Main Idea and Supporting Details Practice Exercises

Name: ___________________________  Period: ___________  Date: ______________

PRACTICE 1: A MUSICAL MOUSE
Read the selection, and then answer the questions that follow.

(1) There are many different kinds of mice. Some are good swimmers; others like to swing from trees by their tails. And one kind, the white-footed mouse, is not only a good swimmer and tree climber, but it’s also quite musical!

(2) This minute, furry creature's body is about 8 inches (20 cm) long, with a tail of another 3 inches (7.5 cm). It weighs only about 0.8 ounces (23 g). It's been around North America for a long time; scientists have found 40- million-year-old fossils of the tiny creature's ancestors!

(3) Some people call the white-footed mouse the "wood mouse" because it lives in so many wooded areas throughout North America. Other people call the white-footed mouse the "deer mouse." One reason is that its fur is the same colors as a deer's—soft brown on its back; white on its underside. Another reason is that the mice carry deer ticks that spread Lyme disease.

(4) The whitefoot makes its nest almost anywhere. It likes a home that is warm and dry, like a hollow tree or empty bird's nest. But most of the time the whitefoot runs along the ground looking for food. It eats seeds, nuts, leaves, bark, and insects. It sleeps by day and looks for food at night—its long whiskers and big ears help it find its way in the dark.

(5) Does the whitefoot really make music? In a way, it does because it often makes a humming sound. And it taps its little paws very fast on a dead leaf or hollow log to make a buzzing, drumming sound! Scientists aren't sure why the mouse is a drummer; it just is!

(6) So the next time you're in the woods, walk quietly. There might be a white-footed mouse nearby, and you wouldn't want to interrupt a mouse in the middle of its song... would you?

1. What is the main idea of this selection?
   a. Deer are brown and white.
   b. The white-footed mouse taps its paws in a drumming sound.
   c. The woods of North America are full of mice.
   d. Scientists study the habits of mice.
2. Which is a supporting detail for that main idea?
   a. The white-footed mouse is also known as the wood mouse.
b. The deer mouse may carry ticks that transmit a disease.
c. The mouse taps on a dead leaf or hollow log.
d. The white-footed mouse isn’t very big.
3. Which would make the best substitute title for this selection?
   a. "How to Build a Better Mousetrap"
   b. "Concert in the Woods"
   c. "Caution: Lyme Disease Ahead!"
   d. "All about Rodents"
4. What is the main idea of paragraph 2?
   a. The white-footed mouse lives in Canada.
   b. The white-footed mouse is also called the wood or deer mouse.
   c. The white-footed mouse hums.
   d. The white-footed mouse is very small.
5. Which detail in paragraph 2 is interesting, but not needed to find the main idea of that paragraph?
   a. Its tail is 3 inches (7.5 cm) long.
   b. Scientists found 40-million-year-old fossils of its ancestors.
   c. It weighs 0.8 ounces (23 g).
   d. Its body is about 8 inches (20 cm) long.

**PRACTICE 2: DIETARY DETAILS**
Read the selection, and then answer the questions that follow.

(1) Everyone needs food as fuel for his or her body. But kids especially need the right fuel to keep their bodies going as they’re growing. To help everyone figure out which foods supply the energy needed, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed a new Food Guide Pyramid in 2005. Look at the visual.

(2) You probably remember the old pyramid, with horizontal layers of blocks like the ancient pyramids. Well, this new pyramid has six, tall, vertical stripes instead. Each stripe represents one source of nutrition. There are horizontal steps on the side of the pyramid, but they signify the need for exercise as well as good food—30 minutes of exercise a day—to create a healthy you!

(3) This new pyramid is called MyPyramid, because it’s supposed to help meet the needs of each individual. Your food needs are based on your age, if you’re a girl or boy, and how active you are. You can go to the USDA website at http://mypyramid.gov to check out how much and which kinds of food you need.
(4) Each stripe on MyPyramid is a different color:

**Orange:** *grains* The average kid needs 6 ounces a day from this group, which includes breads, cereals, rice, and pasta.

**Green:** *vegetables* The average kid needs about $2 \frac{1}{2}$ cups a day from this group, which includes dark green veggies, like spinach and broccoli, and bright orange ones, like carrots.

**Red:** *fruits* The average kid needs about 2 cups of fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit a day.

**Yellow:** *oils* Kids need about 5 teaspoons of oil a day. Some have no cholesterol or are lower in fat than others. Check food labels for information.

**Blue:** *milk* The average kid needs about 3 cups a day of milk, yogurt, or cheese.

**Purple:** *meat, fish, beans, and nuts* The average kid needs about 5 ounces a day from this group.

(5) These provide a "healthy diet." That's one that has enough of each essential nutrient; a variety from all food groups; energy to maintain a healthy weight; and no excess fat, sugar, or salt. Eating healthy and exercising daily can help reduce the risk of getting diabetes, cancer, or bone problems as you get older.

6. Which is the most likely main idea of this selection?
   a. People need to exercise at least once a week.
   b. Beans are a good source of vitamins.
   c. People need to eat a variety of good foods and exercise for a healthy life.
   d. Fiber is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.

7. Which is NOT a supporting detail for the main idea?
   a. Always use sunscreen as protection from the sun's harmful rays.
   b. Pick a variety of things from the vegetable group.
   c. Get at least a half-hour of exercise every day.
8. Why was it suggested that someone go to the USDA website?
   a. to check the local weather
   b. to write a letter to Congress
   c. to exchange recipes for wholesome, healthy foods that taste good
   d. to find out exactly which foods and how much that individual should eat

9. Which would best be another title for the article?
   a. The Nutrition Needs of Prehistoric Humans
   b. Food for Thought
   c. The Eating Habits of Senior Citizens
   d. Thoughts about Work Routines

10. Which is the main idea of the last paragraph?
    a. It's nice to choose a variety of foods.
    b. Many older people have heart problems.
    c. Eating right and exercising now can reduce health risks in the future.
    d. Getting enough sleep is important to good health.

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**PRACTICE 3: RADIO DAYS**
Read the selection, and then answer the questions that follow.

(1) Before there was TV, Americans gathered around their radios daily to listen to the news and more. In the 1930s and 1940s, mystery shows, like Sam Spade and The Shadow, were favorites with young and old alike. Every week people tuned in to hear the top tunes on Your Hit Parade. And on Sunday mornings, radio stars read the comics aloud to kids.

(2) Did you think soap operas were a TV phenomenon? No way! They started on radio. Do you know why they were called "soap operas"? Most shows were sponsored by soap companies and, because characters had many problems, people said the stories were like operas, most of which don't have happy endings!

(3) Because there were no pictures to show what was going on, radio required people to use their imaginations. So, as a sportscaster described the action, people had to imagine "he hits a pop fly high into the infield, the shortstop moves in . . . reaches . . . . grabs it . . . throws to second . . . and he's out!" Not only did they picture it, many people cheered as if they were right there in the stadium!

11. Which best states the main idea of the article?
    a. Soap operas started on TV.
    b. Before there was TV, people listened to the radio a lot.
    c. Quite often, operas don't end happily.
d. Top tunes were played on the radio.

12. The author says radio required people to use their imaginations because
   a. radio stars read the comics.
   b. people cheered as if they were at the stadium.
   c. *The Shadow* was a mystery show.
   d. there were no pictures to show the action.

13. Which could the author best use as another supporting detail?
   a. Television was not in many American homes until the 1950s.
   b. Many cars did not have a radio.
   c. The modern home has two or more TVs.
   d. Two-way radios were important during the war.