**Finding the Main/Central Idea**

Directions: *read each passage below carefully. Summarize in your mind what each paragraph is about, and focus on the basic thing that all the details have in common or are centered around. Then write the letter of your answer choice in the margin next to the question number.*

1. Topic: Classrooms

The physical environment of a classroom is extremely important because it can influence the way teachers and students feel, think, and behave. If a student feels pressured, under stress, unhappy, or unsafe, it would be impossible for her or him to learn the lessons planned by the educator. Likewise, if a teacher feels unhappy or disorganized because of the classroom’s lack of order or detail, the ability for them to teach is greatly diminished. The environment of a classroom serves four basic functions: security, social contact, pleasure, and growth. For real learning and teaching to take place, all four of those needs must be met by the class space.

What is the central idea of this passage?

1. If a teacher is overly organized it will add extra stress and prevent them from teaching students well.
2. The physical environment of a classroom is extremely important because it can influence the way teachers and students think, feel, and behave.
3. A classroom must be kept in neat, functioning order by the teachers, parents, and students in order for it to be a productive learning environment.
4. A classroom must be set up to support social contact because students need to be able to talk to each other in order to learn.
5. **Topic: Rain**

**Often when it rains, a particular dreariness descends upon the earth. Most people hid out in their houses sending forlorn glances out the window. Animals scamper off to nooks and crannies, poking their heads out to timidly sniff the air for signs of dry weather. Despite the pellets of water cascading from the sky, an occasional brave soul will venture out for a jog in the drizzle or a bird will chirp merrily in a mud puddle, dismissing the downpour. Some people call these adventurers crazy, but others celebrate the willingness of these individuals to embrace negativity and turn it into something positive.  
What is the central idea of this passage?**

1. **It’s abnormal to venture out into the rain, but the positive results can be well worth it.**
2. **Rain contains a chemical compound that makes humans and animals depressed.**
3. **Birds need to be more like the humans that chirp merrily in a mud puddle.**
4. **The difference between humans and animals is that rain will keep a human inside but not an animal.**
5. Topic: Movies

Going to the movies has become a weekend activity that many people pay large amounts of money to do. Movies are pretty pricey these days, but the medium never fails to draw crowds. And while some movies have excellent plots, characterization and cinematography, others are simply horrible in just about every way. Yet, once in a while, a film will appear on the big screen that will earn itself a rightful place in history as a magnificent film, one that touches the lives of people. And really, is that all people are really looking for as they trek out to the show, weekend after weekend? A brief glimpse into a life where people express what the moviegoer is also feeling? It must be, otherwise people would spare their wallets and stay home.

What is the central idea of this passage?

1. People should not pay high prices for movies when they can’t afford it and the movie is terrible.
2. Movie theaters should charge less for movies that don’t have as great of ratings.
3. Film makers should not be allowed to send their movies to theaters unless it is life-changing.
4. People are willing to pay high prices for movies on the weekends in order to experience camaraderie with others.
5. Topic: Troopathon

As troops fought their way through the desert during the war in Iraq, the narrative from the mainstream media was nearly synonymous with that of the anti-war left. The military mission was continuously undermined by media reports claiming that American troops were killers and that the war on terror was all but lost. Frustrated with the lies and exaggerations perpetuated by the media, Melanie Morgan decided to fight back. So Morgan joined forces with political strategists Sal Russo and Howard Kaloogian to create a pro-troop nonprofit organization that hosts Troopathon, a yearly web telethon fundraiser that raises money to send care packages to troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay. Since the first Troopathon was held three years ago, the organization has raised over $2 million.

What is the central idea of this passage?

1. Many military troopers decided to leave the armed forces during the Iraq War because of the negative portrayal of them by the news.
2. The media cannot be trusted or believed because they are too opinionated and have their own agenda.
3. Melanie Morgan created the Troopathon to counteract the negative personification of troops displayed by the media.
4. People need to donate money to Troopathon so that the organization can send care packages to troops overseas.
5. Topic: Relationships

At one time or another, most adults have been in a romantic relationship. A guy walks up to a girl at a bar, gets her number, and the beginning of a relationship is formed. A guy and girl meet in Physics class, get paired as study partners, and the rest is history. Two high school sweethearts rekindle an old flame on Facebook after years apart. These types of simple encounters may lead to relationships, and even though that first meeting is easy, the entire relationship is not. A lot of work goes into making a true bonded relationship, and when that work is bypassed, the relationship may not last.

What is the central idea of this passage?

1. Getting into a relationship is easy, but staying in one is not.
2. There are many places to meet people to date.
3. If you date someone once, you are likely to date them again.
4. Social media has changed the way people enter relationships.