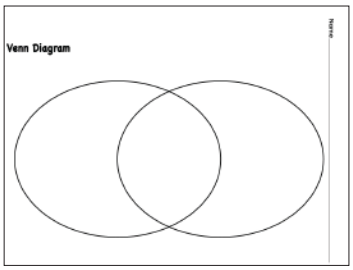
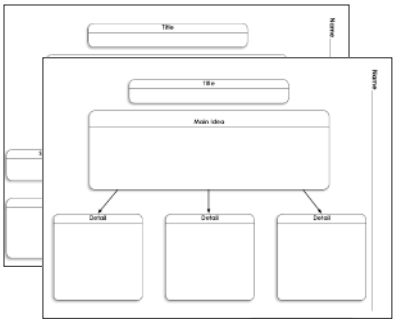
Comprehension Strategies Guide

Resource Overview

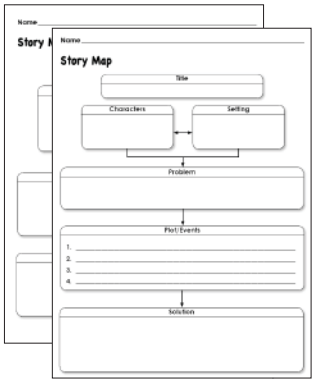
Comprehension Strategies texts and printouts help students learn strategies such as comparing and contrasting information, identifying the main idea and supporting details, and charting story structure. Along with the story texts, blank Graphic Organizers for each comprehension strategy are provided to support students by helping them to visualize connections and relationships between facts, information, and terms. Completed model Graphic Organizers accompany each text printout.



The **Compare/Contrast Graphic Organizer** can be used to help students to classify, identify characteristics, and show how two ideas, stories, or texts are alike and different.



The **Main Idea Graphic Organizer** can be used to identify the main or central idea of an informational text as well as the details that support the main idea.



The **Story Map Graphic Organizer** can be used to help students identify the characters, setting, problems, and solution/ resolution of a story. One version includes only the problem; another version also includes the plot.

Online Resource Overview

Project Imagine Learning's online instructional comprehension strategies activities to teach or review the concepts of story map, main idea, and compare/contrast prior to practicing with the printouts.

To project a comprehension instruction activity in your classroom, go to the online Activity Menu.

1. 

Click on **Comprehension**

2. 

Click on the desired comprehension strategy:

Main Idea

Compare/Contrast

Story Map

3. 

Click on the desired grade level at the top of the screen

4. 

Under **Instruction and Guided Practice**, play any activities labeled **Instruction**

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How to Use This Resource in the Classroom

- **Pre-read:** Use graphic organizers to preview ideas, relationships, or sequences and prepare students for important concepts they will encounter in the text.
- **Prewrite:** Have students use a graphic organizer to brainstorm and map plots, sequences, or relationships between a main idea and its details. This will help students narrow down and organize their ideas before beginning the writing process.
- Have students complete the Graphic Organizer. Depending on group size, consider the following processes:
    - **Whole class:** Distribute the text printout and Graphic Organizer. Project the graphic organizer. Review each term or element as needed. Ask the students to listen for these elements as you read the text together out loud. Have students raise their hand as they identify information that can go in the Graphic Organizer. Have students fill out their individual printouts as you model it. When finished reading, review the graphic organizer. Discuss the text and fill in any additional information.
    - **Small Groups:** Display and review the selected graphic organizer. Tell students the name and main idea of the text, or preview the plot of the story. Brainstorm with students to predict details they think might go in the completed Graphic Organizer. Divide students into small groups of three to five students and assign reader and writer roles to the members of the group. Give the text printout to the readers and the Graphic Organizer to the writers. Have the readers take turns reading a paragraph or section at a time aloud to the group. Have students discuss each section as they read. Ask the writers to record details from the discussion on the Graphic Organizer. Once students have finished, have groups report to the class the results of their discussion. Point out and discuss commonalities or distinct differences among group results.
    - **Guided Pairs:** Project or display the Graphic Organizer. Review elements and details as needed. Pair students with a partner. Give each pair a text printout and Graphic Organizer. Have the students read just the first section of text aloud with their partner. Have students work together to apply the comprehension strategy. Review answers and model filling out the Graphic Organizer. Then have the students read the remaining sections of the text, completing their Graphic Organizer as they read. When they are finished reading, have partners discuss the text and make corrections or add details to the graphic organizer. Lead a group discussion to review answers and compare results. Display or project the completed model Graphic Organizer as needed during the discussion.
    - **Independent Pairs:** Pair students with a partner. Give each pair a text printout and the corresponding Graphic Organizer. Have students take turns reading the text aloud with their partner, pausing to fill out the Graphic Organizer as they read. When they finish reading, have partners discuss the text and add any necessary details to the Graphic Organizer. Have students use the completed model Graphic Organizer to check their comprehension.
    - **Individual:** As necessary, review elements and details of the comprehension strategy. Provide student with a text printout and the corresponding Graphic Organizer. Ask students to first review the Graphic Organizer printout and be prepared to look for these elements as they read the text on their own. Have students fill in the details as they read. Have students use the completed model Graphic Organizer to check their comprehension when they have finished reading the story. Extend learning by having them present and explain their Graphic Organizer to a partner or by having volunteers explain each section of the Graphic Organizer to the class.
- **Summarize:** After reading, have students use graphic organizers to summarize information such as cause and effect factors or main ideas and supporting details. The visual nature of the graphic organizer will help students follow processes, make inferences, and draw conclusions.

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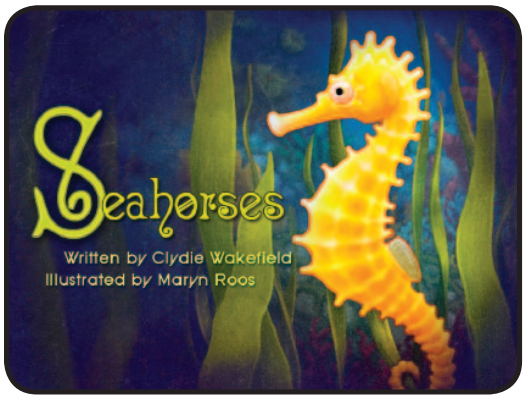

Seahorses

Introduction to Main Idea Questions, Instructional Text
Paired with *How Do Seeds Get Around?*

Written by Clydie Wakefield
Illustrated by Maryn Roos
Lexile®: 580L, 191 words

Have you ever seen a seahorse? If so, you have probably been amazed. A seahorse is a really cool fish. It has a head like a horse, a fin like a fish, and a tail like a monkey.

Sadly, seahorses are beginning to disappear. Millions are caught and used to make medicine. They are also sold as pets or souvenirs. And they are dying because their homes are disappearing.

Over 24 million seahorses are caught each year in order to make a Chinese medicine. This medicine is very popular. People believe it can cure a number of health problems.

Another several million are sold for home aquariums. It is difficult to keep these seahorses alive in a tank. Most of them die within a year. Seahorses are also popular as souvenirs. People buy dried seahorses as decorations.

Seahorses are also dying because their homes are disappearing. They live in seagrass beds in shallow waters. Many of these waters have become polluted. This pollution kills the seagrass beds.

Seahorses are disappearing every day. It isn't easy to find a live one. If you are lucky enough to see one, take a long look. You might not have many chances to see this amazing fish.

