

Determine an author's purpose essay sample



An author's purpose is his or her reason for writing. Asking two important questions about anything you read will help you understand the author's purpose:

- Why did the author write this?
- What does the author expect me to learn or do?

The topic and main idea may contain clues that will help you answer these questions and determine an author's purpose. If the selection you are reading has a title, it too may provide clues. You can learn to recognize three common purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. Facts and examples presented objectively are clues that the author's purpose is to inform. Details that influence or convince you to think, feel, or act a certain way suggest that the author's purpose is to persuade. Descriptive details that give you emotional and intellectual pleasure may indicate that the author's purpose is to entertain. The type of material may also suggest an author's purpose. Textbooks and professional journals are written to inform. Newspaper editorials and articles from special interest magazines are often written to persuade. Essays, fiction, and some personal interest stories in periodicals are written to entertain. An author may have more than one purpose, but one purpose will dominate. For example, an author who wants to persuade readers to try a new diet may also need to inform them about its benefits and risks.

The following exercises will help you determine an author's purpose, first in sentences, then in paragraphs, and finally in longer selections.

D: Purpose Exercise D. 1

<https://assignbuster.com/determine-an-authors-purpose-essay-sample/>

Read the following sentences. Then circle the author's purpose. In addition, be prepared to explain your answer if asked to do so.

1. Aranika Sorenstam was only the second woman in history to play in a major

PGA tournament. a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

2. Women should do a monthly breast self-examination because early detection of cancer increases the chances for a cure. a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

3. When asked how she stayed so slim, the fashion model replied, „ It's simple: no food, no drink, no exercise.” a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

4. Did you know that most tomatoes are picked green before they are sold to grocery stores?

a. inform

b. persuade

d. entertain

5. The sky was the color of slate, and as the wind began to pick up we knew that a storm was coming. a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

6. Everyone knows that well-lighted streets are a deterrent to crime; therefore, the city must install streetlights in our neighborhoods. a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

7. The bodies of fireflies contain phosphorus, a chemical that causes them to glow in the dark. a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

Section D-Determine an Author's Purpose43

D: Purpose Exercise D. 2

Read each topic and its source. Circle whether the purpose is to inform, persuade, or entertain. Then be prepared to explain your answer if asked to do so.

1. A section in a biology textbook on the Krebs cycle

a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

2. An editorial urging you to vote " no" on an upcoming referendum a. inform

b. persuade

c. entertain

3. A letter from your insurance company explaining new benefits for policyholders
 - a. inform
 - b. persuade
 - c. entertain

4. A magazine ad from the California Growers Association asserting that eating avocados is good for you
 - a. inform
 - b. persuade
 - c. entertain

5. A review in your local newspaper calling a new film the worst movie of the year"
 - a. inform
 - b. persuade
 - c. entertain

6. " Those Winter Sundays" from a collection of poems by Robert Hayden
 - a. inform
 - b. persuade
 - c. entertain

7. A journal article about ways to improve reading comprehension
 - a. inform
 - b. persuade
 - c. entertain

44. Part 2-Essential Skills

D: Purpose Exercise D. 3

Read each paragraph. Circle whether the purpose is to inform, persuade, or entertain. Be prepared to explain your answer if asked to do so.

1. The U. S. government consists of three branches: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. Each branch has different functions as specified in the U. S. Constitution. The framers intended the three branches to act as checks and balances so that no one branch would become more powerful than the others.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

2. The number of credit card fraud cases has increased dramatically in recent years. To avoid being a victim, guard your credit cards carefully. Do not let others use your cards. Also, keep your carbons and be wary of giving out your credit card numbers to anyone.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

3. The would-be bank robber slipped a note to the teller saying, " Hand over your cash, or I'll shoot." He pulled aside his jacket to reveal the butt of his gun. The teller gave him what he asked for, but when he arrived home the police were waiting for him. How did they know? The note he had given to the teller was written on the back of one of his own deposit slips, which listed his name and address.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

4. Frank Sinatra, an entertainer whose popularity spanned several generations, died of a heart attack on May 14, 1998, at the age of 82.

