



Name the Author's Purpose



Keys to
Comprehension

**Ruby
Reader**

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Name the Author's Purpose



Keys for the Teacher

Identifying an Author's Purpose reveals the author's intention for writing the text. Understanding the author's goal (inform, entertain and persuade) helps a reader interpret the author's message (lesson, moral, opinion) and deepens comprehension of the text.

Keys for the Children

Good readers think about, "Why did the author write this?" and "What do they want us to remember?".

Lesson

The first part of this lesson is to share with students a sampling of various types of texts written by authors. Take the children on a tour of a big stack of reading material . . . books, magazines, newspapers, signs, food packaging, brochures, directions, field guides, ads, reports, labels, cookbooks, letters and notes, warnings, manuals, travel books and more. Ask them to figure out how all this reading is alike? Guide them to realize that someone, an author, wrote each piece.

Now it's time to tackle the question, "Why did the author write this for us to read?" Share that different authors write for different reasons. Hold up each piece and have the children try to articulate why the author may have written the text. Sort the texts into piles as the children talk about each piece. You might need to guide the discussion so the categories of inform/teach, entertain, and persuade (or make us "think like they do") become clear. While parts of this lesson are somewhat abstract, the main point to share is that authors have a reason for writing.

Another part of this strategy is uncovering the author's message. Begin by asking, "What does the author want us to remember?" Children are encouraged to analyze the story and distill the important message. Many times in the picture books written for children of this age, the messages bring up important values such as being kind, fair, getting along, honesty, friendship and many, many more. Discussions of author's message gives students a chance to share their own related opinions, thoughts and experiences. Often, class community bonds are formed and strengthened through these discussions.

Reads alouds are the best time to practice identifying Author's Purpose. The teacher is there to ask probing questions and keep the discussion on track. Read alouds give all students, no matter what their accuracy level, a chance to think hard about texts and develop comprehension skills.

