

Teaching Author's Purpose: A Parent's Guide

Does homework time feel like pulling teeth? You're not alone. When your child brings home a reading assignment about "author's purpose," it can feel overwhelming—especially when you're juggling dinner, bedtime routines, and a million other things. The good news? Teaching this concept is easier than you think, and it can actually be fun. This guide will show you simple strategies to help your child understand why authors write what they write—and you'll both feel confident tackling this skill together.



What Is Author's Purpose? (The Simple Version)

Author's purpose is simply **why** an author wrote something. Think of it like this: every time someone writes, they have a reason. Authors write to **persuade** you to do something, to **inform** you with facts, or to **entertain** you with a fun story.

Here's an easy trick to remember: **PIE**—Persuade, Inform, Entertain. Your child can think, "What kind of PIE is the author serving?" This simple acronym makes the concept stick and gives kids a mental checklist when reading any text.

Persuade

Convince you to think or do something (like ads or opinion pieces)

Inform

Teach you facts or explain something (like textbooks or news articles)

Entertain

Make you laugh, feel emotions, or enjoy a story (like novels or comics)



How to Spot Each Purpose: Questions to Ask

Help your child become a reading detective by asking these simple questions while reading together. These prompts guide them to think critically about what they're reading and why the author wrote it.

01

Does it try to change my mind?

If yes, it's probably persuasive. Look for strong opinions or calls to action.

02

Does it teach me something new?

If yes, it's likely informative. Look for facts, definitions, or explanations.

03

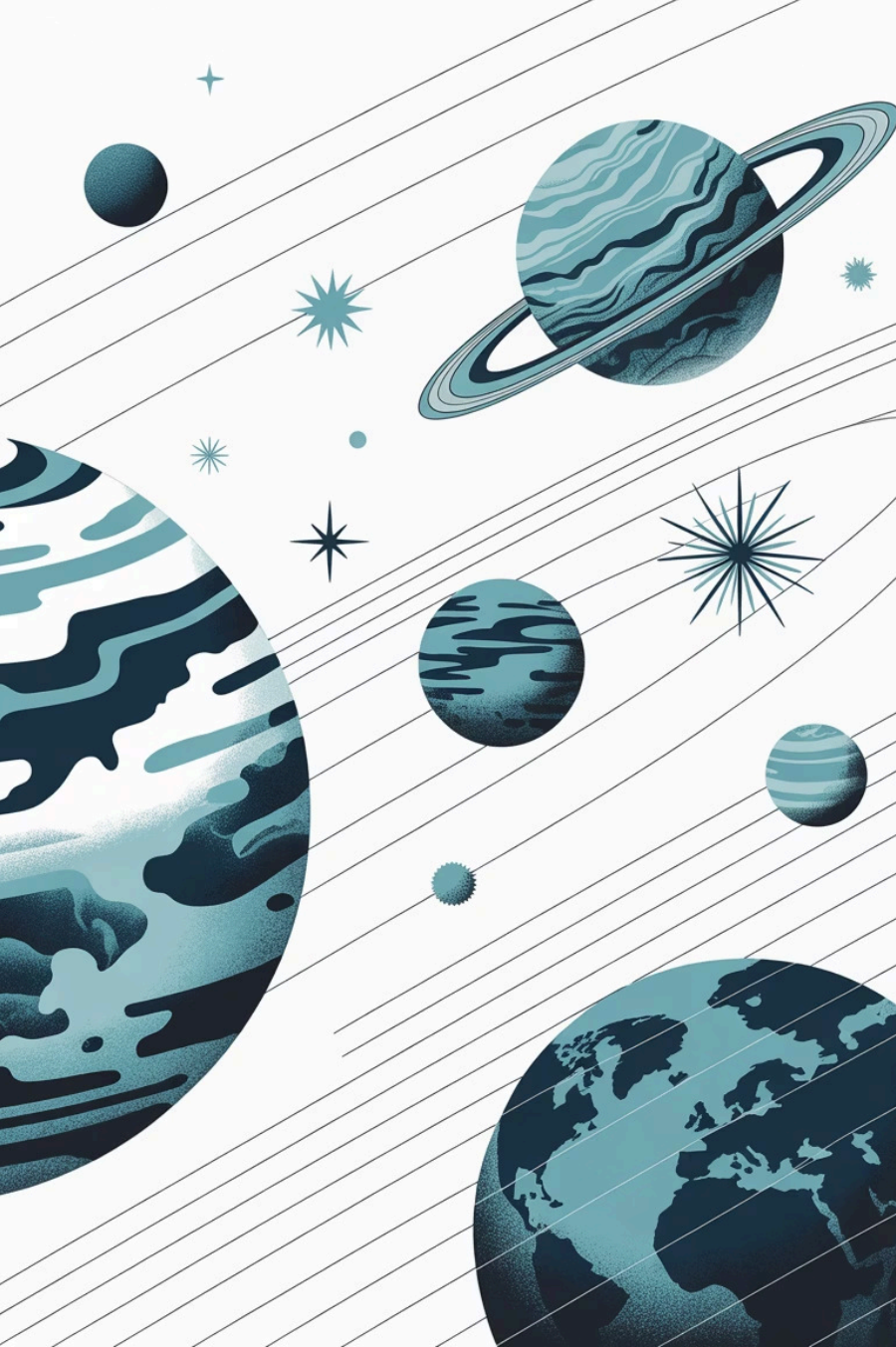
Does it make me feel something?

