

WHAT'S THE MAIN IDEA?

Skills

Students will:

- + determine the main idea of an article
- + identify supporting details
- + recognize extraneous information

Purpose

The fishbone organizer helps students recognize that nonfiction articles and expository writing contain a main idea and supporting details. As they isolate specific information to record on the organizer, students make decisions regarding its relevance, thereby increasing their understanding that not all text is of equal importance. Students who are writing essays or articles can use the graphic during prewriting to ensure that their work contains a main idea and to help them develop a structure for their piece.

How to Use the Organizer

After reading an article, have students determine the main idea and write it on the spine of the fish. Then encourage them to write the details that support the main idea inside the divisions made by the other bones. Students who wish to use the graphic organizer to plan their own writing can begin with the main idea or record facts first, which may lead them to the development of a main idea.

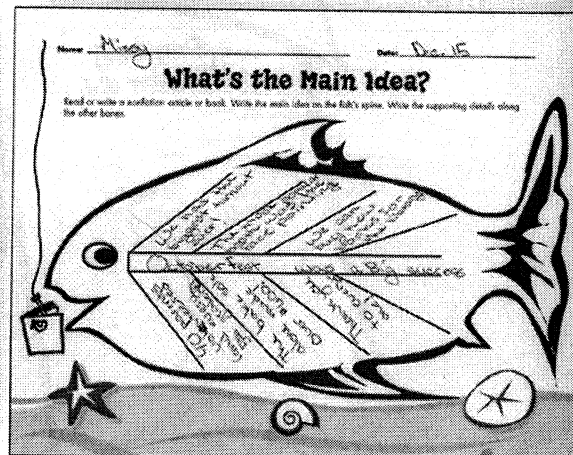
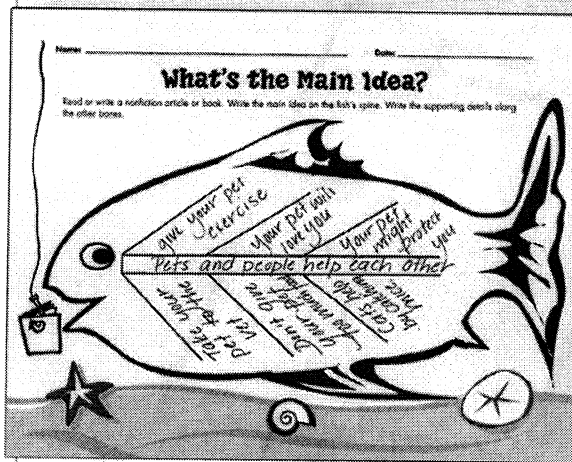
Examples

Primary Grades

After reading an article from their weekly news magazine, second graders helped their teacher complete the What's the Main Idea? organizer on an overhead transparency.

Intermediate Grades

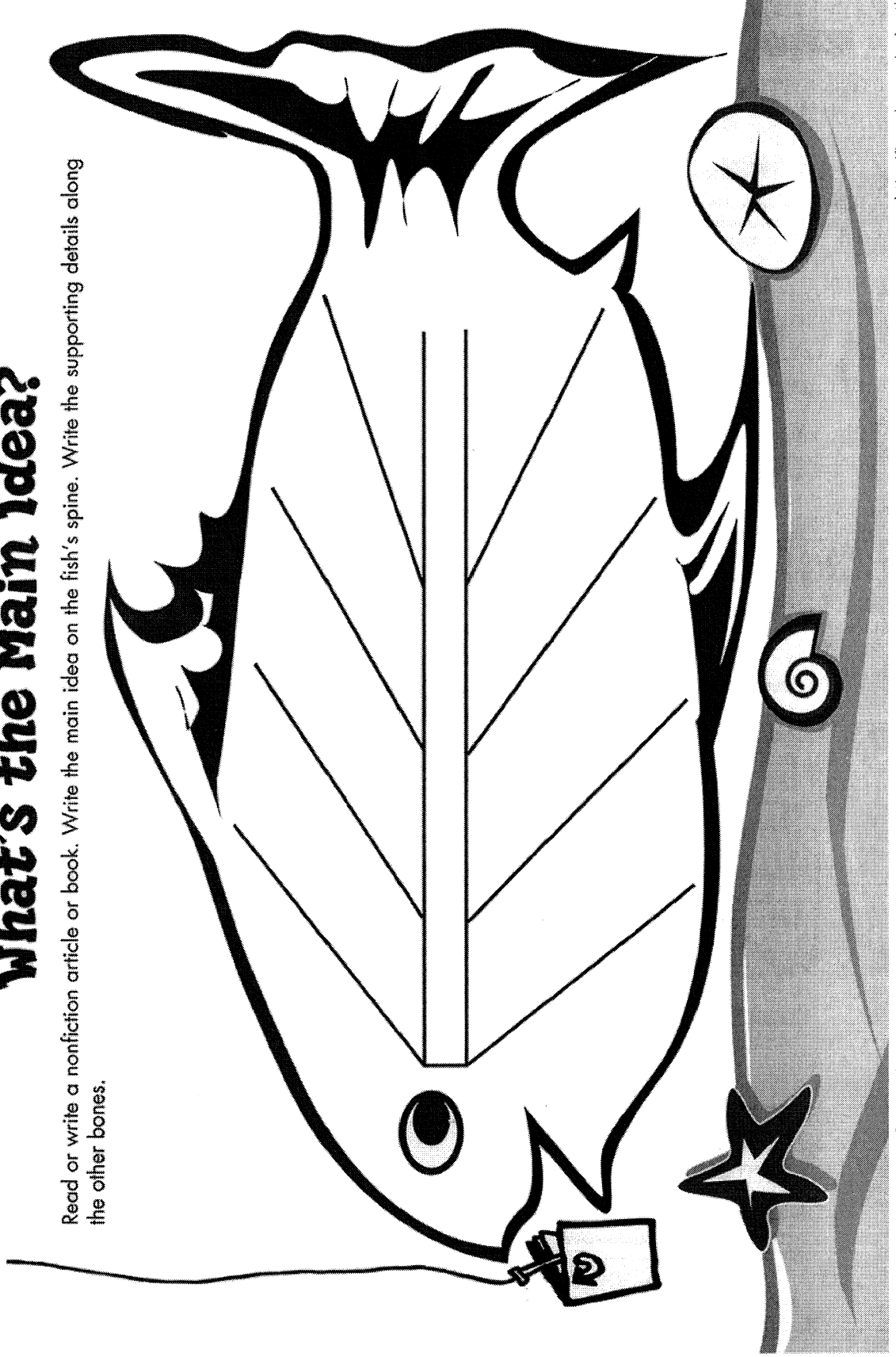
A small group of fourth graders used What's the Main Idea? to organize an article they were composing for the school newspaper.



