

THE SOUTH AND WEST TRANSFORMED

Reading Strategy**Identify Supporting Details**

Supporting details are the pieces of information that provide evidence for the main idea in a paragraph or other text. They may answer questions about the main point by explaining where, when, why, or how something occurred. When you are able to identify supporting details, you are in a better position to determine whether the main idea is valid or not.

To identify the supporting details, first identify the main idea in a passage. Then look for the details or extra information that tell more about or support the main idea.

Read the following paragraph:

The southern economy continued to lag behind the rest of the country. While the North was able to build on its strong industrial base, the South first had to repair the damages of war. Moreover, industry rests on a three-legged stool: natural resources, labor, and capital investment. The South had plenty of the first but not enough of the second and third.

The main idea of this paragraph is that after the war, the southern economy continued to lag behind the rest of the country. The details about the damages of war and the lack of labor and capital investment support this main idea.

Directions: Read the following paragraph. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions below.

Faced with serious difficulties, Texas farmers in the 1870s began to organize and to negotiate as a group for lower prices for supplies. The idea spread. Local organizations linked together in what became known as the Farmers' Alliance. These organizations soon connected farmers not only in the South but also in the West. Farmers' Alliance members tried to convince the government to force railroads to lower freight prices so members could get their crops to market outside the South at reduced rates. Because of regularly rising rates, the Alliance also wanted the government to regulate the interest that banks could charge for loans.

Hint: Supporting details often answer the questions, What? Where? When? Why? How much? How many?

Questions to Think About

1. What is the main idea of this paragraph?
2. List two details that support this main idea.
3. Suppose the main idea of a paragraph is: The southern economy and society changed after the Civil War. Using what you already know, write two details that support this main idea.