

FCAT READING SKILL

Determine the Main Idea, Stated or Implied

1. **What to do and what to watch for:** The main idea tells what the whole passage is about. The main idea is the main or most important point the writer wants to make.
2. **Read the title of the passage.** The title is written in **BOLD** at the top of the passage. Find the title before you read the passage. Read it and think about it by asking:
 - What is this reading all about?*
 - What's the main point?*
 - Why did the writer write this?*
 - What information will I get from this reading?*
 - What is the BIG picture here?*
 - Why would someone want to read this?*
3. **Read the introduction.** The introduction is right under the title. It is one or two sentences written in *ITALICS*. Just like the title, the introduction gives important information about what you are going to read. Sometimes, the introduction tells you the main idea before you read. After you read the introduction, think about it by asking yourself the same questions you asked about the title.
4. **Read the passage. Is there a topic sentence?** This is a sentence that explains in a few words what the whole passage is all about. This sentence tells the main idea or topic of the passage. Often, the topic sentence is the first sentence, but sometimes you will find it in the middle or at the end. When you find a topic sentence, you have found the **stated main idea**.

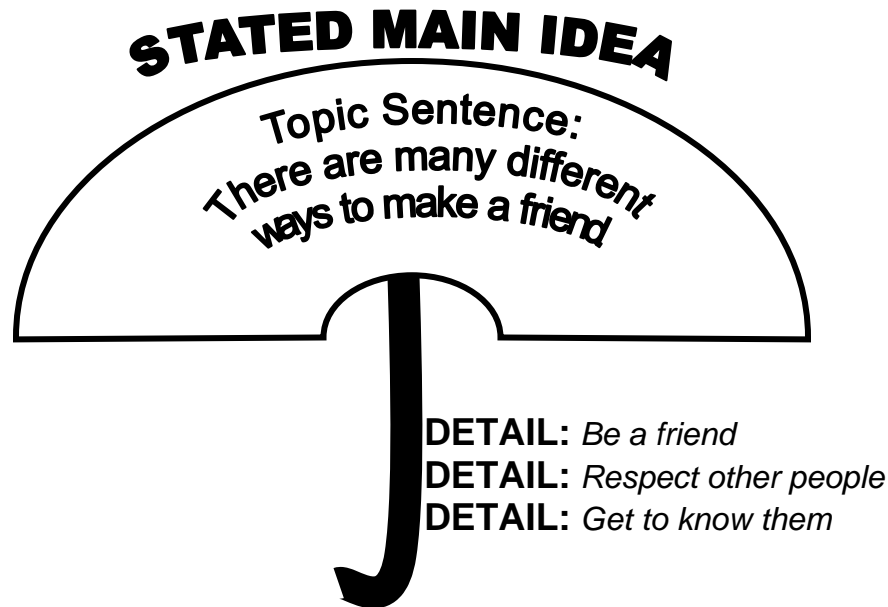
TOPIC SENTENCE + DETAILS = STATED MAIN IDEA
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With Stated main idea, you can prove your answer by going directly to the passage to check it. Your answer is clearly stated in the passage, and should be easy to find. Questions on stated main idea are based on what is written exactly or stated in the passage itself. For these questions, you go directly to the reading and look for the information. In other words, prove it!

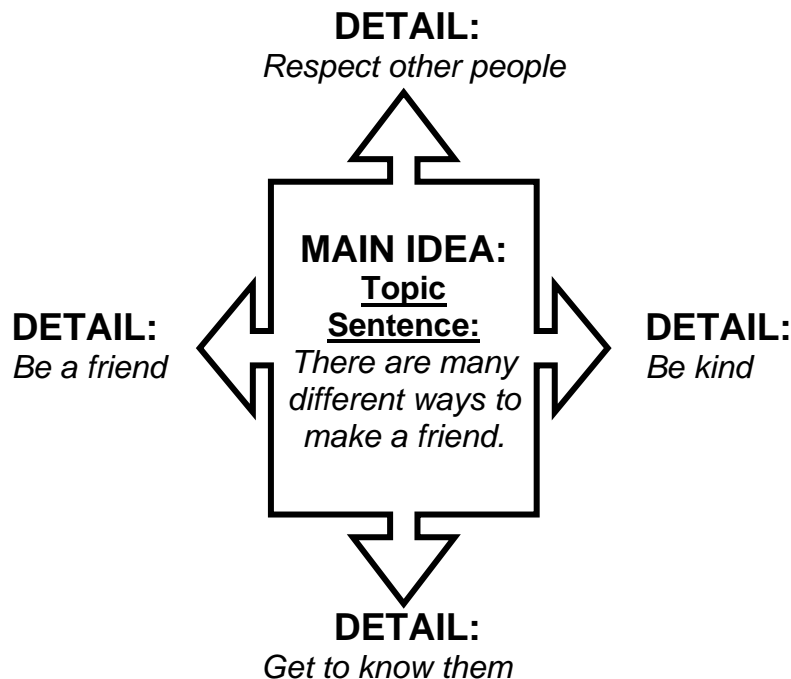
Example:

