

SIXTH EDITION

TEN STEPS  
TO  
ADVANCING  
COLLEGE READING SKILLS

John Langan





# 3

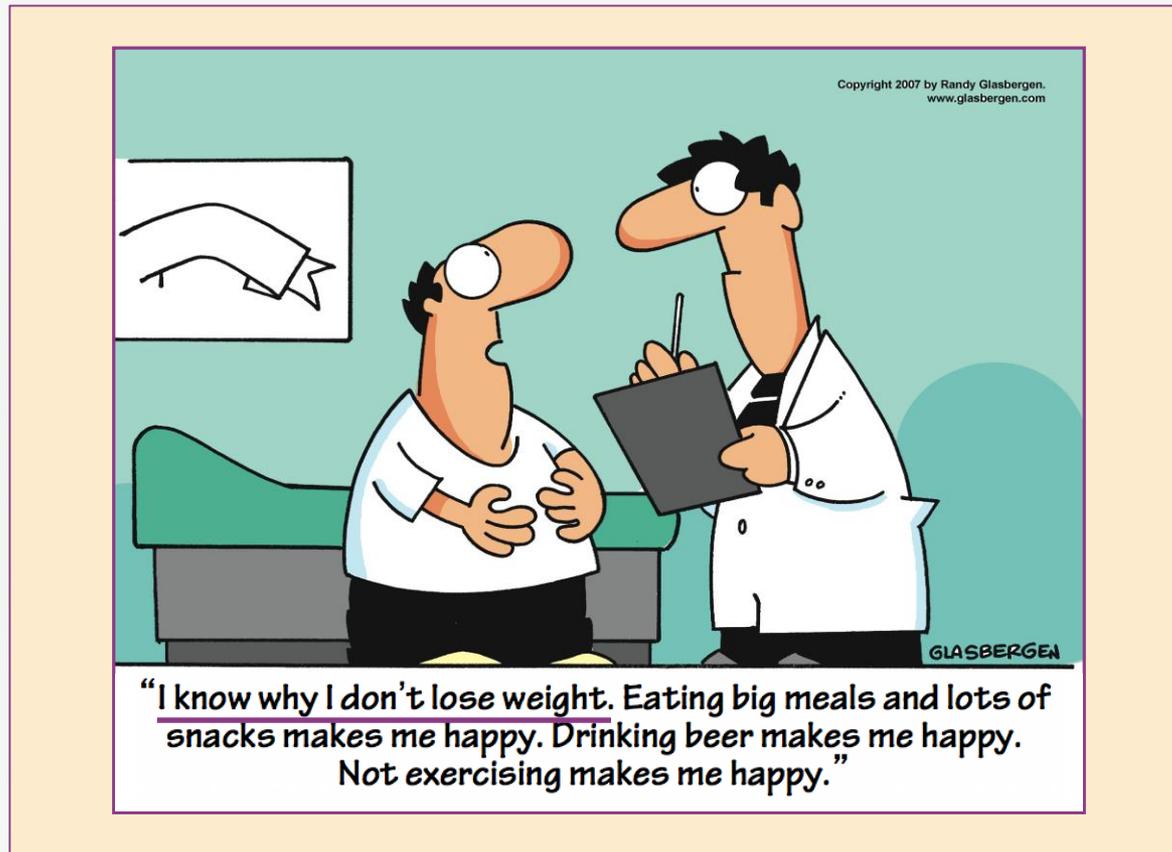
## Supporting Details

# What Are Supporting Details?

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**Supporting details** are reasons, examples, facts, steps, or other kinds of evidence that explain a main idea.

