

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPARING SUMMARIES AND FULLY ELABORATED MAIN EVENTS

Read each version of a main event about a family ski trip.

1. To celebrate the New Year, my family took a ski trip.
2. Our trip started with a long drive to the mountain. Then we checked into the hotel and unpacked our suitcases. After that, we got our lift tickets. Then we bundled up in our warmest clothes and put on our skis. The mountain was crowded and there was a line for the chairlift. I met a friend while we were waiting.
3. “And we’re off,” Dad said, happily. He revved the engine and backed our car out of the driveway. Dad was as excited about our New Year’s ski trip as the rest of us. We’d gotten an early start but there was still traffic on the highway. Matthew, my little brother, counted the cars that had skis strapped to their roofs like ours. He was up to 27 when he got bored with the game and started asking “Are we there yet?”

“Not quite,” Mom answered.

“Are you sure we’ll have time to ski today?” I asked.

“Of course,” Mom assured me. “The chairlifts run until dark.”

We ate a picnic lunch of tuna fish sandwiches and potato chips in the car and arrived at the mountain just after noon. Quickly, Dad checked us into the hotel at the foot of the mountain.

I felt a flutter of excitement as I snapped my skis into their bindings and got into the line for the triple-chair chairlift. It was a long wait, but well worth it because while I was standing on line, I meet Darcy, who was also in 5th grade and as excited about skiing as I was!

She and I rode the ski lift to the top. “Which trail should we ski first?” I asked. I’d studied the trail map in the car and knew there were several runs to choose from.

“The Challenger, of course,” Darcy said.

“The Challenger? Are you sure?” Steep and narrow, the Challenger was an experts only run.

“Of course,” Darcy said. “It’s awesome.”

“You’ve done it before?”

“A million times. Come on.”

Darcy pushed off with her poles and started down the mountain. Making short, sharp turns, she quickly left me behind.

Of course, I should have known better, but I was determined to catch up with her. I started going faster and faster. My knees felt wobbly and my goggles fogged up.

Without warning, another skier swerved right in front of me. I tried to stop myself but it was no use. I wiped out, falling flat on my face into the hard-packed snow. I dropped my poles and my skis went flying. Worst of all, when I tried to get up, I felt a sharp pain in my leg. Oh, no!

**Turn and Talk:** Which example is a fully elaborated main event? Which example is a simple summary of a main event? Which example is a grocery list of action? Which example is the most entertaining to read?







Name \_\_\_\_\_

## BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (1) - MAIN EVENT

Read this summary of a **main event**. It rushes through the most important part of the story way too quickly! It is BORING!

**Grandma and Grandpa came to visit and brought me a new bicycle.**

**Revise** this by writing a fully elaborated **main event** with a balance of action, description, dialogue, thoughts and feelings - and just for fun, a sound effect.

Be sure to:

- Show slow motion action. Ask: What did I do? S-T-R-E-T-C-H I-T O-U-T!
- Include an exclamation. Ask: What did I exclaim?
- Show how the main character is feeling. Ask: How did I feel?
- Include a description of the setting. Ask: What did I see, hear, feel?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (2) - MAIN EVENT

Read this summary of a **main event**. It rushes through the most important part of the story way too quickly! It is BORING!

**I finally learned how to paddle a canoe.**

**Revise** this by writing a fully elaborated **main event** with a balance of action, description, dialogue, thoughts and feelings - and just for fun, a sound effect.

Be sure to:

- Show slow motion action. Ask: What did I do? S-T-R-E-T-C-H I-T O-U-T!
- Include an exclamation. Ask: What did I exclaim?
- Show how the main character is feeling. Ask: How did I feel?
- Include a description of the setting. Ask: What did I see, hear, feel?

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## A Game of Catch

I jolted awake to the sound of something that sounded like a helicopter hovering in the air above my front lawn. Of course, that would've been weird enough but when I peeked through the curtains, I saw something much, much stranger. A large, round spacecraft was landing in my yard. Brightly lit, it sparkled like a Christmas tree ornament in the moonless night. Through a window in the front, I saw a face peering out with big, unblinking eyes.

An alien? I had to be dreaming! I'd remembered watching a great science fiction movie before I went to bed. It made sense that the movie had inspired this very realistic dream.