There are many different ways to make a friend. One way to make a friend is to be a friend. If someone needs you, be there. Second, remember that everyone is a different person. Respect the way other people are, and get to know them. They will respect you, and want to get to know you too. Another thing you can do is always to be kind to everyone. You'd be surprised how many great friends are waiting for you.

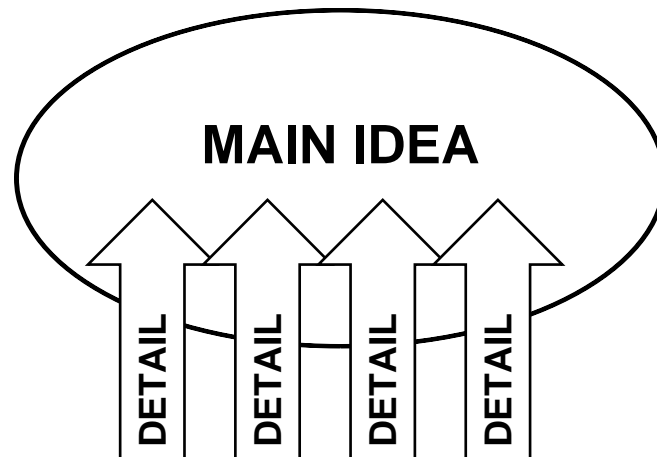
The first sentence is the **topic sentence**. The other sentences tell the **details** to support the main idea, “ways to make a friend.” You can test your answer because the topic sentence states this idea. Also, all of the other sentences (the details) are talking about the same main idea.



5. **Use graphic organizers.** You can visualize or organize the main idea and details in many different ways. Take a look at another graphic organizer.



6. **Pay attention to the details.** Details are little pieces of information that tell more about the main idea. Details support the main idea and are connected to the main idea. All of the details will talk about the main idea and lead you to the main idea, like little clues. The main idea covers all of the details.



7. **Read actively.** This means that while you are reading, you continue to ask yourself questions to anticipate what is coming next.

What is the writer trying to say here?

What do the details have in common?

What can I infer from the information I have read so far?

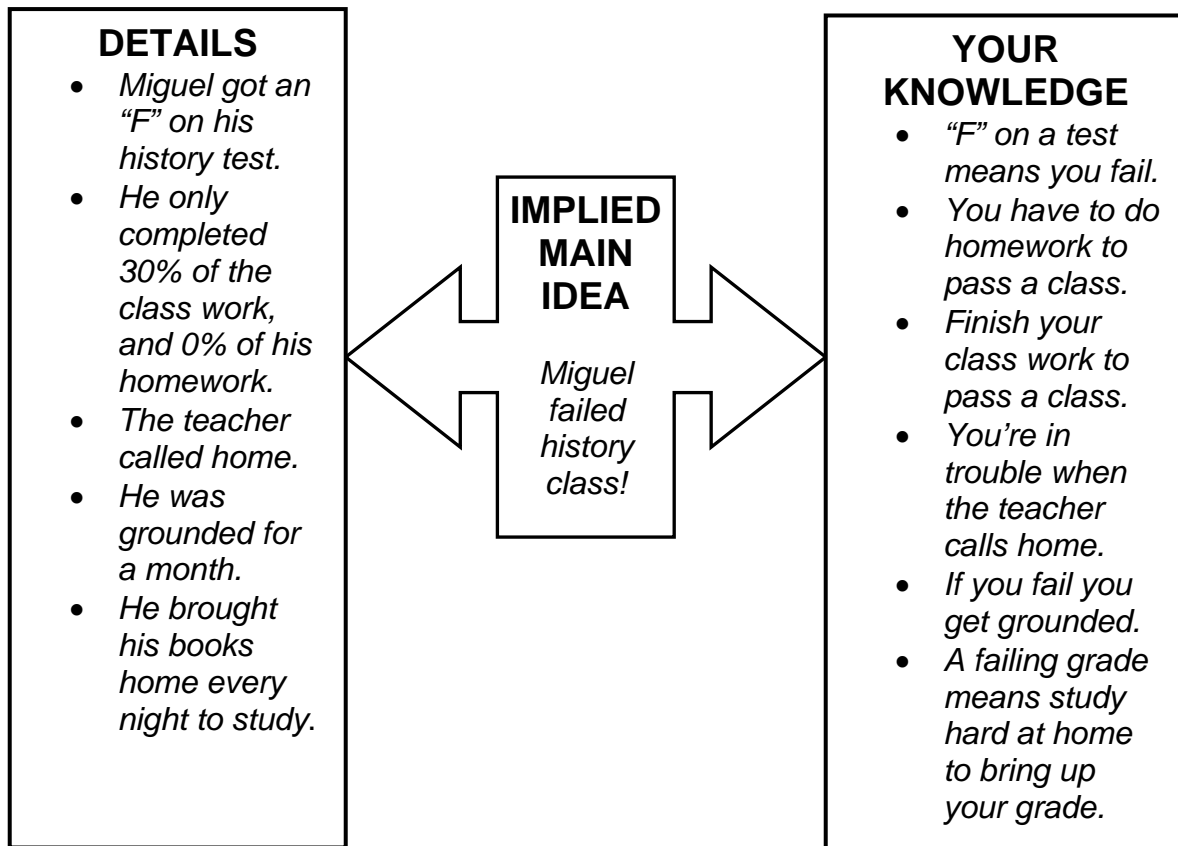
What do these details add up to?