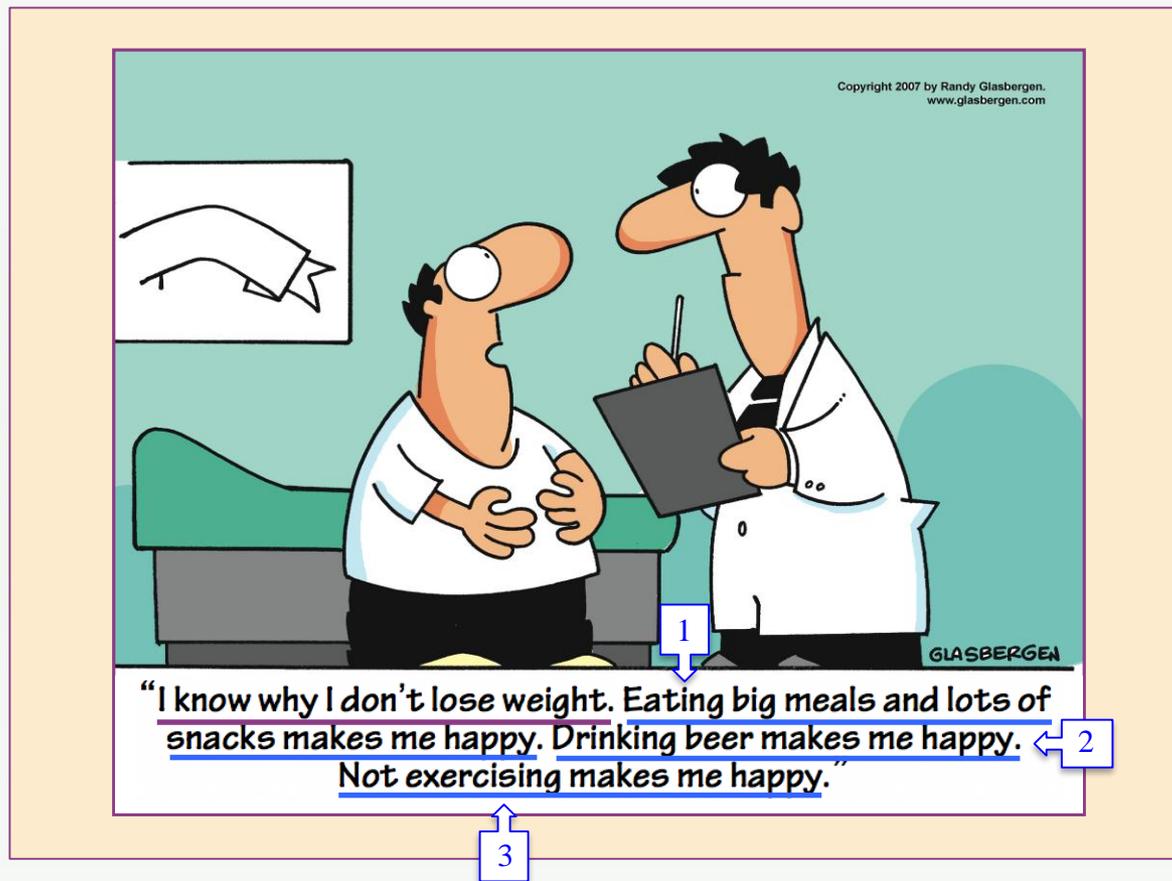
## What Are Supporting Details?



In this cartoon, what is the speaker's **main idea**?

The **main idea** is that "I know why I don't lose weight."

## What Are Supporting Details?



The joke is that the man's **supporting details**—big meals, snacks, beer, and not exercising—may make him *happy*, but they don't make him *healthy*.

## A Paragraph with Strong Support

## What Are Supporting Details? / A Paragraph with Strong Support

In the paragraph below, three **major details** support the main idea that the penny should be phased out of our economy. As you read the paragraph, try to identify the **three major details**.

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

## What Are Supporting Details? / A Paragraph with Strong Support

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, 1 pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are 2 a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, 3 keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

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Try to complete this basic outline of the paragraph. What is the first major detail that supports the main idea?

**Main idea:** Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

Supporting detail 1:

Supporting detail 2:

Supporting detail 3:

## What Are Supporting Details? / A Paragraph with Strong Support

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, ① pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

**Main idea:** Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

**Supporting detail 1:** Pennies take up more space than they are worth.

**Supporting detail 2:**

**Supporting detail 3:**

## What Are Supporting Details? / A Paragraph with Strong Support

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

## What is the second major detail that supports the main idea?

**Main idea:** Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

**Supporting detail 1:** Pennies take up more space than they are worth.

**Supporting detail 2:**

**Supporting detail 3:**

## What Are Supporting Details? / A Paragraph with Strong Support

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. **② Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community.** According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

**Main idea:** Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

**Supporting detail 1:** Pennies take up more space than they are worth.

**Supporting detail 2:** Pennies are a nuisance to the business community.

**Supporting detail 3:**

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## What is the third major detail that supports the main idea?

**Main idea:** Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

**Supporting detail 1:** Pennies take up more space than they are worth.

**Supporting detail 2:** Pennies are a nuisance to the business community.

**Supporting detail 3:**

## What Are Supporting Details? / A Paragraph with Strong Support

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

**Main idea:** Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

**Supporting detail 1:** Pennies take up more space than they are worth.

**Supporting detail 2:** Pennies are a nuisance to the business community.

**Supporting detail 3:** Pennies cost the nation as a whole.

## What Are Supporting Details? / A Paragraph with Strong Support

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. **But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy**, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. **For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth.** We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. **Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community.** According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. **Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole.** The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

**Main idea:** Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

**Supporting detail 1:** Pennies take up more space than they are worth.

**Supporting detail 2:** Pennies are a nuisance to the business community.

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**Supporting detail 1:** Pennies take up more space than they are worth.

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**Supporting detail 3:** Pennies cost the nation as a whole.

# Outlining

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Preparing an outline of a passage will help you understand and see clearly the relationship between a **main idea** and its **supporting details**.

Outlines start with a **main idea** (or a heading that summarizes the main idea), followed by supporting details.

There are often two levels of supporting details—major and minor. The **major details** explain and develop the main idea. In turn, the **minor details** help fill out and make clear the major details.

Many people feel that violence on television is harmless entertainment. However, we now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways. One study showed that frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others. They try to protect themselves from the outside world with extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns. In addition, that same study showed that heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers. It seems that the constant violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. Another study, of a group of children, found that TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Children who watched violent shows were more willing to hurt another child in games where they were given a choice between helping and hurting. They were also more likely to select toy weapons over other kinds of playthings.

