

Practice Week 2 Identify Topic and Main Idea

Direction: Read each paragraph carefully. Then:

1. Identify the topic – What is the general subject of the paragraph?
2. Identify the main idea – What does the author want to say about the topic?

1. Many people enjoy watching movies in their free time. Some like action movies, others like comedies or romantic stories. No matter the type, movies are a fun way to relax and enjoy time with family or friends.

Topic: Watching movies in free time

Main IDea: Many people enjoy watching movies in their free time.

2. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram have changed how people communicate. People now send messages, photos, and videos instead of meeting in person. While this helps us stay connected, some people worry that real communication is becoming weaker.

Topic: Social media and communication

Main IDea: 1. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram have changed how people communicate.

2. As social media plays an important role, communication styles have changed.

3. Social media plays an important role in shaping how communication styles have changed.

3. In big cities, many people travel long distances to work. Trains and buses are often crowded, and traffic can be very slow. These problems make traveling stressful and also add to pollution in the air.

Topic: Traffic in big cities

Main IDea: There are many transportation problems in big cities.

4. Many schools are now using technology in classrooms, such as tablets, computers, and online lessons. Some teachers believe this helps students learn better and makes lessons more interesting. Others are worried that too much screen time may not be good for students. It is important to find a good balance between using technology and using other teaching methods.

Topic: Technology in classroom today

Main IDea: Using technology in the classroom has both advantages and disadvantages.

5. In Thailand, students usually wear school uniforms and follow a national curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education. Teachers are expected to complete the syllabus set by the central authority. In the United States, public school students generally do not wear uniforms, and individual states or even districts create their own education standards. Assessment styles and teaching approaches also vary between the two countries.

Topic: Education system

Main Idea: Education systems in Thailand and the US are different.

6. For example, in countries like Japan and Sweden, people often ride trains or bicycles as a daily means of transport. In the United States, especially in suburban areas, many rely on private cars to travel between home, work, and school. In crowded cities such as Bangkok or Manila, people commonly use motorcycles, buses, or tuk-tuks to move quickly through traffic. Meanwhile, in some rural African communities, walking long distances remains a primary mode of transportation.

Topic: Transportation methods around the world

Main Idea: People in different countries use various forms of transportation depending on their environment, infrastructure, and daily needs.

7. They might start the day with a croissant and latte—terms from French and Italian. While listening to music, they may play the piano (an Italian word) or enjoy a solo performance (from Latin). Later, they might head to a dojo for a karate class, both words from Japanese. In the evening, they could eat sushi or dim sum, borrowing from Japanese and Cantonese, or watch a film at a cinema—words that came from Greek and French.

Topic: Loanwords in English

Main Idea: Many words used in daily activities come from different languages and cultures.

English has many loanwords from other languages and cultures.

8. Current research describes two different types of self-esteem: (1) feeling, either positive or negative, about self-worth, and (2) feeling of confidence in our ability to deal with problems when they happen, often called action-based self-esteem. The first type has to do with how we feel about ourselves when we are alone. The second type has to do with action and problem solving. Your self-esteem may be stronger in one of these areas than the other.

Topic: Self-esteem, Types of self-esteem

Main Idea: Current research describes two different types of self-esteem.

9. Millions of people are using cell phones today. In many places, it is actually considered unusual not to use one. In many countries, cell phones are very popular with young people. They find that the phones are more than a means of communication - having a mobile phone shows that they are cool and connected.

The explosion around the world in mobile phone use has some health professionals worried. Some doctors are concerned that in the future many people may suffer health problems from use of mobile phones. In England, there has been a serious debate about this issue. Mobile phone companies are worried about the negative publicity of such ideas. They say that there is no proof that mobile phones are bad for your health.

On the other hand, why do some medical studies show changes in the brain cells of some people who use mobile phones? Signs of change in the tissues of the brain and head can be detected with modern scanning equipment. In one case, a traveling salesman had to retire at a young age because of serious memory loss. He couldn't remember even simple tasks. He would often forget the name of his own son. This man used to talk on his mobile phone for about six hours a day, every day of his working week, for a couple of years. His family doctor blamed his mobile phone use, but his employer's doctor didn't agree.

What is it that makes mobile phones potentially harmful? The answer is radiation. High-tech machines can detect very small amounts of radiation from mobile phones. Mobile phone companies agree that there is some radiation, but they say the amount is too small to worry about.

As the discussion about their safety continues, it appears that it's best to use mobile phones less often. Use your regular phone if you want to talk for a long time. Use your mobile phone only when you really need it. Mobile phones can be very useful and convenient, especially in emergencies. In the future, mobile phones may have a warning label that says they are bad for your health. So for now, it's wise not to use your mobile phone too often.

Topic: The effects of mobile phone on health, Mobile phone use and health concerns

Main Idea: 1. The explosion around the world in mobile phone use has some health professionals worried.
2. Some doctors are concerned that in the future many people may suffer health problems from use of mobile phones.

10. What happens if you don't get enough sleep? Randy Gardner, a high school student in the United States, wanted to find out. He designed an experiment on the effects of sleeplessness for a school science project. With doctors watching him carefully, Gardner stayed awake for 264 hours and 12 minutes. The results showed that sleeplessness can cause physical, mental, and cognitive problems.

What effect did sleeplessness have on Gardner? After 24 hours without sleep, Gardner started having trouble reading and watching television. The words and pictures were too blurry. By the third day, he was having trouble doing things with his hands. By the fourth day, Gardner was hallucinating. For example, when he saw a street sign, he thought it was a person. He also imagined he was a famous football player. Over the next few days, Gardner's speech became so slurred that people couldn't understand him. He also had trouble remembering things. By the eleventh day, Gardner couldn't pass a counting test. In the middle of the test he simply stopped counting. He couldn't remember what he was doing. When Gardner finally went to bed, he slept for 14 hours and 45 minutes. The second night he slept for twelve hours, the third night he slept for ten and one-half hours, and by the fourth night, he had returned to his normal sleep schedule. Even though Gardner recovered quickly, scientists believe that going without sleep can be dangerous. Some scientists think we sleep in order to replenish brain cells. Other scientists think that sleep helps the body to grow and to relieve stress. Whatever the reason, we know that it is important to get enough sleep.

(Adapted from Lee & Gundersen, 1950, p. 3- 4)

Topic: The effects of sleeplessness

Main Idea: The results showed that sleeplessness can cause physical, mental, and cognitive problems.