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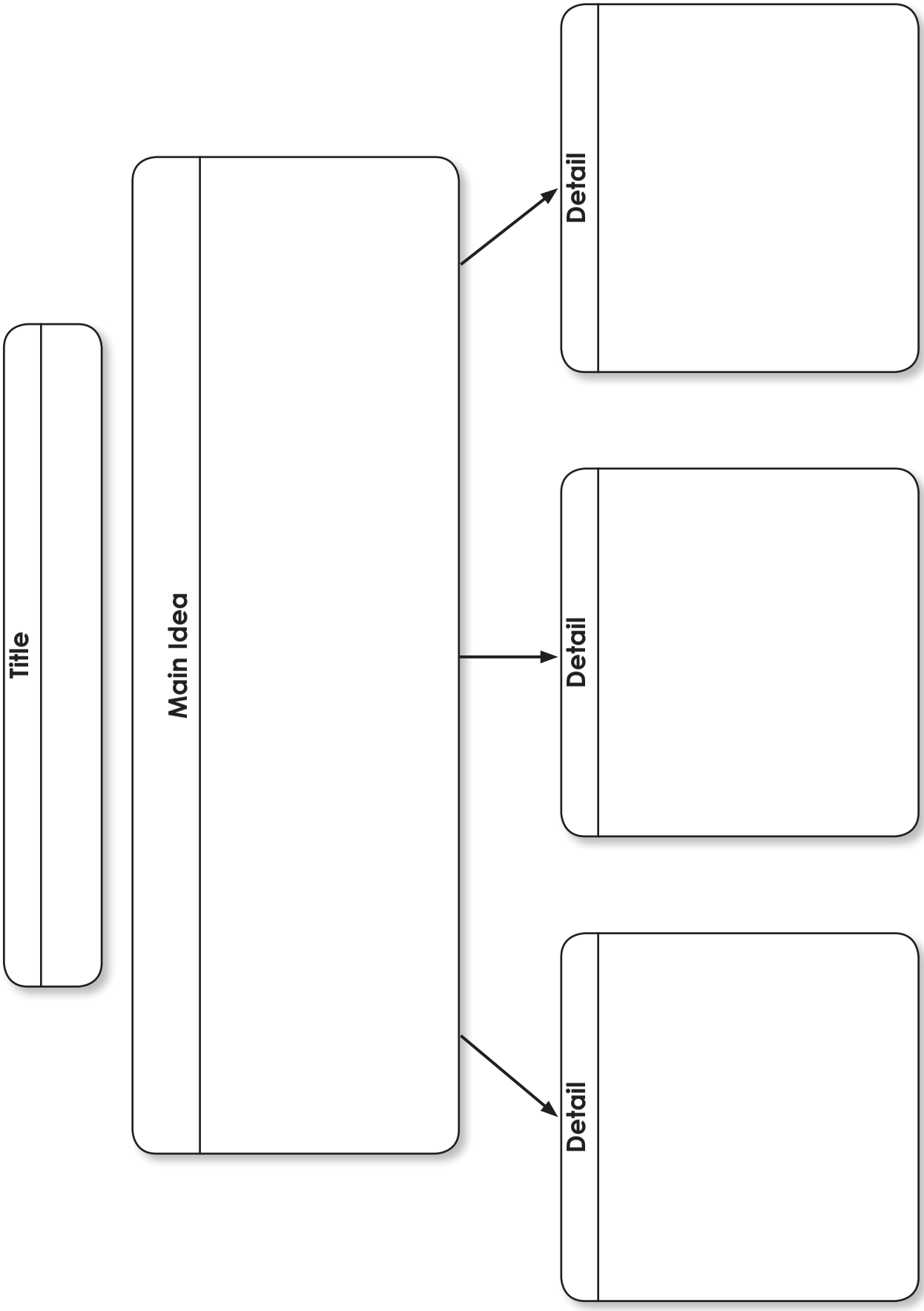

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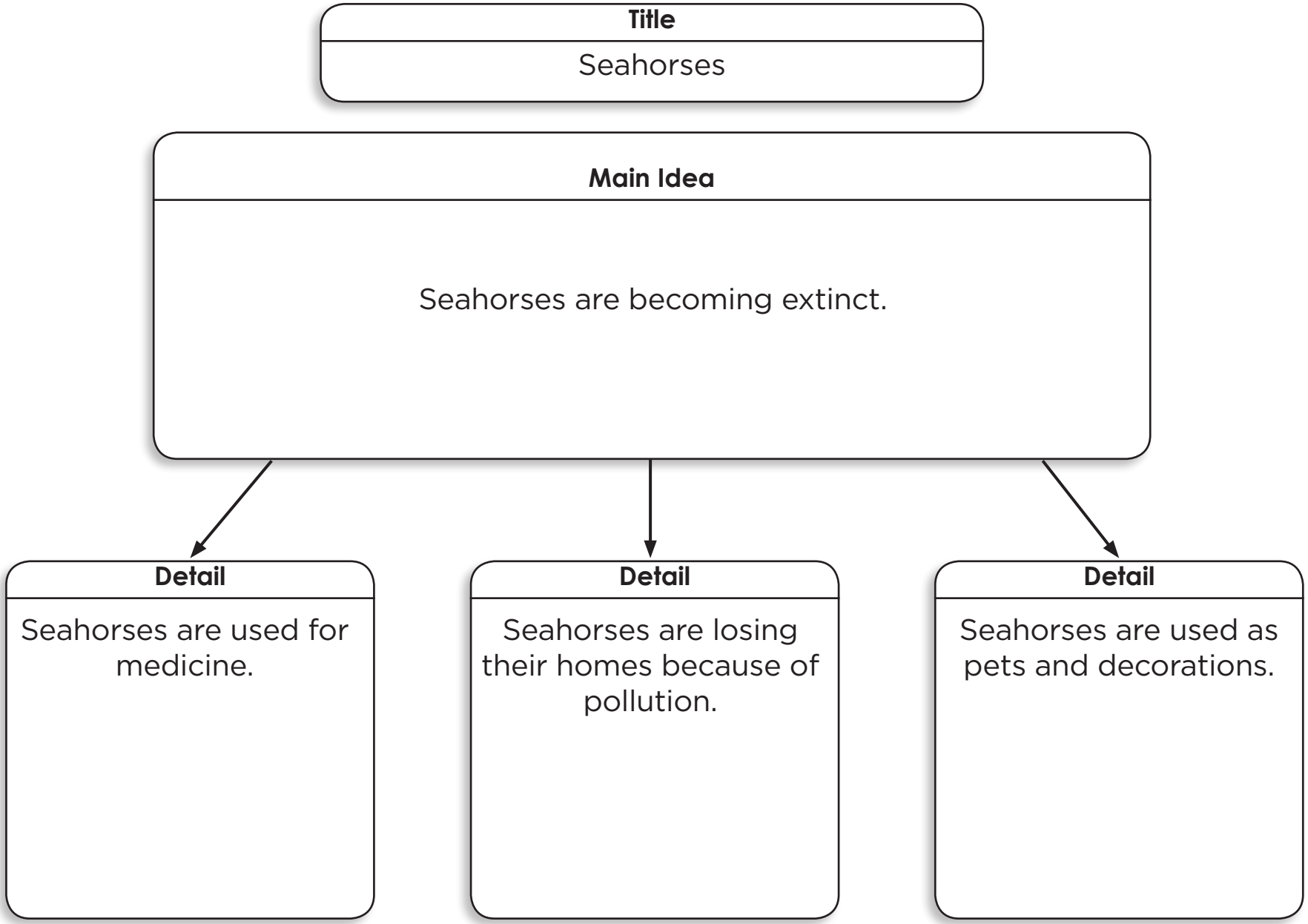

Imagine Learning

Main Idea: Seahorses

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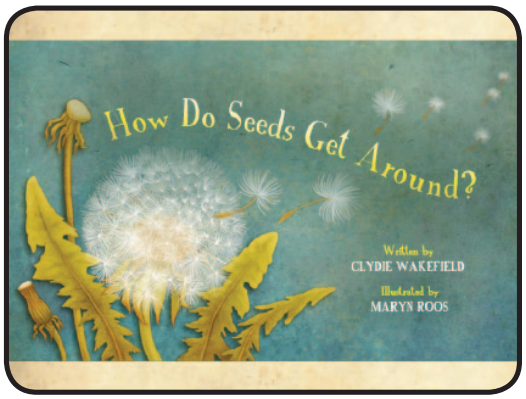

How Do Seeds Get Around?

Introduction to Main Idea, Instructional Text

Written by Clydie Wakefield
Illustrated by Maryn Roos

Lexile®: 580L, 245 words

Seeds need a good place to grow. If they fall too close to the plant that made them, they may not get enough sun or water. So how do they get to a good spot on the ground?

Some seeds travel a long way from where they start. In fact, some move miles away. How do they do it? They fly, float, or hitchhike.

Flying Seeds

Some seeds have wings like an airplane's. They glide through the air. The seed of an Asian climbing gourd has long wings. It glides in large, wide circles. Other seeds fly like a helicopter or drift like a parachute.

Floating Seeds

Some seeds float on water. A coconut palm tree may drop its seed into the ocean. The ocean current can carry it a long way. Sometimes the seed will travel 1,000 miles before it reaches dry land.