Here is the paragraph on TV violence that you saw in Chapter 2. In that chapter, you picked out the **main idea** of the paragraph—that TV violence affects people in negative ways.

Many people feel that violence on television is harmless entertainment. However, we now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways. One study showed that frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others. They try to protect themselves from the outside world with extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns. In addition, that same study showed that heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers. It seems that the constant violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. Another study, of a group of children, found that TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Children who watched violent shows were more willing to hurt another child in games where they were given a choice between helping and hurting. They were also more likely to select toy weapons over other kinds of playthings.

Now reread the paragraph and try to pick out the three major supporting details.

## Outlining

Many people feel that violence on television is harmless entertainment. However, we now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways. One study showed that 1 frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others. They try to protect themselves from the outside world with extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns. In addition, that same study showed 2 heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers. It seems that the constant violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. Another study, of a group of children, found that 3 TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Children who watched violent shows were more willing to hurt another child in games where they were given a choice between helping and hurting. They were also more likely to select toy weapons over other kinds of playthings.

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**Main idea:** We now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways.

**Major detail:** 1. Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.

**Minor detail:** Protect themselves with extra locks, alarms, dogs, and guns.

Here is an outline  
of the first part of  
the paragraph.

## Outlining

Many people feel that violence on television is harmless entertainment. However, we now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways. One study showed that frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others. They try to protect themselves from the outside world with extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns. In addition, that same study showed that heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers. It seems that the constant violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. Another study, of a group of children, found that TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Children who watched violent shows were more willing to hurt another child in games where they were given a choice between helping and hurting. They were also more likely to select toy weapons over other kinds of playthings.

**Main idea:** We now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways.

**Major detail:** 1. Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.

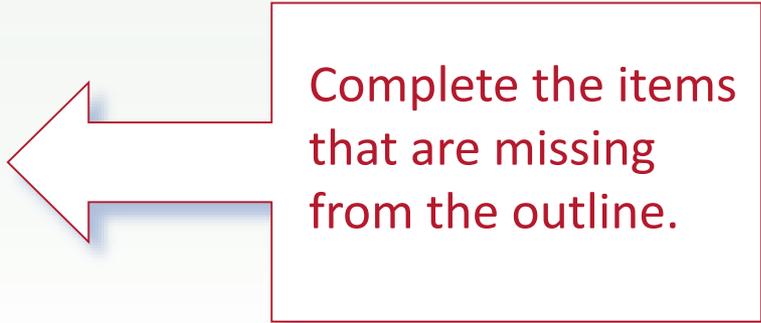
**Minor detail:** Protect themselves with extra locks, alarms, dogs, and guns.

**Major detail:** 2.

**Minor detail:**

**Major detail:** 3.

**Minor detail:**



Complete the items  
that are missing  
from the outline.

## Outlining

Many people feel that violence on television is harmless entertainment. However, we now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways. One study showed that frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others. They try to protect themselves from the outside world with extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns. In addition, that same study showed **2** heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers. It seems that the constant violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. Another study, of a group of children, found that TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Children who watched violent shows were more willing to hurt another child in games where they were given a choice between helping and hurting. They were also more likely to select toy weapons over other kinds of playthings.

**Main idea:** We now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways.

**Major detail:** 1. Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.

**Minor detail:** Protect themselves with extra locks, alarms, dogs, and guns.

**Major detail:** 2. Heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers

**Minor detail:** Constant violence on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing.

**Major detail:** 3.

**Minor detail:**

## Outlining

Many people feel that violence on television is harmless entertainment. However, we now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways. One study showed that frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others. They try to protect themselves from the outside world with extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns. In addition, that same study showed that heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers. It seems that the constant violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. Another study, of a group of children, found that

- ③ TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Children who watched violent shows were more willing to hurt another child in games where they were given a choice between helping and hurting. They were also more likely to select toy weapons over other kinds of playthings.

**Main idea:** We now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways.

**Major detail:** 1. Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.

**Minor detail:** Protect themselves with extra locks, alarms, dogs, and guns.

**Major detail:** 2. Heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers

**Minor detail:** Constant violence on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing.

**Major detail:** 3. TV violence increases aggressive behavior in children.

**Minor detail:** Children watching violent shows are more likely to choose toy weapons instead of other playthings.

## Outlining

Many people feel that violence on television is harmless entertainment. However, we now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways. One study showed that frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others. They try to protect themselves from the outside world with extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns. In addition, that same study showed that heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers. It seems that the constant violence they see on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing. Another study, of a group of children, found that TV violence increases aggressive behavior. Children who watched violent shows were more willing to hurt another child in games where they were given a choice between helping and hurting. They were also more likely to select toy weapons over other kinds of playthings.

