

# DETERMINING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

## 6.RI.2.B Explain how an author's point of view or purpose is conveyed in a text.

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# DETERMINING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

## TEACHER NOTES

6.RI.2.B, Lessons 1–3

### UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit walks students through how to determine an author's general purpose and main purpose in an informational text. Working with a variety of text types, students examine the words and phrases the author uses and how text evidence supports the purpose of each text.

**Lesson 1:** In this lesson, students review the general purposes of informational text: to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain. Then students identify the general purpose of four video clips and examine how the speakers' words show the purpose.

**Lesson 2:** In this lesson, students identify the main purpose of an informational text that either instructs or informs by looking at the evidence the author provides. You model how to find text evidence that supports the author's purpose; then student pairs identify additional examples.

**Lesson 3:** This lesson repeats the activities from the previous lesson with text that persuades or entertains.

Research Findings	Lesson Strategies, Approaches, or Activities
<p>“When reading with students, we emphasize that all texts have a purpose—that the author wants to convey specific information for a particular reason. The more students understand this concept, the deeper their comprehension and appreciation of text will become.”</p> <p>(Sisson &amp; Sisson, 2014, p. 75)</p>	<p>These lessons emphasize that all texts have two kinds of purpose: the general purpose (to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade) and the main purpose (the specific reason the author wrote the text). Students practice identifying both kinds of author's purpose for various types of informational text. During the process, students examine how the author uses specific pieces of information to support the purpose.</p>
<p>Working with and learning from peers gives students opportunities to practice skills while also giving teachers opportunities to gauge student understanding.</p> <p>(August &amp; Shanahan, 2006)</p>	<p>Each lesson gives students the opportunity to discuss their ideas about the text with one another. These discussion times are prime opportunities for you to listen and identify any difficulties students are having in learning the new concepts.</p>

<p>Authentic literacy practices raise scores in reading. Authentic literacy includes daily reading, writing, and discussion in an intellectually safe and emotionally supportive environment.</p> <p>(Schmoker, 2007)</p>	<p>In this unit, students read informational texts, write their responses on handouts, and discuss their thinking with peers. You foster a supportive environment by affirming student effort and all levels of understanding, while encouraging classmates to do the same.</p>
<p>“In close reading, students read to make some decisions—for example, What is important in a text? What satisfies their curiosity? What gives insight into a provocative question? Or, what evidence supports an argument?”</p> <p>(VanDeWeghe, 2008, p. 106)</p> <p>The process of close reading allows students to find evidence in the text that best supports the author’s purpose. This activity deepens students’ reading comprehension.</p> <p>(VanDeWeghe, 2008)</p>	<p>In Lessons 2 and 3, students read closely to decide what evidence best demonstrates and supports the author’s main purpose.</p>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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# DETERMINING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

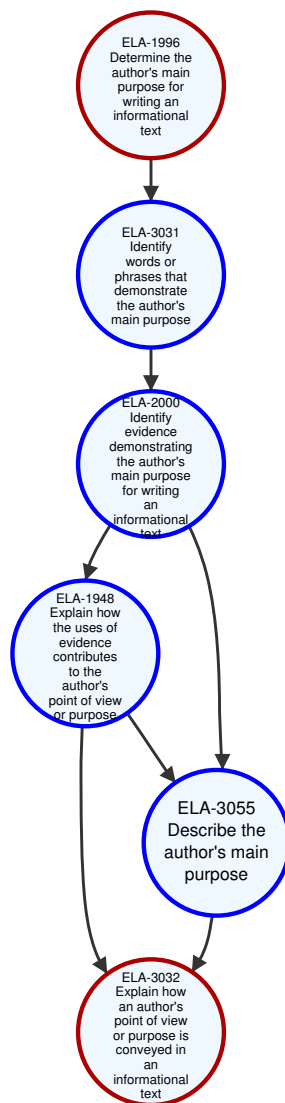
## LEARNING MAP TOOL

6.RI.2.B

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### STANDARD

**6.RI.2.B** Explain how an author's point of view or purpose is conveyed in a text.



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*\*Learning map model for 6.RI.2.B.*