In other words, if the main idea is not stated, then it is implied. The implied main idea is not stated, it is only suggested. There is not a topic sentence, so you need to be a good detective. Pay attention to the details, and put them together with your own knowledge to determine the main idea. This is called drawing an **inference**. You draw an inference to find **the implied main idea**:



Example: Miguel got an "F" on his history test. He only completed 30% of the classwork, and 0% of his homework. When the teacher called Miguel's father, Miguel was grounded for a month. He had to bring his books home every night and sit at the kitchen table to study.

The following graphic organizer is one way to organize the details of the passage and your own knowledge of the topic.



If you think while you are reading (read actively), then you know that all of these details + what you know about school (your knowledge) add up to one thing (the main idea). Miguel failed history class! The passage never stated directly the main idea, but you can figure it out (infer) from the details PLUS what you yourself know.

Name: _____

Title: _____

MAIN IDEA

DETAIL

DETAIL

DETAIL

DETAIL

Name: _____

Title: _____ Author _____

STATED MAIN IDEA

Topic Sentence:

| | |

DETAIL:

DETAIL:

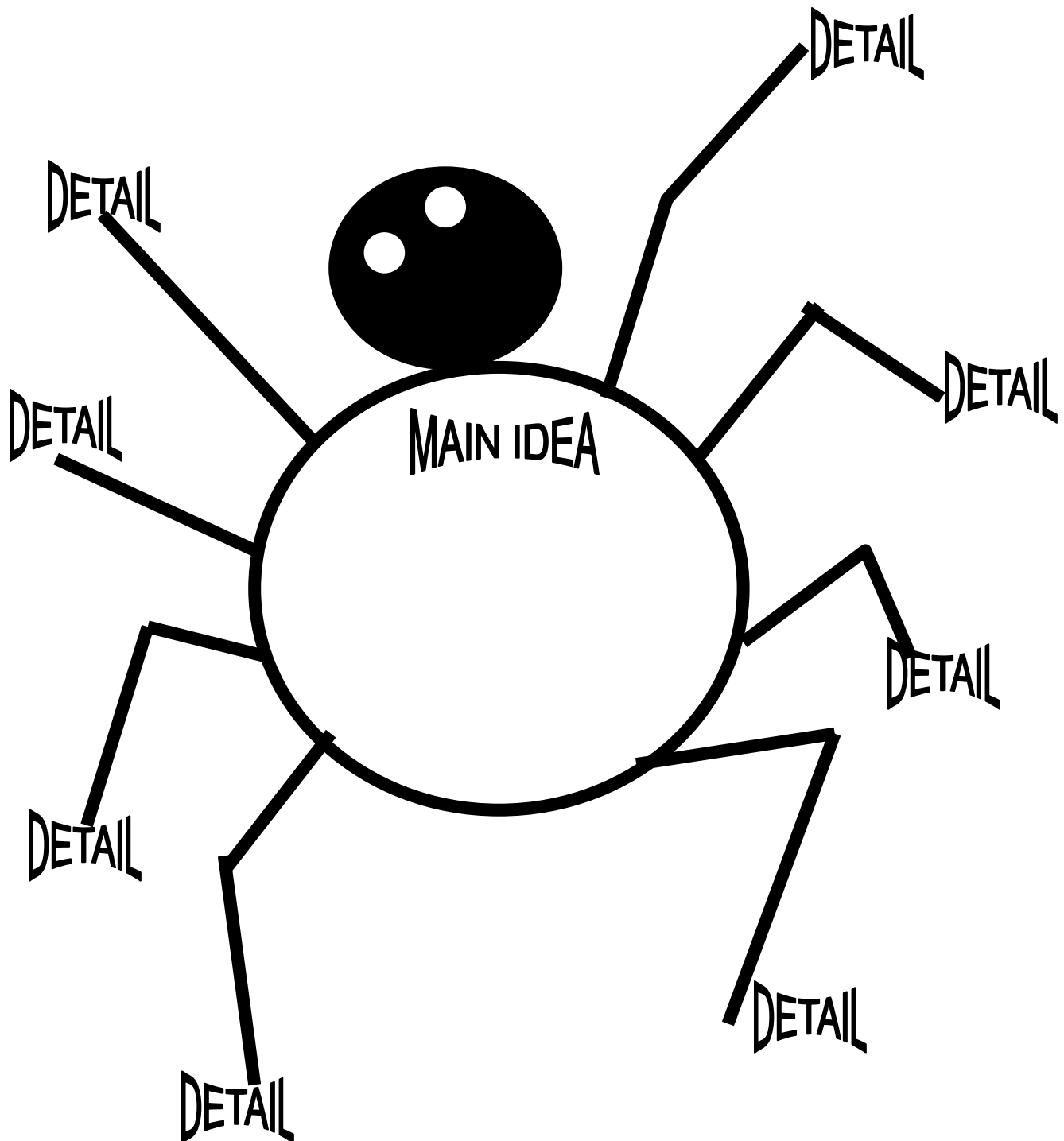
DETAIL:

Name: _____

Main Idea and Details SPIDER

The spider's body is the main idea. Each leg is a different detail.

Title: _____ Author _____



Name: _____

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEA and DETAILS

Title/Topic/Text: _____ Author: _____

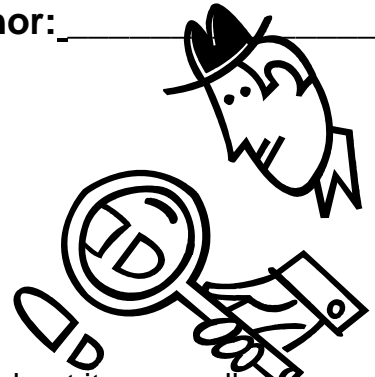


Name: _____

Title/Topic/Text: _____ Author: _____

IMPLIED MAIN IDEA

Follow the clues that lead you to the main idea.



CLUE #1 tells....

What I know about it personally is...

CLUE #2 tells....

What I know about it personally is...

CLUE #3 tells....

What I know about it personally is...

CLUE #4 tells....

What I know about it personally is...

IMPLIED MAIN IDEA

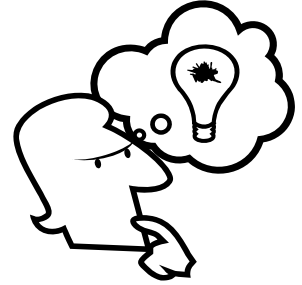
What's it all about? Did you figure it out?

Name: _____

Title: _____ Author _____

IMPLIED MAIN IDEA

What's it all about?



Details:		Your knowledge:		Implied Main Idea
1. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	→	1. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	=	What's it all about? Did you figure it out? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
2. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	→	2. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	=	
3. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	→	3. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	=	
4. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	→	4. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	=	

Name: _____

Title/Topic/Text: _____ Author: _____

TOPIC SENTENCE



DETAILS

1.

2.

3.

4.



STATED MAIN IDEA

Name: _____

Title/Topic/Text: _____ Author: _____

DETAILS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



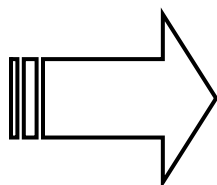
YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



IMPLIED MAIN IDEA

Name: _____

Title/Topic/Text: _____ Author: _____

Diagram illustrating the structure of a paragraph using a hot air balloon metaphor:

- TOPIC SENTENCE**: The large central section of the balloon.
- DETAIL**: Three smaller sections (two on the sides, one in a thought bubble) providing supporting information.
- STATED MAIN IDEA**: The basket of the hot air balloon.

Below the hot air balloon is a large rectangular box for additional writing.

Name: _____

Title/Topic/Text: _____ Author: _____

FINDING MAIN IDEAS

Main Idea:

Page # Paragraph #:

1.

2.

3.

4.

