

Standards addressed

Reading 2.2 Select and practice simple comprehension strategies with instructor assistance

Reading 2.3 Recognize key points in simple texts and documents.

Introduction:

Cartoons can be used as a resource to help students learn how to identify the main idea of a passage. Each cartoon has a main idea that the cartoonist is trying to get across. Sometimes it can be very subtle and the student must think about what the cartoonist is trying to say. Sometimes it is very blatant. The same is true with many passages that students read. Sometimes the main idea is very obvious and sometimes it is unstated.

To understand an unstated main idea, the student must see how all of the key points are related to determine the “real” main idea.

Activity:

Distribute copies of the cartoon page (s) from the local newspaper. Use the expanded editions that are normally available with the Sunday Edition of the paper. This will give you a greater variety of cartoons. Give several students the same cartoon and ask them to determine what the author’s main idea (s) is.

Debriefing/Evaluation Activity

As students give their main idea, check to see if the others agree or disagree with the determination. If there is disagreement about the main idea, stop and discuss the cartoon and its main idea with the entire group.

Real-Life Connection

Provide students with business letters, editorials or other documents that they may encounter in real-life. Have the students identify the main idea or purpose of each document. This will provide students with an opportunity to use the types of documents they will encounter when taking the GED Tests.

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