

Skill: Infer and Support the Main Idea**Saving Your Family's Energy Dollar****3rd Grade Nonfiction**

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How can you help your family save money on energy this winter? Here are some important ways to save money.

What can you do to help save money in the kitchen? Keep lids on pots when you cook.

How can we save dollars everywhere in our home? If your windowpanes are loose, there are leaks. The heat can leak out of your home. You won't see those leaks, but you can make sure you don't have them. Seal windows and doorframes so there is no chance of a leak. With every leak, your family loses money. Your family can save money by sealing along doorframes, too. If you have a window air conditioner, be sure to seal around it, too. Your family can buy tape or seals to weatherproof doors and windows and around pipes. That will help your family save money by keeping the heat inside in winter and outside in summer.

Windows can make your home colder. In winter, you may see ice on your window on the inside. That means you need another window layer. Storm windows and storm doors help a lot. They don't just put another layer between you and the cold. They make an air pocket that is like a cushion between your home and the outside air. If you don't have storm doors and windows, you can buy plastic sheets to tape over the windows. Just be sure to tape carefully. That keeps the cold on the outside of the windows.

Keeping doors and windows closed is another way to save energy. Heat can leave your home if you leave the door open when you take out the trash. Close that door to save money.

Insulation helps save energy. Insulation is a layer between the cold and you. It can keep warmth in and cold out. It is a way to keep a home warm in winter and cool in summer. Outside walls are between your family's home and the cold air. Those walls need to have insulation. Your home's insulation may have holes in it. To find them, look at the walls carefully. If you see dirty spots, that is a clue. You may have found a hole in the insulation. You need to patch it. Then you will have a lower energy bill.

Warm clothes are important. A sweater is like insulation you wear. If everyone in your family wears a sweater inside, you are warmer. Then you could turn your heat down and save money.

Many people turn heat down at night. It is colder at night. But they do not turn up the heat. They use extra blankets to keep warm. They cut down their energy bill. They save money while they sleep.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?

- a. Chicago is cold.
- b. People need warm clothes.
- c. Insulation saves money.
- d. You can cut energy costs.

2. Which of these is the main idea of the last paragraph?

- a. People need blankets.
- b. It is cold at night.
- c. People use blankets to save money.
- d. People need to keep warm at night.

3. Which of these facts is important to know about how insulation helps people?

- a. It costs money.
- b. It saves money.
- c. It helps people at night.
- d. It is part of your windows.

4. What is the main idea of the paragraph about insulation?

- a. You need to patch walls.
- b. Insulation saves energy costs.
- c. People need winter clothes.
- d. Turn down the heat to save money.

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

Re-read the paragraph about windows. Write what the main idea is.

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	d	c	b	b

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. Answers should include that people should seal windows to conserve energy.

Skill: Infer and Support the Main Idea

The Ants and the Grasshopper 3rd Grade Fiction

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It is wintertime. The weather is cold, but the ants are doing fine. They have their warm home, and they have a lot of food to eat. They can wait for the warm weather in spring. The reason the ants have a lot of food is because they worked in the summer. So now they have grain to eat.

Grain is a kind of plant. People plant it and cut it and then they use it to make bread. The ants get the grain in summer, because that is when grain grows. The ants live in the fields where the grain grows. When the wind blows, some grain falls and the ants rush to get it. They do not eat it right then. They save it because they need to be able to have food in the winter months when plants do not grow. This goes on all summer.

The ants work hard every day. They pick up the grain, they carry it to their home. Every ant helps. Each ant carries one piece of grain. It is hard work. They carry more than they need to eat every day. They carry grain they will eat in winter, too. They play sometimes, but most of the time they work.

The grasshoppers live near the ants, and they love summer. They hop and play and they laugh at the ants. They say, "We have fun every day while you work every day. Come and play. You can get grain later." But the ants say, "No, we have to work."

Soon it is winter, and the grasshoppers are cold. They are hungry, too. They do not have food to eat. Since they played all summer, they did not save food for winter.

One day, a grasshopper came to see the ants and he was very hungry. "Please, ants, could you help me a little bit? I am just so hungry!" said the grasshopper.

The ants asked him, "Why didn't you work in summer? We did. Remember, how you played while we worked? You made fun of us and said, 'All work and no play is no good.' Well, now we have food and you are hungry."

The grasshopper said, "I didn't have the time. The weather was so lovely that I spent all the days singing. I couldn't help but have fun. We had such a good time."

The ants said, "We are sorry you have no food. We have a lot because we worked hard. You have none because you played. But, we will give you some food because we are good, kind neighbors. We want you to live, so we will help you now. But learn from us. Playing is a lot of fun. But you need to work to live."

The grasshopper thanked the ants. The grasshopper had learned a lesson. It is fun to play, but you need to save for winter, too. You need to work if you want to eat. Next summer, he would work and play, too, just like the ants.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question.

6. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?

- a. The winter is cold, spring is warm.
- b. Ants are fine in winter.
- c. Ants have food because they worked.
- d. Ants need food.

7. Which of these is the best main idea for paragraph 3?

- a. The ants played some days.
- b. The ants worked to get food.
- c. The ants helped each other.
- d. The ants love summer.

8. What is the main idea of the passage?

- a. You need to work to stay alive.
- b. You need food to live.
- c. Playing all the time is fun.
- d. Ants help grasshoppers.

9. What is a good title for this passage?

- a. What the Grasshopper Learned
- b. How the Ants Worked
- c. Why the Ants Worked
- d. How the Grasshopper Played

10. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What do you think the main idea is of the last paragraph?

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Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	c	b	a	a

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. Answers should include that the grasshopper had learned a lesson.