

Close Reading: Identifying the Main Idea

The Transcontinental Railroad

Directions: Complete each of the following steps. Then, fill out the Main Idea chart on the next page.



Underline the main idea in red.



Underline supporting details in blue.



Underline an interesting piece of information in purple.

The Transcontinental Railroad

The building of the Transcontinental Railroad is an important part of United States history. As a result of people migrating West for the Gold Rush, the idea of building an east to west railroad became a major goal.

Therefore, in 1862, President Lincoln approved funding for the building of a transcontinental railroad. This railroad was the first mass-transit project to connect the Eastern United States with the new West. Although it was difficult to find an easy way for the train to pass through California, Theodore Judah finally found a safe passage through the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

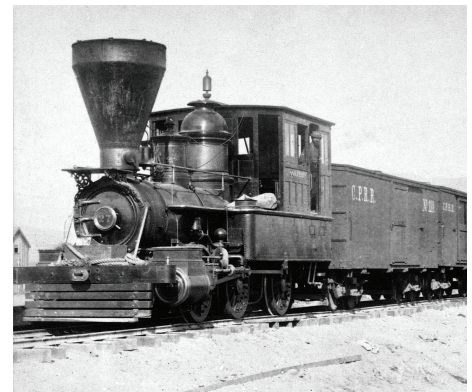
Workers began building at both ends of the track and met in Promontory Point, Utah. The project was finished on May 10th, 1869, and workers celebrated by joining the two sets of track with a golden spike.

FUN FACT

Modern highway Interstate 80 follows most of the transcontinental railroad's original route.

Glossary

approved	to accept
funding	money provided by an organization or government
mass-transit	public transportation
migrating	to move from one region to another
transcontinental	crossing a continent



Name _____

Date _____

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Directions: Write the main idea of this passage in a complete sentence. Then, record three supporting details.

Main Idea:



Supporting Detail # 1

Supporting Detail # 2

Supporting Detail # 3