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Node ID	Node Name	Node Description
ELA-1948	EXPLAIN HOW THE USE OF EVIDENCE CONTRIBUTES TO THE AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW OR PURPOSE	Explain how the details and evidence in an informational text contribute to the author's point of view on the topic or purpose for writing the text.
ELA-1996	DETERMINE THE AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE FOR WRITING AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Determine the author's exact reason or purpose for writing the informational text on a given topic. The purpose extends beyond just to answer a question, explain a process, or describe a topic and includes the author's point of view and perspective on the topic.
ELA-2000	IDENTIFY EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING THE AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE FOR WRITING AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Identify evidence that depicts the author's main purpose for writing the informational text.
ELA-3031	IDENTIFY WORDS OR PHRASES THAT DEMONSTRATE THE AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE	Identify words or phrases that depict the author's main purpose for writing an informational text.
ELA-3032	EXPLAIN HOW AN AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW OR PURPOSE IS CONVEYED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT	Explain how the facts, details, ideas, concepts, and other information in an informational text convey the author's point of view on the topic or purpose for writing the text.
ELA-3055	DESCRIBE THE AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE	Describe the author's main purpose for writing an informational text on a topic.

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# GENERAL PURPOSE

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

6.RI.2.B, Lesson 1

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students review the general purposes of informational texts: to inform, instruct, entertain, and persuade. Students determine the general purpose for several video clips and identify the words that show the purpose of the clips.

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### STANDARD

**6.RI.2.B** Explain how an author's point of view or purpose is conveyed in a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, select four short video clips, each with a different general purpose. For example, select a clip from a sports show that is intended to entertain, a report on an endangered animal intended to persuade, a cooking video intended to instruct, and a local news clip intended to inform. Alternatively, select four texts with different general purposes.

Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ whiteboard or chart paper
- ▶ four video clips (or texts)
- ▶ [STUDENT HANDOUT: GENERAL PURPOSE](#)

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## IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: “I can identify the general purpose of an informational video.”

**Direct** students to turn to a neighbor and tell them a definition for *purpose*. Ask for volunteers to share and write the definitions on the board or chart paper. **Tell** students that a purpose is the reason something happens or exists.

**Explain** that there is always a reason an author wrote a book or article. There are two kinds of author’s purposes: general purpose and main purpose. This lesson will focus on general purpose. **Tell** students that the general purpose of an author can be to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade.

**Direct** partners to brainstorm a type of informational text that fits each of the purpose categories. Collect responses on the board or chart paper.

**Explain** that in today’s lesson, students will identify the general purpose of several video clips. **Pass out** [STUDENT HANDOUT: GENERAL PURPOSE](#), and **show** the first clip.

**Ask** students what the general purpose of the clip is. Direct students to record their answer on the handout.

**Tell** students that you will play the clip again, and instruct them to record the words and phrases that show whether the clip’s purpose is to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade the audience. **Play** the clip, and then call on students to share the words they identified.

**Show** the second video clip. Then **direct** partners to work together to record the general purpose and supporting words and phrases on the handout. If needed, play the video a second time for students to focus on identifying words.

As students work, **circulate** and collect evidence about student thinking.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
Determine if the student can <b>IDENTIFY WORDS OR PHRASES THAT DEMONSTRATE THE AUTHOR’S MAIN PURPOSE (ELA-3031)</b> :		
▶ What is the general purpose of the video?	▶ What context clues helped you determine the general purpose?	▶ What words or phrases show the general purpose? How do they show it?

**Repeat** the process for the remaining clips, with partners completing the handout for each video. Or if students have access to devices, you may choose to assign different videos to pairs and have groups present

their findings. As partners complete the handout for each clip, **walk around** and ask the Checking for Understanding questions.

**Direct** students to share their handouts with another set of partners. Instruct them to discuss any differences and try to come to a group decision about them.

**Call on** a spokesperson for each group to share the differences and explain whether the group came to a consensus about them. If groups have mostly similar answers, ask the group spokesperson to explain their responses.

