

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Main Idea Worksheet 5

**Directions:** Read each passage and ask yourself, “What is the author doing in this paragraph?” Write your answer in the summary box and then think of an appropriate title for the passage based on the main idea of the passage.

1. Sir Isaac Newton was contemplating the universe in his garden one day in 1665 when he noticed an apple fall from a tree. Newton wondered to himself, “Why should the apple always fall to the ground? Why does it not go sideways or upwards but directly toward the Earth’s center?” After much contemplation Newton concluded that objects are pulled to the Earth through a force that he called *gravity*, which means heaviness in Latin. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1687 Newton formally expressed his law of universal gravitation in series of books called *The Principia*.

Summarize this paragraph in one sentence. **Be specific and clearly explain the main idea.**

An appropriate title: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In the summer of 1939, a few months before World War II started, Albert Einstein and a group of Hungarian scientists wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In this letter they warned Roosevelt that the Nazi’s were conducting atomic research and that the consequences would be dire if the Nazis were to win the race to build an atom bomb. They recommended that U.S. become involved in uranium research. As a result of this letter, the U.S. joined the atomic race and poured billions of dollars into the development of weaponry. The U.S. won the race and became the first country to build an atomic bomb. The bomb was then used in Japan, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. In 1954, a year before his death, Einstein would refer to the moment that he signed the letter to President Roosevelt as the greatest mistake of his life.

Summarize this paragraph in one sentence. **Be specific and clearly explain the main idea.**

An appropriate title: \_\_\_\_\_

3. For most of human history, people thought that the Earth was the center of the universe. Nicolaus Copernicus changed how people understood the universe when he theorized that it was heliocentric, or sun-centered. Interestingly, Copernicus had most of this theory worked out some time before 1514, and his work was fully articulated by 1532, yet publication of this text was not completed until 1543 as he lay dying. Some scholars believe that Copernicus delayed publishing this work because it contradicted the Catholic Church’s view that the Earth was at the center of the universe. Copernicus’s may have been smart in doing so because the Church did not formally accept his view of the universe until 1822, almost 300 years later.

Summarize this paragraph in one sentence. **Be specific and clearly explain the main idea.**

An appropriate title: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Galileo Galilei was an influential scientist and one of the early developers of the refracting telescope. In 1632 Galileo published a book called *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, in which he compared the Copernican view of a heliocentric universe, one where the sun is at the center, with the geocentric view, one in which the Earth is at the center. The Church took offense as to how Galileo portrayed the geocentric view using a character named Simplicio, which has undertones of *simpleton* in the Italian language, and he was put on trial before the Roman Inquisition. The Inquisition ordered Galileo to recant his ideas, his book was banned, he was forbidden from publishing anything else, and he was sentenced to house arrest for the rest of his life. I guess it's not just what you say that's important but how you say it.

Summarize this paragraph in one sentence. **Be specific and clearly explain the main idea.**

An appropriate title: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Nikola Tesla was an inventor and physicist who is best remembered for his contributions to the AC power system and radio, but he may have also built a death ray. At a 1937 luncheon in his honor, Tesla claimed to have created a weapon that could shoot a concentrated beam of energy capable of bringing down fleets of airplanes. He further claimed to have built, demonstrated, and used this weapon. When Tesla entered negotiations with the U.S., the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union to sell his device, Tesla claimed that one of these parties had sent people to break into his room and steal his invention, but that this theft was impossible since the blueprint for the weapon was entirely in his mind. Unfortunately, Tesla died with the blueprint in his mind before anyone could get one. On second thought, maybe that's not such a bad thing.

Summarize this paragraph in one sentence. **Be specific and clearly explain the main idea.**

An appropriate title: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Marie Curie not only the first woman to have won a Nobel Prize, she is also the only person to win a Nobel Prize in two different sciences. Most notably, however, Marie Curie discovered radiation. She was also the first person to use radiation to treat tumors. Curie experimented extensively with radioactivity during her scientific career. Unfortunately the damaging effects of radiation were not known then. Her exposure to radiation most likely was the cause of her blindness and early death. Still today her scientific papers are considered too dangerous to handle without protective equipment. These documents are stored in lead-lined boxes. Even her cookbook is radioactive. She must have made some really hot food in her lifetime.

Summarize this paragraph in one sentence. **Be specific and clearly explain the main idea.**

An appropriate title: \_\_\_\_\_