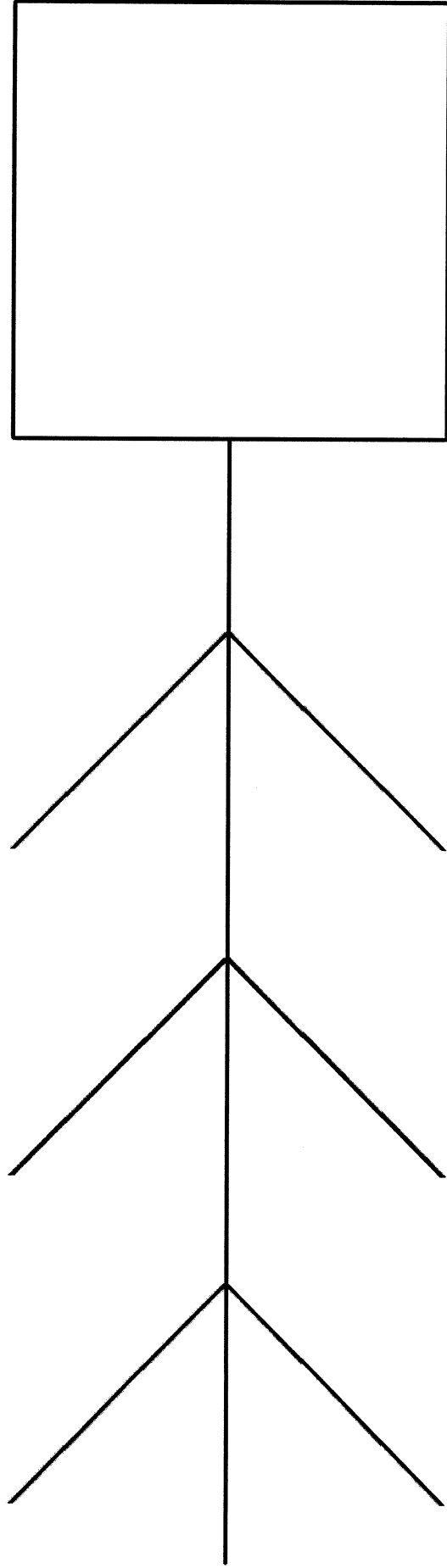
Name: _____ Date: _____

What's the Main Idea?

Read or write a nonfiction article or book. Write the main idea on the fish's spine. Write the supporting details along the other bones.