**Main idea:** We now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways.

**Major detail:** 1. Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.

**Minor detail:** Protect themselves with extra locks, alarms, dogs, and guns.

**Major detail:** 2. Heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers

**Minor detail:** Constant violence on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing.

**Major detail:** 3. TV violence increases aggressive behavior in children.

**Minor detail:** Children watching violent shows are more likely to choose toy weapons instead of other playthings.

Notice that just as the **main idea** is more general than its supporting details, so **major details** are more general than **minor ones**.

**Main idea:** We now know that TV violence does affect people in negative ways.

**Major detail:** 1. Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.

**Minor detail:** Protect themselves with extra locks, alarms, dogs, and guns.

**Major detail:** 2. Heavy TV watchers are less upset about real-life violence than non-TV watchers

**Minor detail:** Constant violence on TV makes them less sensitive to the real thing.

**Major detail:** 3. TV violence increases aggressive behavior in children.

**Minor detail:** Children watching violent shows are more likely to choose toy weapons instead of other playthings.

Notice that just as the **main idea** is more general than its supporting details, so **major details** are more general than **minor ones**. For instance, the **major detail** that “Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others” is more general than the **minor details** about people protecting themselves with “extra locks on the doors, alarm systems, guard dogs, and guns,” which illustrate the major detail.

- Major detail:** 1. Frequent TV watchers are more fearful and suspicious of others.  
**Minor detail:** Protect themselves with extra locks, alarms, dogs, and guns.

# Outlining Tips

**TIP** **TIP 1 Look for words that tell you a list of details is coming.**

Here are some common list words that you saw in Chapter 2:

*List Words*

several kinds of  
a number of  
four steps

various causes  
a series of  
among the results

a few reasons  
three factors  
several advantages

*Examples*

- But there are now **good reasons** for our government to phase the penny out of the economy.

- In fact, we now know that TV violence does affect people in **negative ways.**

**TIP** **TIP 1 Look for words that tell you a list of details is coming.**

*List Words*

**several kinds of  
a number of  
four steps**

**various causes  
a series of  
among the results**

**a few reasons  
three factors  
several advantages**

You will not always be given such helpful signals that a list of details will follow. However, you will want to note such words when they are present, because they help you to understand quickly the basic organization of a passage.

**TIP** **TIP 2 Look for words that signal major details.**

Such words are called **addition words**. Here are some common addition words:

*Addition Words*

<b>one</b>	<b>to begin with</b>	<b>also</b>	<b>further</b>
<b>first (of all)</b>	<b>for one thing</b>	<b>in addition</b>	<b>furthermore</b>
<b>second(ly)</b>	<b>other</b>	<b>next</b>	<b>last (of all)</b>
<b>third(ly)</b>	<b>another</b>	<b>moreover</b>	<b>final(ly)</b>

**TIP TIP 2 Look for words that signal major details.**

Look again at the paragraph on phasing out the penny.

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the low **Addition words** → **For one thing** pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies **Addition word** → **also** a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to **Addition word** → **Finally**, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

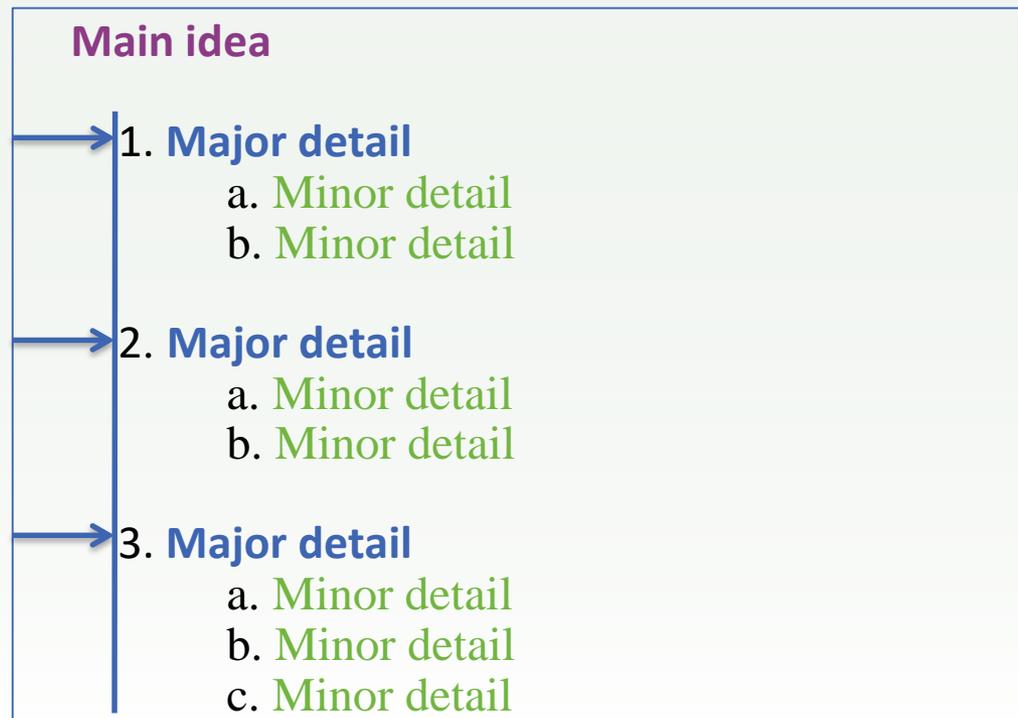
Which words introduce the first major detail?

