

Unfinished Business (page 260)

 **Active Reading SkillBuilder**

Identifying the Main Idea

Most nonfiction focuses on a **main idea**—a central idea, message, or opinion that the writer wants to communicate to the reader. Sometimes the main idea is only implied or suggested. Other times it is stated directly. Typically, a main idea is broad and is supported by more specific ideas and details. As you read “Unfinished Business,” write down some of Kübler-Ross’s ideas. Then mark the one that you think is the main idea.

Important Ideas in “Unfinished Business”	Main Idea (✓)

Name _____

Date _____

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Words to Know SkillBuilder

Words to Know

bland contaminated devastated punitive transcend
concretely convey procrastinating spontaneous uniqueness

A. Decide which word from the word list belongs in each numbered blank. Then write the word on the blank line on the right.

Even though I know (1) doesn't pay,
I still put off until next week what I should do today. _____ (1)

If there's one food I really cannot stand,
It's plain vanilla ice cream—much too (2). _____ (2)

You say, "I love you dearly," and you say it very sweetly,
But I'd prefer you showed your love a little more (3). _____ (3)

The message in your words is nice. I like to hear you say it,
But giving me some dinner and a hug would help (4) it. _____ (4)

Some dogs are trained to aid the deaf or blind.
Some dogs, it seems to me, can read your mind.
As if they were not dogs, some dogs, I find,
(5) the limitations of their kind. _____ (5)

The salad's just a carrot; the soup and fruit are canned.
This dinner party clearly is (6), not planned. _____ (6)

Of course I'll teach you to make pie,
But wash your hands before you try.
For no one wants to have dessert
(7) by that dirt. _____ (7)

Dad knows you didn't mean to break the window with the ball.
He knows that what you did was not deliberate at all.
You needn't hide beneath the bed. I know I heard him mention
That he hasn't any (8) intention. _____ (8)

I stand and, hopelessly, I look about
At crops all (9) by the drought. _____ (9)

At times, the evidence of crimes is more than merely hints
Because of the (10) of each person's fingerprints. _____ (10)

B. Write a brief summary of the advice that is stated or suggested in the interview with Kübler-Ross. Use at least **four** of the Words to Know.

Unfinished Business (page 271)**Grammar SkillBuilder: Simple Sentences**

Key Concept: A simple sentence is the most direct way to express a thought. Writers often use simple sentences to focus on important ideas or feelings.

Simple Sentences

A **simple sentence** contains only one independent clause. This does not mean that the sentence is necessarily short. It can contain a compound subject, a compound predicate, a compound direct object, and a compound predicate adjective.

In this excerpt from "Unfinished Business," each sentence is a simple sentence. Note the compound predicate adjective in the fourth sentence and the compound predicate in the last sentence.

"She was just lying there week after week after week. And the father couldn't communicate with her. He was a very nonverbal man. The mother was **very verbal and a practicing Catholic**. Every family member **was at a different stage and used his own coping mechanism.**"

Activity

Rewrite each sentence so that it becomes two simple sentences. Then underline the subject of each simple sentence once, and the predicate twice.

1. The father was worried that Dr. Kübler-Ross would upset the children.
2. From experience, Dr. Kübler-Ross knew that the children would express their unconscious feelings in their pictures.
3. She locked the dining room door so no grown-up would interfere, and explained the drawing competition.
4. The pictures revealed that the children were aware of their sister's true condition.
5. When Dr. Kübler-Ross challenged him, the six-year-old told her his true feelings.
6. If his sister was so terribly ill, why was it taking so long for her to die?
7. He could tell the doctor his feelings, but did he have enough courage to tell his sister?
8. With his whole family there listening, he finally blurted everything out.
9. The dying girl hugged her brother and cried, but her tears were tears of relief.
10. Now she did not have to carry this wish alone, and her brother was proud to be able to help her.

Unfinished Business (page 260)**Literary Analysis SkillBuilder****Interview**

An **interview** is a series of questions and answers between two people. The interviewer usually comes away with notes and often with a tape recording. He or she may then present the questions and answers as they occurred or may shape the information into a biographical essay or profile. Another approach—the one used in “Unfinished Business”—is to focus on the best parts of the conversation and allow the person being interviewed to speak directly to the reader. This format gives the writing a more conversational style. Pick out three passages from the interview that sound like conversational speech rather than a written essay. Record them on the chart.

Examples of Conversational Style

Follow Up: Does the casual style of the interview enhance or detract from Kübler-Ross’s main idea? Explain your answer.

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Selection Quiz

Recall the ideas that Kübler-Ross expresses in the interview, and then answer the questions in one or two sentences.

1. How did Kübler-Ross discover that the dying girl's younger siblings knew she was dying?

2. According to Kübler-Ross, when people know that a loved one will die, how can they make their loss easier to bear?

3. When the six-year-old boy told his sister he had prayed for her death, she cried with relief and hugged him. Why did she react this way?

4. How did Kübler-Ross help the dying girl overcome her fear that she would not go to heaven?

5. According to Kübler-Ross, why are the lessons that dying people teach especially valuable?

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Selection Test

A. Read each quotation from the interview with Kübler-Ross and think about what advice she is suggesting by her remark. In the box below each quotation, make notes about what you think the advice is. In the box at the bottom, make notes about what you think the main message of the selection is. (8 points each)

1. "If I love somebody, I tell them 'I love you' now, so I can skip the schmaltzy eulogies afterward."

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2. "There is a beauty in [dying people] that very few see. And all you have to do is look."

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3. "Dying patients literally teach you about life."

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4. What do you think the main idea, or message, of this selection is?

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B. Write the letter of the best answer. This exercise is continued on the next page. (6 points each)

- _____ 1. What is the **main** feeling that the six-year-old boy expresses about his sister's dying?
- guilt about his reactions
 - fear of what is happening
 - jealousy over the attention she receives
 - frustration with delaying what is unavoidable

- _____ 2. The dying girl responds to her brother's statement to her by indicating that she sees him as
- a. a partner.
 - b. a selfish person.
 - c. an enemy.
 - d. an immature person.
- _____ 3. Kübler-Ross suggests that the **most** important thing to do in dealing with dying children is to
- a. deal with them honestly.
 - b. protect them from conflict.
 - c. pretend that their illness is temporary.
 - d. ask them to hold on to life as long as they possibly can.
- _____ 4. According to Kübler-Ross, grieving for a dying person is something that should be
- a. avoided.
 - b. done in private.
 - c. started before death.
 - d. saved for the funeral.

C. Words to Know. Write the letter of the best answer. (4 points each)

- _____ 1. If something is unique, it is completely
- a. finished.
 - b. unavoidable.
 - c. unusual.
- _____ 2. Which is used to convey something?
- a. a letter
 - b. a nail
 - c. a telephone pole
- _____ 3. If you transcend your goal, you
- a. meet it.
 - b. exceed it.
 - c. fall short of it.
- _____ 4. Procrastinating can be expressed by saying,
- a. "I did it"
 - b. "I'm doing it"
 - c. "I'll get to it"
- _____ 5. A spontaneous activity is one that is
- a. unseen.
 - b. unplanned.
 - c. unproductive.

D. Answer one of the following questions based on your understanding of the selection. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (12 points)

1. Give an example of something that would qualify as "unfinished business," according to Kübler-Ross, and tell why she thinks "unfinished business" is harmful.
2. Why might the statement "I love to work with dying children" be considered a paradox?

E. Linking Literature to Life. Answer the following question based on your own experience and knowledge. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (12 points)

How might a person behave if he or she followed Kübler-Ross's advice to view life and death as "a challenge and not a threat"? Explain your answer.