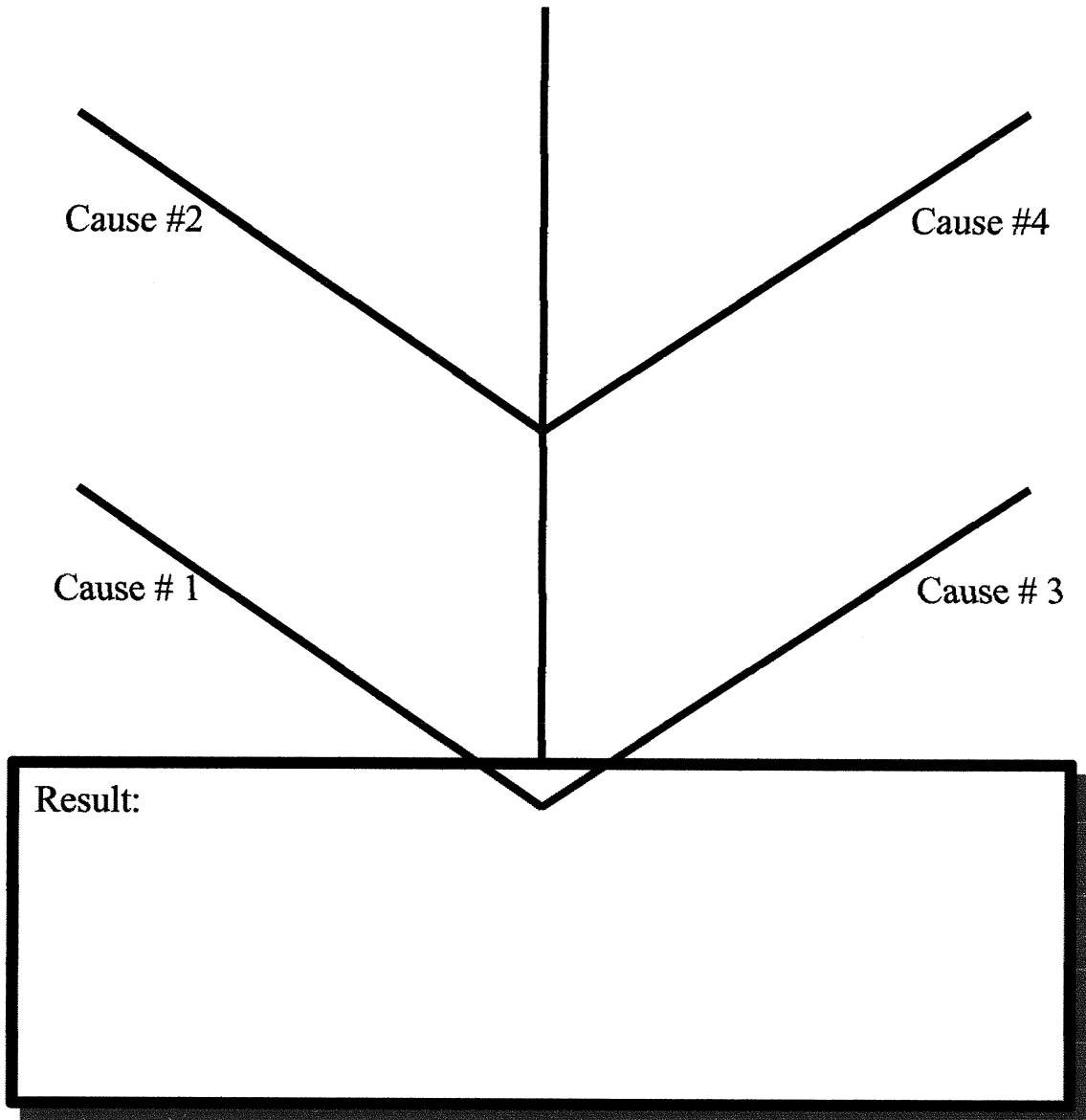


Cause - Effect

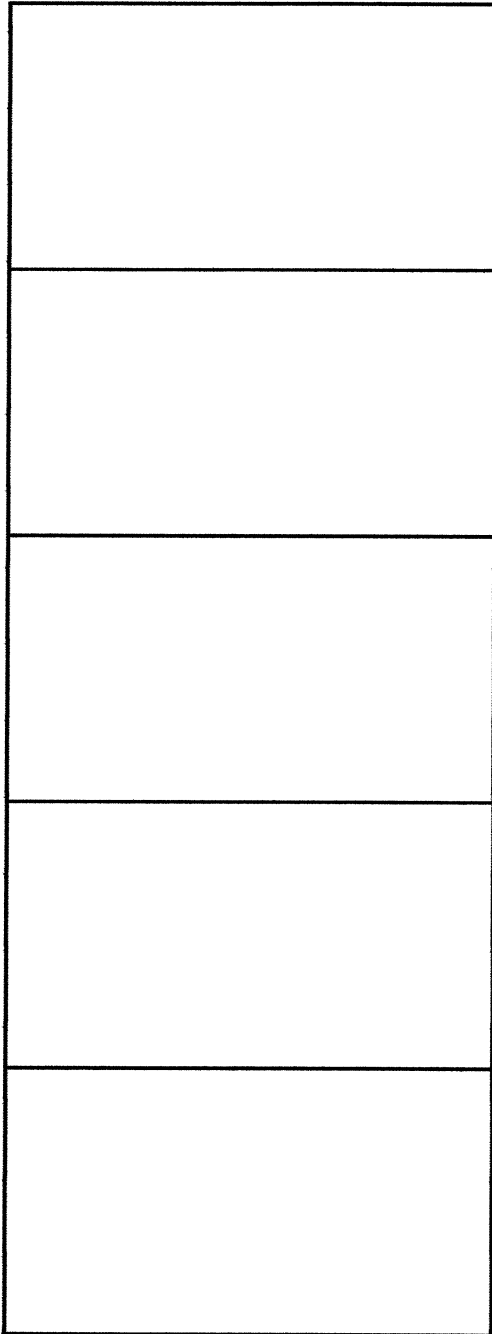


TOPIC: _____
FISHBONE MAP

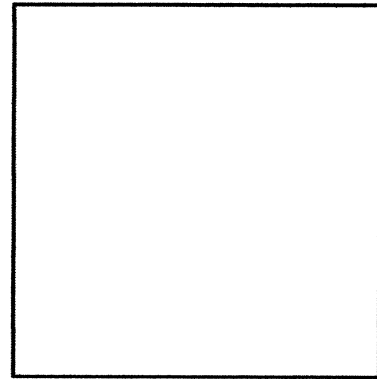
Name: _____ Date: _____



Causes



Effect



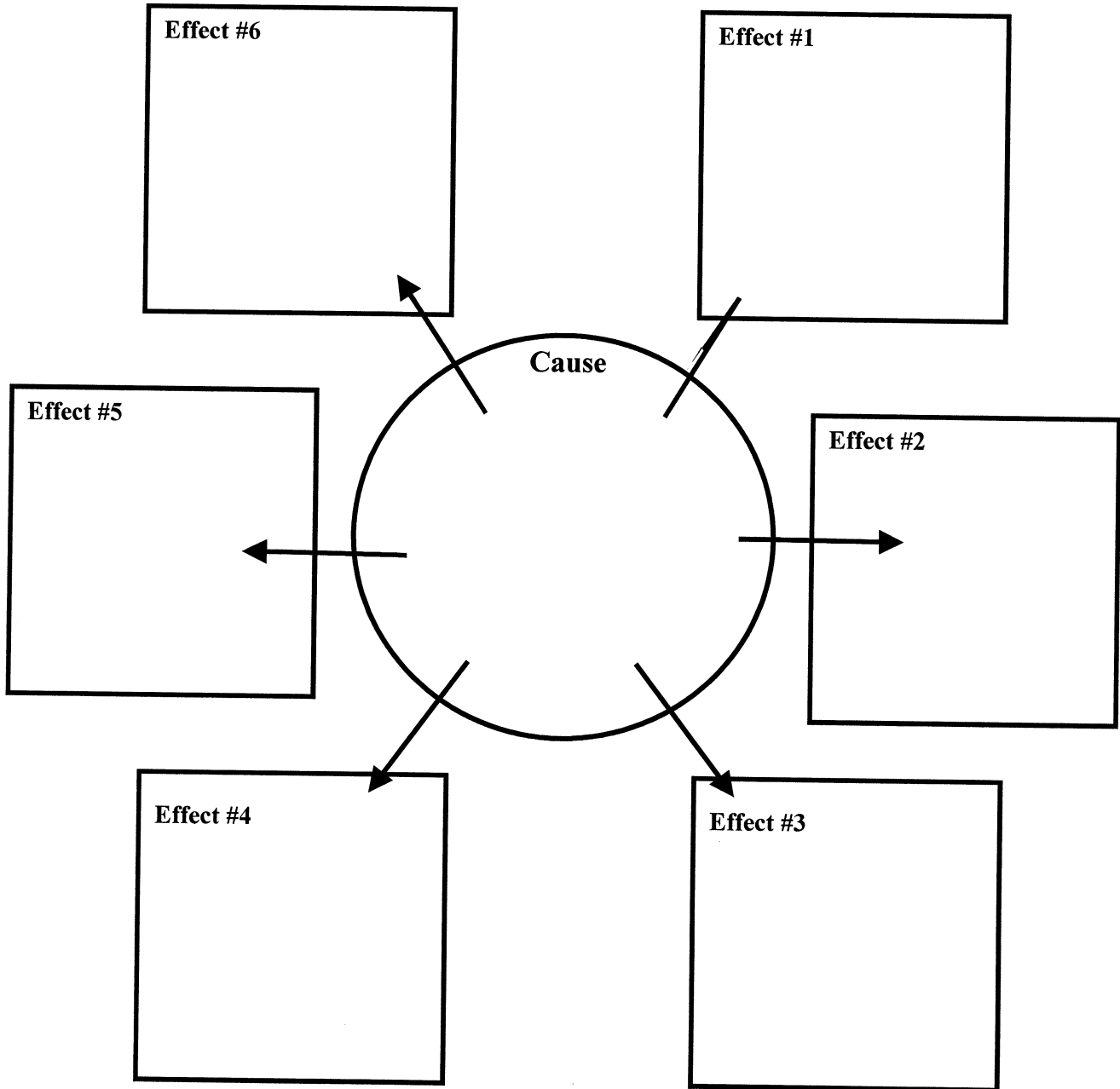
The Problem:

Possible Solutions	Consequences What will happen if I adopt this solution?	Pro or Con?	Value How important is the consequence? Why?