Hitchhiking Seeds

Some seeds travel by animal. Cocklebur plants make seeds covered with little hooks. These hooks grab onto the fur of passing animals. The seeds stay on an animal until they are scratched or pulled off. They might land far away from where they started.

Seeds can also travel *inside* animals. Seeds that animals eat end up in animal droppings. The seeds grow wherever the droppings land.

Plants create seeds that grow into new plants. But seeds need a good place to grow. They can fly, float, or hitchhike to get there. It's amazing how seeds can really get around!

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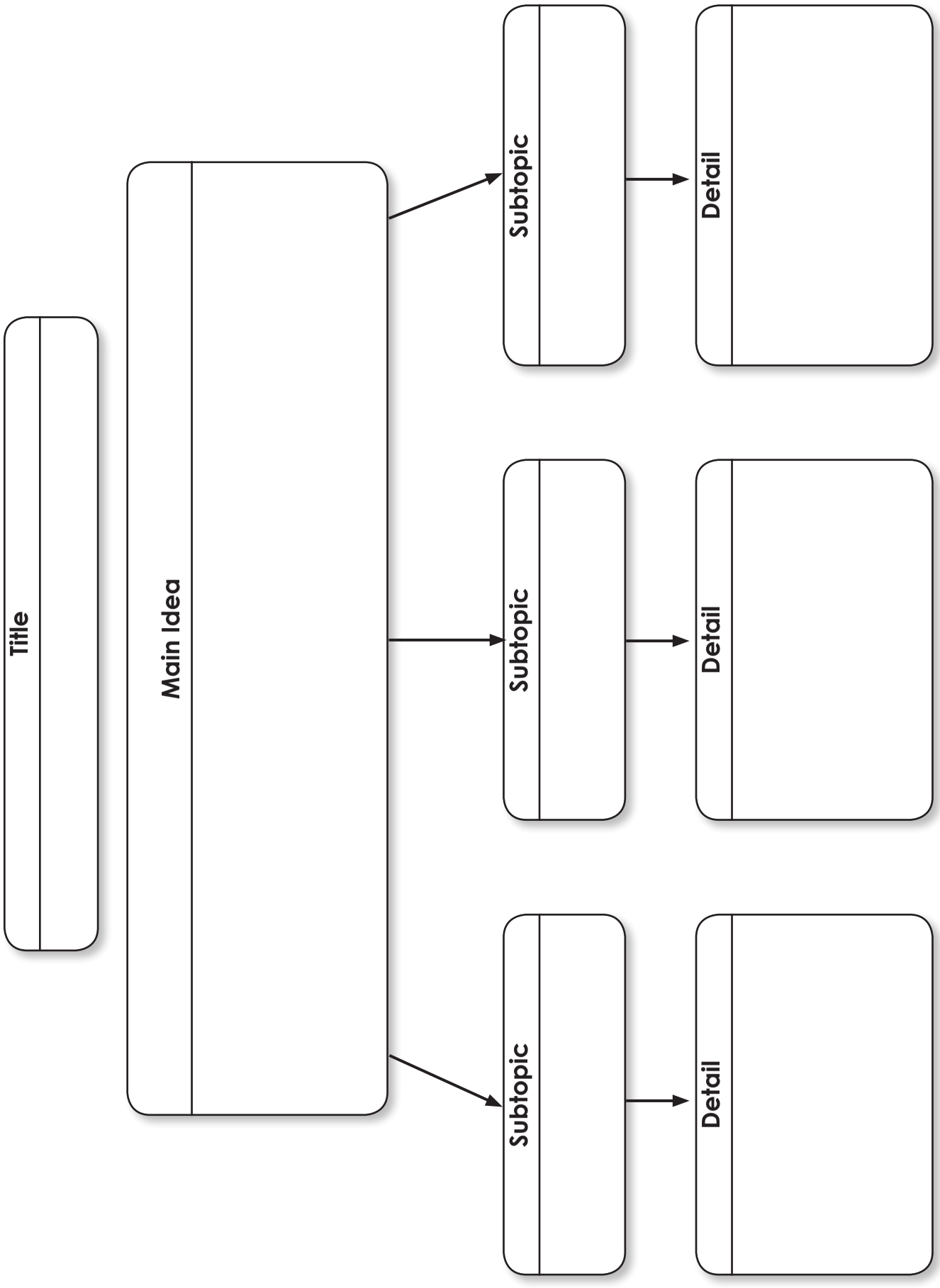


Name _____

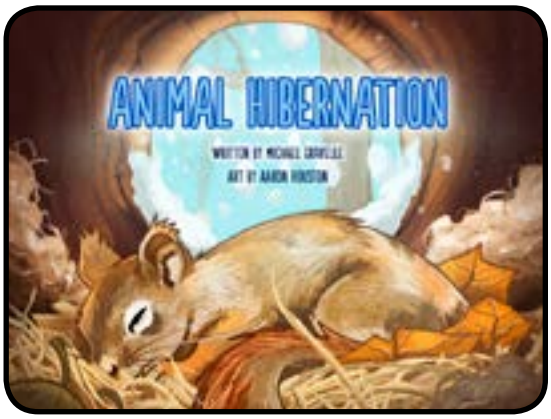
Title

How Do Seeds Get Around?

Main Idea

Seeds can travel by floating, flying, or hitchhiking.

Subtopic	Subtopic	Subtopic
Flying Seeds	Floating Seeds	Hitchhiking Seeds
Detail	**Detail**	**Detail**
Seeds have wings like an airplane's. Seeds can drift like a parachute.` Seeds can fly like a heilcopter.	Seeds float on water. Seeds can travel a thousand miles on ocean currents.	Seeds travel on animal fur. Seeds travel inside animals and grow where droppings land.



Animal Hibernation

Written by Michael Gravelle
Illustrated by Aaron Houston

Animals need food so that they can have energy. They use that energy to move and stay warm.

But sometimes food can be hard to find, especially in winter. So some animals, like groundhogs and squirrels, have found a way to live through the cold winter by saving up their energy. It's called hibernation.

Before animals hibernate, they eat as much as they can. Their bodies turn the food into a layer of fat. The fat gives the animals all the energy they need while they're hibernating.

Since it takes a lot of energy to move, animals hold very still while they hibernate. In fact, hibernation looks a lot like sleeping. They're not sleeping, though. They're very carefully saving energy.

Remember how it also takes energy for mammals to stay warm? Well, when most animals hibernate, their body temperatures get very low. Some animals cool off so much that they're almost the same temperature as snow!

When the cold weather ends, the animals warm up and start moving and looking for food again.

