

Sample Lesson #1

Working with Longer Passages: Look for the Big Picture

There is usually one big picture or main idea in a reading selection. The title - if there is one - may give a clue about the main idea. Sometimes you can figure out the big picture by reading just the first sentence of every paragraph. Each paragraph has its own main idea related to the big picture. You can find the main idea of each paragraph by locating the **topic sentence**.

Read the following selection and complete items 1 – 8.

The Japanese Tea Ceremony

The Japanese Tea Ceremony, called a *chado*, is a very **elaborate** and beautiful ritual. *Cha* means "tea", and *do* means "the way of," so *chado* is "the way of tea." Each part of the *chado* is practiced in a precise way according to ancient traditions. Even the most modern of tea ceremonies includes the basics: a simple room decorated with fresh flowers or wall hangings, an attitude of peace, and a deep respect for the host, the guests, the tea, and even the utensils used to make the tea. The purpose of the tea ceremony is to stop and enjoy a relaxing moment in the midst of a hectic day. Participants take the time to **savor** the tea and to honor each other. Guests at a Japanese tea ceremony show respect by moving slowly, bowing deeply, and speaking quietly. In fact, there is very little talking at all in the tea room where the ritual takes place.

The place where people gather for the tea ceremony is called a *chashitsu*. This is a very simple room with no furniture. Instead, there are tatami mats (mats made of natural fibers) covering the floor. Guests remove their shoes at the entrance of the *chashitsu* and wear only white socks inside the room. Instead of being seated in chairs, guests at a tea ceremony kneel on the *tatami* mats sitting back on their lower legs and heels. The room often has a single lovely wall hanging which is the focal point of the room. There may also be an **elegant** arrangement of fresh flowers, along with all of the special tools or utensils of the tea ceremony.

The *teishu* is the host or the one who performs the Japanese tea ceremony. The *teishu* uses unique utensils and ingredients to make and serve the tea. First, there is the water. Water is a symbol of purity. It is used to cleanse the utensils and to make the tea. Green tea powder called *matcha* is scooped with a *chashaku* which is a bamboo serving spoon, and the water is measured out with a *hishaku* or bamboo ladle. The host uses a *chasen* (bamboo whisk) to combine the powdered tea with hot water. Water is

heated in a tea kettle. When it is hot, not boiling, the tea is whisked into the water, and it becomes a bright green, frothy beverage. Other types of tea may be used for the tea ceremony, but *matcha* is an excellent tea with a high nutritional value. When the tea is ready, it is served in the *chawan*, a delicate ceramic bowl. Guests drink from the bowl, then wipe the edge and pass the bowl to the next person. Each participant bows to the next person or to the *teishu* before drinking the tea. They take a few moments to admire the *chawan* and to appreciate its simple beauty. Sweets known as *omogashi* are sometimes served with the tea. Afterwards, the utensils are cleaned with a special cloth called a *chakin*. Even the cleansing of the utensils is a part of the ceremony, so it is done with great respect.

1. Highlight or underline the **topic sentence** in paragraph 1.
2. The purpose of a tea ceremony is to _____.
 discuss business eat lunch relax study history
3. Highlight or underline the **topic sentence** in paragraph 2.
4. Highlight or underline the **topic sentence** in paragraph 3.
5. According to paragraph 3, _____ is a symbol of purity.

Underline the meaning of each bold word. Use context clues from the selection.

6. **savor** utensil sweet enjoy ask
7. **elaborate** custom complex ceremony foreign
8. **elegant** graceful used artificial collection