

Name: _____ Date: _____

Finding the Main Ideas

The main idea of a section or a whole article is an important idea that the author wants you to know about the topic. Looking at the details can help you figure out what the main idea is. What do they mainly describe? You can also use the titles of sections as clues.

Directions: Complete the chart below. Use the prompts to help you.

Section	Main idea	How do you know?
"Attacked!"	After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the U.S. was outraged and declared war on Japan.	Give two details from this section that tell what happened at the Pearl Harbor military base when it was attacked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
"Loyal Americans"	Write the main idea:	The main idea is supported by the details below. Think about what they tell you about why the government imprisoned Japanese Americans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Pearl Harbor, "prejudice against Japanese Americans exploded." • Many Americans believed that Japanese Americans couldn't be trusted. • The U.S. government decided to move all Japanese Americans who lived on the West Coast into prison camps.
"Crowded, Smelly, Dusty"	Write the main idea. Think about the details on the right and what the section mainly describes:	Give three details from this section that show what happened to Japanese Americans after President Roosevelt signed the order to imprison them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Continued on next page >

Name: _____ Date: _____

Finding the Main Ideas, p. 2

Section	Main idea	How do you know?
"Heart Mountain"	Write the main idea. Think about the section header and what the section describes:	We've given you one detail that supports the main idea. Write two more details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill, his parents, and his three siblings lived in a tiny room with hardly any furniture. • •
"Life Goes On"	Write the main idea. Think about the section header and what the section mainly describes:	Give three details that support the main idea: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
"A Terrible Wrong"	Write the main idea:	Give three details that support the main idea: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •