

Name _____

Date _____

Maintain Your Focus

Staying focused on your main idea helps your readers clearly understand your message. Details that do not support the main idea can confuse the reader or distract from your argument.

Strategies to stay focused:

- Identify your main idea before you start writing.
- Remove sentences or phrases that do not directly support your main idea.
- Use transitional words and phrases to connect your supporting details.
- Check each sentence: ask, “Does this support my main point?”

Read the beginning of the persuasive letter below. Then:

1. Underline the sentence that clearly states the main idea.
2. Cross out each sentence that does not support the main idea.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I think it's time for me to have my own laptop. This change would benefit our entire family. First, it would reduce arguments over computer time, so everyone would be less stressed.

Honestly, Milo rarely uses the computer for anything helpful.

Also, having a laptop would help me improve my grades, since I could do homework or study anywhere with Wi-Fi. I might need a backpack or sleeve to carry it safely. Additionally, having my

Name _____

Date _____

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own laptop would allow me to learn in new ways. For instance, I could use apps to practice science or algebra. Our current desktop can't run many educational apps.

B. Explain how the details you crossed out could have confused the reader.

C. Write another detail sentence that focuses on the main idea of the letter.

D. Write a paragraph explaining why your school should have a garden. Make sure your paragraph has a clear main idea.

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Maintain Your Focus – Answer Key

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~~a backpack or sleeve to carry it safely.~~ Additionally, having my

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Maintain Your Focus – Answer Key

own laptop would allow me to learn in new ways. For instance, I could use apps to practice science or algebra. Our current desktop can't run many educational apps.

B. Explain how the details you crossed out could have confused the reader.

These sentences do not clearly support the main point about why having my own laptop would benefit the family or help me academically. Including them could distract the reader from understanding the main argument.

C. Write another detail sentence that focuses on the main idea of the letter.

With my own laptop, I could complete homework faster, access online resources for projects, and improve my learning in multiple subjects.

D. Write a paragraph explaining why your school should have a garden. Make sure your paragraph has a clear main idea.

Having a school garden would be a great idea because it benefits students in many ways. First, students could learn about plants and nature by growing and observing them. Second, working in the garden encourages teamwork among students. Finally, spending time in the garden can help students relax and reduce stress.