Which word introduces the second major detail?

Which word introduces the third major detail?

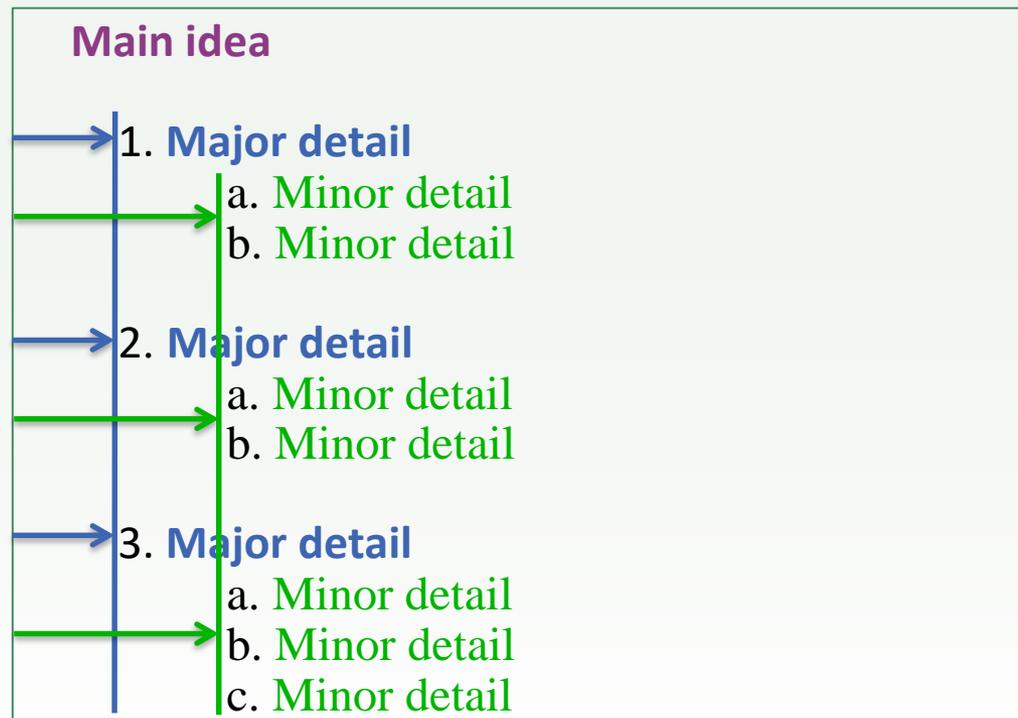
**TIP** **TIP 3** When making an outline, put all supporting details of equal importance at the same distance from the left margin.

In the model outline below, the **three major supporting details** all begin at the same distance from the margin.



**TIP 3** When making an outline, put all supporting details of equal importance at the same distance from the left margin.

Likewise, the **minor supporting details** are all indented at the same distance from the margin.



# Mapping

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**Maps**, or diagrams, are highly visual outlines in which circles, boxes, or other shapes show the relationships between main ideas and supporting details.

Each **major detail** is connected to the **main idea**. If **minor details** are included, each is connected to the **major detail** it explains.

## Here is how you might create a map of the paragraph on bullying.

### Main idea

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

## Mapping

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Major details

Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

Take up more space than they are worth

A nuisance to the business community

Pennies cost the nation as a whole

## Mapping

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to **Minor details** phase out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

Take up more space than they are worth

Need a dime or a quarter but can only find useless pennies in your pocket

A nuisance to the business community

5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars wasted by businesses on time it takes to handle pennies

Pennies cost the nation as a whole

Expenses of production and distribution of a penny is more than the penny is worth

“A penny saved is a penny earned,” the old saying goes. But there are now good reasons for our government to phase the penny out of the economy, allowing the nickel to stand as the lowest-valued coin. For one thing, pennies take up more space than they are worth. We can all recall a time when we needed a nickel, dime, or quarter to make an important phone call, buy a vending machine snack, or make a photocopy, and all we could come up with was a fistful of useless pennies. Pennies are also a nuisance to the business community. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, 5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars are wasted by businesses on the extra time and effort it takes to handle pennies. Finally, keeping pennies in circulation costs the nation as a whole. The manufacturing, storage, and handling expenses involved in a penny’s production and distribution add up to considerably more than the one cent it is worth.

Our government should phase the penny out of the economy.

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Need a dime or a quarter but can only find useless pennies in your pocket

A nuisance to the business community

5.5 million hours and 22 million dollars wasted by businesses on time it takes to handle pennies

Pennies cost the nation as a whole

Expenses of production and distribution of a penny is more than the penny is worth

As you read this paragraph, try to pick out the **major details**.