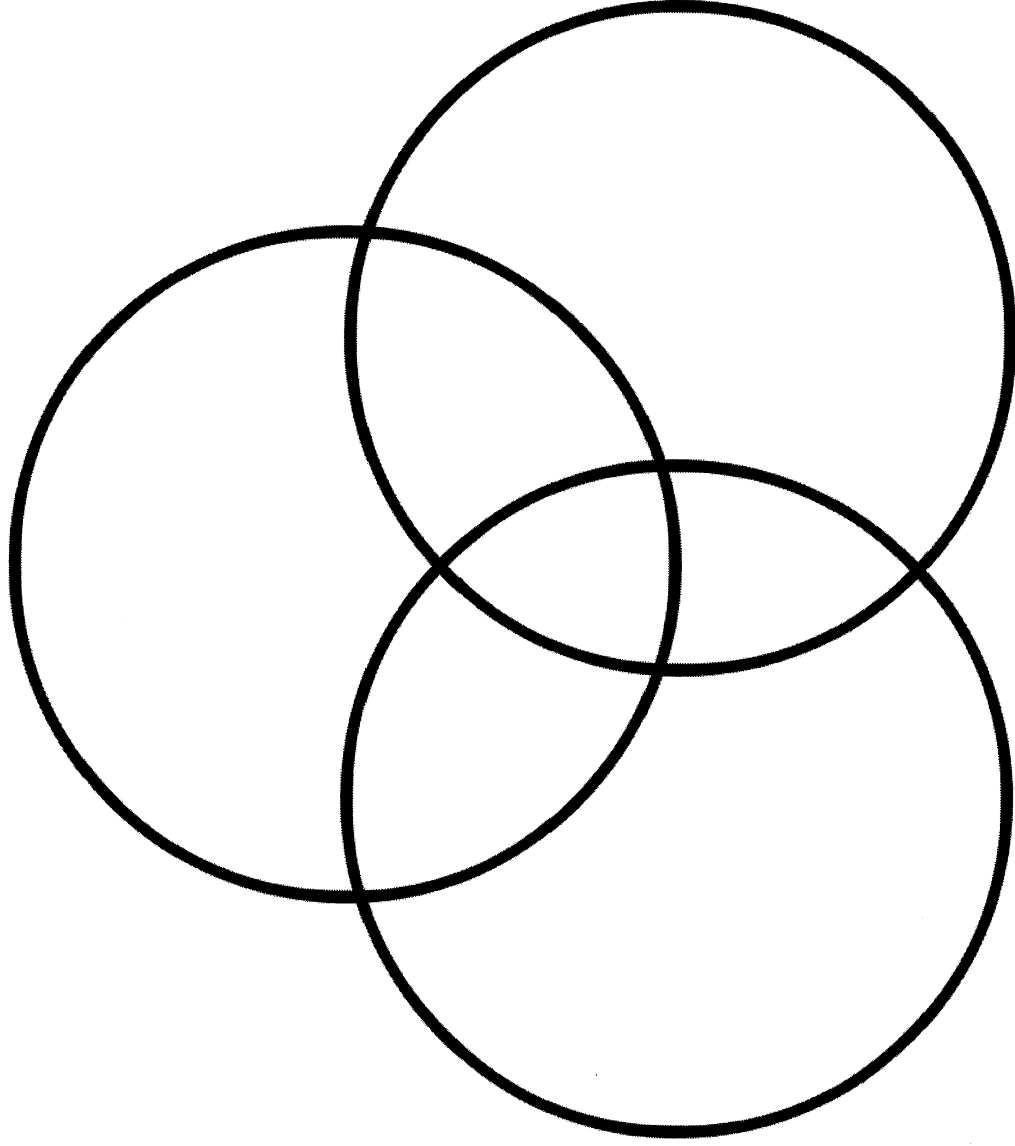
The Best Solution:

TOPIC: _____

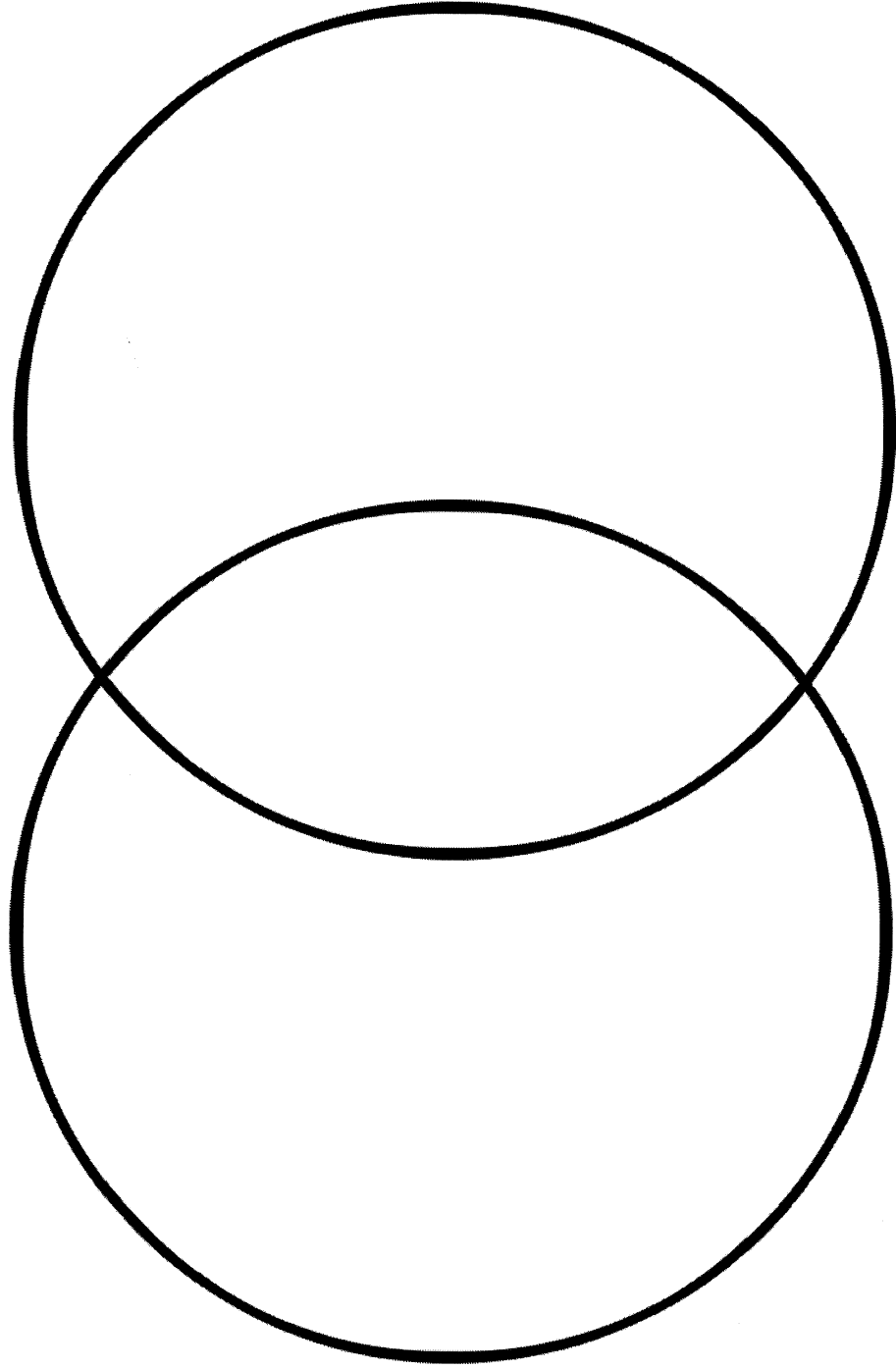
Name: _____ **Date:** _____



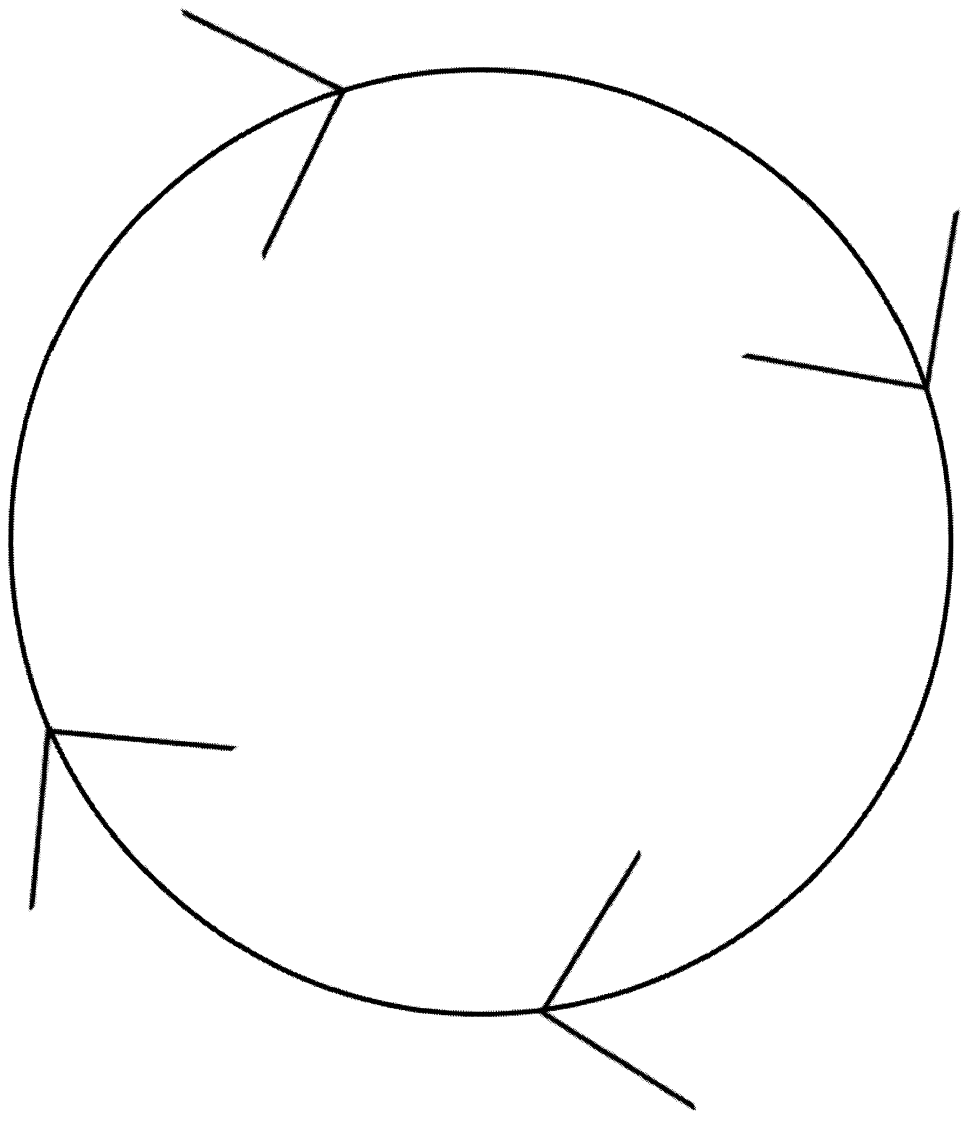
Overlapping Concepts



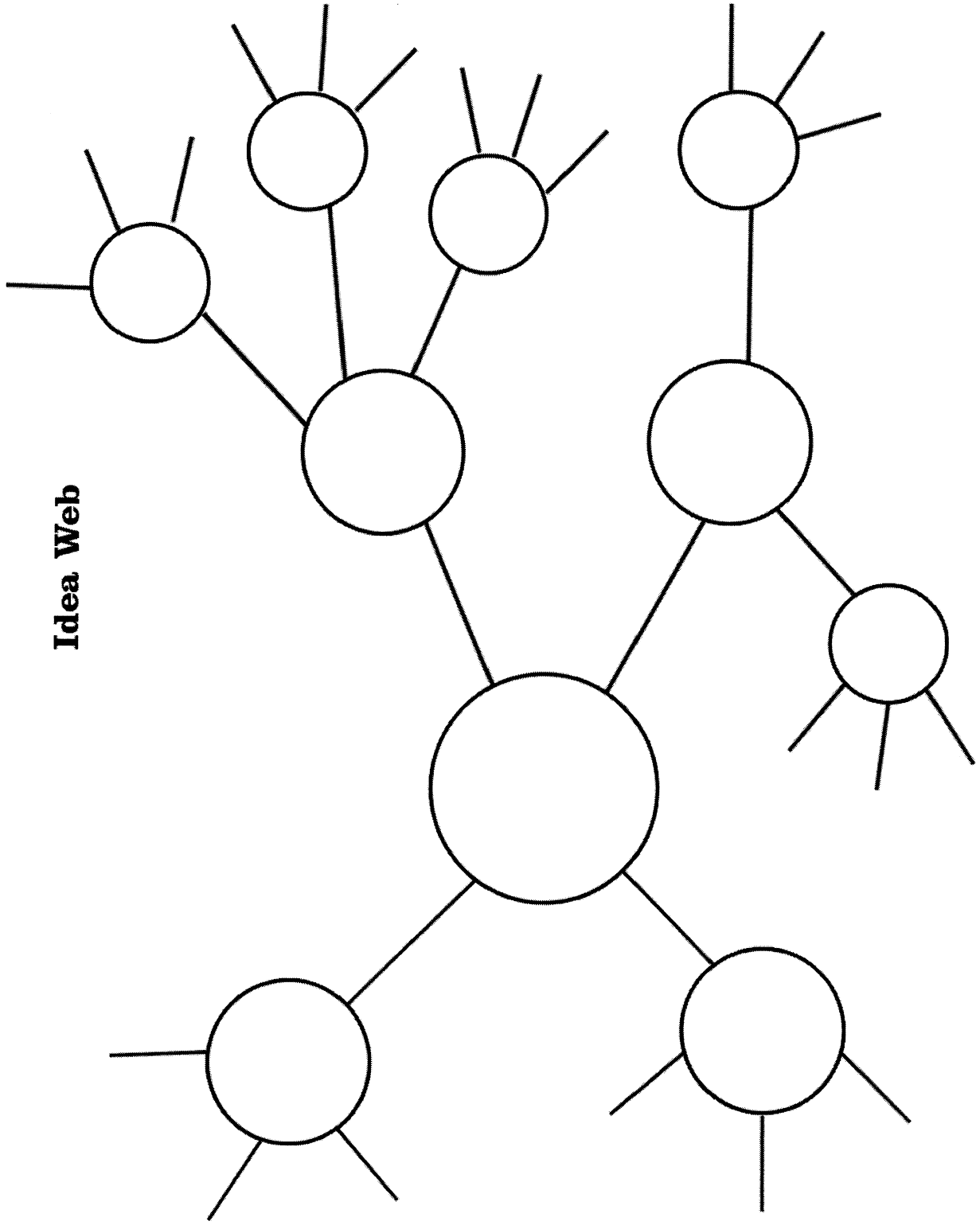
Venn Diagram



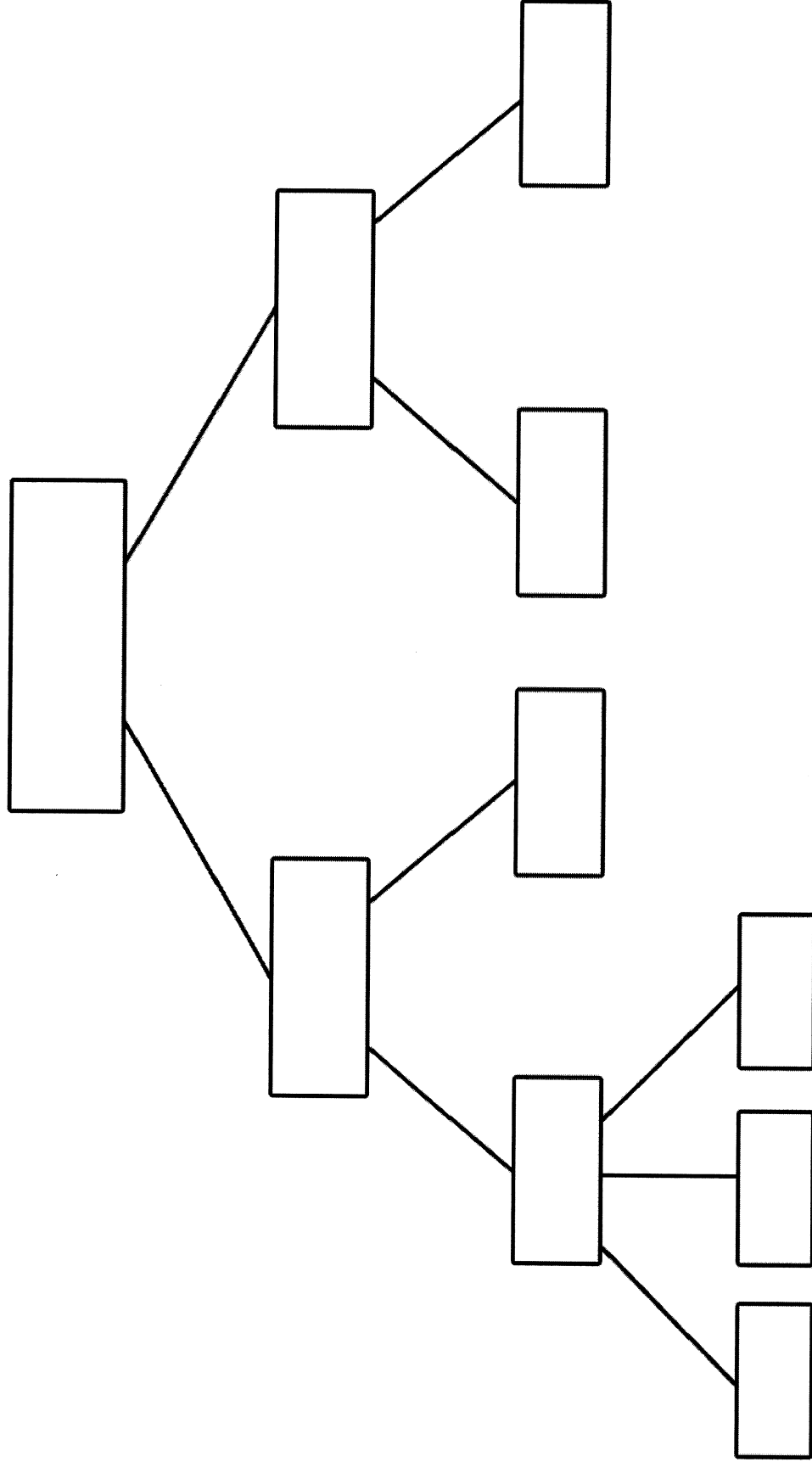
Cyclical



