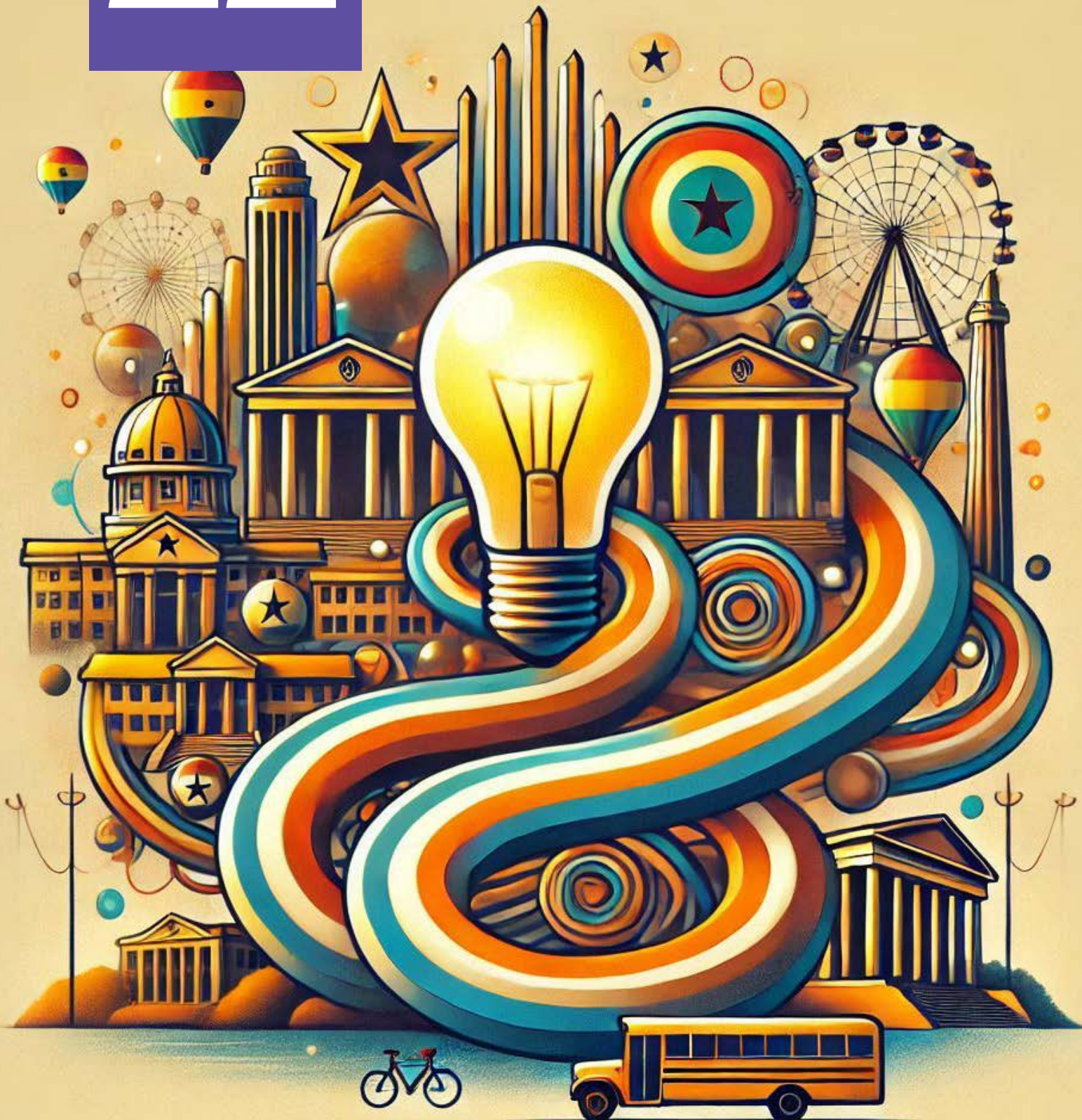


SECTION

22

IDEAS



LISTENING COMPREHENSION

INTRODUCTION

In this Section, we are going to look at what is meant by important and unimportant ideas. We learned in the previous week what main and subsidiary ideas are. We also learned how to retrieve main ideas from subsidiary ideas. Applying the knowledge gained from the previous lesson and with the knowledge that will be gained from this new lesson, we are going to listen to oral conversations and retrieve important ideas and unimportant ideas. We will also differentiate between the ideas that are important and those that are unimportant.

