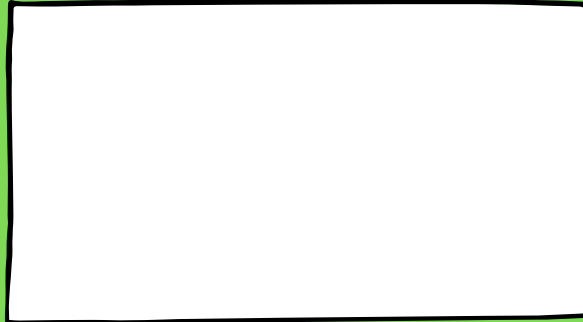
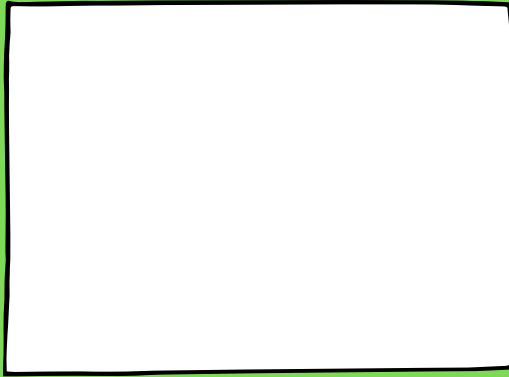
Read the below cards containing a main idea and supporting details. Decide which is the main idea, and write the main idea in the center bubble on the graphic organizer on the next page. Write each supporting detail in one of the smaller bubbles of the graphic organizer.

Events like tornados are also on the  
rise.

Name:

Date:

## Brainstorming Details:



# Comprehension

## Pick the Main Idea

Read each paragraph below. Then, read the four main ideas at the bottom of the page. Cut out the main idea and paste it on top of the paragraph where it belongs.

Main Idea:

First, the fox grabs a stick with its mouth. Then, the fox slowly backs into a river. As the fox slowly backs into the river, fleas jump up the fox's back towards its head. The fox slowly pulls its head low in the water. The fleas jump off the fox's head and onto the stick. The fox lets go of the stick and it floats away down the river.

Main Idea:

First, the anteater has curved foreclaws that helps it to rip open ant or termite mounds. Second, the anteater has long, thick fur that protects it from bites or attacks. An anteater has a long snout that allows it to reach into holes. Finally, it has a sticky tongue that it can use to get down into ant or termite holes, making it easy to remove and eat the insects.

Main Idea:

When a porcupine feels threatened, its first defensive reaction is to straighten its quills until they stand erect. Next, it may make a clattering noise with its teeth. The porcupine is also able to give off a foul odor to repel attackers. If none of these things work, the porcupine will run sideways or backwards into attackers with its sharp quills

Main Idea:

Many animals rely on clams as a source of food. Walruses, sea lions, sea otters, and some seals eat clams. Humans have been harvesting clams from the sand or mud to eat for hundreds, possibly thousands of years. Clams also play an important role by filtering water. Clams remove excess nitrogen from water, and store it in their shell.

# Comprehension

## Pick the Main Idea

Read each paragraph below. Then, read the four main ideas at the bottom of the page. Cut out the main idea and paste it on top of the paragraph where it belongs.

The fox has a clever way to get rid of fleas.

Clams play an important role in the ecosystem, both as a source of food and a cleaner of our water.

Porcupines give a number of warnings when attacked before using their quills to protect themselves.

Anteaters have many physical features that help find and eat ants.

# Comprehension

## **Verbalize the Main Idea**

**Work with a partner to read a short paragraph. As you read, work together to work through the below questions/prompts:**

- 1. Identify the most important who or what in the paragraph**
- 2. Identify the most important thing about the most important who or what in the paragraph.**
- 3. Use the most important who/what and the most important thing about the who/what to say a main idea that is ten words or less. Count each word on your hand as you say your main idea out loud to your partner. Work together to shorten the main idea if it is more than 10 words.**

Name:

Date:

**Writing Main Idea and Supporting Details**

Read a paragraph on your own or with a partner. Write the main idea of the paragraph in the large center bubble on the graphic organizer below. Then, identify important supporting details from the paragraph and write them on the smaller bubbles below.

