

Name: _____

Main Idea and Text Structure Worksheet 4

Directions: Read each passage and on a separate sheet of paper...

- A. Write a sentence explaining the main idea of the text
- B. Create a graphic organizer that represents the information in the text
- C. Come up with a title related to the main idea of the passage.



1. Today's economy is tough, but there are a lot of ways that you can cut back. Instead of paying big bucks to some fancy mechanic, you can save money by changing your own oil. Before you crawl under that car, you need to put on some clothes that you won't mind getting dirty. You will also need to wear goggles, gloves, and boots for your own safety.

Once you are properly dressed, crawl under your car and remove the oil plug. Drain the oil into an oil pan. Wait a few minutes to make sure that the old oil has drained completely, and then replace the oil plug. Now locate your car's oil filter and use an oil filter wrench to remove it. Be careful: a small amount of the old oil may dump out of the filter. Replace your old filter with the new one and pour four or five fresh quarts of oil into your car's engine. Larger vehicles may require more oil so be sure to find out the correct amount of oil for your car before pouring. The last step is to clean up your mess. This includes properly disposing of your old oil. Most places that change oil will get rid of your old oil for free. While you are dropping off your old oil you can laugh in their faces about all of the money that you are saving.

2. Going for a drive can be a peaceful and relaxing activity. The world is a beautiful place and you can see a lot more of it with a car, but one thing that can ruin a nice drive is heavy traffic. Have you ever wondered why there are traffic jams? The first reason is because of merging. Every car driver keeps a certain distance between themselves and the car in front of them. When a new person merges into traffic, the person behind him must slow down to adjust his or her following distance. Each person that merges causes more and more people to slow down. If there are many people merging, traffic will move very slowly. The second thing that creates traffic is bottlenecking. Bottlenecking happens when the number of lanes reduces. When lanes end, drivers have to merge, and as we have already discussed, merging slows down traffic. The absolute worst thing for the flow of traffic is an accident. An accident will create traffic in two ways: first, it will shut down lanes, which will create bottlenecking and force people to merge, but accidents also slow down traffic by absorbing the attention of passing drivers. Many people stare at the scene of the accident as they pass, which causes traffic to move very slowly through the bottleneck that is created by the accident. Traffic may back up for miles. So the next time that you're parked in the middle of the expressway staring at somebody's bumper stickers for several hours, you'll know why. Won't that be nice?

3. You might think that all automobile fuels are the same, but they aren't. Automobiles can run on one of three types of fuel: gasoline, diesel, and biodiesel. All of these fuels are burned inside of the engine, which creates the heat and energy that is used to power the car, but there are important differences between them. Gasoline and diesel are the most common fuels, but they are burned differently. Diesel fuel is heavier and less flammable than gasoline, so it has to be compressed before it will burn. Gasoline is lighter than diesel, but both of these fuels are made from crude oil. Biodiesel, on the other hand, is made from vegetables. Both biodiesel and diesel fuels must be burned in diesel engines, which only use diesel fuel. If gasoline is pumped into a diesel engine, it will have to be pumped out. These fuels may look pretty similar at the gas station, but remember that there are important differences between them or it may cost you.

4. According to the last US census, drivers 19 years old and younger represent only 5% of all drivers, yet they are involved in more than 12% of car accidents. This shows that teen drivers are involved in more accidents than their older and wiser counterparts. Sadly, teens make up more than 8% of drivers killed in car accidents. It doesn't have to be like this. We can prevent accidents and save lives by changing the minimum driving age. By raising the minimum driving age to 21 years old, more teens will live to see their 20s. Doesn't that seem worth it? I'd rather have my teenage son or daughter moaning and groaning about the driving age than getting involved in a serious accident because he or she isn't ready to drive yet. What do you think?

5. The history of the automobile involves many key contributors. Nicolas Cugnot is credited with creating the first self-propelled vehicle, and Nicéphore Niépce created the first internal combustion engine, but perhaps the most important figure in the history of the automobile was Henry Ford. Henry Ford did not invent the automobile but he changed the way that automobiles, and most consumer products, are made. Henry Ford did this by making cars in a more efficient way: he used an assembly line. Rather than training each worker to create a whole vehicle, Ford's workers were only responsible for one small part of the manufacturing process. For example, one worker's job might be to put all of the tires on all of the wheels. Since this was all that this worker would do all day, it was pretty easy to learn his job and stay focused on it. Building products using an assembly line proved to be cheaper and faster than using craftsmen to produce specialized products. Because of his assembly line, Ford's Model T became the first affordable automobile for mainstream America. So while Henry Ford didn't invent the car, he did make it so that most Americans could buy cars and that's a pretty big deal.

6. Imagine this: you're driving down the highway at a decent pace, maybe sixty miles an hour, when suddenly your engine makes a loud noise and your car comes to a rough stop. What happened? You probably ran out of oil. Cars need oil to operate. Oil lubricates the engine to prevent friction. If your car does not have oil, the engine will overheat and malfunction. The engine block may crack, which will break the car. This is an easy to prevent, however. Just check your oil levels every time that you fill up your gas tank. If you notice that you are leaving behind oil spots or that your oil levels are dropping, get the leak in your system plugged immediately. A healthy car does not lose oil. Also, don't forget to change your oil every 3,000 to 7,000 miles. Replacing your car's engine is very costly and it's a lot cheaper and easier to practice basic maintenance than to buy a whole new one.