Weber says that there are three types of authority from which governments gain their right to command. One type of authority is based on tradition. Kings, queens, feudal lords, and tribal chiefs do not need written rules in order to govern. Their authority is based on long-standing customs and is handed down through generations from parent to child. People may also submit to authority because of charisma, the exceptional personal quality of an individual. Such leaders as Napoleon and Gandhi illustrate authority that derives its legitimacy from charismatic personalities. The political systems of industrial states are based largely on a third type of authority: legal authority. These systems derive legitimacy from a set of explicit rules and procedures that spell out the ruler's rights and duties. Typically, the rules and procedures are put in writing. The people grant their obedience to "the law." It specifies procedures by which certain individuals hold offices of power, such as governor or president or prime minister. But the authority is vested in those offices, not in the individuals who temporarily hold the offices.

## Mapping

Weber says that there are three types of authority from which governments gain their right to command. **One** type of authority is based on tradition. Kings, queens, feudal lords, and tribal chiefs do not need written rules in order to govern. Their authority is based on long-standing customs and is handed down through generations from parent to child. People may **also** submit to authority because of charisma, the exceptional personal quality of an individual. Such leaders as Napoleon and Gandhi illustrate authority that derives its legitimacy from charismatic personalities. The political systems of industrial states are based largely on a **third** type of authority: legal authority. These systems derive legitimacy from a set of explicit rules and procedures that spell out the ruler's rights and duties. Typically, the rules and procedures are put in writing. The people grant their obedience to "the law." It specifies procedures by which certain individuals hold offices of power, such as governor or president or prime minister. But the authority is vested in those offices, not in the individuals who temporarily hold the offices.

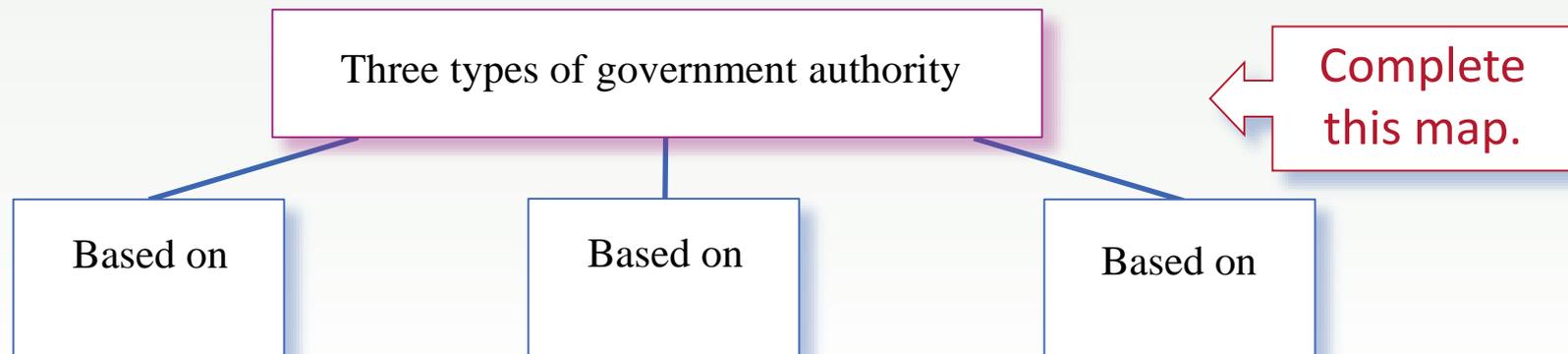
Which word introduces the first major detail?

Which word introduces the second major detail?

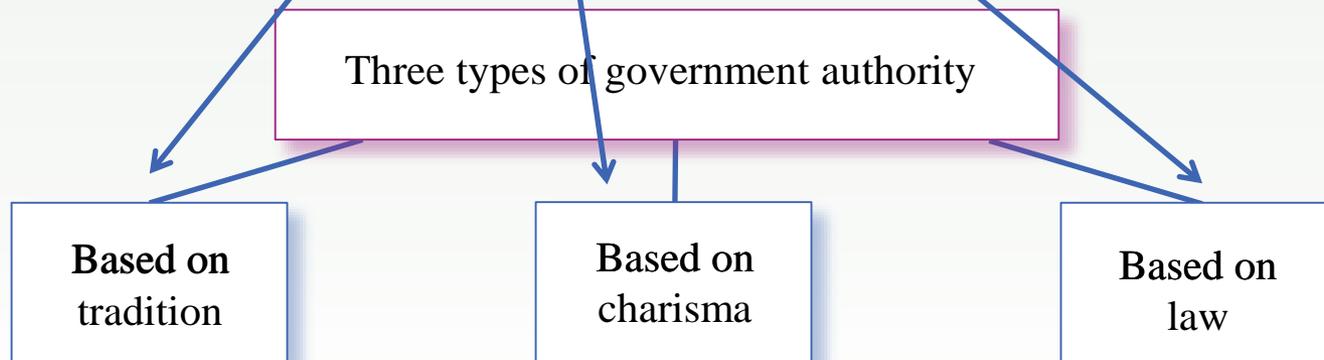
Which word introduces the third major detail?

