

CENTRAL IDEA QUESTION STRATEGIES

The Central Idea covers the **OVERALL** details introduced in the text.

(The Central Idea does **NOT** focus on specific details or introduce new ideas.)

STRATEGY: IDENTIFY the central idea and DEFINE in 3-6 words*

Steps to Answering Central Idea Questions

Step 1: HIGHLIGHT/UNDERLINE (See the *Reading Non-Fiction Handout*)

- First and Last Sentences
- Birthday Words – but, instead, rather, though, however, despite, although, yet. Central idea is often in the sentences containing a birthday word.
- Weird punctuation—colon, rhetorical question

Step 2: Re-read what you highlighted after you initially read the text. As you re-read your highlighted sentences, ask yourself, “HOW does this sentence develop the Central Idea?” “WHAT is the overarching theme of the text?”

Step 3: Define the Central Idea in 3-6 words (in your head) before looking at the answer choices. Central Idea needs to be **SHORT** and **SIMPLE!** The more concise, the quicker and easier it is to check it against the answer choices.

Step 4: Use the HSDQ Answering Multiple Choice Strategies (See handout)