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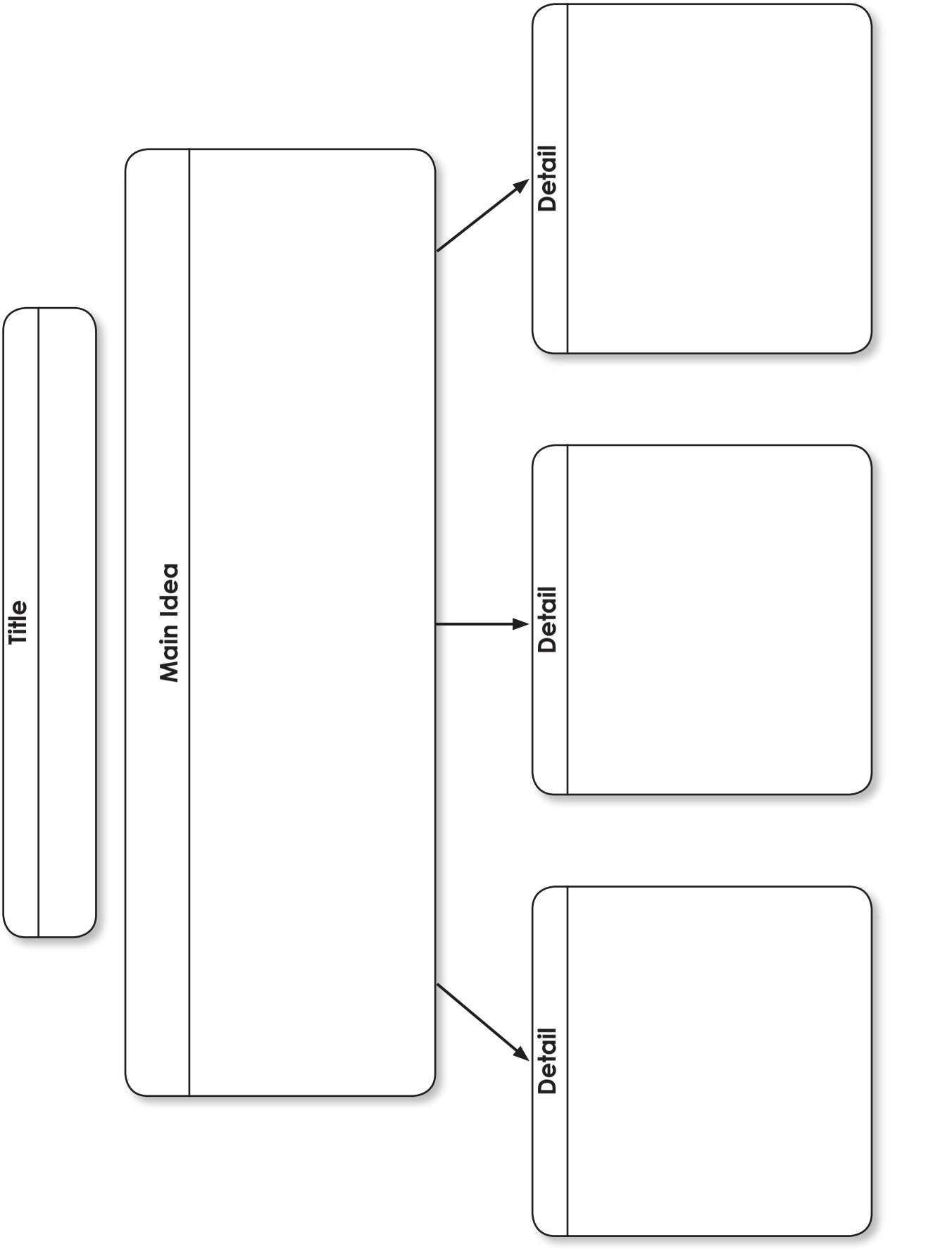

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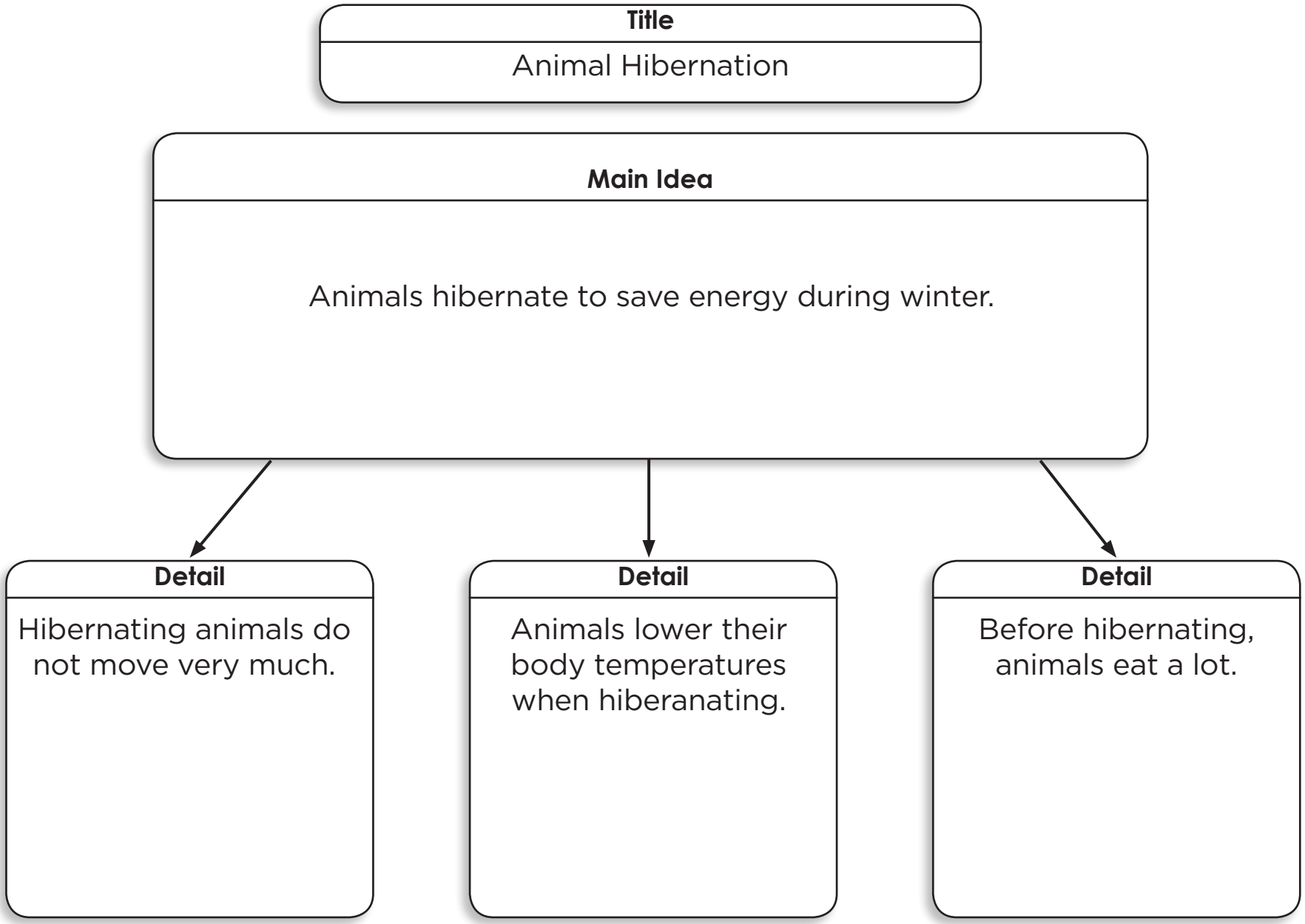

Main Idea: Animal Hibernation

Response Journal

Think about the article ***Animal Hibernation***.

Write a story about a young animal that is hibernating for the first time. What does the animal do to prepare? What does it do when spring comes?

OR

Think about how your behavior changes as it gets colder in the winter. Write about what you do differently than when it is warmer.

WORDS YOU MIGHT USE

groundhog	squirrel	energy
winter	hibernate	fat
still	sleep	warm
temperature		

Gabriela Mistral

Written by Naomi Pope
Illustrated by Tiffany LaGrange

In 1889, Gabriela Mistral was born in a small village in Chile. During her life, Gabriela became one of Chile's most famous people. She was known for her talent, hard work, and desire to help people.

Gabriela was a very talented poet. Her first poems were published when she was only fifteen years old! Later, she became the first Latin American to win the biggest writing award in the world, the Nobel Prize for Literature.

But Gabriela wasn't just a great poet. When she was twelve, she started studying on her own to become a teacher. It was hard work, but it paid off!

Soon she was teaching children all over Chile. She even became a principal at the best school in the country.

Gabriela had many ideas that she wanted to share with the world. She spent a lot of her life visiting teachers and writers in other countries. She traveled to places like France, Puerto Rico, Brazil, and the United States.

Even though Gabriela Mistral traveled all over the world, the people of Chile never forgot her. They are still proud of her great accomplishments.

