

Name: _____ Date: _____

Central Ideas and Details

A central idea of a text is one of the main points the author is making.

(Sometimes a central idea is called a main idea.)

A central idea can always be supported with details from the text.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to explore the central ideas and supporting details in "Escape From Alcatraz."

1. Reread the section "Ready for Troublemakers." Which statement below BEST expresses the central idea of this section?

- Ⓐ Officials at Alcatraz were nervous before the arrival of the first inmates. (p. 8)
- Ⓑ Alcatraz opened in 1934. (p. 8)
- Ⓒ Alcatraz was built to house the most dangerous criminals in America. (p. 8)
- Ⓓ Criminals became celebrities in the 1930s. (p. 8)

2. Read the central idea of the introduction and the section "Many Had Drowned" stated in the box below. Then read the lines from the article listed under it. Which detail does NOT support the central idea?

Central Idea:

Frank Morris, Allen West, and the Anglin brothers were resourceful.

- Ⓐ "They covered the dummy heads with hair stolen from the prison barbershop and painted faces on them." (p. 7)
- Ⓑ "Carefully avoiding the prison searchlight, they crawled silently across the roof . . ." (p. 7)
- Ⓒ "For months, they had been using stolen spoons and a power drill made out of a vacuum cleaner motor to dig away at the concrete walls of their prison cells." (p. 6)
- Ⓓ "Using stolen and handmade tools, they'd managed to fashion life jackets and a raft out of raincoats." (p. 6)

I chose _____ because _____

3. Read the details from the section "Harsh Punishment" listed below. In the box, write a central idea that these details support.

Central Idea:

Detail 1: "After a gong signaled wake-up at 6:30 a.m., inmates cleaned their cells, then stood to be counted." (p. 8)

Detail 2: "No newspapers or radios were allowed. Lights-out was at 9:30 p.m. sharp." (p. 9)

Detail 3: "Men who broke the rules faced harsh punishment, the most feared of which was solitary confinement." (p. 9)

4. Consider the central idea of the whole article that is written below. We wrote one detail from the article that supports this idea. Write two more supporting details in the spaces provided.

Central Idea: It was extremely difficult to escape from Alcatraz.

Detail 1:

"Men had tried to escape from Alcatraz before only to drown in the frigid waters of San Francisco Bay." (p. 6)

Detail 2:

Detail 3:
