*Session 14*

**Focus**: Good readers understand that a main idea is more than a topic

**Materials**: student’s books (make sure they have a different nonfiction book), pencils, journal or stickies

**Genre**: Non-fiction

**Before Reading- Mentor says**: Last week, we talked about finding topics and subtopics by looking at headings within a nonfiction book. Can you remind me, what is the difference between a topic and a subtopic? (review with the student)

Today, we are going to be thinking about the main idea of a nonfiction book. Has your classroom teacher taught you about finding the main idea yet? What do you think a main idea is?

We are going to focus on recognizing the difference between a topic and a main idea today. The main idea is more than just what the text is about (the topic). You can say a book is about whales. But that is just the topic. You would probably be able to say this without even reading the book! The title gives you that.

Figuring out the main idea requires a little thinking and a little work.

The work you do as a reader is to collect all the information, notice what the author writes about, and then ask yourself, “So what?” You need to figure out what the author’s BIG IDEA about the topic is today.

**During Reading**: I want you to write “A main idea is more than a topic!” on the top of the page in your journal so we remember that while we read today.

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| --- | --- |
| Prompting Questions | Writing Activities |
| What is the title?Does the title tell you the topic? What is the topic of your book?What’s this section mostly about? That’s the topic. What’s the author’s idea about it?What do you think the author is trying to say about that topic? | Journal organizer example:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What? | Arctic Fox |
| So What? | Arctic Foxes have many ways to survive in the cold weather |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What? | Animal adaptations |
| So What? | Some animal behaviors are gross to humans, but they are important for them to survive. |

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**After Reading**: Great job reading today! I hope you were able to understand that a topic is different than a main idea. By asking yourself, “So what?” you are pushing yourself to think about what the author’s perspective is on the topic. Let’s review. Can you read what you wrote in your journal out loud to me? Are you starting to understand how to find the main idea? How comfortable do you feel with it? Can you rate yourself 1-5, 1 being really confident and 5 being I need more practice?

**Closing**: Thank you for working with me today. I enjoyed our time together and I am so proud of the work you are sharing with me. I will return next (day of the week) to work with you. Please remember the following:

1. Fill out the teacher/mentor communication log
2. Check the school calendar for upcoming events
3. Check your personal calendar to determine scheduling conflicts. Remember, students are eager await your arrival and their mentoring time with you.
4. If you have any questions or concern, please share them with a school employee (teacher, counselor, assistant principal or principal, etc.) before leaving the building.