Although Sinatra made dozens of recordings and starred in many films, he was best known for his unique singing voice.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

5. " Saved by a Dog" read the headline in a Florida newspaper. A child playing too close to shore almost fell into the jaws of a hungry alligator. A neighbor's German shepherd came to the rescue, grabbing the child's diaper in his mouth and pulling him out of danger. In a strange twist of fate, the dog's name is Gator.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

Section D-Determine an Author's Purpose

6. The world's oceans have been overfished to the point that some species are near extinction, Without increased controls on the commercial fishing industry, we may find our choice of seafood severely limited in the future.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

7. To register to win a year's worth of groceries, all you have to do is fill in your name, address, and phone number on one of the blanks available at any of the checkout counters. No purchase is necessary, and you do not have to be present to win.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

46Part 2-Essential Skills

D: Purpose Exercise D. 4

Read each paragraph. Circle whether the purpose is to inform, persuade, or entertain. Be prepared to explain your answer if asked to do so.

1. The city of Orlando has done much to promote its Lynx bus system both to make citizens aware that the transportation exists and to encourage people to use it. Some buses are painted bright colors. Artists have painted murals, or scenes, on some of the buses. One bus is decorated with the Orlando Magic team logo and photographs of some of the players. Bus stops throughout the city are identified by signs painted with a pink paw print. The Lynx system offers safe, convenient transportation.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

2. If you live in an apartment, you should consider paying for a garbage pickup service. For a small fee you can leave your garbage outside your door for pickup on designated days. You can save yourself the trouble of carrying your garbage out to the dumpster where you might be at risk, especially at night. A no-hassle service will make it less likely that you will allow garbage to accumulate, drawing bugs and causing an unpleasant odor. Surely, a service like this is well worth the price.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

3. In the days before smoking was banned in public buildings, Francine, an attorney, took her last thoughtful drag of cigarette smoke, inhaled, and stubbed out the butt in an ashtray that was already overflowing. Looking around for the wastebasket, she found a large trash-filled receptacle on the floor beside her secretary's desk and emptied the ashtray. " Hey!" cried the secretary. " That's my purse."

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

4. Something should be done to make it safer for us to use automatic teller machines. We have seen too many examples of people who have gotten robbed or assaulted by thugs while making a deposit or withdrawal. Also, it is easy for a thief to look over someone's shoulder and memorize an account number for later use. Moreover, we have read reports of burglars who have stolen the machines themselves, causing needless damage and expense. This has got to stop.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

Section D- Determine an Author's Purpose⁴⁷

5. To balance your checkbook, follow these steps. First, write down the balance shown on your statement. Next, add any deposits you have made that are not listed on your statement. From this amount subtract the sum of all the checks you have written that do not show on your statement. The resulting number should agree with the balance shown in your checkbook.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

6. Yesterday Emily Peterson thought she had won the lottery. When she tried to make a withdrawal from the ATM on campus, she got a big surprise. First the machine cashed her \$25 check, but then it kept spitting out bills so fast that she could hardly catch them. Something clearly was wrong because she soon had more money than she knew was in her account. The machine

thought it was being robbed and sounded an alarm. Security personnel took the money and retrieved a record of Emily's transaction. Finding no evidence of tampering, they did not charge Emily with wrongdoing. Oh yes, she got her \$25 back.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

Ronald's, a bakery on South Street, has a cookie for everyone. For example, kids love Ronald's sugar cookies, decorated with sweet icings and candies. Chocolate lovers can choose chocolate chip or chocolate macaroons. For someone who likes a cookie that is not too sweet, oatmeal raisin is a good choice. Visit Ronald's today.

- a. inform
- b. persuade
- c. entertain

48Part 2-Essential Skills

D: Purpose Exercise D. 5

This exercise will help you determine the author's purpose in a longer selection. Read the selection. Then answer the questions that follow it.

Skimming and Scanning

Skimming and scanning are tools of the efficient reader. These two time-saving strategies help readers zero in on the information they need. To become a more efficient reader, make skimming and scanning a part of your

reading process. To skim means to briefly glance over a paragraph or passage to get a rough idea of what it is about: its topic, purpose, or main idea. For example, skimming is useful for looking through a newspaper article to get an idea of what the story covers. To determine the subject or plot of a paperback book, skim the introduction or the information printed on the back cover. To scan means to glance over a page or more to find a specific piece of information. For example, scan the page of a telephone directory to find a number. Use scanning to look up a word in a dictionary or to glance through an article to find a name or a date. Scanning is helpful for finding a topic in an index or for choosing a website from a list of sources. Skimming and scanning are useful review strategies. For example, skimming chapters or articles refreshes the memory. Scanning for dates, names, definitions, or other facts saves rereading entire sections or chapters.