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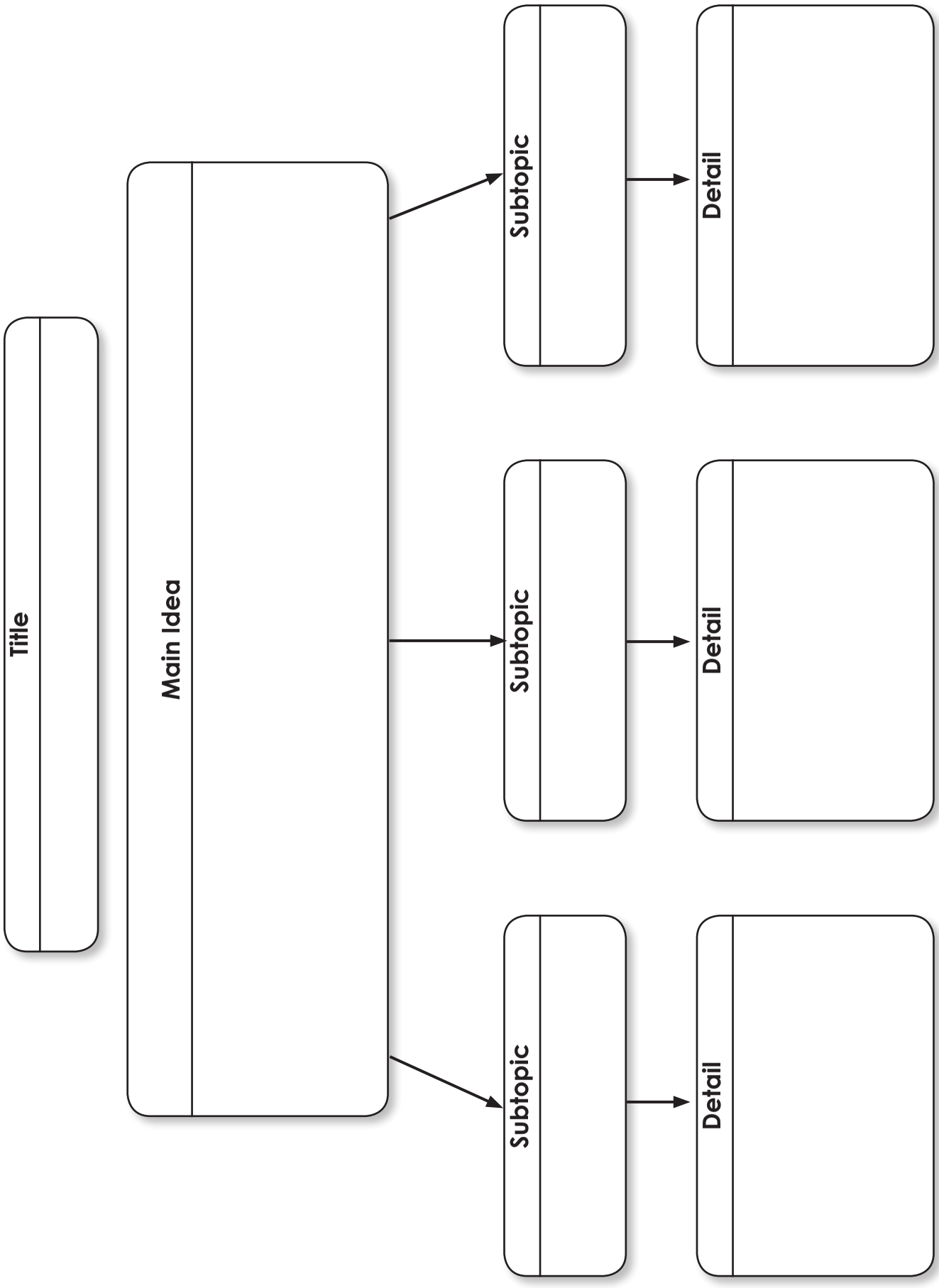

Main Idea: Gabriela Mistral

Name _____

Title

Gabriela Mistral

Main Idea

Gabriela Mistral is one of Chile's most famous people.

Subtopic	Subtopic	Subtopic
Talented poet	Shared ideas with the world	Teacher
Detail	**Detail**	**Detail**
Poems published at 15 years old. First Latin American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.	Visited teachers and writers in other countries. Traveled to France Puerto Rico, Brazil, and the U.S.	Taught children all over Chile. Became a principal at the best school in the country.

Main Idea: Gabriela Mistral

Shark Sense

Written by Tori King

Sharks are predators, which means they hunt for fish and other food they like to eat. Finding food underwater isn't easy, though. So sharks have some amazing senses that help them hunt.

One thing that helps them is a powerful sense of smell. As a shark swims, water carries the smells of nearby animals into the shark's nose. A shark's nose is very large and very sensitive. Their sense of smell is so powerful that they can even tell which direction to turn in order to find the animal!

Sharks have a very good sense of hearing, too. They can hear sounds much lower than humans can, including the sounds an injured animal makes. Injured animals make an easy meal, so sharks follow the sound.

Sharks also have a sense that humans don't have. They have an organ called a lateral line, which senses movement in the water. The lateral line looks like a stripe down both sides of the shark's body. When a nearby fish swims through the water, the water vibrates. The cells inside the lateral line pick up the movement and let the shark know there's food nearby.

Without these special senses, sharks wouldn't be able to find food. Their sharp senses help them survive.

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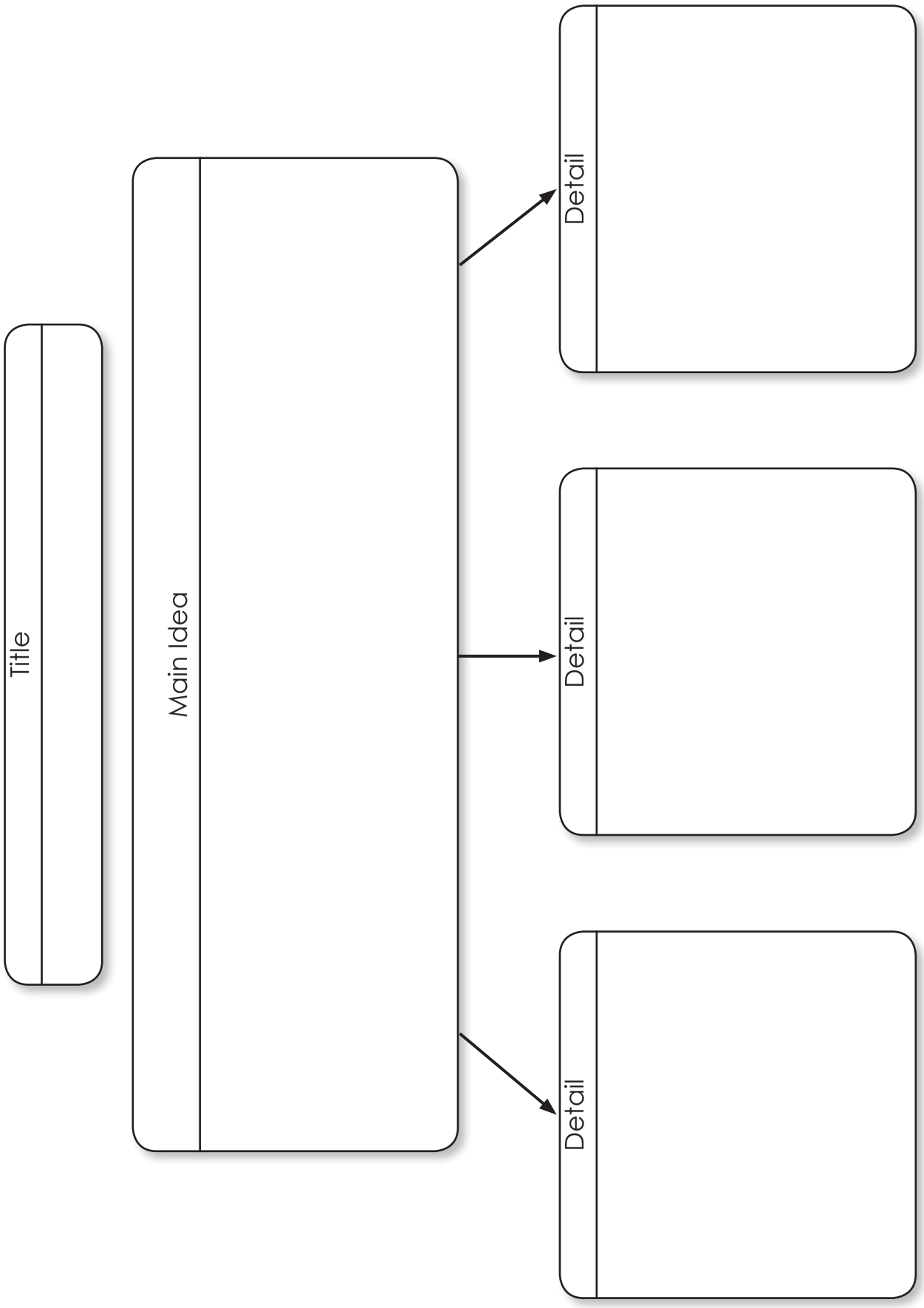

