

Main Idea and Details

- The **topic** is the overall subject of a piece of writing.
- The **main idea** of a selection is the most important idea about the topic of that selection.
- **Details** are small pieces of information that tell more about the main idea.
- Sometimes the author states the main idea in a single sentence. When the author does not state the main idea, the reader must figure it out.

Directions Read the following passage. Then complete the diagram below.

Mari wondered why the numbers of some species swing up or down. Her science teacher explained that environment controls an animal's population size.

"Food, shelter, water, and space all have an effect," Mr. Gonzalez explained. "The animals' numbers are limited by whichever one of these is least available."

"But what about other animals?" Mari asked. "Don't they have an effect too?"

"Yes, that's the other part of the puzzle," said Mr. Gonzalez. "Enemies can cut down an animal's numbers. Some species are reduced because other animals are competing for the same food. Also, if there is a lack of prey for an animal, that animal's numbers will drop."

Main Idea

1. Animal numbers are determined by _____



Details

2. One thing that limits an animal's numbers is availability of _____

3. Also limiting an animal's numbers is lack of _____

4. An animal's numbers will decline if others are _____

5. What is the main idea? _____



Home Activity Your child identified the main idea and details of a nonfiction passage. Work with your child to identify the main idea and details of individual paragraphs in a magazine article about wild animals.