**Directions: Read and annotate the following passage. Then, from the options below, choose the sentence that best states the main idea.**

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| Financial genius James "Big Jim" Fisk (1834-1872) died of a gunshot wound when he was only thirty-seven years old. During his brief lifetime, Fisk earned and lost huge sums of money, much of it through bribery and theft. During the Civil War, he smuggled cotton from the South to the North. He also printed and sold phony bonds to gain control of the wildly profitable Erie Railroad. Then he bankrupted the railroad while gaining a personal fortune for himself. In 1869, Fisk’s attempts to take over the gold market led to financial panic and the collapse of the stock market. Oddly enough, Fisk seemed rather proud of his wicked ways, saying "Some people are born to be good; other people to be bad. I was born to be bad." A lover of the ladies, Fisk was killed in a fight with a rival over the affections of actress Josie Mansfield. (Source of information: Armento et al., *A More Perfect Union*, p.472) |
|  | **Main Idea:** |
|  | **a. Big Jim Fisk liked pretty women a little too much for his own good.** |  |
|  | **b. In his pursuit of wealth, James Fisk never let law or morality stand in his way.** |
|  | **c. James Fisk did not have a long life, but that did not stop him from making a great deal of money.** |