

Identifying Supporting Ideas

- Look for specific details, such as facts and comparisons, that support the main purpose. The main points of a speech or essay are often found in the topic sentence of a paragraph. Topic sentences usually occur at the beginning of paragraphs.
- Read carefully in context; do not just pick up a brief phrase or two.
- Supporting details may be data, examples, anecdotes, or reasons.

Making Inferences and Generalizations

- Ask yourself what the writer is telling you indirectly. What does the writer suggest but not say? The inferences you'll make will be based on what writers have chosen to tell you. Here are some kinds of inferences you are often asked to make and some of the clues you can use to make them:
 - **Inferences about character:** Look at a character's speech, appearances, thoughts, actions; look at what other characters say and think about the character.
 - **Inferences about tone (writer's attitude):** Look at the writer's choice of words and details.
 - **Inferences about themes:** Look at key passages; look at how the main character changes or what he or she has learned.
- When you make an inference, be able to cite the evidence from the passage to support it. Details and images often contain supporting evidence for your inferences.
- Make generalizations by looking at the big picture. Which ideas are repeated and emphasized in the passage?