

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

9th Grade  
ELA  
Skill: Main Ideas

The **main idea** is the central message, insight, or opinion in a work.

**Supporting details** are the pieces of evidence that a writer uses to prove the main idea. These details can include facts, statistics, quotations, or anecdotes.

**As you read the following paragraphs, you will see that the main idea of all the paragraphs is similar. But each of the paragraphs discusses a somewhat different point. Answer the questions that follow.**

**A.** The act of laughing is actually good exercise. In an average laugh, the heart, lungs, and other organs get a brief workout. Laughing can clear up the respiratory system and speed up heart rate. If the laugh is especially strong, it loosens muscles in the face, arms, and legs.

**1.** Underline the sentence that directly states the main idea made about laughter in paragraph A.

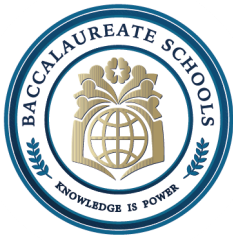


B. But laughter is more than exercise. Some scientists believe that laughter causes the body to produce a group of hormones. These hormones may then release natural painkillers that can reduce suffering from arthritis, allergies, or other ailments. According to this theory, laughter might actually trigger relief from pain.

**2. Underline the main idea in paragraph B.**

C. In 1964, Norman Cousins, editor of *Saturday Review* magazine, was diagnosed with a life-threatening disease. But instead of dying, Cousins applied a laugh- yourself-to-health approach. Acting against medical opinion, he booked a hotel room and read humorous books and watched funny movies. Regular belly laughter, he found, worked like medicine so that he was able to enjoy two hours of painless sleep at a time. Within a few years, he had recovered completely.

**3. Underline the main idea for paragraph C.**



**Read the passage, and then answer the questions that follow.**

**Circle the letter of the best answer choice.**

She liked to grocery shop. She loved it in the way some people love to drive long country roads, because doing it she could think and relax and wander. Her parents wrote up the list and handed it to her and off she went without complaint to perform what they regarded as a great sacrifice of her time and a sign that she was indeed a very nice girl. She had never told them how much she loved grocery shopping, only that she was “willing” to do it. She had an intuition which told her that her parents were not safe for sharing such strong, important facts about herself. Let them think they knew her.

Once inside the supermarket, her hands firmly around the handle of the cart, she would lapse into a kind of reverie and wheel toward the produce. Like a Tibetan monk in solitary meditation, she calmed to a point of deep, deep happiness; this feeling came to her, reliably, if strangely, only in the supermarket.

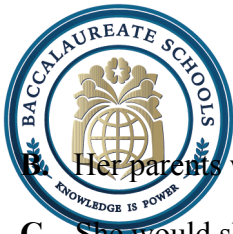
—“Checkouts, Fifteen” by Cynthia Rylant

**1. Which sentence states the main idea of the passage?**

- A.** Let them think they knew her.
- B.** She had never told them how much she loved grocery shopping, only that she was “willing” to do it.
- C.** She liked to grocery shop.
- D.** She had an intuition which told her that her parents were not safe for sharing such strong, important facts about herself.

**2. Which of the following details supports the main idea?**

- A.** She held her hands firmly around the handle of the cart.



- B. Her parents wrote up the list and handed it to her.
- C. She would shop in the produce department first.
- D. She calmed to a point of deep happiness only in the supermarket.

**3. Which statement is the best summary of the passage?**

- A. A daughter has difficulty fitting into her family.
- B. A young girl derives comfort from an ordinary chore.
- C. A young girl finds a substitute for long country drives.
- D. Parents share their daughter's innermost feelings.