

## AUTHOR'S PURPOSE



An author's purpose is his reason for or intent in writing.

An author's purpose may be to amuse the reader, to persuade the reader, to inform the reader, or to satirize a condition.

An author writes with one of four general purposes in mind:

1. To relate a story or to recount events, an author uses **narrative** writing.
2. To tell what something looks like, sounds like, or feels like, the author uses **descriptive** writing.
3. To convince a reader to believe an idea or to take a course of action, the author uses **persuasive** writing.
4. To inform or teach the reader, the author uses **expository** writing.

An author's purpose is reflected in the way he writes about a topic. For instance, if his purpose is to amuse, he will use jokes or anecdotes in his writing.

Clues to an author's purpose may be found in titles, prefaces, and the author's background.

## **AUTHOR'S PURPOSE**

**EXERCISES:** Read each paragraph. Then select the answer that best describes the author's purpose in writing.

**The word is terracide. It is not committed with guns and knives, but with relentless bulldozers, roaring dump trucks, and giant shovels like mythological beasts. Dynamite cuts and rips apart mountains to reach the minerals inside, leaving nothing but empty, naked hills. The land is left wasted and allowed to slide down upon houses and into streams, making the land unlivable and the stream water undrinkable. This is terracide, or if you prefer, strip mining.**

1. The author's purpose is to
  - a. inform you about the purposes of strip mining.
  - b. describe a strip mining operation.
  - c. persuade you that strip mining is bad for the environment.
  - d. define terracide.

**The human sex chromosomes are of the XX-XY pattern. The Y chromosome is much smaller than the X chromosome. Two types of sperm cells are formed during gametogenesis; half of these have the X chromosome and the others have the Y chromosome. Every egg cell has an X chromosome; therefore, fertilization determines the sex. If a Y sperm cell fertilizes the egg, a male develops.**

2. The author's purpose is to
  - a. explain how the sex of humans is determined.
  - b. describe chromosomes.
  - c. tell the steps in fertilization.
  - d. contrast X and Y chromosomes

**To make a delicious New England pit, proceed as follows: take some water and flour; then construct a bullet-proof dough. Make this into a disk-shaped object. Dry it for a couple of days in a mild temperature. Pour on stewed dried apples and slabs of citron; leave it in a safe place until it petrifies. Serve cold at breakfast and invite your mother-in-law.**

3. The author's purpose is to
  - a. tell the steps in making a pie.
  - b. make fun of (satirize) New England cooking.
  - c. persuade the reader to buy New England pie.
  - d. describe New England pie.

**I will try to give the reader of this article some idea of the real nature of Gothic architecture, not just of Venice, but of universal Gothic. One of the most interesting parts of our study will be to find out how far Venetian architecture went in achieving the perfect type of Gothic, and how far it fell short of it.**

4. The author's purpose is to
  - a. explain the importance of Gothic architecture.
  - b. describe Venetian architecture.
  - c. show how Venetian architecture is different from Gothic architecture.
  - d. show the nature of Gothic architecture.

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**On September 23, a large cavalry troop from Fort Robinson arrived at the camp of Sitting Bull. Just as he was about to give a welcoming speech, a commotion broke out among the watching warriors. Rifles were fired, and the meeting ended in a massacre of the soldiers.**

5. The author's purpose is to
  - a. describe Sitting Bull's camp.
  - b. persuade the reader that the Indians were bloodthirsty.
  - c. tell the events leading to a massacre.
  - d. explain the problems of the Calvary.

**Tofu is a product that is becoming very popular as a low-calorie, cholesterol-free meat substitute. Formerly it was found exclusively in Oriental markets and health food stores, but today tofu can be purchased in most supermarket produce departments. This white, cheese like substance is made from the condensed milk of soybeans. It is extremely high in protein and low in sodium. Tofu is almost tasteless by itself, but it can be easily mixed into sauces and soups; it can even be made to imitate scrambled eggs.**

6. The author's primary purpose is to
  - a. evaluate Oriental cooking.
  - b. persuade you to eat low-cholesterol foods.
  - c. describe tofu.
  - d. to compare tofu with meat.

**Dear Tall, Dark and Handsome — This is your lucky day! The girl of your dreams is just a phone call away. I am 5' 10'', slim, pretty, and only 23. I love pop music, good books, exotic foods, and foreign travel. Give me a ring any day after 6 P.M. You won't be sorry. Your gal, Jackie.**

7. The author's purpose is to
  - a. convince the reader to call the writer.
  - b. describe the writer objectively.
  - c. criticize the writer's lack of intelligence.
  - d. entertain the reader with some interesting facts.

**Our criminal justice system today is a disgrace. Modern day criminals have more rights than an honest citizen ever imagined were written into our U.S. Constitution. Murderers and rapists are typically set free on legal technicalities and seldom face any jail time. While that scum is back to work finding new victims, the pleas of those they have killed, maimed, or violated go unheard. Until we begin giving some real consideration to people who obey the law, instead of those who break it, things are going to continue getting worse.**

8. The author's purpose is to
  - a. describe the actions of the criminals.
  - b. compare criminals with honest citizens.
  - c. inform the reader about the extent of crime in America.
  - d. criticize our criminal justice system.