Before my wondering eyes, an escape chute opened from the side of the spacecraft. It looked like a typical silver slide that you could find on any playground. An alien slid out and bounced up onto its oversized feet. Standing in the shadowy darkness on the overgrown grass of my front lawn, I strained my eyes to get a good look at the alien. He was bald and stood about 3 feet tall on long, skinny legs. Along with chalky, white skin, he had bulging dark eyes, a tiny bump of a nose and a large, round mouth. The visitor from faraway wore a white t-shirt that hung to his knees and the biggest pair of bright red, high-top sneakers I'd ever seen. He waved at me!

I waved back, feeling not even the tiniest tingle of fear because I knew that this was just a dream — and an entertaining, remarkably realistic one. I couldn't wait to tell my friends about it in school the next morning.

The alien ran across the yard and picked up a baseball mitt that I'd left on the lawn — my favorite one. He put it on and pretended that he was catching a ball.

"We. Play. Catch," he said in a deep, slow voice.

I hesitated for a moment. The night was so dark and the alien so odd. Would I be safe out there with him? I decided to take a chance. Grabbing a ball and my old baseball mitt, I tore out the door.

It turned out the alien wasn't much good at catching a baseball and even worse at throwing one. He fell over his big feet as he ran to retrieve the ball.

(continued)

His throws didn't have an ounce of power behind them. I tossed him a gentle, underhand pitch and it bounced off his forehead. We threw the ball around for about ten minutes before we quit.

"We. Play. Again. I. Get. Better."

"Okay," I said.

"Tomorrow. Same. Time. Same. Place." Still wearing my mitt, the alien crawled up the slide and into his spaceship. Within seconds, the vessel had shot up into the sky and disappeared.

The dream had reminded me that I'd left my favorite baseball mitt on the lawn, so the first thing I did the next morning was rush outside to find it before Dad did — he'd warned me dozens of times that I had to "take better care of my things or risk losing them forever." I didn't want him to know that I'd been careless again.

I searched the front yard and the back but I couldn't find the baseball mitt. What I found instead was a round patch of flattened grass on the lawn that looked like it had been created by the weight of something heavy. Something like a spaceship?

A tingle raced up my spine as I asked myself if my late-night game of catch with an alien had really been a dream. I just didn't know, but as the voice of the alien echoed in my mind — "Tomorrow. Same. Time. Same. Place." — I realized that I'd find out soon enough. Until then, all I could do was wait and wonder.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: MAIN EVENT

You've read the story A Game of Catch. Write an essay to explain how the author connects the real world with the fantasy world and why the reader is willing to suspend their disbelief and go along with the fantasy. Be sure to cite examples and provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

**THINK AND DISCUSS:** What is the suspension of disbelief? What does an author need to do to create an effective, fully elaborated main event?

Your teacher will walk you through the following STEPS:

1. Read, annotate, analyze, and summarize the story.
2. Fill in the following:
  - Who is the main **point of view character**? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the **setting**? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the main character's **motivation**? (What does she/he **want**?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the **conflict**? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Fill in the summarizing framework that outlines the **plot**.

*This story is about* \_\_\_\_\_ .  
*The problem / adventure / experience* \_\_\_\_\_ .  
*The problem was solved, experience or adventure concluded when* \_\_\_\_\_ .

- What is the **theme**? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Consider the task:
    - How does the author connect the real world with the fantasy world?
    - How does the reader suspend their disbelief and accept this fantasy?
  4. Your teacher will MODEL this process with you. You may use the sentence starters to help you cite examples in the source text.

**SENTENCE STARTERS:**

- In this fantasy story \_\_\_\_.
- Interestingly, the author uses \_\_\_\_ .
- Besides that \_\_\_\_.
- Of course \_\_\_\_.
- The author brings the main event to life when \_\_\_\_.
- We understand that \_\_\_\_.
- The author shows \_\_\_\_.
- Readers feel \_\_\_\_.
- The author describes \_\_\_\_.
- We see that \_\_\_\_.
- Readers discover that \_\_\_\_.
- This main event \_\_\_\_.
- In this story \_\_\_\_.



