

Comprehension Activity

Introduce: Author's Purpose

Activity Type: Introduce

Grade: K-3

Group Size: Small Group, Large Group, Whole Class

Length: 15 minutes

Materials: A fiction or nonfiction book to read out loud, chart paper or board

Goal: Given a book, students will be able to determine the author's purpose for writing it.

Prepare:

Choose a book that appeals to early readers.

Model/Instruct:

1. Show your students the book you have chosen (front cover, back cover, and a quick flip through the pages) and ask them to think about what the author's purpose for writing the book might have been.

Today we are going to read a book entitled _____. Why do you think the author wrote this book? What is our reason for reading this book? What do you think the author wants us to experience as we read this book?

2. Record the students' comments on the chart paper or board.

3. Explain the meaning of determining an author's purpose.

When an author sits down to write a book, he or she has a reason for doing so. Usually, an author writes a book for one of three reasons. Authors write books to entertain, to inform (teach), or to persuade (get you to do something). When you are reading a book and you know the author's purpose, it helps you understand the book better. When an author writes fiction, his purpose is usually to entertain. When an author writes a nonfiction book, she is usually trying to inform. People who write commercials and other advertisements are writing to persuade you to do something.

4. Give examples of the ways students might have already used strategies to determine an author's purpose.

When you write a story, what is your purpose?

When your parent writes me a note explaining why you were not here yesterday, what is the purpose?

Have you ever figured out that a commercial was trying to persuade you to buy something?

5. Read the first half of the book, pausing at appropriate places to point out details that confirm the author's purpose.

Practice:

6. Stop reading just before some important information.

Let's talk about we have read so far and see if we can figure out the author's purpose. Remember that the author's purpose could be to entertain, to inform, or to persuade. Does this book tell a story? Have we learned something? Is the author trying to get us to do something?

7. Record students' comments and guesses as to the author's purpose on the chart paper or board.
8. Finish reading the book.
9. Check and confirm the author's purpose using the information from the chart paper or board.

Now let's look back at our ideas about the author's purpose. We thought the author's purpose was to _____. What information from the book helps us know that this is the author's purpose?

Call on students to share their ideas.

Knowing the author's purpose helps us understand the book better.

Adjust:

For advanced students:

Encourage these students to find three instances from the text to support their assertion about the author's purpose.

For struggling students:

Some students may have difficulty determining an author's purpose for a fiction book that is not funny. Explain to them that "to entertain" does not mean to be funny. A sad book can be entertaining as well. You still want to know what will happen to the characters. Some students may have difficulty determining whether an author is trying to inform or persuade. In this case it is helpful to ask them questions about the book:

What is the author trying to teach you?

What have you learned from the book?

Is the author trying to get you to do something? What?

What language does the author use to get you to do something?

Why did the author write this book?

For ELL students:

Before reading the book, explain the meaning of any key vocabulary or concepts that they may need to understand the book. Provide students with the names of the three purposes (to entertain, to inform, and to persuade) in their native language or allow them to look up the words in a bilingual dictionary.

This lesson is shared by <http://www.freereading.net>

FreeReading is a high-quality, open-source, free reading intervention program addressing literacy development for grades K-3. Schools and teachers everywhere can use the complete, research-based 40 week program for K-1 students, or use the library of lessons to supplement existing curricula in phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and writing. The site is also filled with free, downloadable materials including flashcards, graphical organizers, illustrated readers, decodable texts, audio files, videos and more.