

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Central Idea (Main Idea)

### Vocabulary:

**topic:** the general subject that the paragraph is discussing

**main idea (central idea):** the main point that is being stated in a paragraph, essay, article or passage. It's what's specifically being said about a particular topic.

- To find the **main idea (central idea)**, ask yourself, what is the point that the writer trying to make?
- It's always helpful to skim through the passage again and see what words are repeated, and what idea the author is trying to stress, or get across.
- Sometimes, the **main idea (central idea)** will be at the start of a paragraph or article.
- But the **main idea (central idea)** can be stated anywhere in a piece of text. Sometimes it's in the second or third paragraph.
- Sometimes it will come at the very end as a conclusion.
- Sometimes you're going to have to reread the passage, and go back to it a few times, to get a good sense of what's being discussed.
- It helps to ask yourself general questions about the passage. Questions may be things like: Is it about a person? An idea or theory?

### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Read the following paragraphs.
2. Which word (or part of a word) is repeated throughout the paragraph?  
Highlight this word with a highlighter.
3. With another color highlighter, highlight other important words and important vocabulary that help us to find the **central idea (main idea)**.
4. Write down the topic and the **main idea (central idea)** of the paragraph.

### PARAGRAPH #1

Not only is smoking cigarettes a disgusting and smelly habit, it's also extremely bad for your health. It has been proven to cause cancer, lung disease, and heart disease, and to weaken your immune system. Smoking makes it a lot harder to breathe, which means it's more difficult to play sports and get the exercise you need to stay healthy. It is also harmful for those hanging around a smoker, because they breathe the smoky air. Even though most people are aware of how bad smoking is for them, more than 1,000 people die each day from its effects!

**TOPIC:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CENTRAL IDEA (MAIN IDEA):** \_\_\_\_\_

### PARAGRAPH #2

When we can, it's important to carpool, use public transportation like buses and trains, ride a bike, or walk instead of driving a car. These things release fewer dangerous toxins into the air. You may not realize it, but air pollution is becoming a bigger problem every day. It is terribly damaging to the environment and the air we breathe. For this reason, we should try to cut back on harmful emissions. One of the best ways to reduce pollution is to use methods of transportation that are less harmful to the environment.

**TOPIC:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CENTRAL IDEA (MAIN IDEA):** \_\_\_\_\_