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between important ideas and unimportant ideas in level-appropriate oral texts.

Key Ideas

- *Idea* is generally any result of a mental activity, a notion, a way of thinking, a plan, thought, or suggestion, especially about what to do in a particular situation.
- *Important ideas* refer to concepts, principles, or values that have significant meaning, relevance, and impact on our lives, relationships and society.
- *Unimportant ideas* refer to concepts, thoughts, or information that lack significance or relevance, have little or no impact on our lives or decisions, are unnecessary or redundant, and are trivial and lack depth or substance.
- *Sequel* is a continuation or follow-up of a story, book, movie, or other narrative. It typically builds upon the events, characters or themes of the original work and explores new developments or plotlines.

IMPORTANT AND NON-IMPORTANT IDEAS

Ideas are thoughts, concepts, or mental representations that form the basis for understanding, creativity, and problem-solving. They are central to innovation, communication, and decision-making across all areas of life. Ideas can be important or unimportant.

Important ideas are those that significantly shape the way individuals, societies, or civilisations think, act, and evolve. These ideas have far-reaching implications, influencing fields like philosophy, politics, science, art, and daily life. Below are some ideas that can be considered important when they are captured in written texts or oral conversations

1. Human Rights

The belief that all people are entitled to certain basic freedoms and protections simply because they are human. It influences laws, justice systems, and international relations.

2. Democracy

The idea that government should be based on the will of the people, typically through free and fair elections. It shapes modern governance, promoting participation, freedom, and equality.

3. Scientific Method

A systematic approach to inquiry that involves observation, experimentation, and rational analysis to draw conclusions about the natural world. It has been the foundation of scientific discoveries and technological advancement.

4. Sustainability

The concept of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. It is central to addressing environmental issues like climate change, resource depletion, and ecological balance.

5. Free Will

The philosophical idea that individuals have the capacity to choose their actions independently of external forces. It impacts ethics, law, psychology, and religious thought.

6. Globalisation

The process of increased interconnectedness between countries in terms of trade, communication, culture, and politics. It affects economies, societies, and cultural exchanges on a worldwide scale.

7. Evolution by Natural Selection

The scientific theory, primarily developed by Charles Darwin, explains how species change over time owing to genetic variations and environmental pressures. It forms the basis of modern biology and our understanding of life's diversity.

8. Economic Systems

These ideas shape how societies organise resources, labour, and wealth distribution.

9. The Rule of Law

The principle that all individuals and institutions, including governments, are accountable to laws that are fairly applied and enforced. It is fundamental to ensuring justice, fairness, and stability in societies.

10. Cultural Relativism

The belief that a person's beliefs and behaviours should be understood based on their own culture and historical development, rather than judged against the criteria of another culture. It influences discussions on diversity, ethics, and tolerance in a globalised world.

11. Equality and Social Justice

This is the idea that all individuals deserve equal rights and opportunities, and that society should be fair and just, with the intention of eliminating discrimination and inequality. It drives movements for civil rights, gender equality, and anti-discrimination laws.

These ideas identified above are considered important ideas in conversation because they are ideas that shape modern life, influence political and scientific developments, and guide philosophical inquiry. They are often foundational to progress, providing frameworks for understanding and improving the world.

Unimportant ideas are those that have minimal or no significant impact on a particular context, conversation, or situation. What is considered unimportant can be subjective, as it depends on the relevance, usefulness, or applicability of the idea. However, here are some characteristics of unimportant ideas:

1. Lack of Relevance

These are ideas that do not contribute to the current topic, problem, or context. They might distract a reader from the main focus or fail to add value.

