RI 2: I can determine the central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details.

**Trashed Technology Is Turning Into a High-Tech Hazard**

It’s your birthday, and you just opened your biggest gift—a sleek silver

laptop. You can’t wait to instant-message your friends with the news,

but first you have to get rid of your old desktop computer. Do you just

toss the monitor and keyboard in the trash?

Not anymore.

Three states—California, Maine, and Maryland—recently [2006] passed

laws prohibiting people from throwing away **electronic waste** with

regular garbage. Electronic waste, or e-waste, includes televisions,

computers, and cell phones.

Although high-tech gadgets don’t make you sick when you use them,

they might when they are destroyed at the dump. Some e-waste

contains heavy metals that can be harmful to humans.

Cell phone batteries contain a chemical called cadmium that can cause

damage to kidneys. Some computer monitors contain lead, which can

cause brain damage. Flat TV screens are made with mercury, which

may cause injury to the **nervous system***.* The nervous system,

which includes the brain, spinal cord, and nerves, controls body

activities. Those metals may also leak toxins into the ground or give

off pollutants when burned.

"The chemicals inside some of these electronics read like a who’s who

of the periodic table of elements," New Jersey Assemblyman Reed

Gusciora told reporters for the Passaic County *Herald News.*

The new legislation requires e-waste to be dumped at **hazardous***,* or

dangerous, waste disposal sites rather than in landfills. Several other

states, such as New Jersey, are considering similar laws. California is

also pushing for a law requiring manufacturers to stop using hazardous

materials in cell phones and iPods.

Legislators aren’t the only people taking aim at e-waste.

Environmentalists are urging people to recycle their outdated

equipment. (See "What Can You Do?")

"It’s just a waste...to not recycle," Patrick O’Shaughnessy, an

associate professor of occupational and environmental health at the

University of Iowa, told *The Daily Iowan.* "Allowing dangerous

[chemicals] to **leach1** into the environment for decades seems

irresponsible."

1 **leach:** to carry off by dissolving soluble components in a liquid; to mix with water and spread out

**What Can You Do?**

**Reduce.** Be a responsible

shopper, and take care of your

electronics so they will last

longer.

**Reuse.** Donate or sell your old

high-tech gadgets. Schools

and community centers often

accept donations of electronic

equipment.

**Recycle.** To find a responsible

recycler, contact a local or

state environmental group.

\_\_\_ 1. The main idea of this passage is that

a. electronic waste includes televisions, computers, and cell phones.

b. throwing away electronics can be harmful to people.

c. in Maine it is against the law to dump hazardous waste in landfills.

d. the mercury in flat TV screens may cause injury to the nervous system*.*

\_\_\_ 2. The main idea of the “What Can You Do” box is that

a. pollution is a big problem.

b. You should recycle your electronics

c. people should stop buying electronics

d. people can help eliminate e-waste

3. What details support the main idea that legislators are passing laws to prevent electronic waste from accumulating in landfills?

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