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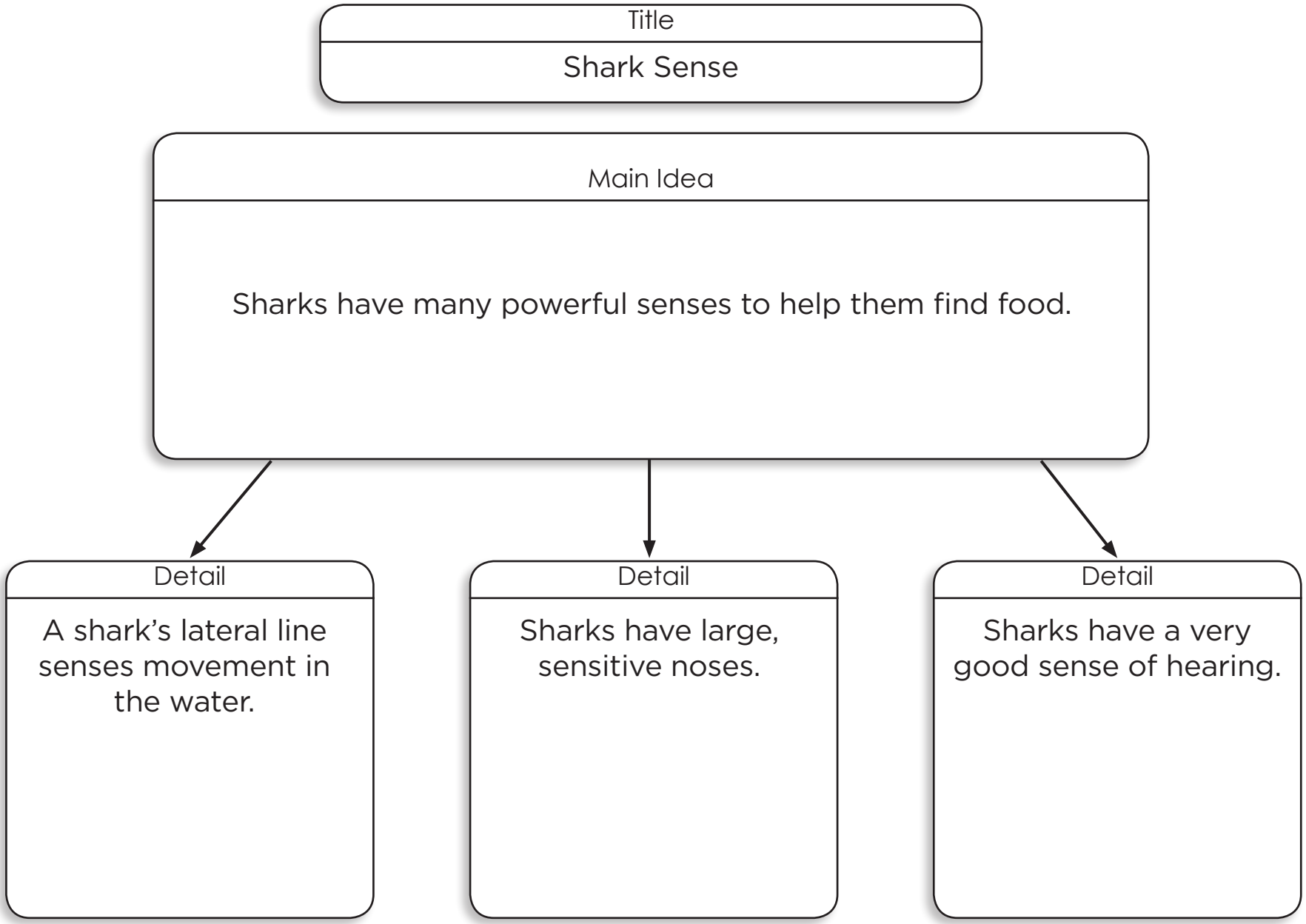

Main Idea: Shark Sense

Imagine Learning

Protecting Planet Earth

Written by Ben Scott

One way we can take care of our planet is by recycling our trash. When something is recycled, it's used to make something new. There are a lot of reasons why recycling is good for our planet.

Recycling things like soda cans, water bottles, and paper protects our natural resources. For example, companies can use recycled paper to make new paper instead of cutting down trees.

Recycling also helps to keep our air and water clean. Factories have to use a lot of dangerous chemicals when they make something brand new. Making something from recycled materials uses fewer chemicals. That means fewer chemicals end up in our air and water!

When you discard something without recycling it, it's taken to a landfill. Landfills are places where garbage is collected and buried in the ground. Recycling helps to keep landfills from getting too big. It also saves room in the landfill for things that cannot be reused.

Many cities have programs that make recycling as easy as throwing something away. Check to see if there's a recycling program in your city. It's a little thing we all can do to make the world a cleaner place.

