Lesson Objectives:
- Determine the main idea and supporting details in a paragraph
- Use a spider map as a pre-writing tool
- Develop a paragraph describing job skills

Activity Plan

Warm Up: Place Ss in small groups. Explain to Ss that they will hear a category (ex. cars) and will have two minutes as a group to list as many words or phrases as they can about the category (ex. sports cars, SUVs, old cars, gas, etc.). There will be several rounds such as American holidays, fast food, U.S. presidents, North American animals, and American sports. Have Ss race to see which group can list the most details about each category. Go over responses as a class following each category.

Introduction: Return to one of the categories reviewed in warm up. Elicit the responses from Ss again writing the category (ex. fast food) and Ss’ responses (ex. cheap, McDonalds, unhealthy, etc.) on the board. Point out to Ss that category (ex. fast food) is the main idea and the information about it (ex. cheap, McDonalds, unhealthy, etc.) is the supporting details. Explain to Ss that today’s lesson will focus on paragraph structure.

Presentation: Present several related objects to the class (ex. pencil, paper, book, and dictionary). Have Ss consider the main idea (ex. objects in a classroom) that goes along with the supporting details (ex. pencil, paper, book, and dictionary). Use this main idea and supporting details to create a paragraph as a class. Write the student-generated paragraph on the board. Explain to Ss that the main idea is often found that at the beginning of the paragraph followed by supporting details.

Example: There are many objects in a classroom. Pencils help us to take notes as the teacher speaks. Paper can be found in a notebook. Students often use books to practice reading. Dictionaries are useful when students need to know the meaning of a word.

Practice: Remind Ss that the main idea is often at the beginning of a paragraph followed by the supporting details. Provide Ss with Listening for the Main Idea (Student Copy). Explain to Ss that they will listen to three different texts being read. In each case, Ss will listen for the main idea and supporting details and record the information on the handout. Point out to Ss that in each instance there is one main idea; however, the number of supporting details could vary. Upon completing the exercise, go over Ss’ answers as a class. Have Ss share their ideas and be able to provide a reason for each answer provided.

Practice: Tell Ss that they will now use the paragraph structure being presented in this lesson to develop their own paragraphs. Explain to Ss that there are different pre-writing tools that help organize information and today’s class will practice one of those tools: the spider map. Provide Ss with a Spider Map and go over its parts. Return to one of the topics from the warm up (ex. fast food) and illustrate use of the spider map through this topic. Have Ss create their own spider map answering the question What are your job skills?. As Ss finish, have them pair up and give feedback to one another.

Practice: Have Ss use their spider maps to create paragraphs describing their job skills.

Evaluation: Have Ss share their paragraphs with the class.

Extension Activities:
- Provide Ss with statements from a basic text that are out of order. Have Ss identify the main idea and supporting details placing the information into a graphic organizer (ex. spider map). Finally, have Ss rewrite the paragraph putting the statements in order.
• Have Ss orally prepare a paragraph on a topic focusing on incorporating a main idea and supporting details.

Lesson adapted from www.tesol.org
The Spider Map is used to describe a central idea: a thing, a process, a concept, a proposition. The Map may be used to organize ideas or brainstorm ideas for a writing project.

Keyframe questions: What is the central idea? What are its attributes? What are its functions?
Text 1:

An airplane pilot bought his passengers pizza. The pilot works for a U.S. airline. His flight was delayed for five hours. He was hungry so he ordered 50 family-sized pizzas for himself and his 157 passengers. He paid for them himself, but the airline gave him the money back. He told his passengers: "Ladies and gentleman, Frontier Airlines is...one of the cheapest airlines...but your captain is not cheap. I just ordered pizza for the entire plane."

The pilot said his airline was like a giant family and his passengers are part of that. He said other pilots also buy food for passengers. The airline said many pilots often do special things for passengers. The pilot met the pizza delivery guy at the airport security area. He helped carry the pizzas back onto the plane. The pizza restaurant was surprised by the order. The pilot said on the phone: "I need to feed my whole plane."


Text 2:

Running every day is good for our health, but new research says running too much could be bad for us. Running long distances for many years could make our life shorter, not longer. A researcher said too much running could take away the good things from exercise. It can also damage your heart and lead to heart disease. He added that the risk of long-distance runners dying from heart disease could be the same as someone who never exercised.

Researchers looked at the health and training of 3,300 runners. Seventy per cent of them ran over 30 kilometres a week. Men who ran marathons for 25 years had hard parts in their heart. A doctor who started running marathons in 1967 is sad. He ran 60 kilometers every week and thought his heart was "indestructible". Now he has heart problems. He said people should exercise regularly but not too much.

Source: http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1404/140409-long-distance-running-1.html#ixzz37JiC8Nkq

Text 3:

A California couple got a big surprise last year while walking in the garden. They found 1,427 gold coins under a tree. The coins are worth $10 million. They are all in perfect condition. They are almost 200 years old. Some of them are rare and could be worth $1 million. The couple saw some cans sticking out from the ground. They dug down and were shocked. The woman said: "It was like finding a wonderful hot potato."

The couple said they would keep some coins and sell the others. They will give some money to charity and use some on their house. The woman said: "Whatever answers you seek, they might be right at home. The answer to our difficulties was right there under our feet." A coin expert said the coins were real. He said: "I don't like to say once-in-a-lifetime for anything, but you don't get an opportunity to handle...a treasure like this. Ever."

Source: http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1402/140228-gold-coins-1.html#ixzz37JitrPMK
Listening for the Main Idea (Student Copy)

Main idea: _____________________________________________________________
Detail: ________________________________________________________________
Detail: ________________________________________________________________
Detail: ________________________________________________________________
Detail: ________________________________________________________________

Main idea: _____________________________________________________________
Detail: ________________________________________________________________
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Main idea: _____________________________________________________________
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Listening for the Main Idea

Main idea: _____________________________________________________________
Detail: ________________________________________________________________
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