

Main Idea, Details, and Author's Purpose

Grade: 4 **Subject:** Reading / Language Arts **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension **Work mode:** On your own · pencil only RLA

Start Here

1. Today you will **read a true article** and answer questions with a pencil.
2. You do **not** need a computer. Work by yourself and do your best.
3. Every answer is **in the article**. You can look back as many times as you want.
4. You may read the article **out loud, quietly, to yourself**.
5. If a question is hard, **skip it and come back** later.

G04_RLA_MainIdeaSummary_01 — Main Idea, Details, and Author's Purpose Student Packet

Start Look & Predict 5 min

Look only at the title before you read.

1The article is called "**Octopuses: Smart Ocean Helpers.**" From the title, write **one thing you predict** the article will teach you.

2The **main idea** is the **most important point** the whole article is about. Name one animal you already know something about, and write one fact you know.

Build Read the Article 10 min

Words to know (from the article)

ocean

the big body of salt water where octopuses live.

tentacle

one of the eight long arms of an octopus.

predator

an animal that hunts other animals for food.

camouflage

a way of hiding by changing color to match what is around you.

"Octopuses: Smart Ocean Helpers" — an original article

[1] The octopus is one of the smartest animals in the *ocean*. It has a soft body, no bones, and eight long arms called *tentacles*. Even though it looks strange, the octopus is very clever. Scientists say it can solve puzzles that stump many other animals.

[2] An octopus is a great problem solver. In one test, a scientist put a tasty crab inside a jar with a lid. The octopus felt the lid with its arms, twisted it open, and pulled the crab out. Some octopuses have even learned to open jars from the outside *and* the inside. That takes a lot of brainpower for an animal with no bones.

[3] The octopus is also very good at hiding. Its skin can change color in less than a second. It uses this *camouflage* to match rocks, sand, or coral. Hiding helps the octopus stay safe from a hungry *predator*, like a shark or an eel. It can also squeeze its soft body into a space as small as a coin to escape danger.

[4] Octopuses even use tools, which not many animals do. Some carry empty coconut shells across the ocean floor. When danger comes, they climb inside the shells and hide, like moving into a little house. Using an object to stay safe is a sign of a smart mind.

[5] From solving puzzles to changing color to carrying shells, the octopus shows how clever ocean animals can be. The next time you think of a smart animal, do not forget the eight-armed octopus. It may be one of the cleverest creatures under the sea.

3In paragraph [1], what does the article say the octopus is one of? Use a detail from the article.

Apply Read Closely 15 min

Every answer is in the article. Look back before you write.

4**Main idea.** What is the **most important point** of the whole article? Write it as one sentence.

5**Supporting details.** Write **two details** from the article that show the octopus is smart. Add the paragraph number for each.

Detail 1 (paragraph #)

Detail 2 (paragraph #)

6**Author's purpose.** Did the author write this article to **inform** (teach facts), **persuade** (make you agree), or **entertain** (tell a fun story)? Circle one and give a **reason** from the article.

Circle one: inform · persuade · entertain

My reason:

7**Which detail best supports the main idea?** Fill in the circle for ONE choice.

- The octopus has a soft body and no bones.
- The octopus twisted open a jar lid to get the crab inside.
- The octopus lives in the ocean.
- A shark or an eel can be a predator.

7b. In one sentence, tell why that detail best shows the main idea.

Explain Write Your Main Idea & Summary 10 min

Question 8. Write the **main idea** in **one sentence**. Then write a **3 to 4 sentence summary** of the article using details. A summary tells the **most important** parts — you do **not** need every little thing.

You may start your sentences with: "The main idea is..." · "One way..." · "Another way..." · "Also,..." · "These details show..."

Main idea (one sentence)

Details (summary: 3–4 sentences)

Summary connection

How do your details show the main idea?

Close ACE Wrap-Up 5 min

Answer

Say the **main idea** of the article in your **own words**, in one sentence.

Cite

Name **one paragraph** that helps show the main idea.

Extend

What is **one new thing** you learned about octopuses? Write one sentence.

Continue Early Finisher optional • ~15 min

If you finish early (no new materials needed):

Write a new title for the article on the back of this page. Your new title should **fit the main idea**. Then write **one sentence** telling why your title fits.

Turn in: Hand in this whole packet with your name, class, and date filled in. Make sure questions 1–8 and the ACE box are done. The new title is optional — turn it in too if you did it.

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