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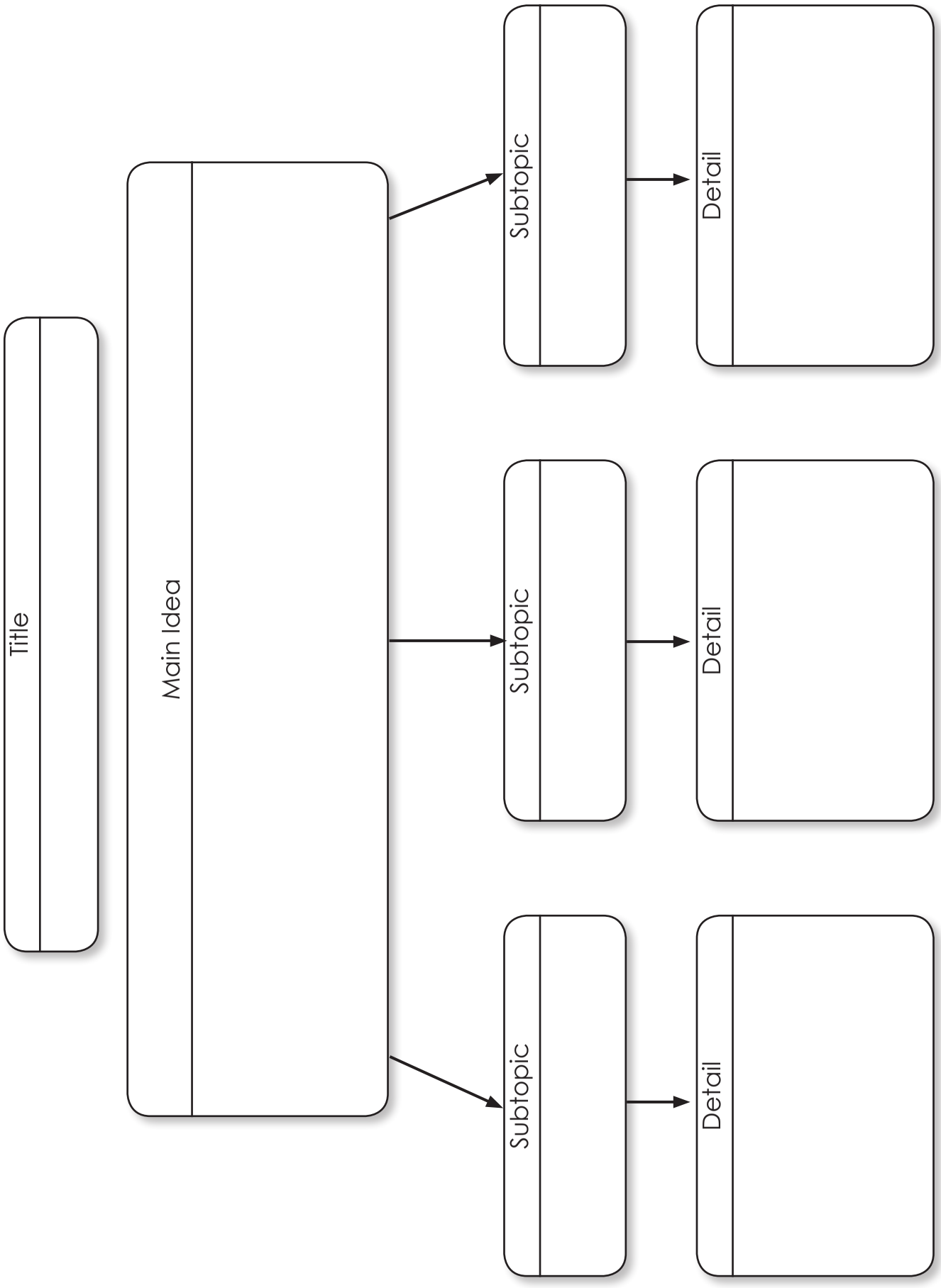
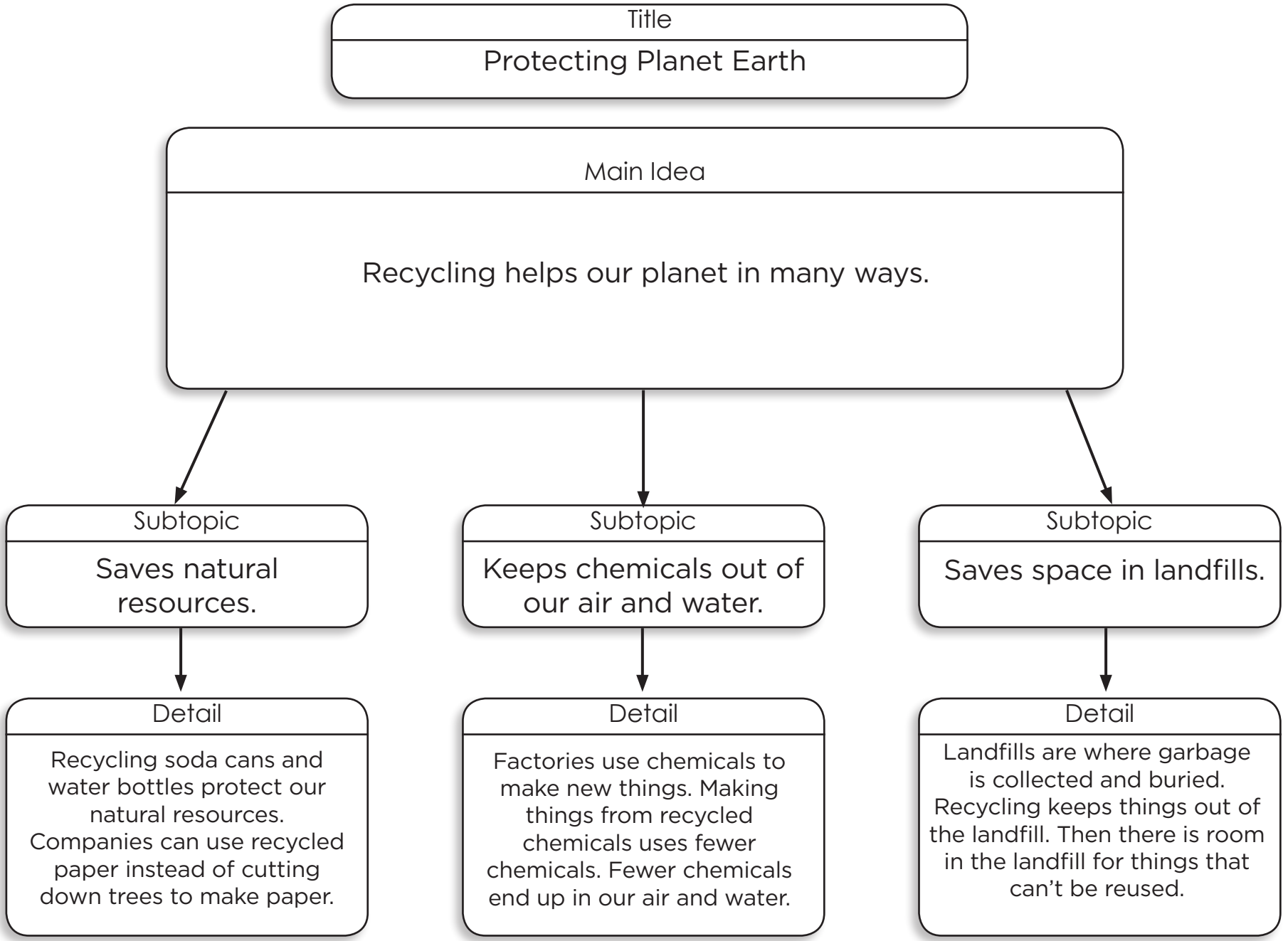


Main Idea: Protecting Planet Earth

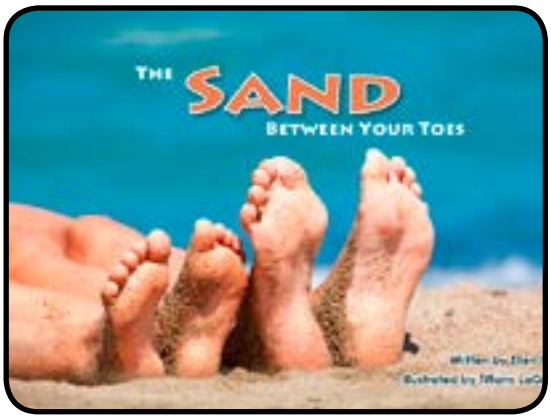
Imagine Learning

Name _____



Main Idea: Protecting Planet Earth

ImagineLearning



The Sand Between Your Toes

Written by Ellen Young
Illustrated by Tiffany LaGrange

Where Does Sand Come From?

When people visit the beach, many of them don't think about the sand between their toes. But sand is pretty amazing stuff.

Each tiny piece of sand was once part of something much bigger. Most sand is made from tiny pieces of rock. Many beaches on the coasts of continents have light colored, sparkly sand made from rocks called feldspar and quartz. That's what the continents are made out of!

Other beaches have black sand, which is made from volcanic rock. In Hawaii, there are green beaches made from a rock called olivine.

However, not all sand is made from rock. Some sand, like the sparkling white sand in Tahiti, is made up of the shells and exoskeletons of sea creatures. The pink sand from Bermuda is mostly made from pink coral.

How Did the Sand Become So Tiny?

Big rocks and pieces of coral become tiny grains of sand through a long, slow process called erosion. Over time, the movement of waves gradually breaks the big rocks on the shore into smaller and smaller pieces.

The work doesn't just happen on the shore, though. Fastmoving currents break down underwater rocks, as well as coral and shells. Fish and other sea animals help erosion by bumping into things and breaking off small pieces as they eat. Then, the waves carry the small pieces up onto the shore to join the other sand.

So the next time you're at the beach, make sure to look a little closer at the sand, because it's more interesting than you might think!

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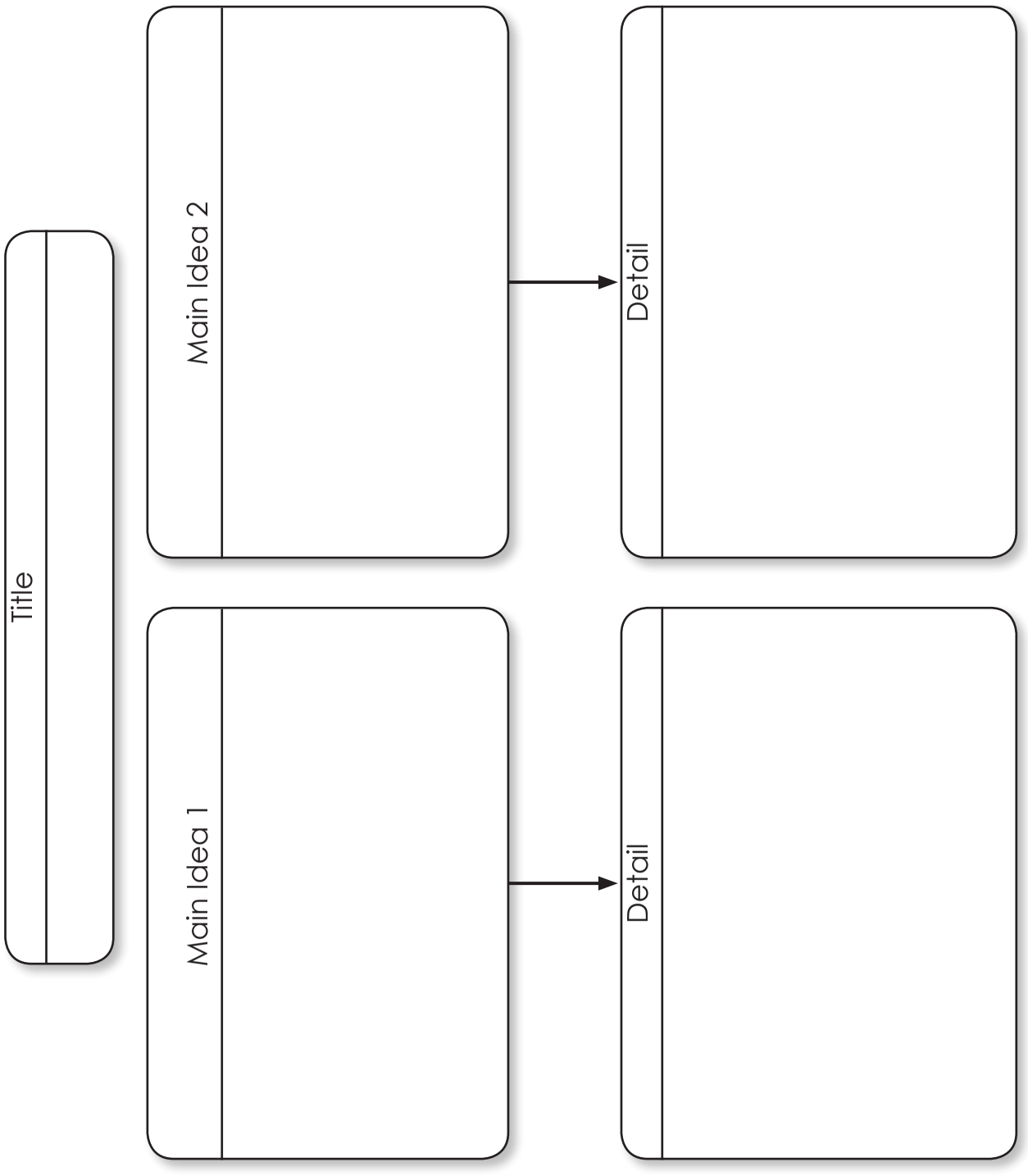