**Collect** handouts.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.



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# GENERAL PURPOSE

## STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 1

Text Title	General Purpose	Words or Phrases
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

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# AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE IN INFORMATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL TEXTS

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

6.RI.2.B, Lesson 2

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students examine how evidence shows the author's main purpose in a text that either informs or instructs.

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### STANDARD

**6.RI.2.B** Explain how an author's point of view or purpose is conveyed in a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, select a text that either instructs or informs from a curriculum resource that has been purchased for individual student use, such as a class set of textbooks. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ informational or instructional text, for individual student use
  - ▶ **STUDENT HANDOUT: AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE: INFORMATIONAL OR INSTRUCTIONAL TEXT**
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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement without revealing the text type you've selected: "I can explain how evidence in a text shows the author's main purpose."

**Invite** a volunteer to share the definition of *general purpose*. Then **review** the rest of the previous lesson as you see fit.

**Explain** the difference between general purpose and main purpose: general purpose is a type: to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade. Main purpose is the specific reason the author wrote the text. What does the author want the reader to know, do, or experience in regard to the text's topic? **Tell** students that today they will determine the main purpose of a text that either informs or instructs.

**Call on** students to explain what it means to inform someone. Tell students that to inform is to explain information about a topic. **Call on** students to explain what it means to instruct someone. Explain that to instruct is to teach someone how to do something.

**Remind** students that they found specific words and phrases that showed the general purpose in the previous lesson. In this lesson, students will look for evidence in the text that shows the author's main purpose.

**Ask** students what kinds of words they use when they explain something. What kinds of words do they use to instruct someone? On the board, **list** words to look for in texts that inform: *for example, for instance, overall, and in conclusion*. Also list words for texts that instruct: *first, second, next, and finally*.

**Explain** that in an informational text, text features give the reader information about the purpose or reason the author wrote the text. It is important to look at the title and headings when figuring out why the author wrote the text. Explain that authors also use examples or facts as evidence to support their main point. This evidence also shows the author's purpose. **Tell** students that they will find examples and facts in a text and use them to determine the author's main purpose.

**Read** the text with the class. Then **pass out** **STUDENT HANDOUT: AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE: INFORMATIONAL OR INSTRUCTIONAL TEXT**.

As a class, determine the general purpose of the text. **Call on** students to share whether this text is intended to instruct or inform and to explain how they know.

**Tell** students that the next step is to find examples or facts that show the general purpose. Remind students to pay attention to both the text and the text features.

As a class, **find** one piece of evidence that supports the general purpose. Instruct students to fill in the box on the handout. **Ask** students why the author uses this example. **Instruct** students to work with a partner to complete the handout.

**Circulate** and check for understanding.

## CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Determine if the student can  
**IDENTIFY WORDS OR PHRASES  
THAT DEMONSTRATE THE  
AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE (ELA-  
3031):**

- ▶ What words show the main purpose of the text?
- ▶ What words help you discover what the author wants you to learn?

Determine if the student can  
**IDENTIFY EVIDENCE  
DEMONSTRATING THE AUTHOR'S  
MAIN PURPOSE FOR WRITING  
AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-  
2000):**

- ▶ What evidence shows the main purpose for writing this text?
- ▶ What fact or example helps you discover the main thing the author wants you to know?

Determine if the student can  
**EXPLAIN HOW THE USE OF  
EVIDENCE CONTRIBUTES TO THE  
AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW OR  
PURPOSE (ELA-1948):**

- ▶ How does this piece of evidence show the main purpose of the author?
- ▶ Why does the author include this example?
- ▶ How does this fact help you learn about the text's topic?

**Instruct** partners to share their handouts with another pair. Then ask for volunteers to share their handouts with the class and explain the main purpose of the text.

**Collect** handouts.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

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AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE:  
INFORMATIONAL OR INSTRUCTIONAL TEXT  
STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 2

General Purpose

Evidence

Evidence

Evidence

Evidence

Main Purpose

How does the evidence build the author's main purpose?