Example: Discussing personal hobbies in the middle of a serious business meeting about financial planning.

2. Trivial Information

Ideas that focus on minor details that are inconsequential or insignificant in the broader scope of a discussion.

Example: Debating the colour of office supplies when discussing a company's overall strategy for growth.

3. Redundant Ideas

Ideas that repeat information already known without offering new perspectives, insights, or solutions.

Example: Continuously restating the same point in a discussion without adding further clarity or depth. (As one wise chairman once commented in these circumstances, 'If you have three people with dogs on long leads, and you let them run round the same tree, all the leads get tangled. Let's move on.')

4. Overly Speculative Ideas

Ideas based on far-fetched assumptions that lack evidence or logical support, making them impractical or unrealistic.

Example: Speculating about possible overseas influence on economic policies in a serious discussion about government regulations.

5. Outdated Ideas

Ideas that may have been relevant at one point but are now obsolete owing to advancements in knowledge, technology, or social norms.

Example: Advocating the use of typewriters and FAX machines in a discussion about modern office technology.

6. Ideas with No Actionable Outcome

Ideas that, while they may sound interesting, do not lead to any meaningful actions, changes, or decisions.

Example: Suggesting a completely hypothetical scenario with no practical relevance to the matter at hand.

7. Ideas Based on Misinformation

Ideas that are founded on incorrect facts or misunderstandings, leading to conclusions that are not useful or accurate. Example: Proposing health advice based on a widely debunked 'urban myth', such as the idea that vaccines cause autism.

8. Clichéd or Overused Ideas

Ideas that have been repeated so often that they lose their originality or effectiveness, often failing to contribute fresh insight.

Example: Using vague motivational phrases like "we have to think outside the box" without offering concrete strategies for innovation.

Unimportant ideas tend to fail in contributing positively or moving a conversation, problem-solving effort, or project forward. In many cases, their lack of relevance or practicality makes them distractions rather than useful contributions. It's important, however, to note that what might seem unimportant in one context may be valuable in another.

How to Differentiate between Important and Unimportant Ideas

Differentiating between important and unimportant ideas involves evaluating them based on several key factors. Find below some of the factors one can consider before differentiating between important and unimportant ideas.

1. *Relevance to Goals:*

Important ideas directly align with your goals, objectives, or the task at hand. They contribute significantly to what you're trying to achieve.

Unimportant ideas are tangential or unrelated to your main objectives.

Ask yourself: Does this idea move me closer to my goals?

2. *Impact:*

Important ideas have a large potential impact. They may lead to significant outcomes, changes, or improvements.

Unimportant ideas often have limited or negligible impact.

Ask yourself: If I focus on this, what will the result be? Will it make a big difference?

3. *Feasibility:*

Important ideas are attainable and realistic, meaning they can be implemented with available resources and within the given constraints.

Unimportant ideas might be overly idealistic or impractical to pursue at the moment.

Ask yourself: Can I realistically act on this idea?

4. *Urgency:*

Important ideas often demand timely attention, either because of deadlines, pressing needs, or opportunities that may not last.

Unimportant ideas may not require immediate attention and can be revisited later without significant consequences.

Ask yourself: Is this something that needs to be done now, or can it wait?

5. *Alignment with Values:*

Important ideas often resonate with your core values or the values of the organisation or community you're a part of.

Unimportant ideas may conflict with those values or seem trivial in the broader context.

Ask yourself: Does this idea align with what I or my organisation stands for?

6. *Supporting Evidence:*

Important ideas are usually backed by solid reasoning, data, or experience. They are based on sound logic or evidence.

Unimportant ideas may lack substantiation, relying more on assumptions or whims.

Ask yourself: Is there evidence or reasoning that supports this idea?

7. *Consequences of Ignoring:*

Important ideas often have negative consequences if ignored, such as missed opportunities or unresolved problems.

Unimportant ideas might not lead to significant losses or consequences if set aside.

Ask yourself: What happens if I don't act on this idea?

By applying these criteria, you can better distinguish between ideas that deserve attention and those that may be less critical.