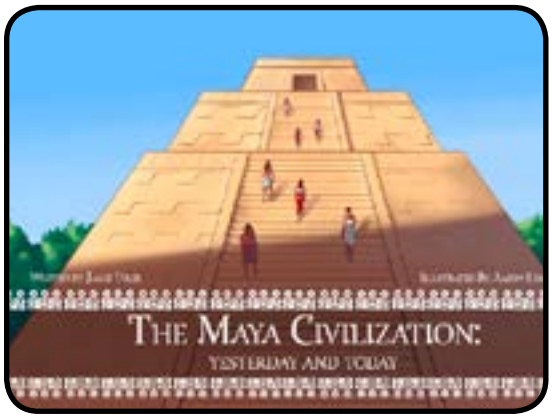
Name _____

Title

The Sand Between Your Toes

Main Idea 1	Main Idea 2
Sand was once part of something bigger.	Sand is formed through erosion.
Detail	Detail
Sand is made from tiny pieces of light-colored rock, black or green volcanic rock, and remains of sea creatures.	Sand is made when waves, underwater currents, fish and other sea animals break down coral and rocks.

The Maya Civilization: Yesterday and Today



Written by Jamie Tyler
Illustrated by Aaron Houston

The Maya civilization began more than 4,000 years ago in Mexico and the northern part of Central America.

The Maya people were one of the most advanced societies in the ancient Americas. Long before the Spanish explorers came to Central America, the Maya were building cities and achieving amazing things.

One thing the Maya were known for was building huge stone pyramids. One Maya pyramid in Guatemala, called La Danta, is one of the largest pyramids in the world. It's more than 20 stories high and nearly 2,000 feet wide!

The Maya was also the only ancient society in ancient America that had a complete written language. Pieces of Maya writing have been found on buildings, pottery, and paper made from tree bark.

After the Spanish explorers came to Central America, life for the Maya people changed. But the Maya people didn't disappear. Millions of Maya people still live in Mexico and Central America today.

Some Maya people still live in a way that's similar to the ancient Maya. They speak Mayan languages and keep the traditions that have been passed on for centuries. Some Maya people weave cloth and grow food in ways that are a lot like the ancient Maya.

Other people who have Maya ancestors speak Spanish and go to public schools. There are Maya people in all walks of life, including baseball players, musicians, and politicians.

From ancient times to today, the Maya people continue to be an important part of our world culture.

Name: _____

Title

Main Idea 1

Main Idea 2

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

Subtopic

Detail

Detail

Detail

Detail

Main Idea: The Maya Civilization: Yesterday and Today

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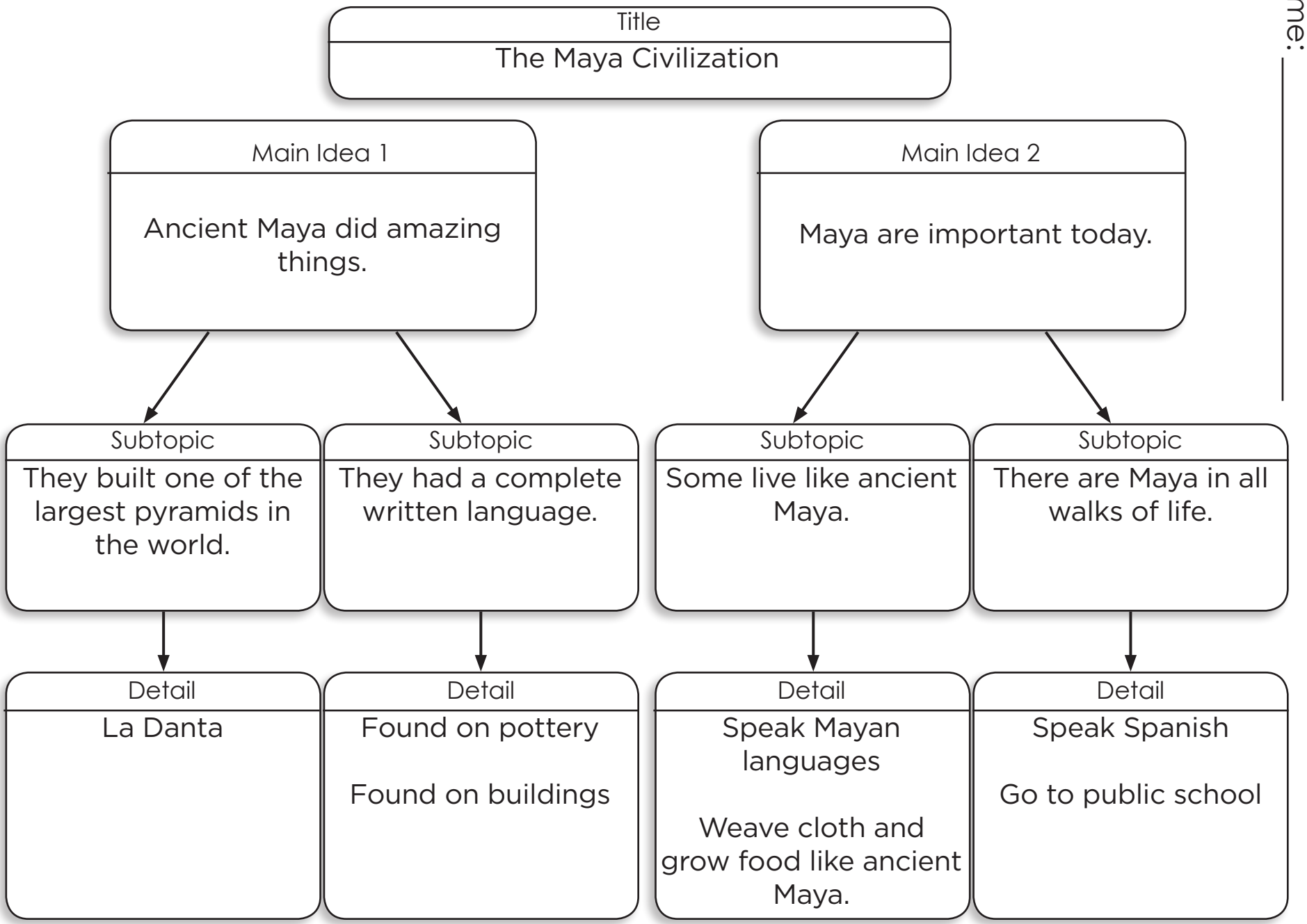

Main Idea: The Maya Civilization: Yesterday and Today