

**THE TRIUMPH OF INDUSTRY**

**Reading Strategy**

**Identify Supporting Details**

Supporting details provide more information about the main idea of a reading selection. Supporting details can include facts, examples, and opinions. To identify supporting details, you must first identify the main idea of a text. The main idea is the most important point, which often but not always appears at the beginning of a passage. Supporting details explain or expand on the main idea. When you identify supporting details, look for facts and examples that clarify or demonstrate the main idea. Identifying supporting details will help you understand the ways in which key pieces of information relate to one another.

Read the paragraph below from Section 2 in your textbook. Then, study the outline identifying the main idea and supporting details.

Corporations worked to maximize profits in several ways. They decreased the cost of producing goods or services by paying workers the lowest possible wages or paying as little as they could for raw materials. They tried to increase profits by advertising their products widely, thus increasing their potential customer base. Like J. P. Morgan, the heads of some corporations supported research laboratories where inventors could experiment with products and methods that might bring the corporations future profits. Others thought up new ways to make money. Cornelius Vanderbilt, a self-made businessman in the railroad industry, got his start in the steamboat business. He cleverly succeeded in getting his competitors to pay him to relocate because his low fares were driving them out of business.

- I. Main Idea: Corporations tried to maximize profits.
  - A. Supporting Detail: They paid workers low wages to decrease production costs.
  - B. Supporting Detail: They paid the lowest possible prices for raw materials to decrease production costs.
  - C. Supporting Detail: They advertised their products widely to attract more customers.
  - D. Supporting Detail: J. P. Morgan supported inventors that might add to his company's products and services.
  - E. Supporting Detail: Cornelius Vanderbilt convinced competitors to pay him to move.

**Directions:** Read the paragraphs under the subheading "Debating the Role of Big Business" in Section 2 of your textbook. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, make an outline listing the main ideas and supporting details of the passage and answer the questions below.

**Hint:** First, find the main idea in each paragraph. Then, identify the details that clarify or expand on the main idea.

1. What details support the idea that business leaders were robber barons?
2. What details support the idea that business leaders were captains of industry?