## Mapping

Weber says that there are three types of authority from which governments gain their right to command. **One** type of authority is based on tradition. Kings, queens, feudal lords, and tribal chiefs do not need written rules in order to govern. Their authority is based on long-standing customs and is handed down through generations from parent to child. People may **also** submit to authority because of charisma, the exceptional personal quality of an individual. Such leaders as Napoleon and Gandhi illustrate authority that derives its legitimacy from charismatic personalities. The political systems of industrial states are based largely on a **third** type of authority: legal authority. These systems derive legitimacy from a set of explicit rules and procedures that spell out the ruler's rights and duties. Typically, the rules and procedures are put in writing. The people grant their obedience to "the law." It specifies procedures by which certain individuals hold offices of power, such as governor or president or prime minister. But the authority is vested in those offices, not in the individuals who temporarily hold the offices.



Weber says that there are three types of authority from which governments gain their right to command. **One** type of **authority is based on tradition.** Kings, queens, feudal lords, and tribal chiefs do not need written rules in order to govern. Their authority is based on long-standing customs and is handed down through generations from parent to child. People may **also** submit to **authority because of charisma,** the exceptional personal quality of an individual. Such leaders as Napoleon and Gandhi illustrate authority that derives its legitimacy from charismatic personalities. The political systems of industrial states are based largely on a **third** type of authority: **legal authority.** These systems derive legitimacy from a set of explicit rules and procedures that spell out the ruler's rights and duties. Typically, the rules and procedures are put in writing. The people grant their obedience to "the law." It specifies procedures by which certain individuals hold offices of power, such as governor or president or prime minister. But the authority is vested in those offices, not in the individuals who temporarily hold the offices



# Summarizing

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A **summary** is the reduction of a large amount of information to its most important points.

As a general guideline, a paragraph might be reduced to a sentence or two, an article might be reduced to a paragraph, and a textbook chapter might be reduced to about three pages of notes.

One of the most common types of summarizing occurs when you are taking study notes on textbook material. Very often you will find it helpful to summarize examples of key terms.

## Read the textbook passage below.

People under severe stress may react to their problems with **regression**, a return to childlike behavior and defenses. Adults who cry when their arguments fail may expect those around them to react sympathetically, as their parents did when they were children. Other adults may use temper tantrums in a similar way. In both examples, people are drawing on childish behaviors to solve current problems, in the hope that someone will respond to them the way adults did when they were children. Inappropriate as it may seem, such immature and manipulative behavior often works—at least for a while.

## Now read this **summary** of the passage.

### *Summary*

Regression—a return to childlike behavior and defenses to solve current problems. For example, an adult whose argument fails may cry to get sympathy.

Note that a textbook definition of a key term (such as *regression*) should generally not be summarized, but should be worded in the language chosen by the author.

## Summarizing

People under severe stress may react to their problems with **regression**, a return to childlike behavior and defenses. Adults who cry when their arguments fail may expect those around them to react sympathetically, as their parents did when they were children. Other adults may use temper tantrums in a similar way. In both examples, people are drawing on childish behaviors to solve current problems, in the hope that someone will respond to them the way adults did when they were children. Inappropriate as it may seem, such immature and manipulative behavior often works—at least for a while.

80  
words

*Summary*

Regression—a return to childlike behavior and defenses to solve current problems. For example, an adult whose argument fails may cry to get sympathy.

10  
words

On the other hand, it usually makes sense to summarize the supporting information.

Summarizing often involves two steps:

- 1 *Select* one example from several that might be given.
- 2 *Condense* the example if it's not already very brief.

As you read this paragraph, notice the extended example.

The tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision is called **groupthink**. Once a tentative decision has been made, members withhold information or opinions that might cast doubt on that course of action. They do not want to be seen as criticizing their colleagues or as “rocking the boat.” If outside experts raise questions about the wisdom of their decision, members unite in opposing and discrediting the new information. A classic example of “groupthink” occurred more than 50 years ago, during President Kennedy’s administration. Kennedy sought the advice of a small group of trusted advisers in deciding whether to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961—an attempt by a force of Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. Although several advisers had strong objections to the plan, not one expressed doubts. As far as Kennedy knew, his advisers were unanimously in favor. The invasion was a military and public relations disaster.

## Summarizing

The tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision is called **groupthink**. Once a tentative decision has been made, members withhold information or opinions that might cast doubt on that course of action. They do not want to be seen as criticizing their colleagues or as “rocking the boat.” If outside experts raise questions about the wisdom of their decision, members unite in opposing and discrediting the new information. A classic example of “groupthink” occurred more than 50 years ago, during President Kennedy’s administration. Kennedy sought the advice of a small group of trusted advisers in deciding whether to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961—an attempt by a force of Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. Although several advisers had strong objections to the plan, not one expressed doubts. As far as Kennedy knew, his advisers were unanimously in favor. The invasion was a military and public relations disaster.