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# AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE IN ENTERTAINING AND PERSUASIVE TEXTS

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

6.RI.2.B, Lesson 3

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### LEARNING GOAL

In this lesson, students examine how evidence shows the author's main purpose in a text that either entertains or persuades.

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### STANDARD

**6.RI.2.B** Explain how an author's point of view or purpose is conveyed in a text.

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### PREPARATION

Before the lesson, select two informational texts, one that persuades and one that entertains, from a curriculum resource that has been purchased for individual student use, such as a class set of textbooks. Follow all copyright restrictions and guidelines as they pertain to material you select for classroom use.

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### MATERIALS & HANDOUTS

- ▶ an entertaining text and a persuasive text, for individual student use
  - ▶ **STUDENT HANDOUT: AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE: ENTERTAINING OR PERSUASIVE TEXT**
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### IMPLEMENTATION

As a class, turn the learning goal into an I Can statement: "I can explain how evidence in a text shows the author's main purpose."

**Review** general purpose and main purpose. Invite a volunteer to explain the difference between the two.

**Tell** students that in today's lesson, they will use the skills from the previous lesson with two additional types of text: text that persuades and text that entertains. Explain that these texts are different from texts that instruct or inform because the author has a clear position on the topic. In a persuasive text, the author intends to get the reader to agree with a certain belief or point of view. In an entertainment piece, the author intends to make the reader feel emotions, such as happiness or sadness.

**Assign** students to pairs or trios. Then **pass out** [STUDENT HANDOUT: AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE: ENTERTAINING OR PERSUASIVE TEXT](#), and assign each group with one of the texts. Instruct groups to read the text together and then collaborate to complete the handout. **Restate** that the general purpose is to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade and the main purpose is the specific reason the author wrote the text.

While students work, **walk around** and ask the Checking for Understanding questions.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING		
<p>Determine if the student can <b>IDENTIFY THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE FOR WRITING THE INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-1131)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What is the general purpose for writing the text?</li><li>▶ Does the author want to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade the reader?</li></ul>	<p>Determine if the student can <b>IDENTIFY EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING THE AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE FOR WRITING AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-2000)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ What evidence shows the author's main purpose for writing the text?</li><li>▶ What fact or example helps you discover the main thing the author wants you to experience or believe?</li></ul>	<p>Determine if the student can <b>EXPLAIN HOW AN AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW OR PURPOSE IS CONVEYED IN AN INFORMATIONAL TEXT (ELA-3032)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ How does the evidence explain or support the main purpose of the text?</li><li>▶ Where in the text is the author's main purpose the most clear?</li><li>▶ How did you decide what the author's main purpose is?</li></ul>

**Ask** for volunteers to share their handouts and to explain how they found the evidence and main purpose.

**Collect** handouts.

For a discussion of the research that supports this instructional model, see the [TEACHER NOTES](#) for this lesson set.

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AUTHOR'S MAIN PURPOSE:  
ENTERTAINING OR PERSUASIVE TEXT  
STUDENT HANDOUT

Lesson 3

General Purpose

Evidence

Evidence

Evidence

Evidence

Main Purpose

How does the evidence build the author's main purpose?



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## DETERMINING AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

### STUDENT FEEDBACK GUIDE

6.RI.2.B, Lessons 1–3

**Directions:** For each learning goal, circle the sentence that best matches what you can do.

Learning Goal	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Describe the general purpose of an informational text</b>	I can determine whether the text is intended to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade.	I can identify a word or phrase that shows the general purpose.	I can use words from the text to explain the general purpose.
<b>Identify and describe evidence that supports an author's main purpose</b>	I can identify one piece of evidence and explain how it shows the author's main purpose.	I can identify two pieces of evidence and explain how they show the author's main purpose.	I can identify multiple pieces of evidence and explain how they combine to show the author's main purpose.
<b>Describe how the author's purpose is conveyed through specific evidence</b>	I can describe the main purpose of the text.	I can describe the main purpose of the text, using one or two pieces of evidence as examples.	I can describe the main purpose of a text and explain how the purpose is revealed through several pieces of evidence.