

TOPICS AND MAIN IDEAS

A **topic** is a word or phrase that everything in a text refers to. The topic is usually expressed in a few words and is the general subject of a paragraph or essay.

Example

"Some people say that music helps them to relax and focus when they are studying or working."

The topic of this statement is "music."

To find the topic of an article or essay, ask yourself two questions:

1. Who/what is the text about?
2. What is the author trying to show/teach to the reader?

The **main idea** of a text is the most important point that is being made by the author in reference to the topic at hand. Generally, the main idea needs to be a full sentence in order to be completely identified and defined.

Example

"Some people say that music helps them to relax and focus when they are studying or working."

The main idea of this statement is that music helps some people relax.

To find the main idea of a statement or paragraph, first find the topic. Then, look for a sentence that states an important point about the topic.