Activity 22.1

1. Invite 5 friends and perform this activity with them. Let the first set of two read this conversation while the others listen, and after which another set of two will also read till the last set finally reads.

A Conversation between a doctor and a patient

Doctor: Hello! What can I do for you?

Patient: I have been suffering from fever and sore throat since yesterday.

Doctor: Do you have a cough problem also?

Patient: Yes, I have.

Doctor: Do you have any other symptoms?

Patient: I also feel a headache and shivering.

Doctor: Have you taken any medicine so far?

Patient: No, Doctor.

Doctor: Let me check your temperature. Now the fever is 40 degrees.

Patient: Is there something serious Doctor?

Doctor: Don't worry. Take the prescribed medicines two times a day for 3 days and get some rest.

Patient: Thank you very much Doctor.

Doctor: Welcome. Get well soon.

2. Still with your friends, find the ideas presented in the conversation by asking the following questions:
 - a. What is/are the speaker(s) referring to?
 - b. What does/do the speaker(s) want me to know?
 - c. What did you learn from the passage (themes, characters, moral lessons)?
 - d. What are the key ideas in the text?
 - e. What will you suggest as a suitable title for the text and why?

Activity 22.2

1. Read this conversation with one of your friends. One of you will assume the role of the mother and the other will assume the role of the daughter.

Mother: Maame Kay, my dear, now that you're growing up, it's essential to take good care of your body. You know what I mean?

Daughter: (giggles) Yes, Mommy, you mean like bathing and wearing clean clothes?

Mother: Exactly! But it's more than that. As a young lady, you need to pay attention to your personal hygiene. Wash your hands regularly, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.

Daughter: Okay, Mommy, I'll try.

Mother: Try? Maame Kay, it's not just about trying. It's about making it a habit. You see, when you keep your body clean, you feel good about yourself, and others respect you too. And don't forget to wear clean clothes every day, especially during your...you know...monthly periods.

Daughter: (giggles) Yes, Mommy, I know.

Mother: Good. And Maame Kay, don't be shy to ask me or your aunties about anything you don't understand about your body. We've all been through it, and we're here to guide you.

Daughter: Thanks, Mommy. I feel better knowing I can come to you.

Mother: Anytime, my dear. Now, go take your bath and put on some clean clothes. You're growing up to be a beautiful, confident woman!

Daughter: Yes, Mommy! (hugs)

2. With the friend you read the conversation with, perform this activity together.
 - a. Identify the key ideas from the conversation.
 - b. Summarise in your own words what the text is about by focusing on the key ideas identified.
 - c. Suggest a suitable title for the narrative.

Activity 22.3

1. Practise the conversation below again with your friend, assuming the role of the mother and the son.

Mother: Papa Kwaku, my son, how was the party you attended yesterday? Did you have fun?

Son: Yes, Mommy, it was so much fun! I played with my friends and ate a lot of jollof rice and chicken.

Mother: (laughs) That's good to hear. And what about the birthday boy, Kwame? Did you wish him a happy birthday?

Son: Yes, Mommy, we all sang 'Happy Birthday' and he blew out the candles.

Mother: That's great. And what did you think of the cake? Was it delicious?

Son: (excitedly) Oh, Mommy, it was so sweet! I had two slices.

Mother: (laughs) Papa Kwaku, you and your sweet tooth! I'm glad you enjoyed yourself. And did you dance with your friends?

Son: (giggles) Yes, Mommy, we danced azonto and shaku-shaku.

Mother: (smiling) That's my boy! I'm glad you had a great time. And don't forget to thank Kwame's mother for inviting you to the party.

Son: Yes, Mommy, I'll do that.

Mother: Good. Now, let's get ready for church. We don't want to be late.

Son: Okay, Mommy.

2. Perform this activity on your own.
 - a. Write down the key ideas in the conversation above.
 - b. Identify what the speakers are referring to.
 - c. Write down two things you have learned from the conversation.
 - d. Summarise the conversation in your own words.