If yes, it's likely entertaining. Look for characters, dialogue, or humor.

04

What does the author want me to do after reading?

This helps narrow down the purpose even further.



Practice Story #1: The Amazing Solar System

"Did you know that Jupiter is so big that 1,300 Earths could fit inside it? Our solar system has eight planets that orbit the Sun. Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun and gets super hot, while Neptune is the farthest and freezing cold. Each planet is unique and fascinating in its own way!"

Now, let's figure out the author's purpose together. Read through each option below with your child and talk through why each one might or might not be correct. Use the process of elimination!

Story #1: What's the Author's Purpose?

1

To persuade you to visit space

Think about it: Does the author tell you that you *should* do something? Are there strong opinions? Not really—it just shares cool facts.

✗ Not quite!

2

To inform you about the solar system

Think about it: The passage teaches facts about planets, their sizes, and temperatures. It explains something scientific.

✓ This is it!

3

To entertain you with a funny story

Think about it: Is there a plot, characters, or humor? No—this is straightforward information, not a story.

✗ Not this one!

4

To persuade you that Jupiter is the best planet

Think about it: While Jupiter is mentioned, the author doesn't argue it's "better" than others—just shares a fact.

✗ Close, but no!

Parent Tip: Talk through why option 2 is correct. The clues? Words like "did you know" and factual descriptions. There's no story and no opinion—just information!



Practice Story #2: The Best Pet Ever

"If you're looking for a pet, you absolutely need to get a dog! Dogs are loyal, loving, and make the best companions. They'll protect your home, play with your kids, and always be happy to see you. Don't waste time with other pets—a dog is the only choice for your family. Visit your local shelter today and bring home a furry friend!"

Time for round two! This one is different from the first story. Read it carefully with your child and use the elimination strategy to find the author's purpose.

Story #2: What's the Author's Purpose?

1

To inform you about different types of pets

Think about it: Does the author explain various pets objectively? No—it only talks about dogs and has a strong opinion.

✗ Nope!

2

To entertain you with a story about a dog

Think about it: Is there a plot or characters? Not really—it's more like an argument or advertisement.

✗ Not this time!

3

To persuade you to get a dog

Think about it: The author uses strong language like "absolutely need" and "only choice" and tells you to take action. This is classic persuasion!

✓ You got it!

4

To inform you about animal shelters

Think about it: Shelters are mentioned, but only as part of convincing you to get a dog—not to explain how they work.

✗ Not quite!

Parent Tip: Help your child spot persuasive language. Words like "best," "need to," "don't waste time," and commands like "visit today" are big clues that the author is trying to convince them!

Quick Tips for Practice at Home

The best way to master author's purpose is through everyday practice. You don't need special worksheets—just use the reading material already around your house! Here are simple ways to weave this skill into daily life:



Read Together Daily

Pick different types of texts—cereal boxes, recipes, comics, ads. Ask, "Why did someone write this?" Make it a game!



Analyze Commercials

Commercials are perfect for spotting persuasive techniques. Pause and ask, "What does this ad want us to do?"



Use Process of Elimination

Teach your child to cross out wrong answers. This builds confidence and critical thinking skills.



Talk About It

Discussion is key! Let your child explain their reasoning out loud—it helps cement the concept.

Common Mistakes (And How to Fix Them)

Even adults sometimes confuse author's purpose! Here are the most common mix-ups kids make—and how you can help them avoid these traps:

1

Confusing Inform and Persuade

The fix: Ask, "Are there opinions or just facts?" Informative writing sticks to neutral facts. Persuasive writing uses loaded words and tells you what to think or do.

2

Thinking Entertaining = Funny

The fix: Remind your child that entertaining means any story that makes you feel emotions—happy, sad, scared, or excited. It doesn't have to be a comedy!

3

Choosing Based on Topic, Not Purpose

The fix: It's not about *what* the text is about, but *why* it was written. A text about dogs could inform, persuade, or entertain depending on how it's written.

You've Got This!

Teaching author's purpose doesn't have to be stressful. With the PIE acronym, thoughtful questions, and everyday practice, your child will master this skill in no time. Remember, the goal isn't perfection—it's progress. Celebrate small wins, keep practicing together, and watch your child's reading comprehension soar.

- 📌 **Next Steps:** Try creating your own practice stories at home! Write a short paragraph together and challenge each other to identify the purpose. Make it silly, make it fun—the more engaged your child is, the better they'll remember.

You're doing an amazing job supporting your child's learning. Keep up the great work!

