

Name: _____

Main Idea 2

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. Being a clown isn’t all fun and games. Rodeo clowns expose themselves to great danger every time they perform. When cowboys dismount or are bucked off of bulls at riding competitions, rodeo clowns jump in front of the bulls and motion wildly to get their attention. In this way rodeo clowns provide an alternate target, and in doing so protect the rider. So you see, sometimes clowning around can be serious business.

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

An appropriate title: _____

2. The wolverine, a medium sized mammal weighing no more than 50 lbs., has earned its reputation for ferocity with its documented ability to kill prey many times its size. The reason why wolverines have so many conflicts with other animals (including wolves, cougars, and even bears) is probably because of the wolverine’s preferred hunting style. Rather than chasing down or tricking its prey like most hunters, the wolverine prefers to take its meals directly from other hunters. So while a polar bear or a lone wolf might be enjoying a hard earned carcass, a hungry wolverine may try to take his lunch. This keeps the wolverine in plenty of fights.

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

An appropriate title: _____

3. Sometime in December of 1891, Dr. James Naismith, a gym teacher at the YMCA College in Springfield, Massachusetts was trying to keep his gym class active on a rainy day. He wanted a vigorous game that would keep his students moving. After rejecting a few other ideas because they were too rough or not suited for the walled-in gym, Naismith wrote out the rules for a game with peach baskets fixed to ten-foot elevated tracks. Naismith’s students played against one another, passing the ball around and shooting it into the peach baskets. Dribbling wasn’t a part of the original game, and it took a while to realize that the game would run more smoothly if the bottoms of the baskets were removed, but this game grew to be one of the most popular sports in America today. Can you guess which one?

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

An appropriate title: _____

4. What's that humming sound? Could it be hummingbird, the only bird capable of backward flight? Hummingbirds have many unique flight habits that distinguish them from other birds. Most birds flap their wings up and down to fly, but the hummingbird moves its wings forward and backward very rapidly in a figure eight pattern. This allows the hummingbird to hover in position, fly upside down, and move about very rapidly. And while other birds have to push off with their feet to begin flying, and work their ways up to their top speeds, the hummingbird can both start flying at maximum speed and stop flying instantaneously. After you've seen a hummingbird in flight, it's unlikely that you'll mistake them for another bird.

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

An appropriate title: _____

5. Remember, if something is worth doing, it is worth doing correctly. That said, the key to making perfect cookies is merely a matter of preparation and precision. To begin with, read your cookie recipe thoroughly before baking. Make sure that you have all of the necessary ingredients before you continue. Next, use good tools and utensils. Sometimes, the craftsperson is only as good as his or her tools. By using good tools you can minimize mistakes and improve the quality of your product. Lastly, you should use top quality ingredients. Unlike in the fairytales, you can't turn lead into gold. If you use poor quality materials, you'll create an inferior product. So, to make perfect cookies you should use the highest quality materials available. Bon apatite!

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

An appropriate title: _____

6. The term "machine gun" is commonly applied to any gun that is designed to fire repeatedly and in rapid succession for as long as the trigger is held down. During the course of warfare, the trigger of some machine guns may be held down almost continuously for hours to create suppressant fire (rounds fired not necessarily to kill an enemy, but to prevent them from attacking). All of this firing can generate a lot of heat, which may cause the weapon to overheat and malfunction. But this situation has been addressed in a number of ways. For one, practically all machine guns fire from an open bolt, which allows air to cool the breach between bursts of fire. Additionally, some machine guns have removable barrels, which allow hot barrels to be replaced. And some advanced machine guns even have sophisticated barrel cooling systems, which maintain a functional heat level within the weapon. As you might have concluded, a lot of brain power has gone into keeping those guns firing.

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

An appropriate title: _____