Review Questions

NB: Read all the instructions carefully before you tackle any of the questions.

Read the narrative below carefully and use it to answer question 1 and 2.

“As I walked to the market, I couldn’t help but think about the upcoming elections and how they would impact our community. I had been volunteering with a local organisation to register voters and educate them on the issues. But then I saw a street performer doing a great impression of Michael Jackson and I stopped to watch. He was really good! After that, I continued to the market to buy some fresh produce for dinner. I decided to try out a new recipe for jollof rice and chicken. When I got home, I spent some time responding to emails and then took a nap. Later, I attended a meeting with our neighbourhood association to discuss the proposed development project that could bring in new businesses and jobs. We had a lively discussion about the pros and cons. After the meeting, I met up with friends at a nearby café and we chatted about our favourite TV shows.”

1. State what the speaker is describing.
2. State two important ideas and two unimportant ideas from the text above.

Read this passage below and use it to answer questions 3 to 6.

Fiifi was a grade 10 learner at a school in Accra. He was known for his intelligence and hard work, but he also had a tendency to take shortcuts. One day, he heard about an exam leak for the upcoming West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). His friends told him that they had seen the questions and that he could get a copy too.

At first, Fiifi was hesitant, but the temptation was too great. He decided to get the leaked questions and study them, thinking that it would guarantee him good grades. However, when the exam day came, Fiifi felt guilty and anxious. He realised that he had cheated and that his grades would not be genuine.

Meanwhile, his best friend, Amina, had studied hard for the exam without cheating. She felt confident and prepared. When the results came out, Amina passed with flying colours, while Fiifi failed miserably.

Fiifi learned a bitter lesson about the dangers of cheating and the importance of hard work and integrity. He realised that success requires effort and dedication, not shortcuts.

3. Write down any two themes that you can identify from the passage above.
4. Who are the characters in the passage?
5. What two moral lessons have you learned from the text?
6. What will you suggest as a suitable title for the passage?

Use this passage to answer questions 7 and 8.

Salamatu, a young Ghanaian girl from a small village, dreamed of becoming a doctor. She worked hard in school, excelling in science and mathematics. She also loved playing ampe, a traditional Ghanaian game, with her friends. Salamatu's parents, though poor, encouraged her to pursue her dreams. They even sacrificed their own needs to buy her textbooks and a uniform.

One day, Salamatu's friends tempted her to skip school and go to the beach. But Salamatu remembered her parents' sacrifices and stayed focused on her studies. She graduated top of her class and earned a scholarship to medical school.

In medical school, Salamatu faced many challenges, but she persevered, inspired by her role model, Dr. Jane, a renowned Ghanaian doctor. She also enjoyed listening to highlife music and dancing with her colleagues. Salamatu's hard work paid off, and she became a successful doctor, returning to her village to provide healthcare to those in need.

7. Identify three (3) important ideas from the passage above.
8. Summarise the text in your own words by focusing on the key ideas you have identified.

Read the conversation below silently. Use it to answer questions 9 and 10.

Kulewosi: Sis, I'm struggling in school. I don't know if I can pass my exams.

Mawuena: Why don't you try harder? You're capable of doing well.

Kulewosi: I don't know...I just don't feel like it.

Mawuena: That's exactly the problem. You're giving up too easily. Remember what Mom always says: "Fall seven times, stand up eight." Don't give up!

Kulewosi: I guess you're right. But what if I still fail?

Mawuena: Then you learn from your mistakes and try again. That's how we grow. And remember, failure is not the opposite of success, it's a part of it.

Kulewosi: Okay, I'll try harder. But what about when people make fun of me?

Mawuena: Ignore them! Their opinions don't define your worth. You are more than what others think of you. And besides, kindness is always better than cruelty. Treat others with respect and empathy.

Kulewosi: You're right. Thanks, sis.

Mawuena: Anytime, bro. And always remember honesty is the best policy, integrity is everything, and family is forever.

9. Identify three moral lessons in the conversation above.
10. Create a sequel to the conversation above.

Acknowledgements



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