

**Goal:** Reading – Comprehension  
(I can understand what I read)

**Skill:** ID Main idea & topic

**Strategy:** What? and So What?

## What? and So what? Strategy Sheet

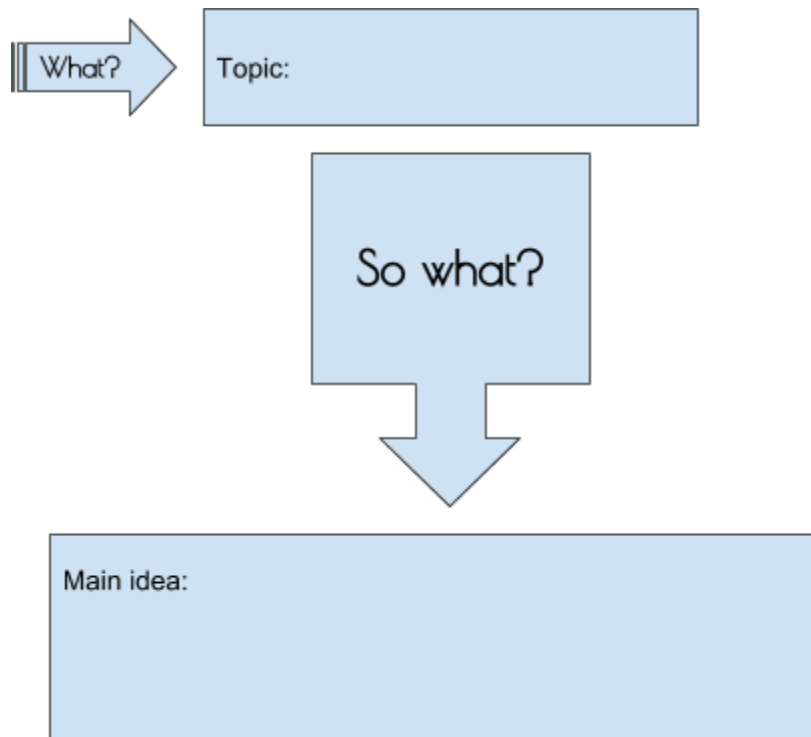
### What is it?

A main idea is more than a topic. A topic is what the text is about but a main idea is a complete sentence, including the topic AND what the author wants to say about it. Figuring out the main idea may take some work. Readers must collect information, focusing on what the author writes about and how they write about it.

### How do I use it?

**What?** Read and ask yourself: what is this article or section about? This is your topic. Write it in the rectangle at the top of the organizer.

**So what?** Then, ask yourself “So what?” Your answer might be about why the author wrote it or a unique perspective they bring to the topic. Your “so what?” will focus on what the author thinks about the topic. Write this information in the bottom rectangle of the organizer.



### What does the final product look like?

The final product is an organizer with the topic written at the top, and the main idea written at the bottom. Once the reader has distinguished between a topic and a main idea, they can begin the work of finding supporting details for the main idea.