Study notes on this paragraph should include the key point that Kennedy’s advisers overlooked the flaws in a decision.

## Summarizing

The tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision is called **groupthink**. Once a tentative decision has been made, members withhold information or opinions that might cast doubt on that course of action. They do not want to be seen as criticizing their colleagues or as “rocking the boat.” If outside experts raise questions about the wisdom of their decision, members unite in opposing and discrediting the new information. A classic example of “groupthink” occurred more than 50 years ago, during President Kennedy’s administration. Kennedy sought the advice of a small group of trusted advisers in deciding whether to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961—an attempt by a force of Cuban exiles to overthrow the

**Which example below best completes the study notes?**

one expressed doubts. As far as Kennedy knew, his advisers were unanimously in favor. The invasion was a military and public relations disaster.

Groupthink—the tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision.

Example—

- A. During Kennedy’s administration, the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 was a military and public relations disaster.
- B. The classic example occurred during President Kennedy’s administration.
- C. Kennedy went ahead with the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion because advisors withheld their objections.

## Summarizing

The tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision is called **groupthink**. Once a tentative decision has been made, members withhold information or opinions that might cast doubt on that course of action. They do not want to be seen as criticizing their colleagues or as “rocking the boat.” If outside experts raise questions about the wisdom of their decision, members unite in opposing and discrediting the new information. A classic example of “groupthink” occurred more than 50 years ago, during President Kennedy’s administration. Kennedy sought the advice of a small group of trusted advisers in deciding whether to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961—an attempt by a force of Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. Although several advisers had strong objections to the plan, not one expressed doubts. As far as Kennedy knew, his advisers were unanimously in favor. The invasion was a military and public relations disaster.

Groupthink—the tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision.

Example—

-  **A.** During Kennedy’s administration, the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 was a military and public relations disaster.

Answer A tells about the results of the Bay of Pigs invasion, but says nothing about how the advisers withheld their true opinions.

## Summarizing

The tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision is called **groupthink**. Once a tentative decision has been made, members withhold information or opinions that might cast doubt on that course of action. They do not want to be seen as criticizing their colleagues or as “rocking the boat.” If outside experts raise questions about the wisdom of their decision, members unite in opposing and discrediting the new information. A classic example of “groupthink” occurred more than 50 years ago, during President Kennedy’s administration. Kennedy sought the advice of a small group of trusted advisers in deciding whether to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961—an attempt by a force of Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. Although several advisers had strong objections to the plan, not one expressed doubts. As far as Kennedy knew, his advisers were unanimously in favor. The invasion was a military and public relations disaster.

Groupthink—the tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision.

Example—

 **B.** The classic example occurred during President Kennedy’s administration.

Answer B also makes no mention of what the advisers did. It refers to the example so generally that the event isn’t even mentioned.

## Summarizing

The tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision is called **groupthink**. Once a tentative decision has been made, members withhold information or opinions that might cast doubt on that course of action. They do not want to be seen as criticizing their colleagues or as “rocking the boat.” If outside experts raise questions about the wisdom of their decision, members unite in opposing and discrediting the new information. A classic example of “groupthink” occurred more than 50 years ago, during President Kennedy’s administration. Kennedy sought the advice of a small group of trusted advisers in deciding whether to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961—an attempt by a force of Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. Although several advisers had strong objections to the plan, not one expressed doubts. As far as Kennedy knew, his advisers were unanimously in favor. The invasion was a military and public relations disaster.

**Groupthink**—the tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision.

**Example**—

Answer answer C includes the idea that advisers withheld their objections in order to seem unanimously in favor of the Bay of Pigs invasion, which turned out to be a disaster.

- C.** Kennedy went ahead with the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion because advisers withheld their objections.

## Summarizing

The tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision is called **groupthink**. Once a tentative decision has been made, members withhold information or opinions that might cast doubt on that course of action. They do not want to be seen as criticizing their colleagues or as “rocking the boat.” If outside experts raise questions about the wisdom of their decision, members unite in opposing and discrediting the new information. A classic example of “groupthink” occurred more than 50 years ago, during President Kennedy’s administration. Kennedy sought the advice of a small group of trusted advisers in deciding whether to support the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961—an attempt by a force of Cuban exiles to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro. Although several advisers had strong objections to the plan, not one expressed doubts. As far as Kennedy knew, his advisers were unanimously in favor. The invasion was a military and public relations disaster.

**Study Notes:**

**Groupthink**—the tendency for members to be so intent on maintaining group agreement that they overlook or put aside the flaws in their decision.

**Example**—Kennedy went ahead with the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion because advisers withheld their objections.

## Chapter Review

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- Major and minor details provide the added information you need to make sense of a main idea.
- List words and addition words can help you to find major and minor supporting details.
- Outlining, mapping, and summarizing are useful note-taking strategies.
- Outlines show the relationship between the main idea, major details, and minor details of a passage.
- Maps are very visual outlines.
- Writing a definition and summarizing an example is a good way to take notes on a new term.

The next chapter—Chapter 4—will show you how to find implied main ideas and central points.