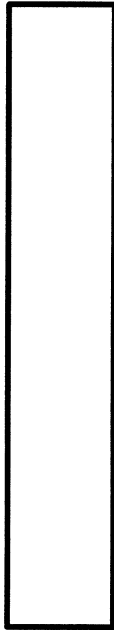
Idea Web



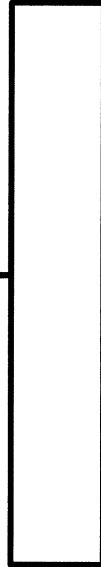
Organizational Outline



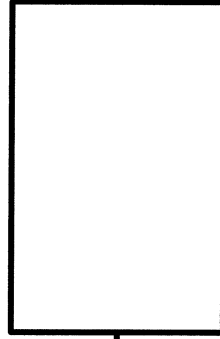
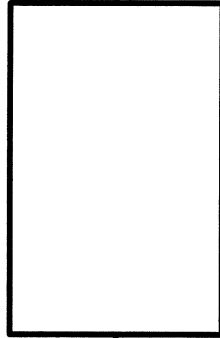
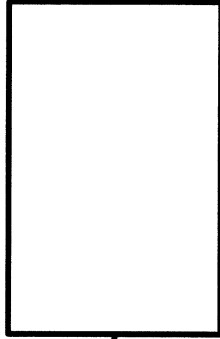
Topic



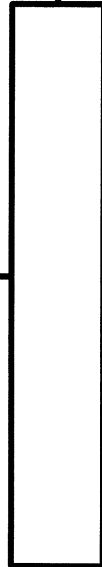
Main Idea



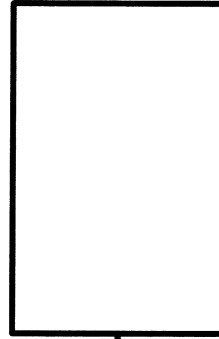
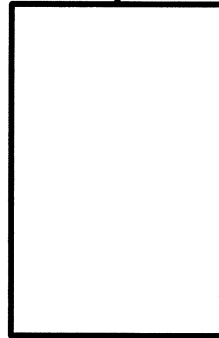
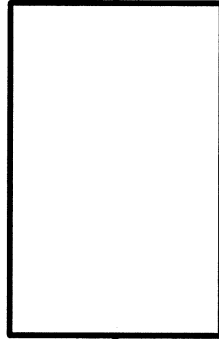
Supporting Details



Main Idea



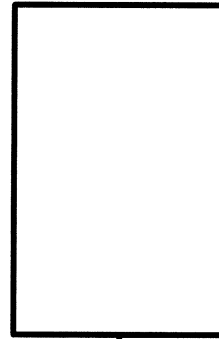
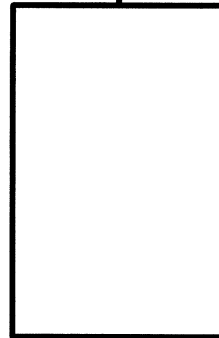
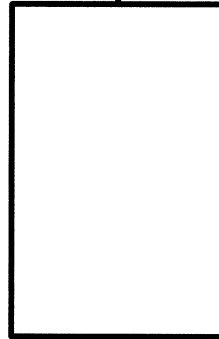
Supporting Details



Main Idea



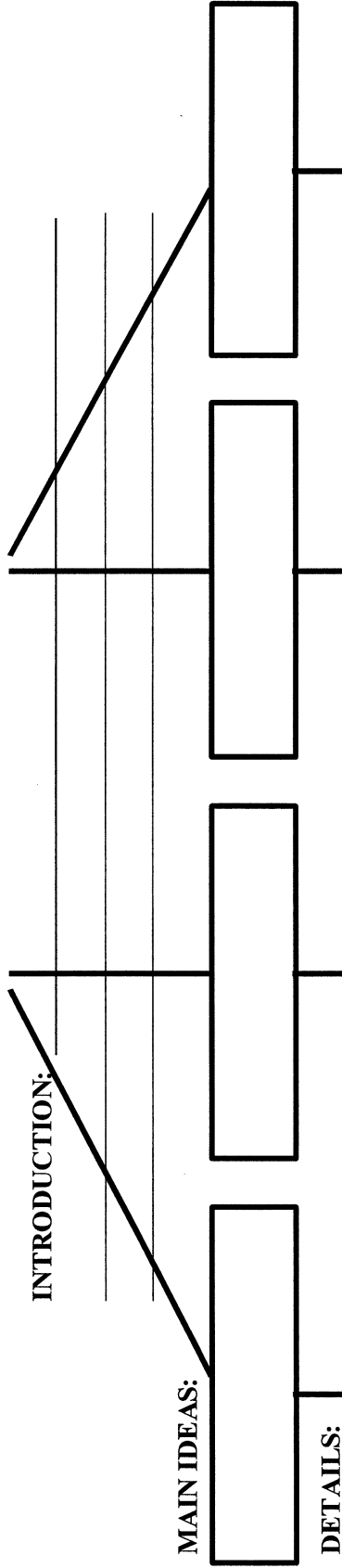
Supporting Details



IDEA DIAGRAM

Name: _____ Date: _____

TOPIC:



MAIN IDEAS:

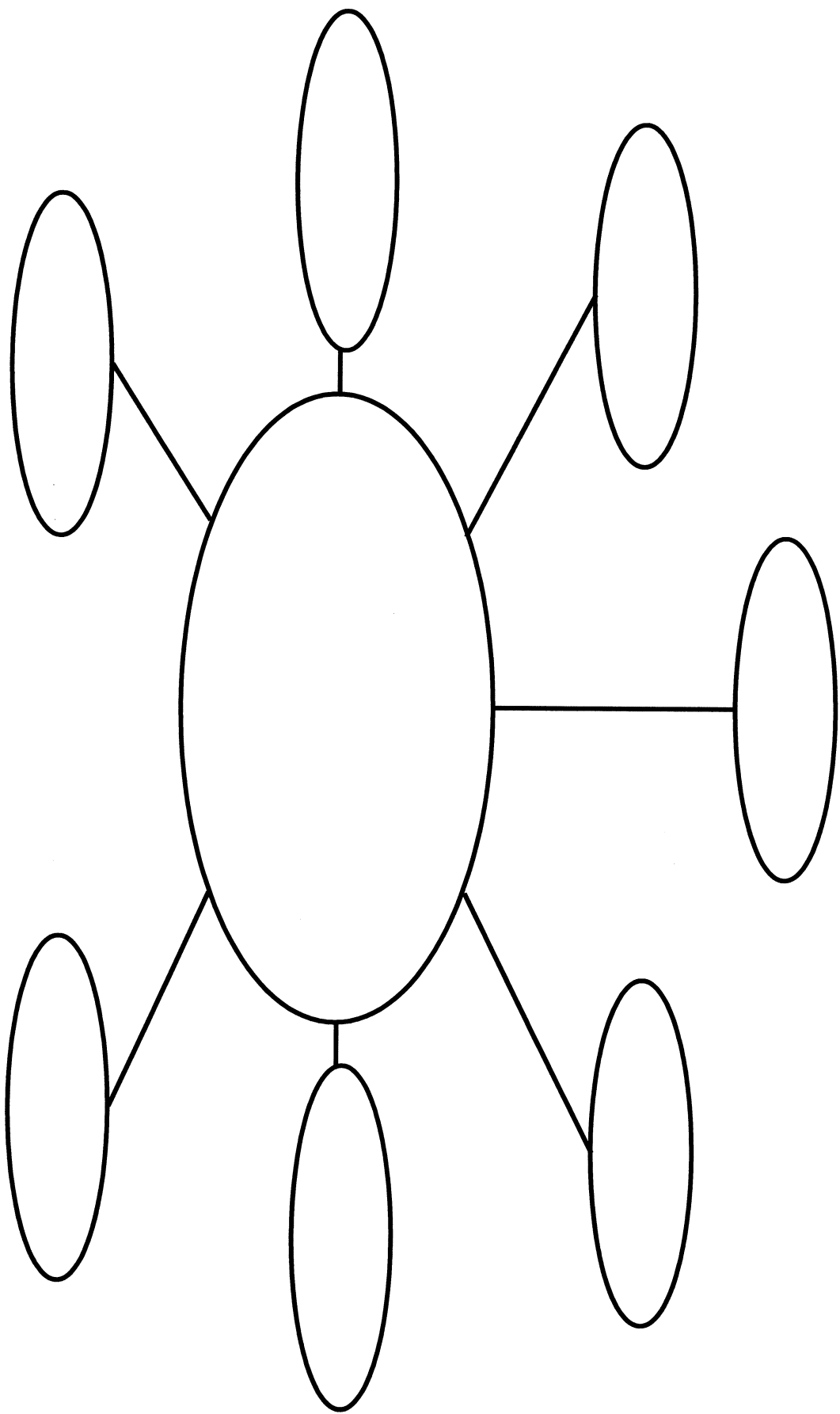
DETAILS:

INTRODUCTION:

CONCLUSION:

WEB 2:

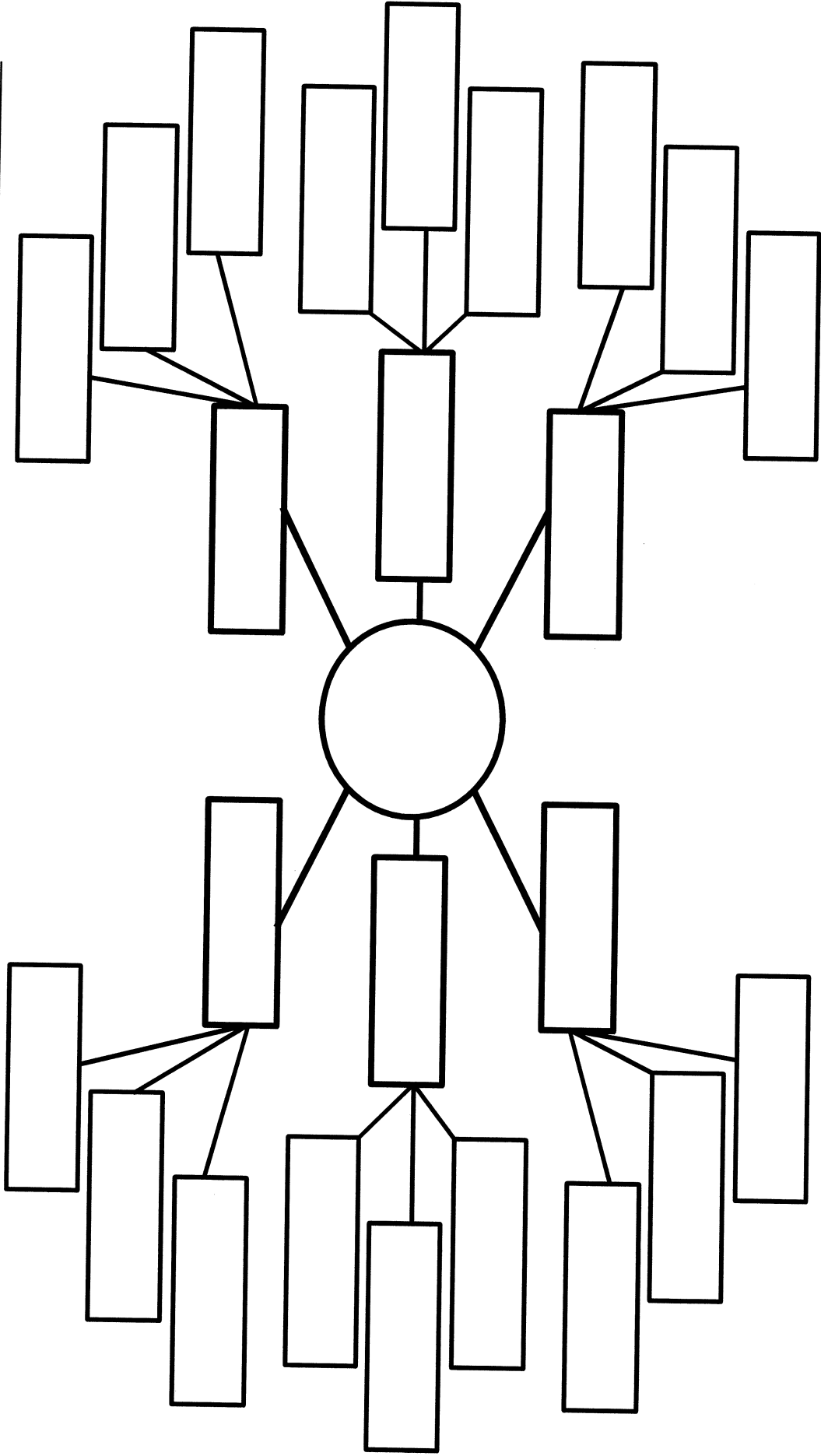
Name: _____ Date: _____



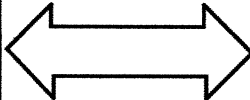
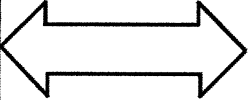
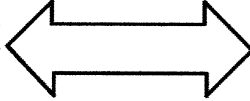
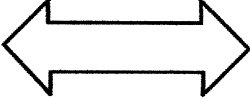
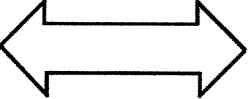
WEB 1:

Name: _____

Date: _____



Compare and Contrast

	with regard to	
		
		
		
		
		

Indicate which items are similar and which are different.