

Name: _____

Date: _____

Digging In with Research

When you read a nonfiction text you are exposed to a lot of new information. But it is your job, as the reader, to determine what information is most important.

To determine what is important, you should ask yourself two questions as you read:

- Why did the author write this text? (author's purpose)
- What did they want me to learn? (main idea)

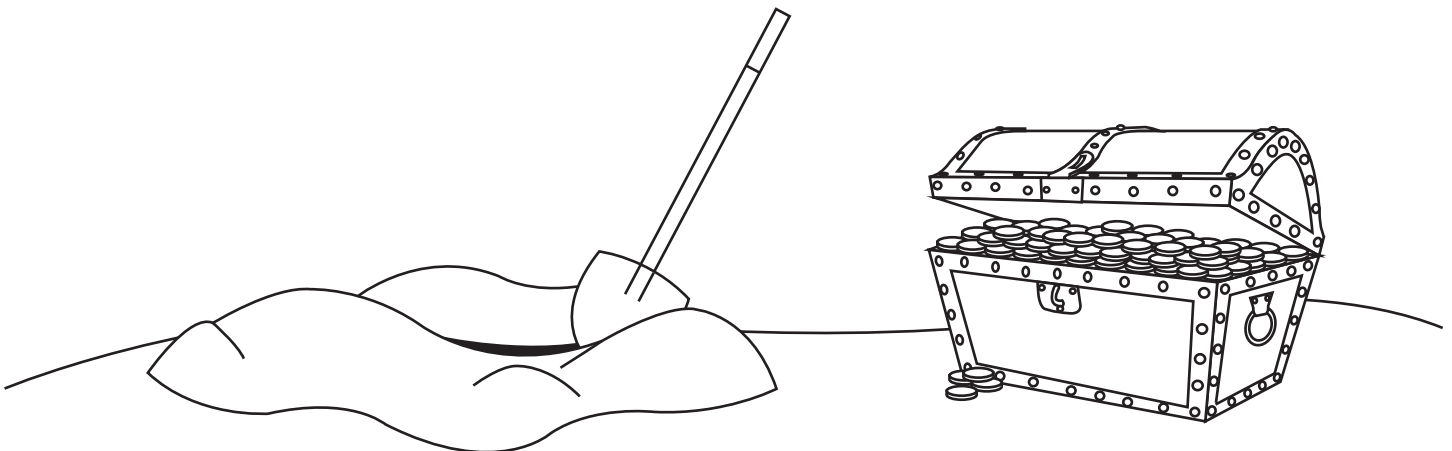
While you read, imagine you are digging for treasure. As you dig, you will find three things:

The Dirt: This is the information that “fills in” the text. You do not need this information to understand or main idea of the text. Sometimes the “dirt” can get in your way or distract you from finding the information you are looking for.

The Chest: This is a supporting detail. It might give you clues about the main idea or purpose of the article. You should slow down your digging (reading) because you might be close to finding the information you are looking for. Underline the supporting details you find.

The Treasure: This is what you've been looking for! It is important information that will help you determine the purpose or main idea of the text. You should stop digging (reading) and pay close attention to this information. **Highlight** key words, phrases, or sentences that reveal the purpose or main idea!

Hint: You will find more than one “treasure” as you read. Look for three to five pieces of important information to highlight.



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Step 1: Read the text below. Underline supporting details. Highlight key words, phrases, or sentences that reveal the purpose or main idea of the text.

Are pirates real? In the movies, pirates are known for their ruthless antics in search of treasure. But stories throughout history prove that real pirates were even more cunning than the ones you've seen on the big screen.

In 1572, a sea captain named Francis Drake was licensed by Queen Elizabeth I, of England, to sail as a privateer. A privateer's commission allowed captains to steal any property belonging to King Philip II, of Spain. With his new license, Francis Drake set off right away with a plan to attack a Spanish settlement, in search of silver and gold. A year later, he returned to England with his stolen treasure, making Queen Elizabeth very happy.

In addition to stealing from the Spanish, Francis Drake was also instructed by the queen to explore the northwestern coast of North America in search of a passage to England. So, in 1577, he set off for a journey around the globe, making him the first English captain to sail around the world. During his voyage, Francis Drake landed in what is now California, claiming the land for Queen Elizabeth. He raided multiple Spanish ports, stealing supplies and valuable goods. Along the way, he even captured a Spanish ship loaded with treasure. When he returned to England in 1580, Queen Elizabeth knighted him, making him Sir Francis Drake—the most famous pirate in history.

Step 2: Make a treasure map! In your own words, write the important information you highlighted.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Step 3: Summarize the text. Use your "treasure map" to write about the main idea and purpose of the text.
