Lesson plan example: 3rd grade ELA, main idea

Example 2 of 6 · 40 minutes · from draftmylesson.com/blog/lesson-plan-example

Standard reference	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2. Determine the main idea of a text, recount key details, and explain how they support the main idea. Use this reference only where Common Core applies.
Objective	Given a short nonfiction paragraph, students state the main idea, select two supporting details and explain how each supports it. Success is at least 4 out of 5 points, including an accurate main idea, using the rubric in the teacher guide.
Materials	• The four printable passages, one set per student; keep Text D for the exit ticket • Pencils, with two-color highlighters optional • A bag containing a notebook, pencil and library book • Anchor chart: "Main idea = what the paragraph says about its topic; details = evidence that develops it"

Companion printables: Four original animal passages and student response sheets (PDF, 4 pages): draftmylesson.com/resources/lesson-library/grade-3-main-idea-students.pdf · Teacher guide, answers, rubric and adaptations (PDF, 2 pages): draftmylesson.com/resources/lesson-library/grade-3-main-idea-teacher.pdf

The 40-minute pack includes a teacher model about emperor penguins, guided practice about beavers, independent practice about bats, and a separate green-turtle exit passage. The answer key accepts accurate paraphrases, not only one exact sentence.

Step	Time	What happens
Hook	4 min	Take the three school items from the bag and ask what connects them. Explain that a text also has a connecting idea, but an animal's name alone gives only the topic, not what the paragraph says about it.
Direct instruction	9 min	Read Text A aloud. Model the idea that emperor penguin fathers protect an egg from the cold. Underline two details, such as balancing the egg on their feet and covering it with a skin fold, and explain how each supports the idea. Compare the whole-paragraph idea with a single detail.
Guided practice	12 min	Read Text B about beavers. Pairs propose a main idea and two details, then explain their connections. Compare a broad idea about building and changing surroundings with "Beavers build dams," which leaves out the lodge.
Independent practice	10 min	Students read Text C about bats and explain how two details support its main idea. Note whether difficulty comes from reading the text, choosing evidence or explaining its relevance. A sentence number can identify a detail; copied facts without a connection do not complete the task.
Exit ticket	5 min	Give students the previously unseen Text D about green turtles. They write a main idea and explain how two details support it. Score one point for the main idea, one for each detail and one for each explanation. Use the result to choose independent extension, a comparison task or teacher-supported rereading.

Adaptations

Preview unfamiliar vocabulary, allow oral responses or a scribe, and read aloud when assessing comprehension separately from decoding. Record the support provided. The teacher guide includes response frames and an extension task.

Why this works

The lesson follows an "I do, we do, you do" gradual release sequence. The exit ticket uses a fresh passage and assesses both evidence selection and explanation, matching the focus of RI.3.2. For ready-to-print science and math materials, see the Grade 5 ecosystems and Grade 7 ratios packs in the 5E guide. Those grade labels describe US school levels; 5E describes a teaching method.

Sources: https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/2/ · https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/3/ · https://draftmylesson.com/blog/5e-lesson-plan
Check the standard adopted by your state, district or school before teaching. Adapt timing and materials to your students.