

Chicago Then and Now

CCSSR2. Identify the key supporting details for a main idea.

Note to teachers: If you give students the main idea of a selection and ask them to support it, that will help them understand the relationship between information and a main idea. Then if they write to support that same idea, they'll learn more about how a nonfiction writer includes information to support an idea.

Long ago, Chicago was a small town. Families settled here. Everyone knew everyone else. People worked hard to get what they needed. Children worked, too, and there were no schools. People had to get wood to make their houses and to heat them in winter.

Then more people moved to Chicago. As families moved here and grew, they wanted to have a school, so they built one. All the children went to school in that one building. The teacher showed them how to read and write and do math. Then, after school they would go home and help their families.

People built more homes and they built streets, too. They built the streets out of wood. Some people had wagons they would ride on the streets, pulled by horses. At night it was hard to see. The wagons would have lanterns to light the way. A lantern uses a candle or oil to make a light. Sometimes the lanterns would fall off the wagons, and they might set the street on fire because the street was made of wood. So people usually carried buckets of water in their wagons in case they set a fire.

When more people moved to Chicago they opened businesses. One of those businesses was a blacksmith shop. There a worker would fix wagon wheels made of metal. The blacksmith would make horseshoes, too. There was a carpenter shop, too, where workers built furniture for homes.

After many years, there were more people here and many changes. The streets were paved, and there were streetlights. People could shop for clothes in stores. They could buy furniture in stores, too. It was becoming a big city. Every day more people came to live here. Businesses opened. People started a newspaper.

If you look at the city today, it is hard to imagine what it looked like long ago. You can see pictures of those times if you go to the Chicago History Museum. There you will see the first streetcar and many more things that were part of everyday life in Chicago long ago.

Support the Main Idea

The main idea of this passage is that Chicago has changed a lot. Underline five examples in the passage that support that idea.

Write What You Think

Write about Chicago now. Is it still changing? Use your own examples to support your answer.