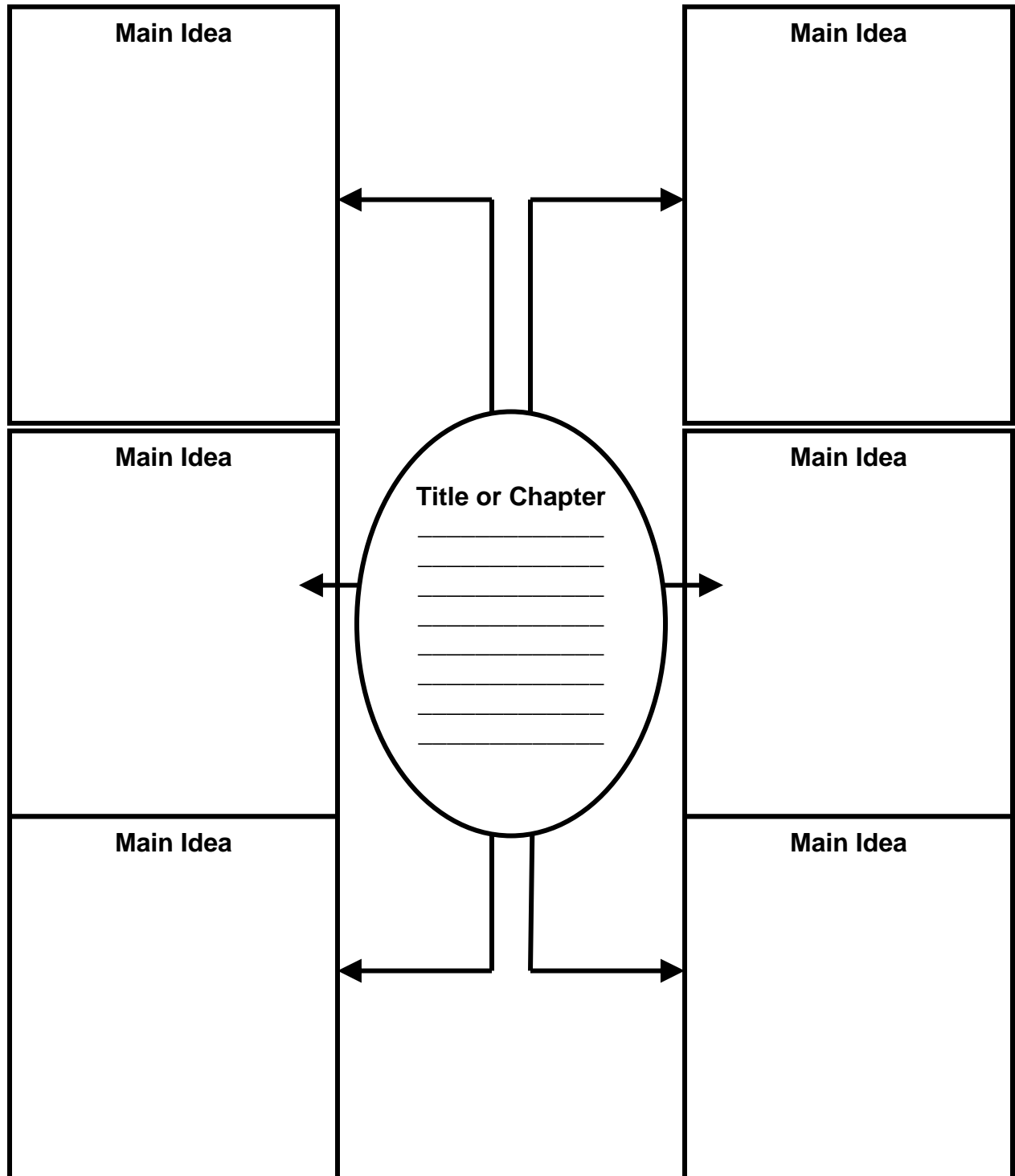
5.

6.

Name: _____

MAIN IDEA ORGANIZER

Title/Topic/Chapter: _____ Author: _____



Name: _____

IDENTIFYING SUPPORTING DETAILS ON A TOPIC

Title/Chapter: _____ Author: _____

TOPIC FOCUS # 1:

Support

Support

Support

TOPIC FOCUS # 1:

Support

Support

Support

TOPIC FOCUS # 1:

