

How purpose affects your writing

Three different ways to write about stress

Your purpose is to share factual information; this is a paragraph from a science book.

About stress

Clearly describes what happens

Includes scientific information

The body has several distinct physical reactions to situations that seem to be threatening or demanding. The heartbeat will increase, pumping blood at a faster rate. Muscles tighten, ready to spring into action. Individuals under stress will experience a heightening of their senses, as the body prepares to meet the stressful situation. Most people have experienced all these symptoms at some time in their lives.

Defines the situation

Offers no opinion

Your purpose is to tell a story; this is a blog entry.

A day I worked to relieve stress

Shares personal information

Use transitions words to tell the order of events

The day of my first job interview was a day I learned how to control the symptoms of stress. As I waited for the boss to open the door and invite me in, my heart was pounding and my hands were shaking. I decided to practice deep breathing techniques, and managed to calm my racing heart. Next, I focused on my shaking hands, placing them on my knees and imagining a place where I am always relaxed—the beach. Finally, I focused on the reasons I knew I would be good at the new job. I reminded myself about my computer skills and how hard I work. By the time the boss opened the door to his office and came out to greet me, I was smiling and relaxed, ready to succeed.

Written in the first person: Uses the personal pronoun “I” or “my”.

Describes events in the order they happen

You are convincing someone of something; this is an article in a health newsletter.

Why you need to reduce stress

Presents a controversial topic

Appeals to readers' interests

Allowing stress to rule your life may result in consequences that negatively affect your health and productivity. Stress, when not managed, can contribute to a variety of health issues, from a reduced immune system to more serious heart disease. Stress hormones increase the heart rate and may elevate blood pressure, a condition that, over time, may contribute to adverse health effects. Individuals under constant stress may have difficulty controlling their emotions, causing interpersonal conflicts at work and at home.

Includes important information

Includes multiple details