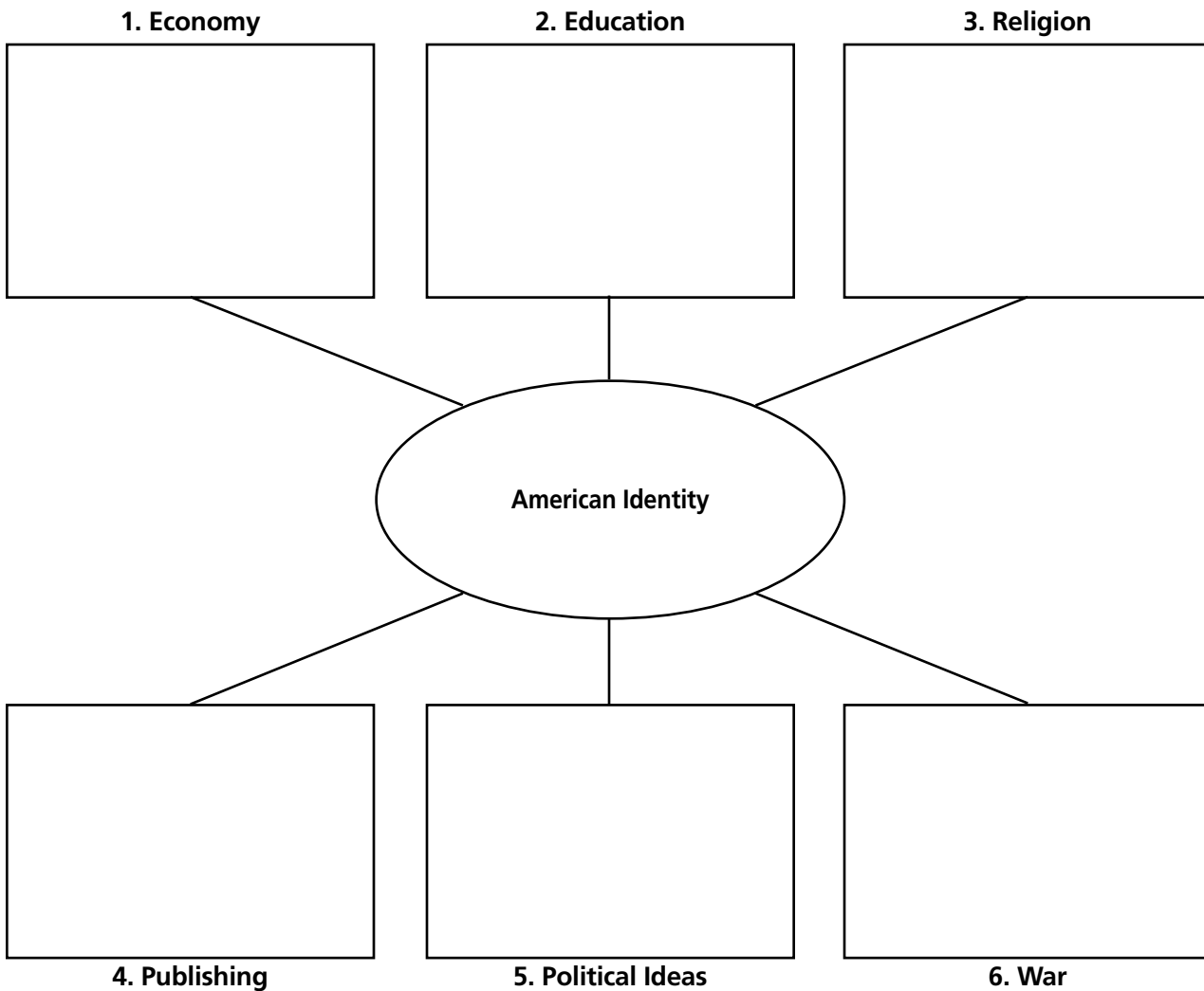


# Setting the Stage

## Reading Strategy: Finding Main Ideas

“What’s the point?” You might ask this question during a long, rambling conversation with a friend. You want to find out the **main idea**, a statement that summarizes the most important point and helps you focus on the topic.

The center of the diagram below identifies the focus of this chapter —“American Identity.” The surrounding boxes show related topics that helped shape an American identity. Look for these topics as you read. For each topic, ask yourself, What’s the point? Then fill in the boxes with main ideas that explain the topics.



## Discussion Questions

1. What role did war play in building an American identity?
2. How did publishing help bring American colonists closer together?
3. Which topic shown in the diagram do you think most influences Americans’ sense of their own identity today?