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Main Idea and Supporting Details Thinking Questions

This is a thinking question only...before the completion of the visual tool.

- Who or what are all these sentences about?

Use both of these questions to determine the information that goes in the “roof” of the visual tool.

- Which sentence states a fact that can be supported by the others?
- Who or what is this passage about?

Use these questions to determine what information goes in the “columns” of the visual tool.

- What aspect/particular area of _____ (the who or what) is this passage about?
- What does the author want me to know about _____ (the aspect/particular area) of _____ (the who or what)?
- What sentences/statements support the main idea - what the author wants me to know?

Notes:

- To achieve an exemplary rating on the visual tool and summary, students should identify more than three supporting details.
- When writing the summary, students should use the information in the “roof” of the visual tool to formulate the topic sentence, and the information in the “columns” becomes the supporting sentences. Students should present their ideas in an orderly fashion—not as random details filling a paragraph.

Pattern Statement – Something large can be supported or held up by enough smaller things.