

Practicing Main Idea Through *Standing Ground*

Main Idea Definition: **The overall idea or the overall picture of a section of text.**

The following paragraphs are taken from various chapters of *Standing Ground*. After reading each paragraph, write what you feel is the main idea of the paragraph.

From page 5:

A thin shimmer of light cascaded through the window from the street lamps outside and dimly lit one side of Israel's face. Clarisa could see him now. The face was of a boy, a young teen. He wasn't so young anymore; at least, that's what the streets said. Israel knew how to take care of himself. He had been doing it for quite some time now. Tonight would be no different. He could handle it. He had done it before, many times. Tomorrow, he would see his homeboys and her again. It would be okay. He took another swig from the soda bottle and put it to one side. Slowly, his head lowered and fell into the fold of his arms on the table. Sirens blared outside in the dark. Down the street, a few faint gunshots echoed through the humid night air. He never heard them. He was asleep.

Main Idea: _____

From page 12:

A few posters decorated the walls. The most special poster was a picture of a beautiful woman. She was the Virgin of Guadalupe, an important symbol of hope for many in Mexico. On a trip to Mexico to visit family a few years earlier, their mamá had bought this poster for them. It showed the painting of a beautiful young woman in a long, multicolored dress, her head covered with a hood that connected to her long robe. Stars twinkled in a half circle above her head. Her face was tan, like theirs, and the Virgin of Guadalupe was staring down toward her feet. Clarisa loved this poster. That's why she put it on the bedroom door, so it would be the last thing that she saw every time she left the room. She liked the thought that someone was watching over her and taking care of her.

Main Idea: _____

From page 22:

The streets in Clarisa's neighborhood were infinitely long and flat as pancakes. Walking down any given street was an experience. Next to a home one could find an auto shop or a store, followed by another home and then some other type of business. Graffiti was pasted on the walls of the buildings and homes. Most of it was crude, unrecognizable letters and symbols roughly spray painted on a wall or a fence. However, some taggers (those who painted, or tagged, the walls) were quite talented. Various walls displayed huge murals with beautiful, bright colors and elegant lettering that spelled out a gang's territory and history. Property was helpless to the onslaught of graffiti. Local owners would try to paint over most of it, only to have it tagged again a short time later. So common was the graffiti that most people no longer noticed it. Actually, the surprising part was when someone passed a wall or a fence that was clean. Now that was a sight!

Main Idea: _____

From page 37:

Students had different opinions about Juarez Middle School. For some, it was a place to learn. For others, it was just a place to be. See friends. Get away from home. Get a free meal. Kids heard teachers talking all the time about them being "at-risk students." They didn't really understand what this meant, but the students knew they were mostly at risk of failing classes or just being plain misunderstood. Juarez wasn't a bad school. It just didn't help all the kids in the way that some of them needed help. Clarisa took school very seriously. She put forth her best foot when it came to learning, and learn she did. She was ranked at the top of her class.

Main Idea: _____

From pages 50

Clarisa didn't like the drill sergeant's attitude, but she held her tongue. As she walked into the room, the stench and heat hit her like a pan to the face. She estimated that more than thirty-five students were stuffed into this room that was suitable for no more than twenty warm bodies. The dingy, tan walls were peeling like a snake shedding its skin. All windows were covered with old, brown pull-down shades, and the graffiti-riddled chairs were in straight rows, occupied by silent, miserable students, some of whom were smirking at her entrance.

Main Idea: _____

From page 72

"Oh, wow!" She sighed. "This is totally awesome!" She had never smelled an aroma so lovely in her life. The sweet, powdery fragrance reminded her of a sunny day in a garden full of flowers. Her eyes remained closed as she took another deep breath. She wished that she could buy the bottle but knew that it was very expensive and that she would never have enough money. As she slowly opened her eyes to ask the nice woman a question, she noticed that the beautiful smile and perfect teeth were gone, replaced by a horrible frown.

Main Idea: _____

From page 79:

Although Clarisa was used to living in and seeing places that weren't too nice, Abel's house looked so bad that it scared her. The front yard was a jungle of weeds covered with bottles, paper bags, and other trash. White paint flaked off of the sides of the house, exposing dark, rotted wood. Two of the front windows were broken, and the screen door leading into the house was falling off the hinges.

Main Idea: _____

From page 92:

The four of them sat in the emergency room of the hospital. As Mr. Rodriguez spoke on the phone to Señora Sanchez, Maribel watched the small television up in the corner of the busy waiting room. Exhausted from the experiences of the day, Clarisa and Israel slumped down in the tiny emergency room chairs. The area was at capacity. An old man lay next to them, snoring as if he were at home. Across from them, three young girls were standing in the corner, leaning on the wall, half-asleep. There was no other space to lay, sit, or stand.

Main Idea: _____

From page 101:

"Israel, I don't know what you're planning on doing, but I want you to think real hard before you do it. Right now, you're not in school. Your girlfriend is in the hospital. We don't know what happened to Abel. If this is what your gang is doing for you, then I can tell you this. They aren't doing much except helping you get into more trouble. Think about it."

Main Idea: _____

From page 111:

As she continued to dance with him, she felt him step away. For a moment she was by herself. Then loud roars and claps from her friends and family came forth as someone else stepped in to take Israel's place on the dance floor. She held the man close as they turned and floated in the middle of the dance floor. The church hall roof opened, and the stars once again twinkled above them. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Israel standing on the side of the dance floor, smiling and clapping for her. "Happy birthday, hijita. I hope that you had a special day," the man dancing with her whispered into her ear. "Oh, it was great! Thank you. Thank you so much." "You had a special day. You are so wonderful. I am so proud of you. I love you!" "I love ... I love you too ... Papi! Thank you for coming." Clarisa slept peacefully. She smiled.

Main Idea: _____