

Here, the first sentence contains the chief idea of the passage—that there should be a strong link between culture and the Internet.

#### Example 4

Information is not synonymous with education. Real education must transform the learner. When a child, on his way to school feels genuinely sad at the plight of bullocks overburdened with a heavy load or when he saves a wounded dog from being run over by speeding vehicles, or when he lends a helping hand to guide a blind person groping in a crowded street, he shows compassion. The transformation in class makes him compassionate. A teacher does not need a computer lab to teach this elementary education. What he needs is genuine concern to transform and not just inform a child!

The passage is building up to its main idea. The last sentence is the topic sentence. You should train yourself to pick out topic sentences from all your regular readings.

### FINDING THE GENERAL THEME

The ability to read several paragraphs quickly and relate them to one common theme or main idea is an advanced skill. The procedure involves careful reading of the whole passage and deciding which idea is the main theme. There may be a repetition of this idea and every sentence may be related to it in some manner.

#### Example 1

Read the following passage and answer the question at the end of it:

Illiteracy and tremendous social evil continue to persist in Indian society and has deprived socio-economic progress and prosperity. The gap between men and women will create impediments in the overall progress of society and the advancement of the country. As women constitute half of the total it is high time we gave top priority to female (child) education.

The underlined idea in this is today's girl child is tomorrow's mother. If the mother is educated, the whole family is educated. Her knowledge will be automatically transferred to all children of the family, irrespective of male or female. So, if women are educated, they will surely pass it on to the next generation.

As women play a significant role in the family, which is the basic unit of society, as a companion and wife to her husband, as a mother to her children—she holds a psycho-emotional and social existence. The whole social fabric moves around a woman's love, affection, faithfulness, devotion and sacrifice. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in one of his speeches rightly pointed out that society cannot progress until women are educated.

The main theme of the passage is:

- (a) How a girl child should be trained as a responsible mother
- (b) The role of an educated woman
- (c) Combating female illiteracy
- (d) The growing gap between men and women



#### Explanation

You should first read the passage and comprehend in general. You would be able to find the common theme and its relation to the different sentences once you do that.

In the given example, the first paragraph explains how there is a need for educating the female child. The second paragraph deals with the point, how a girl child of today shoulders the grave responsibility of a mother of tomorrow. The final paragraph makes an emphasis on the role of a woman in the family's and society's progress.

Now, let us analyse the alternatives given: Alternative (a) is not the theme since the passage does not outline ways of training; it only uses this to illustrate the importance of literacy. Alternative (b) to some extent reflects the theme, but does not completely express the main theme. Alternative (c), on the other hand, pithily expresses the theme of the passage. All the sentences are arranged to stress the importance of this theme. Of course, alternative (d) in no way reflects the main theme.

The following three passages will give you a practice to discover the main theme. The question seen below each passage should be attempted. Also, check the explanation to make sure you have understood the reasoning.

#### Example 2

Raja Rammohan Roy, an eminent Bengali intellectual, was greatly pained when he heard the cries of widows being burnt on their husbands' pyres. He, therefore, undertook a transformative project risking his popularity. The orthodox Brahmins raised a hue and cry but Roy stood his ground and quoted the chapters and verses from the *vedas* to prove that *sati* was not prescribed by the *Shastras*. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule of