

# The Bald Eagle

- 1 Think about the details in the paragraph. Underline the main idea sentence for this paragraph.

The American bald eagle is the national bird. It was chosen as a national emblem because the bird is the only eagle unique to North America. It has a long life, great strength, and majestic looks. It lives on the mountaintops, along the coast, or near lakes and rivers. It has unlimited freedom. It sweeps into the valleys or soars upward into the boundless space of the sky.

- 2 Think about the details in the paragraph. Underline the main idea sentence for this paragraph.

In the 1780s there was much discussion between the forefathers about which bird to choose to represent the country. Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national bird. He thought the turkey was a much more “respectable animal.” Mr. Franklin thought the eagle was a bird of “bad moral character” because it would steal the fish from a fishing-hawk after the hawk had worked hard to catch its dinner. But, in 1787, Congress officially adopted the eagle as the emblem of the United States.

- 3 The main idea sentence is missing in the paragraph below. Think about what the details are describing. Write a main idea sentence.

## Main Idea \_\_\_\_\_

Its back and breast are covered with blackish-brown feathers. Its head, neck, and tail are covered with white feathers. The bald eagle’s head is not actually “bald.” It refers to the word *piebald*, which means “two colored, usually black and white.” The male bald eagle has a body length from 30 to 34 inches. It weighs between 10 and 14 pounds. Its wingspan ranges from 72 to 85 inches (that’s about 6 to 7 feet across!). Its beak is hooked at the tip for tearing its food, which is mainly fish. The edges of the beak are sharp, creating a cutting, scissorlike effect. Yet, even though the beak can be a strong weapon, an eagle can also use it to feed its baby chick, or groom its mate’s feathers.

