

**READ THE PASSAGE**

As you finish each paragraph, recall the main idea.

**Children's Day in Japan**

Every year on May 5, people in Japan celebrate a festival known as Children's Day. This festival celebrates the happiness of children and mothers across the country. It is a national holiday for everyone in Japan.

Children's Day probably began as a festival for boys around AD 600. People flew flags shaped like a fish called a *carp*. The carp is a symbol of strength and health. Each boy had his own flag, and the oldest boy in a family had the biggest flag. People still fly carp flags today. But in 1948, the Japanese government changed the festival so that it celebrated both boys and girls.

People in Japan do many things on Children's Day. They eat special treats, such as rice cakes wrapped in oak leaves. They also take hot baths in water that has the leaves of iris plants in it. These leaves are said to be good for a person's health. But the children in Tokyo, the capital of Japan, get something extra special. They compete in the Kids' Olympics on Children's Day. There is a torch relay and races for kids and their parents. So before you're too old, plan a trip to Japan to celebrate Children's Day, and have fun being a kid!

**STRATEGY PRACTICE**

How did thinking about the main idea of each paragraph help you better understand the passage?

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**SKILL PRACTICE**

Read the item. Write your response.

1. What do the Japanese think of carp?

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2. What happened to the Children's Day festival in 1948?

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3. In which activity would you most like to participate on Children's Day? Why?

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