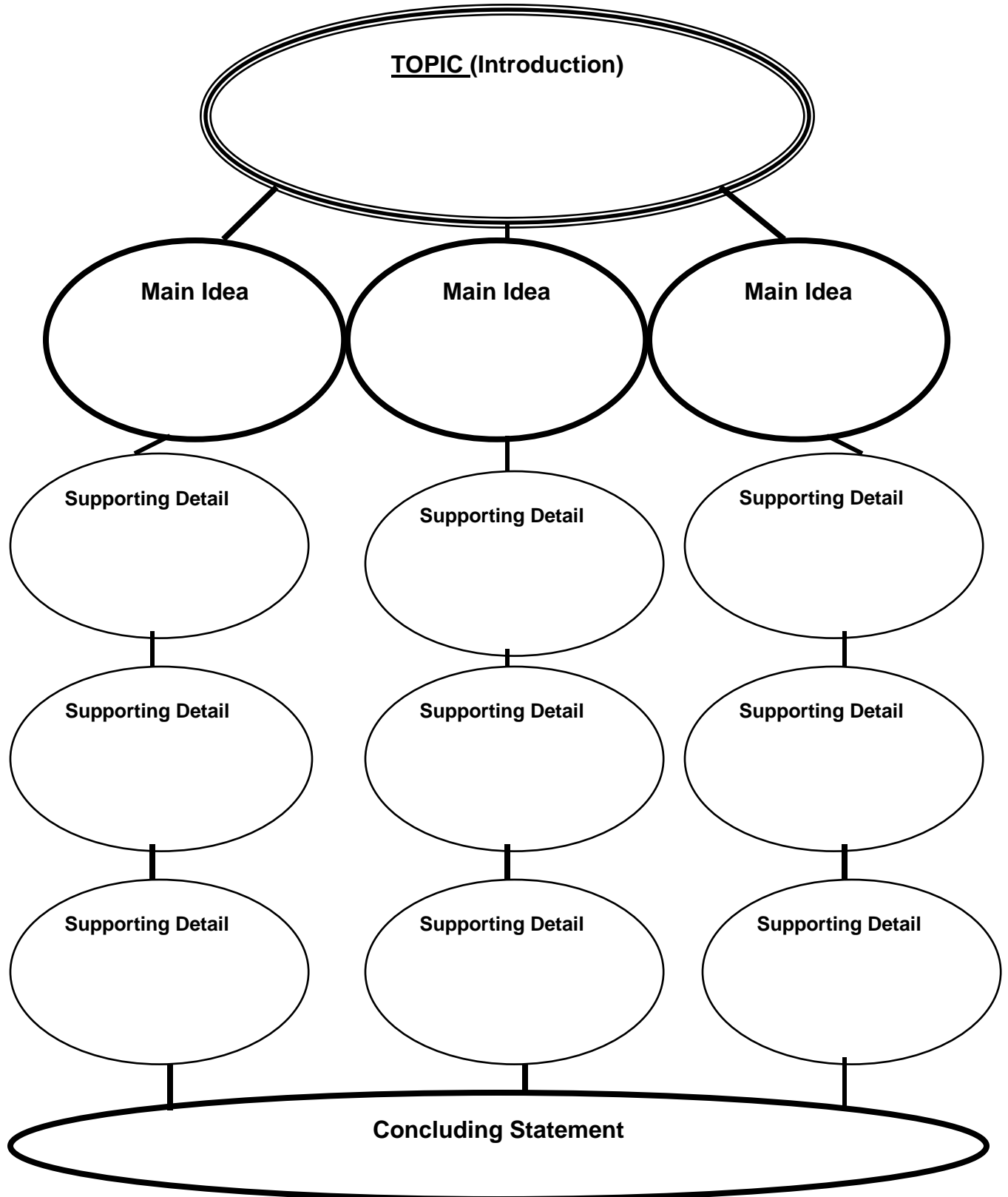
Support

Support

Support

Name: _____

EXPOSITORY THINKING/WRITING ORGANIZER



Name: _____

THINKING & WRITING ORGANIZER: EXPOSITORY ESSAY

Introduction:

Introductory Sentence (State 3 Main Ideas):

Main Idea 1:

Main Idea 2:

Main Idea 3:

Transition Sentence:

Body Paragraph 1:

Main Idea:

Detail/Example:

Detail/Example:

Detail/Example:

Closing/Transition Sentence:

Body Paragraph 2:

Main Idea:

Detail/Example:

Detail/Example:

Detail/Example:

Closing/Transition Sentence:

Body Paragraph 3:

Main Idea:

Detail/Example:

Detail/Example:

Detail/Example:

Closing/Transition Sentence:

Conclusion:

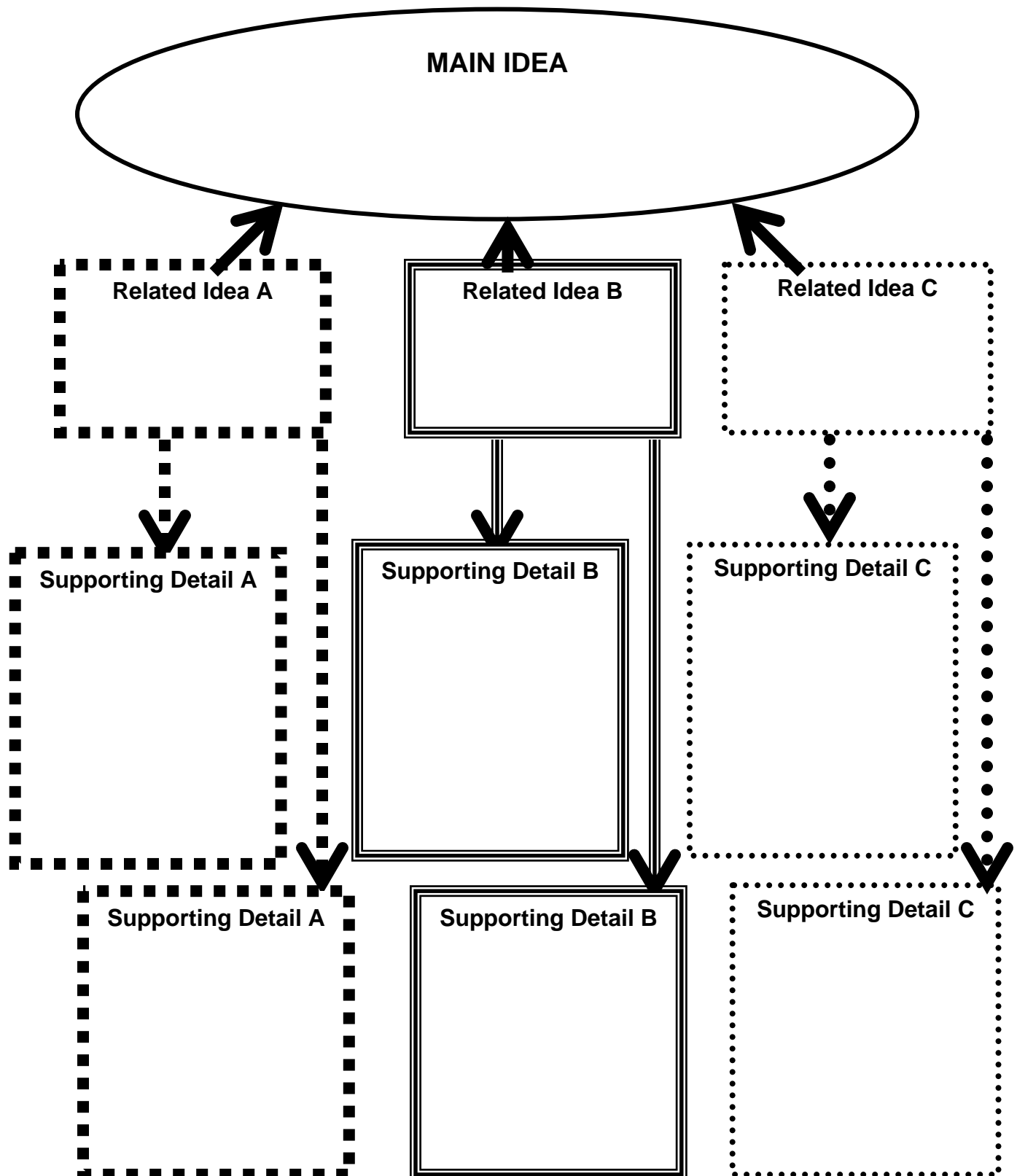
Topic Sentence (Restate 3 Main Ideas):

Prediction:

Closing Sentence:

Name: _____

MAIN IDEA MAP



Name: _____

THINKING & WRITING ORGANIZER: EXPOSITORY ESSAY

Title/Chapter: _____ Author _____

Paragraph #1 – Introduction

Topic Sentence (Introduce and state **Main Idea #1**, **Main Idea #2**, and **Main Idea #3**): _____

Main Idea #1: _____

Main Idea #2: _____

Main Idea #3: _____

Transition Sentence: _____

Paragraph #2 – Main Idea #1 is discussed completely and with evidence.

Topic Sentence (Main Idea #1): _____

Detail #1: _____

Detail #2: _____

Detail #3: _____

Closing Sentence: _____

Paragraph #3 – Main Idea 2 is discussed completely and with evidence.

Topic Sentence (Main Idea #2): _____

Detail #1: _____

Detail #2: _____

Detail #3: _____

Closing Sentence: _____

Paragraph #4 – Main Idea #3 is discussed completely and with evidence.

Topic Sentence (Main Idea #1): _____

Detail #1: _____

Detail #2: _____

Detail #3: _____

Closing Sentence: _____

Paragraph #5 – Conclusion

Topic Sentence (Restate **Main Idea #1**, **Main Idea #2**, and **Main Idea #3**): _____

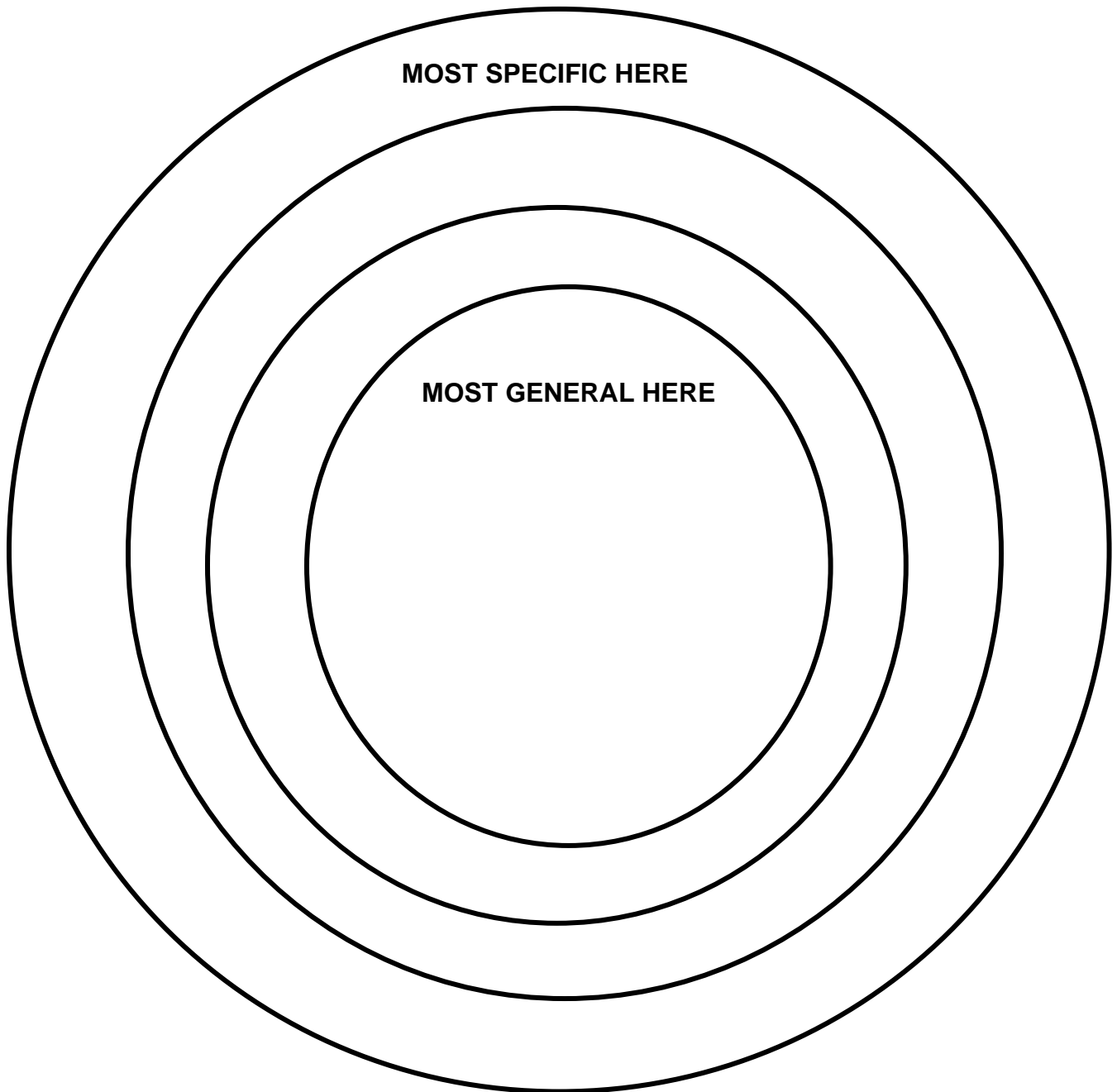
Make a Prediction: _____

Concluding Sentence: _____

Name: _____

MAIN IDEA ORGANIZER: GENERAL TO SPECIFIC

Title/Chapter: _____ Author _____



Name: _____

**MAIN IDEA ORGANIZER: WEDDING CAKE
GENERAL TO SPECIFIC**

Title/Chapter: _____ Author _____

End with most specific here.

Start with the most general here.